Yours very sincerely
H. More

From the picture painted by [illegible]
now in the possession of Lady Sheriff [illegible]

[illegible]

THE

Complete Works

OF

HANNAH MORE.

VOL. I.

Parley was [illegible] frightened, for he thought he [illegible] one or two persons behind Flatterwell. [illegible] page 143.

New-York.
HARPER & BROTHERS, CLIFF STREET.

THE

WORKS

OF

HANNAH MORE.

FIRST COMPLETE AMERICAN EDITION.

I.

NEW-YORK:
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PUBLISHERS' ADDRESS.

When the veil of mortality descends upon splendid genius, that has been long devoted to the instruction and best interests of mankind, the noblest monument that can be erected to commemorate its worth and perpetuate its usefulness, is the collection of those productions which, when separately published, delighted and edified the world.

No writer of the past or present age has equalled Hannah More in the application of great talents to the improvement of society, through all its distinctions, from the humblest to the most exalted station in life. Her works have, indeed, in a very striking manner, and to an extraordinary extent, given a new and most important feature to the moral character of the nation she adorned. They have diffused vital religion, in faith and practice, over districts where its mere external form was before scarcely to be seen; and, what is still more deserving of admiration, this accomplished lady, by the power of her reasoning, and the elegance of her compositions, has succeeded, if the phrase may be permitted, in rendering piety fashionable and popular, where even the name of religion was, and that at no very distant period, treated with indifference, if not with absolute contempt.

After establishing her claim to the highest station in the temple of poctical fame, Hannah More resolved to consecrate her talents wholly to His service from whom she had received them. This determination she carried into effect; and inconceivably great and extensive were the benefits it produced. When licentious principles began to be promulgated with industrious zeal, and to threaten the foundations of all moral and social order, then did this Christian heroine, armed in the panoply of truth, appear foremost to oppose the inroads of the enemies of righteousness. The success was unexampled. The tracts which, with uncommon celerity and admirable judgment, came from her fertile pen, operated like a charm, in confirming the wavering, and appalling the evil mind.

The venerable Bishop Porteus, in a charge delivered to the clergy of his diocess in 1798, having noticed the exertions made by different pious writers to excite the spirit of religion, says, "To these it would now be injustice not to add the name of another highly approved author, Mrs. Hannah More; whose extraordinary and versatile talents can equally accommodate themselves to the cottage and the palace; who, while she is diffusing among the lower orders of the people an infinity of little religious tracts, calculated to reform and comfort them in this world, and to save them in the next, is at the same time applying all the powers of a vigorous and highly cultivated mind to the instruction, improvement, and high delight of the most exalted of her own sex. I allude more particularly to her last work, on female education, which presents to the reader such a fund of good sense, of wholesome counsel, of sagacious observation, of knowledge of the world and of the female heart, of high-toned morality, and genuine Christian piety; and all this enlivened with such brilliancy of wit, such richness of imagery, such variety and felicity of

allusion, such neatness and elegance of diction, as are not, I conceive, easily to be found so combined and blended together in any other work in the English language. Of the above-mentioned little tracts, no less than two millions were sold in the first year; and they contributed, I am persuaded, very essentially to counteract the poison of those impious and immoral pamphlets, which were dispersed over the kingdom in such numbers by societies of infidels and disaffected persons."

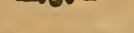
The popularity of Mrs. More's writings, never sensibly diminished, even by the vast increase of excellent and highly esteemed works in every department of literature by which the last twenty years have been distinguished, has been revived to an extent, perhaps, even greater than they achieved in the early period of their existence, by the recent publication of the admirable memoirs of her life and correspondence, prepared with so much skill and judgment by her chosen biographer and literary executor, Mr. Roberts; a work upon which the strongest language of approving criticism has been and still is bestowed by the highest authorities, both in this country and in England. The general acceptation with which those volumes were received, would have encouraged the publishers to follow them with an edition of Mrs. More's writings, even had they not been repeatedly advised and urged to the undertaking, not only by friends and in private, but by the almost united voice of the press throughout the Union. Had they not assumed it, with these inducements, they would have considered themselves as in some measure neglecting a duty, standing as they do in the light of caterers for the literary gratification of the public, whose wishes and opinions they are bound to respect, at least, if not implicitly to follow.

It is hoped and believed that the present collection, which contains all the writings of that eminent lady, in a convenient as well as handsome form, and is published at a very moderate price, will be received with a degree of favour not less cordial and extensive than that which was and still is accorded to the memoirs. To adopt the words of a religious periodical of high character, used in speaking of those volumes, it may be asserted that "it will please the superficial, improve the intelligent, and receive the hearty commendation of the serious reader. The young and the old, the lively and the sedate, will derive from it pleasure and profit."

The publishers cannot refrain from quoting the following just and happy expressions, from another publication devoted to the interests of religion. "But the view of her influence upon mankind will be exceedingly imperfect, unless we take into the estimate the whole number of individuals who have derived already, and will hereafter derive from her writings, the purest principles of religion, philosophy, and virtue. These can never be numbered, but they may safely be put down at millions. Now if all these readers gain but a single important suggestion, are incited to practise a single virtue, or to refrain from a single vice—if but one in ten is made wiser or better by her publications, how immeasurable is the good effected by her mind!"

"A soul thus active, spread out upon so wide a range of objects, impressing its own beauties and breathing its own spirit upon such myriads of kindred beings, demonstrates its own immortality, and proclaims in the history of the world the exhilarating truth, that the united acquisitions of piety, intellect, and virtue, centring their operations on that which is immortal, possess a grandeur which renders the conquests of pride and power insignificant as empty bubbles, and is more substantially glorious than the gorgeous enchantments of imperial magnificence."

PREFACE.



Whatever objections may be urged against the literary character of the present day, it must however be allowed to exhibit an evident improvement in some material points. It is for instance, no new observation, that vanity and flattery are now less generally ostensible even in the most indifferent authors than they were formerly in some of the best. The most self-sufficient writer is at length driven, by the prevailing sense of propriety, to be contented with *thinking* himself the prime genius of the age; but he seldom ventures to *tell* you that he thinks so. Vanity is compelled to acquire or to assume a better taste.

That spirit of independence also, which has in many respects impressed so mischievous a stamp on the public character, has perhaps helped to correct the style of prefaces and dedications. Literary patronage is so much *shorn of its beams*, that it can no longer enlighten bodies which are in themselves opake; so much abridged of its power that it cannot force into notice a work which is not able to recommend itself. The favour of an individual no longer boasts that buoyant quality which enables that to swim which by its own nature is disposed to sink. The influence of an Augustus, or a Louis Quatorze, of a Mæcenas, a Dorset, a Halifax, could not now procure readers, much less could it compel admirers for the panegyrist, if the panegyrist himself, could command admiration on no better ground than the authority of the patron. The once dilated preface is shrunk into plain apology or simple exposition. The long and lofty dedication (generally speaking) dwindled into a sober expression of respect for public virtue, a concise tribute of affection to private friendship, or an acknowledgment for personal obligation. It is no longer necessary for the dependant to be profane in order to be grateful. No more are all the divine attributes snatched from their rightful possessor, and impiously appropriated by the needy writer to the opulent patron. He still makes indeed the eulogium of his protector, but not his apotheosis. The vainest poet of our days dare not venture, like him who has however so gloriously accomplished his own prediction, to say, in so many words, that his own work is *more sublime than the royal heights of pyramids.* Nor whatever secret compact he may make for his duration, does he openly undertake to promise for his verse, that it shall flow *coequal with the rivers and survive the established forms of the religion of his country.* The most venal poetic parasite no longer assures his protector, with 'unhappy Dryden,' that mankind can no more subsist without *his* poetry (the earl of Middlesex's poetry!) than the world can subsist without the daily course of Divine Providence. And it is but justice to the more sober spirit of living literature to observe, that our modesty would revolt (putting our sense and our religion out of the question) were a modern poet to offer even an imperial patron to pick and choose his lodging among the constellations; or, as some author has expressed it on a similar occasion, 'to ask what apartment of the zodiack he would be pleased to occupy.'

So far at least our taste is reformed. And may we not venture to hope, from the affinity which should subsist between correct judgment and unadulterated principle, that our ideas of truth and manly integrity are improved also?

But it is time that I confine myself to the more immediate objects of the present address, in which, in avoiding the exploded evil I have been reprobating, I would not affectedly run into the opposite, and perhaps prevailing extreme.

It may not, it is presumed, be thought necessary to apologise for the publication of this collection, by enumerating all the reasons which produced it. 'Desire of friends,' is now become a proverbial satire; the poet is driven from that once creditable refuge, behind which an unfounded eagerness to appear in print used to shelter itself; and is obliged to abandon the untenable forts and fastnesses of this last citadel of affectation. Dr. Johnson's sarcasm upon one plea will apply to all, and put to flight the whole hackneyed train of false excuses—'If the book were not written to be printed, I presume it was printed to be read.'

These scattered pieces, besides that they had been suffered to pass through successive editions, with little or no correction, were in their original appearance, of all shapes and sizes, and utterly unreducable to any companionable form. Several new pieces are here added, and most of the old ones considerably altered and enlarged.

I should blush to produce so many slight productions of my early youth, did I not find reason to be still more ashamed, that after a period of so many years the progress will be found to have been so inconsiderable, and the difference so little apparent.

If I should presume to suggest as an apology for having still persisted to publish, that of the latter productions, usefulness has been more invariably the object; whereas in many of the earlier, amusement was more obviously proposed; if I were inclined to palliate my presumption by pleading

That not in Fancy's maze I wander'd long;

it might be retorted that the implied plea, in favour of the latter publications, exhibits no sure proof of humility in this instance than in the other. That, if in the first it was no evidence of the modesty of the writer to fancy she could amuse, in the last it furnishes little proof of the modesty of the woman to fancy that she can instruct. Now to amuse, or to instruct, or both, is so undeniably the intention of all who obtrude their works on the public, that no preliminary apology, no prefatory humiliation can quite do away the charge of a certain consciousnes of talents which is implied in the very undertaking. The author professes his inability but he produces his book; and by the publication itself controverts his own avowal of alleged incapacity. It is to little purpose that the words are disparaging while the deed is assuming. Nor will that profession of self-abasement be much regarded, which is contradicted by an act that supposes self-confidence.

If however there is too seldom found in the writer of the book, all the humility which the preface announces, he may be allowed to plead on humility, which is at least comparative. On this ground may I be permitted to declare, that at no period of my life did I ever feel such unfeigned diffidence at the individual appearance of even the slightest pamphlet (the slenderness of whose dimensions might carry some excuse for the small proportion of profit or pleasure it conveyed) as I now feel at sending this, perhaps too voluminous, collection into the world. This self-distrust may naturally be accounted for, by reflecting that this publication is deliberately made, not only at a time of life when I ought best to know my own faults, and the faults of my writings; but is made also at such a distance from the moment in which the several pieces were first struck out, that the mind has had time to cool from the hurry and heat of composition; the judgment has had leisure to operate, and it is the effect of that operation to rectify false notions and to correct rash conclusions. The critic, even of his own works, grows honest, if not acute at the end of twenty years. The image, which he had fancied glowed so brightly when it came fresh from the furnace, time has quenched; the spirits which he thought fixed and essential, have evaporated; many of the ideas which he imposed not only on his reader, but on himself, for originals, more reading and more observation compel him to restore to their owners. And having detected, from the perusal of abler works, either plagiarisms in his own, of which he was not aware, or coincidences which will pass for plagiarisms; and blending with the new judgment of the critic, the old indignation of the poet, who of us in this case is not angry with those who have *said our good things before us?* We not only discover that what we thought we had invented we have only remembered; but we find also that what we had believed to be perfect is full of defects; in that which we had conceived to be pure gold, we discover much tinsel. For the revision, as was observed above, is made at a period when the eye is brought by a due remoteness into that just position which gives a clear and distinct view of things; a remoteness which disperses 'the illusions of vision,' scatters the mists of vanity, reduces objects to their natural size, restores them to their exact shape, makes them appear to the sight, such as they are in themselves, and such as perhaps they have long appeared to all except the author.

That I have added to the mass of general knowledge by one original idea, or to the stock of virtue by one original sentiment, I do not presume to hope. But that I have laboured assiduously to make that kind of knowledge which is most indispensable to common life, familiar to the unlearned, and acceptable to the young; that I have laboured to inculcate into both, the love and practice of that virtue of which they had before derived the principles from higher sources, I will not deny to have attempted.

To what is called learning I have never had any pretension. Life and manners have been the objects of my unwearied observation, and every kind of study and habit has more or less recommended itself to my mind, as it had more or less reference to these objects. Considering this world as a scene of much action, and of little comparative knowledge; not as a stage for exhibition, or a retreat for speculation, but as a field on which the business which is to determine the concerns of eternity is to be transacted; as a place of low regard as an end; but of unspeakable importance as a means; a scene of short experiment, but lasting responsibility; I have been contented to pursue myself, and to present to others (to my own sex chiefly) those truths, which, if obvious and familiar, are yet practical, and of general application: things which if of little show, are yet of some use; and which, if their separate value be not great, yet their aggregate importance is not inconsiderable. I have pursued, not that which demands skill, and ensures renown, but

That which before us lies in daily life.

If I have been favoured with a measure of success, which has as much exceeded my expectation as my desert, I ascribe it partly to a disposition in the public mind to encourage, in these days of alarm, attack, and agitation, any productions of which the tendency is favourable to good order and Christian morals, even though the merit of the execution by no means keeps pace with that of the principle. In some instances I trust I have written seasonably when I have not been able to write well. Several pieces perhaps of small value in themselves have helped to supply in

some inferior degree the exigence of the moment; and have had the advantage, not of supersed ing the necessity, or the appearance, of abler writings, but of exciting abler writers; who, seeing how little I had been able to say on topics upon which much might be said, have more than supplied my deficiencies by filling up what I had only superficially sketched out. On that which had only a temporary use, I do not aspire to build a lasting reputation.

In the progress of ages, and after the gradual accumulation of literary productions, the human mind—I speak not of the scholar, or the philosopher, but of the multitude—the human mind, Athenian in this one propensity, *the desire to hear and to tell some new thing*, will reject, or over look, or grow weary even of the standard works of the most established authors; while it will peruse with interest the current volume or popular pamphlet of the day. This hunger after novelty, by the way, is an instrument of inconceivable importance placed by Providence in the hands of every writer; and should strike him forcibly with the duty of turning this sharp appetite to good account, by appeasing it with sound and wholesome aliment. It is not perhaps that the work in actual circulation is comparable to many works which are neglected; but it is *new*. And let the fortunate author militant, of moderate abilities, who is banquetting on his transient, and perhaps accidental popularity, use that popularity wisely; and, bearing in mind that he himself must expect to be neglected in his turn, let him thankfully seize his little season of fugitive renown; let him devote his ephemeral importance, conscientiously to throw into the common stock his quota of harmless pleasure or of moral profit. Let him unaffectedly rate his humble, but not unuseful labours, at their just price, nor despondingly conclude that he has written altogether in vain, though he do not see a public revolution of manners succeed, as he had perhaps too fondly flattered himself, to the publication of his book. Let him not despair, if, though he have had many readers, he has had but few converts. Nor let him on the other hand be elated by a celebrity which he may owe more to his novelty than to his genius, more to a happy combination in the circumstances of the times, than to his own skill or care;—and most of all, to his having diligently observed, that

There is a tide in the affairs of men;

and to his having, accordingly, launched his bark at the favourable flow.

The well intentioned and well principled author, who has uniformly thrown all his weight, though that weight be but small, into the right scale, may have contributed his fair proportion to that great work of reformation, which will, I trust, unless a total subversion of manners should take place, be always carrying on in the world; but which the joint concurrence of the wisdom of ages will find it hard to accomplish. Such an author may have been in his season and degree, the accepted agent of that Providence who works by many and different instruments, by various and successive means; in the same manner as in the manual labour of the mechanic, it is not by a few ponderous strokes that great operations are effected, but by a patient and incessant following up of the blow—by reiterated and unwearied returns to the same object; in the same manner as in the division of labour, many hands of moderate strength and ability may, by co-operation, do that which a very powerful individual might have failed to accomplish. It is the privilege of few authors to contribute largely to the general good, but almost every one may contribute something. No book perhaps is perfectly neutral; nor are the effects of any altogether indifferent. From all our reading there will be a bias on the actings of the mind, though with a greater or less degree of inclination, according to the degree of impression made, by the nature of the subject, the ability of the writer, and the disposition of the reader. And though, as was above observed, the whole may produce no *general* effect, proportionate to the hopes of the author; yet some truth may be picked out from among many that are neglected; some single sentiment may be seized on for present use; some detached principle may be treasured up for future practice.

If in the records of classic story we are told, that 'the most superb and lasting monument that was ever consecrated to beauty, was that to which every lover carried a tribute;' then among the accumulated production of successive volumes, those which though they convey no new information, yet illustrate on the whole some old truth; those which though they add nothing to the stores of genius or of science, yet if they help to establish and enforce a single principle of virtue, they may be accepted as an additional mite cast by the willing hand of affectionate indigence into the treasury of Christian morals.

The great father of Roman eloquence has asserted, that though every man should propose to himself the highest degrees in the scale of excellence; yet he may stop with honour at the second or the third. Indeed the utility of some books to some persons would be defeated by their very superiority. The writer may be above the reach of his reader; he may be too lofty to be pursued; he may be too profound to be fathomed; he may be too abstruse to be investigated; for to produce delight there must be intelligence; there must be something of concert and congruity. There must be not merely that intelligibility which arises from the perspicuousness of the author: but that also which depends on the capacity and perception of the reader. Between him who writes and him who reads, there must be a kind of coalition of interests, something of a partnership (however unequal the capital) in mental property; a sort of joint stock of tastes and ideas. The student must have been initiated into the same intellectual commerce with him whom he studies; for large bills are only negotiable among the mutually opulent.

There are perhaps other reasons why popularity is no infallible test of excellence. Many readers even of good faculties if those faculties have been kept inert by a disuse of exertion, feel often most

sympathy with writers of a middle class; and find more repose in a mediocrity which lulls and amuses the mind, than with a loftiness and extent which exalts and expands it. To enjoy works of superlative ability, as was before suggested, the reader must have been accustomed to drink at the same spring from which the writer draws; he must be at the expense of furnishing part of his own entertainment, by bringing with him a share of the science or of the spirit with which the author writes.

These are some of the considerations, which, while my gratitude has been excited by the favourable reception of my various attempts, have helped to correct that vanity which is so easily kindled where merit and success are evidently disproportionate.

For fair criticism I have ever been truly thankful. For candid correction, from whatever quarter it came, I have always exhibited the most unquestionable proof of my regard, by adopting it. Nor can I call to mind any instance of improvement which has been suggested to me by which I have neglected to profit.* I am not insensible to human estimation. To the approbation of the wise and good I have been perhaps but two sensible. But I check myself in the indulgence of the dangerous pleasure, by recollecting that the hour is fast approaching to all, to me it is *very* fast approaching, when no human verdict, of whatever authority in itself, and however favourable to its object, will avail any thing, but inasmuch as it is crowned with the acquittal of that Judge whose favour is eternal life. Every emotion of vanity dies away, every swelling of ambition subsides before the consideration of this solemn responsibility. And though I have just avowed my deference for the opinion of private critics, and of public censors; yet my anxiety with respect to the sentence of both is considerably diminished, by the reflection, that not the writings but the writer will very soon be called to another tribunal, to be judged on far other grounds than those on which the decisions of literary statutes are framed: a tribunal, at which the sentence passed will depend on far other causes than the observation or neglect of the rules of composition; than the violation of any precepts, or the adherence to any decrees of critic legislation.

With abundant cause to be humbled at the mixed motives of even my least exceptionable writings, I am willing to hope that in those of later date, at least, vanity, has not been the governing principle. And if in sending abroad the present collection, some sparks of this inextinguishable fire should struggle to break out, let it be at once quenched by the reflection, that of those persons whose kindness stimulated, and whose partiality rewarded, my early efforts; of those who would have dwelt on these pages with most pleasure, the eyes of the greater part are closed, to open no more in this world. Even while the pen is in my hand framing this remark, more than one affecting corroboration of its truth occurs. May this reflection, at once painful and salutary, be ever at hand to curb the insolence of success, or to countervail the mortification of defeat! May it serve to purify the motives of action, while it inspires resignation to its event! And may it affect both without diminishing the energies of duty—without abating the activity of labour.

Bath, 1801.

* If it be objected that this has not been the case with respect to one single passage which has excited some controversy, it has arisen not from any want of openness to conviction in me, but from my conceiving myself to have been misunderstood, and, for that reason only, misrepresented.

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THE PUPPET-SHOW:

A TALE.

A NOBLE earl!—the name I spare,
From reverence to the living heir—
Lov'd pleasure; but to speak the truth,
Not much refinement grac'd the youth.
The path of pleasure which *he* trod
Was somewhat new, and rather odd;
For, that he haunted park or play,
His house's archives do not say;
Or that more modish joys he felt,
And would in opera transports melt;
Or that he spent his morning's prime
In Bond-street bliss till dinner-time:
No treasur'd anecdotes record
Such pastimes pleas'd the youthful lord.
One single taste historians mention,
A fact unmingled with invention;
It was a taste you'll think, I fear,
Somewhat peculiar for a peer,
Though the rude democratic pen
Pretends that peers are only men.
Whatever town or country fair
Was advertised, my lord was there.
'Twas not to purchase or to sell—
Why went he then? The Muse shall tell.
At fairs he never fail'd to find
The joy congenial to his mind.
This dear diversion would you know?
What was it? 'twas a puppet-show!
Transported with the mimic art,
The wit of Punch enthrall'd his heart,
He went, each evening, just at six,
When Punch exhibited his tricks;
And, not contented every night
To view this object of delight,
He gravely made the matter known
He must and would have Punch his own;
For if, exclaims the noble lord,
Such joys these *transient* views afford
If I receive such keen delight
From a short visit every night,
'Tis fair to calculate what pleasure
Will spring from *owning* such a treasure.
I need not for amusement roam,
I shall have always Punch at home.
He rav'd with this new fancy bit,
Of Punch's sense and Punch's wit.
Not more Narcissus long'd to embrace
The watery mirror's shadowy face;
Not more Pygmalion long'd to claim
Th' unconscious object of his flame;
Than long'd the enamour'd legislator
To purchase this delightful creature.
Each night he regularly sought him,
Nor did he rest till he had bought him.
Soon he accomplishes the measure,
And pays profusely for the treasure:
He bids them pack the precious thing
So careful not to break a spring;
So anxious not to bruise a feature,
His own new coach must fetch the creature!
He safely brought the idol home,
And lodg'd beneath his splendid dome,
All obstacles at length surmounted,
My lord on perfect pleasure counted.

If you have feelings, guess you may,
How glad he passed the live long day.
His eating room he makes the station
Of his new favourite's habitation.
'Convivial Punch!' he cried, 'to-day,
Thy genius shall have full display!
How shall I laugh to hear thy wit
At supper nightly as I sit!
And how delightful as I dine,
To hear some sallies, Punch, of thine!'
Next day, at table, as he sat,
Impatient to begin the chat,
Punch was produc'd; but Punch, I trow,
Divested of his puppet-show,
Was nothing, was a thing of wires,
Whose sameness disappoints and tires.
Depriv'd of all eccentric aid,
The empty idol was betray'd.
No artful hand to pull the springs,
And Punch no longer squeaks or sings.
Ah me! what horror seiz'd my lord,
'Twas paint, 'twas show, 'twas pasted-board!
He marvell'd why the pleasant thing
Which could such crowds together bring;
Which charm'd him when the show was full!
At home should be so very dull.
He ne'er suspected 'twas the scenery,
He never dreamt 'twas the machinery;
The lights, the noise, the tricks, the distance,
Gave the dumb idol this assistance.
Preposterous peer! far better go
To thy congenial puppet-show;
Than buy, divested of its glare,
The empty thing which charm'd thee there.
Be still content abroad to roam,
For Punch exhibits not at home.
The moral of the tale I sing
To modern matches home I bring
Ye youths, in quest of wives who go
To every crowded puppet-show;
If, from these scenes, you choose for life
A dancing, singing, dressing wife;
O marvel not at home to find
An empty figure, void of mind;
Stript of her scenery and garnish,
A thing of paint, and paste, and varnish.
Ye candidates for earth's best prize,
Domestic life's sweet charities!
If long you've stray'd from Reason's way,
Enslav'd by fashion's wizard sway;
If by her witcheries still betray'd,
You wed some vain fantastic maid;
Snatch'd, not *selected*, as you go,
The heroine of the puppet-show;
In every outward grace refin'd,
And destitute of nought but mind;
If skill'd in ev'ry polish'd art,
She wants simplicity of heart;
On her for bliss if you depend,
Without the means you seek the end,
You seek, o'erturning nature's laws,
A consequence without a cause;
A downward pyramid you place,
The point inverted for the base.

Blame your own work, not fate; nor rail
If bliss so ill secur'd should fail.
'Tis after fancied good to roam,
'Tis bringing Punch to live at home.
And you, bright nymphs! who bless our eyes,
With all that art, that taste supplies;
Learn that accomplishments, at best,
Are but the garnish of life's feast;
And tho' your transient guests may praise
Your showy board on gala days:
Yet, while you treat each frippery sinner
With mere deserts, and call 'em dinner,
Your lord who *lives* at home, still feels
The want of more substantial meals;
Of sense and worth, which every hour
Enlarge Affection's growing power;
Of worth, not emulous to praise,
Of sense, not kept for gala days.
O! in the highest, happiest lot,
By woman be it ne'er forgot,
That human life's no Isthmian game,
Where sports and shows must purchase fame.
Tho' at the puppet-show he shone,
Punch was poor company alone.
Life is no round of jocund hours,
Of garlands gay, and festive bowers;
Even to the young, to whom I sing,
Its serious business life will bring.
Tho' bright the suns which now appear
To gild your cloudless atmosphere,
Oft, unawares, some direful storm,
Serenest skies may soon deform;
In dim Affliction's dreary hour
The flash of mirth must lose its power;
Whilst faith a constant light supplies,
And virtue cheers the darkest skies.
To bless the matrimonial hours
Must three joint leaders club their powers,
Good-nature, Piety, and Sense,
Must their confederate aids dispense.
As the soft powers of oil assuage
Of ocean's waves the furious rage;
Lull to repose the boiling tide,
And the rough billows bid subside;
Till every angry motion sleep,
And softest tremblings hush the deep:
Good-nature! thus thy charms controul
The tumults of the troubled soul:
By labour worn, by care opprest,
On thee the wearied head shall rest;
From business and distraction free,
Delighted, shall return to thee;
To thee the aching heart shall cling,
And find that peace it does not bring.
And while the light and empty fair,
Form'd for the ball-room's dazzling glare
Abroad, of speech, so prompt and rapid,
At home, so vacant and so vapid;
Of every puppet-show the life,
At home, a dull and tasteless wife;—
The mind with sense and knowledge stor'd
Can counsel, or can soothe its lord;
His varied joys or sorrows feel,
And share the pains it cannot heal.
But, *Piety!* without thy aid,
Love's fairest prospects soon must fade.
Blest architect! rear'd by thy hands,
Connubial Concord's temple stands.
Tho' Wit, tho' Genius, raise the pile,
Tho' Taste assist, tho' Talents smile,
Tho' Fashion, while her wreaths she twine,
Her light Corinthian columns join;
Still the frail structure Fancy rears,
A tottering house of cards appears;
Some sudden gust, nor rare the case,
May shake the building to its base,
Unless, bless'd Piety! thou join
Thy keystone to ensure the shrine;
Unless, to guard against surprises,
On thy broad arch the temple rises.

THE BAS BLEU; OR, CONVERSATION.

ADDRESSED TO MRS. VESEY

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following trifle owes it birth and name to the mistake of a foreigner of distinction who gave the literal appellation of the *Bas-bleu* to a small party of friends, who had been often called, by way of pleasantry, the *Blue Stockings*. These little societies have been sometimes misrepresented. They were composed of persons distinguished, in general for their rank, talents, or respectable character, who met frequently at Mrs. Vesey's, and at a few other houses, for the sole purpose of conversation, and were different in no respect from other parties, but that the company did not play at cards.

May the author be permitted to bear her grateful testimony (which will not be suspected of flattery, now that most of the persons named in this poem are gone down to the grave) to the many pleasant and instructive hours she had the honour to pass in this company; in which learning was as little disfigured by pedantry, good taste as little tinctured by affectation, and general conversation as little disgraced by calumny, levity, and the other censurable errors with which it is too commonly tainted, as has perhaps been known in any society.

Vesey! of verse the judge and friend!
Awhile my idle strain attend:
Not with the days of early Greece,
I mean to ope my slender piece;
The rare Symposium to proclaim
Which crown'd th' Athenian's social name;
Or how Aspasia's parties shone,
The first *Bas-bleu* at Athens known;
Where Socrates unbending sat,
With Alcibiades in chat;

And PERICLES vouchsafed to mix
Taste, wit, and mirth, with politics.
Nor need I stop my tale to show,
At least to readers such as you,
How all that Rome esteem'd polite,
Supp'd with LUCULLUS every night;
LUCULLUS, who, from Pontus come,
Brought conquests, and brought cherries home.
Name but the suppers in th' Apollo,
What classics images will follow!
How wit flew round, while each might take
Conchylia from the Lucrine lake;
And Attic salt; and Garum sauce,
And lettuce from the isle of Cos;
The first and last from Greece transplanted,
Us'd here—because the rhyme I wanted:
How pheasant's heads, with cost collected,
And phennicopters stood neglected.
To laugh at SCIPIO's lucky hit,
POMPEY's bon-mot, or CÆSAR's wit!
Intemperance, list'ning to the tale,
Forgot the mullet growing* stale;
And Admiration balanc'd, hung
'Twixt PEACOCKS' brains, and TULLY's tongue.
I shall not stop to dwell on these,
But be as epic as I please,
And plunge at once *in medias res*
To prove the privilege I plead,
I'll quote from Greek I cannot read;
Stunn'd by Authority, you yield,
And I, not Reason, keep the field.
Long was Society o'er-run
By Whist, that desolating Hun;
Long did Quadrille despotic sit,
That vandal of colloquial Wit:
And conversation's setting light
Lay half-obscur'd in Gothic night;
At length the mental shades decline,
Colloquial Wit begins to shine;
Genius prevails, and Conversation
Emerges into *Reformation.*
The vanquish'd triple crown to you,
BOSCAWEN sage, bright MONTAGU,
Divided, fell;—your cares in haste
Rescued the ravag'd realms of Taste;
And LYTTLETON's accomplished name,
And witty PULTNEY shar'd the fame;
The men, not bound by pedant rules,
Nor ladies† *Precieuses ridicules;*
For polish'd WALPOLE show'd the way,
How wits may be both learn'd and gay;
And CARTER taught the female train,
The deeply wise are never vain;
And she whom SHAKSPEARE's wrongs redrest,
Prov'd that the brightest are the best.
This just deduction still they drew,
And well they practis'd what they knew;
Nor taste, nor wit, deserves applause,
Unless still true to critic laws;
Good sense, of faculties the best,
Inspire and regulate the rest,
O! how unlike the wit that fell,
RAMBOUILLET ‡! at thy quaint hotel;
Where point, and turn, and equivoque
Distorted every word they spoke!
All so intolerably bright,
Plain Common Sense was put to flight;
Each speaker, so ingenious ever,
'Twas tiresome to be quite so clever;
There twisted Wit forgot to please,
And Mood and Figure banish'd ease;
No votive altar smok'd to thee,
Chaste queen, divine Simplicity!
But forc'd Conceit, which ever fails,
And stiff Antithesis prevails·
Uneasy Rivalry destroys
Society's unlaboured joys:
NATURE, of stilts and fetters tir'd,
Impatient from the wits retir'd,
Long time the exile, houseless stray'd
'Till SEVIGNE receiv'd the maid.
Though here she comes to bless our isle,
Not universal is her smile.
Muse! snatch the lyre which CAMBRIDGE strung
When he the *empty ball-room* sung;
'Tis tun'd above thy pitch, I doubt,
And thou no music would'st draw out;
Yet, in a lower note, presume
To sing the full dull drawing room.‡
Where the dire *circle* keeps its station,
Each common phrase is an oration;
And cracking fans, and whisp'ring misses,
Compose their conversation blisses.
The matron marks the goodly show,
While the tall daughter eyes the beau—
The frigid beau! ah! luckless fair,
'Tis not for you that studied air;
Ah! not for you that sidelong glance,
And all that charming nonchalance;
Ah; not for you the three long hours
He worship'd the 'cosmetic powers;'
That finish'd head which breathes perfume,
And kills the nerves of half the room;
And all the murders meant to lie
In that large, languishing, gray eye;
Desist;—less wild th' attempt would be,
To warm the snows of Rhodope:
Too cold to feel, too proud to feign,
For him you're wise and fair in vain;
In vain to charm him you intend,
Self is his object, aim, and end.
Chill shade of that affected peer,
Who dreaded mirth, come safely here!
For here no vulgar joy effaces
Thy rage for polish, ton, and graces.
Cold Ceremony's leaden hand,
Waves o'er the room her poppy wand,
Arrives the stranger; every guest
Conspires to torture the distrest:
At once they rise—so have I seen—
You guess the similie I mean,
Take what comparison you please,
The crowded streets, the swarming bees,
The pebbles on the shore that lie,

* Seneca says, that in his time the Romans were arrived at such a pitch of luxury, that the mullet was reckoned stale which did not die in the hands of the guest.

† See *Moliere's* comedy.

‡ The society at the hotel de *Rambouillet*, though composed of the most polite and ingenious persons in France, was much tainted with affectation and false taste. See *Voiture*, *Menage*, &c.

The late earl of *Mansfield* told the author that when he was ambassador at Paris, he was assured that it had not been unusual for those persons of a purer taste who frequented these assemblies, to come out from their society so weary of wit and laboured ingenuity, that they used to express the comfort they felt in their emancipation, by saying, "*Allons! faisons des so lecismes!*"

* These grave and formal parties now scarcely exist, having been swallowed up in the reigning multitudinous assemblies.

The stars which form the galaxy;
These serve t' embellish what is said,
And show, besides, that one has read;—
At once they rise—th' astonish'd guest
Back in a corner slinks, distrest;
Scar'd at the many bowing round,
And shock'd at her own voice's sound,
Forgot the thing she meant to say,
Her words, half-uttered die away;
In sweet oblivion down she sinks,
And of her next appointment thinks.
While her loud neighbour on the right,
Boasts what she has to do to-night,
So very much, you'd swear her pride is
To match the labours of ALCIDES;
'Tis true, in hyperbolic measure,
She nobly calls her labours *Pleasure;*
In this unlike ALCMENA's son,
She never means they should be done;
Her fancy of no *limits* dreams,
No *ne plus ultra* stops her schemes;
Twelve! she'd have scorn'd the paltry round,
No pillars would have mark'd her bound;
CALPE and ABYLA, in vain
Had nodded cross th' opposing main;
A circumnavigator she
On Ton's illimitable sea.
We pass the pleasures vast and various,
Of routs, not social, but gregarious;
Where high heroic self-denial
Sustains her self-inflicted trial.
Day lab'rers! what an easy life,
To feed ten children and a wife!
No—I may juster pity spare
To the *night* lab'rer's keener care;
And, pleas'd, to gentler scenes retreat,
Where *Conversation* holds her seat.

Small were that art which would ensure
The circle's boasted quadrature!
See VESEV's* plastic genius make
A circle every figure take;
Nay, shapes and forms, which would defy
All science of Geometry;
Isosceles, and parallel,
Names, hard to speak, and hard to spell!
The enchantress wav'd her hand, and spoke!
Her potent wand the circle broke;
Tho social spirits hover round,
And bless the liberated ground.
Here, rigid CATO, awful sage!
Bold censor of a thoughtless age,
Once dealt his pointed moral round,
And, not unheeded, fell the sound;
The Muse his honour'd memory weeps,
For CATO now with ROSCIUS sleeps!
Here once HORTENSIUS† lov'd to sit,
Apostate now from social wit:
Ah! why in wrangling senates waste
The noblest parts, the happiest taste?
Why democratic thunders wield,
And quit the Muses' calmer field?
Ask you what charms this gift dispense?
'Tis the strong spell of COMMON SENSE.
Away dull Ceremony flew,
And with her bore Detraction too.

Nor only geometric art,
Does this presiding power impart;
But chymists too, who want the essence
Which makes or mars all coalescence,
Of her the secret rare might get,
How different kinds amalgamate:
And he, who wilder studies chose,
Finds here a new metempsychose;
How forms can other forms assume,
Within her Pythagoric room;
Or be, and stranger is th' event,
The very things which Nature meant,
Nor strive by art and affectation.
To cross their genuine destination.
Here sober duchesses are seen,
Chaste wits, and critics void of spleen,
Physicians, fraught with real science,
And whigs and tories in alliance;
Poets, fulfilling Christian duties,
Just lawyers, reasonable beauties;
Bishops who preach, and peers who pay:
And countesses who seldom play;
Learn'd antiquaries, who from College,
Reject the rust, and bring the knowledge
And, hear it, *Age*, believe it, *Youth*,—
Polemics, really seeking truth;
And travellers of that rare tribe,
Who've *seen* the countries they describe;
Who study'd there, so strange their plan,
Not plants, nor herbs alone, but man;
While travellers, of other notions,
Scale mountain tops, and traverse oceans,
As if so much these themes engross,
The study of mankind, was moss.
Ladies who point, nor think me partial,
An epigram as well as MARSHALL;
Yet in all female worth succeed,
As well as those who cannot read.

Right pleasant were the task, I ween,
To name the groups which fill the scene;
But rhymes of such fastidious nature,
She proudly scorns all nomenclature,
Nor grace our northern names her lips,
Like HOMER's catalogue of ships.

Once—faithful Memory! heave a sigh,
Here ROSCIUS gladdened every eye.
Why comes not Maro? Far from town,
He rears the urn to Taste, and BROWN,
Plants cypress round the tomb of GRAY,
Or decks his *English garden* gay;
Whose mingled sweets exhale perfume,
And promise a perennial bloom.
Taste thou the gentler joys they give,
With HORACE and with LELIUS live.

Hail, CONVERSATION, soothing power,
Sweet goddess of the social hour!
Not with more heartfelt warmth, at least,
Does LELIUS bend, thy true high priest;
Than I the lowest of thy train,
These field-flowers bring to deck thy fane;
Who to thy shrine like him can haste,
With warmer zeal, or purer taste?
O may thy worship long prevail,
And thy true votaries never fail!
Long may thy polish'd altars blaze
With wax-lights' undiminish'd rays!
Still be thy nightly offering paid,
Libations large of lemonade!
On silver vases, loaded, rise
The biscuits' ample sacrifice!

* This amiable lady was remarkable for her talent in breaking the formality of a circle, by inviting her parties to form themselves into little separate groups.

† This was written in the year 1787, when Mr. Edmund Burke had joined the then opposition.

Nor be the milk white streams forgot
Of thirst-assuaging, cool orgeat;
Rise, incense pure from fragrant tea,
Delicious incense, worthy thee!
Hail, Conversation, heav'nly fair,
Thou bliss of life, and balm of care!
Still may thy gentle reign extend,
And Taste with Wit and Science blend.
Soft polisher of rugged man!
Refiner of the social plan!
For thee, best solace of his toil!
The sage consumes his midnight oil!
And keeps late vigils, to produce
Materials for thy future use.
Calls forth the else neglected knowledge,
Of school, of travel, and of college.
If none behold, ah! wherefore fair?
Ah wherefore wise, if none must hear?
Our intellectual ore must shine,
Not slumber, idly, in the mine.
Let Education's moral mint
The noblest images imprint;
Let Taste her curious touchstone hold,
To try if standard be the gold;
But 'tis thy commerce Conversation,
Must give it use by circulation;
That noblest commerce of mankind,
Whose precious merchandise is MIND!
What stoic traveller would try
A sterile soil, and parching sky,
Or bear th' intemp'rate northern zone,
If what he saw must ne'er be known?
For this he bids his home farewell;
The joy of seeing is to tell.
Trust me, he never would have stirr'd,
Were he forbid to speak a word;
And Curiosity would sleep,
If her own secrets she must keep
The bliss of telling what is past
Becomes her rich reward at last.
Who mock'd at death, and danger smile,
To steal one peep at father Nile;
Who, at Palmyra risk his neck,
Or search the ruins of Balbeck;
If these must hide old Nilus' fount,
Nor Lybian tales at home recount;
If those must sink their learned labour,
Nor with their ruins treat a neighbour?
Range—study—think—do all we can,
Colloquial pleasures are for man.
Yet not from low desire to shine
Does Genius toil in Learning's mine;
Not to indulge in idle vision,
But strike new light by strong collision.
Of CONVERSATION, Wisdom's friend,
This is the object and the end,
Of moral truth man's proper science,
With sense and learning in alliance,
To search the depths, and thence produce
What tends to practice and to use.
And next in value we shall find
What mends the taste and forms the mind;
If high those truths in estimation,
Whose search is crown'd with demonstration;
To these assign no scanty praise,
Our taste which clears, our views which raise.
For grant the mathematic truth
Best balances the mind of youth;
Yet scarce the truth of Taste is found
To grow from principles less sound.

O'er books the mind inactive lies,
Books, the mind's food, not exercise!
Her vigorous wings she scarcely feels,
'Till use the latent strength reveals;
Her slumbering energies call'd forth,
She rises, conscious of her worth;
And, at her new-found powers elated,
Thinks them not rous'd, but new created.
Enlighten'd spirits! you, who know
What charms from polish'd converse flow,
Speak, for you can, the pure delight
When kindling sympathies unite;
When correspondent tastes impart
Communion sweet from heart to heart
You ne'er the cold gradations need
Which vulgar souls to union lead;
No dry discussion to unfold
The meaning caught ere well 'tis told:
In taste, in learning, wit, or science,
Still kindled souls demand alliance:
Each in the other joys to find
The image answering to his mind.
But sparks electric only strike
On souls electrical alike;
The flash of intellect expires,
Unless it meet congenial fires:
The language to th' elect alone
Is, like the mason's mystery known
In vain th' unerring sign is made
To him who is not of the *trade*.
What lively pleasure to divine,
The thought implied, the hinted line,
To feel Allusion's artful force,
And trace the image to it's source!
Quick Memory blends her scatter'd rays,
'Till Fancy kindles at the blaze;
The works of ages start to view,
And ancient Wit elicits new.
But wit and parts if thus we praise,
What noble altars should we raise,
Those sacrifices could we see
Which Wit, O Virtue! makes to thee:
At once the rising thought to dash,
To quench at once the bursting flash!
The shining Mischief to subdue,
And lose the praise, and pleasure too!
Tho' Venus' self, could you detect her,
Imbuing with her richest nectar,
The thought unchaste—to check that thought,
To spurn a fame so dearly bought;
This is high Principle's controul!
This is true continence of soul!
Blush, heroes, at your cheap renown,
A vanquish'd realm, a plunder'd town!
Your conquests were to gain a name,
This conquest triumphs over fame;
So pure its essence, 'twere destroy'd
If known, and if commended, void.
Amidst the brightest truths believ'd
Amidst the fairest deeds achiev'd,
Shall stand recorded and admir'd,
That Virtue sunk what Wit inspir'd!
But let the letter'd and the fair,
And, chiefly, let the wit beware;
You, whose warm spirits never fail,
Forgive the hint which ends my tale.
O shun the perils which attend
On wit, on warmth, and heed your friends;
Tho' Science nurs'd you in her bowers,
Tho' Fancy crown your brow with flowers,

Each thought, tho' bright Invention fill,
Tho' Attic bees each word distil;
Yet, if one gracious power refuse
Her gentle influence to infuse;
If she withhold her magic spell,
Nor in the social circle dwell;
In vain shall listening crowds approve,
They'll praise you, but they will not love.
What is this power, you're loth to mention,
This charm, this witchcraft? 'tis Attention:
Mute angel, yes; thy look dispense
The silence of intelligence;
Thy graceful form I well discern,
In act to listen and to learn,
'Tis thou for talents shalt obtain
That pardon Wit would hope in vain;
Thy wond'rous power, thy secret charm,
Shall Envy of her sting disarm;
Thy silent flattery soothes our spirit,
And we forgive eclipsing merit;
Our jealous souls no longer burn,
Nor hate thee, tho' thou shine in turn;
The sweet atonement screens the fault,
And love and praise are cheaply bought.
With mild complacency to hear,
Tho' somewhat long the tale appear,—
The dull relation to attend,
Which mars the story you could mend;
'Tis more than wit, 'tis moral beauty,
'Tis pleasure rising out of duty.
Nor vainly think, the time you waste,
When temper triumphs over taste.

BISHOP BONNER'S GHOST.

This little poem was never before published. A few copies were printed by the late earl of Orford at his press at Strawberry-hill, and given to a few particular friends.

THE ARGUMENT.

In the gardens of the palace of Fulham is a dark recess; at the end of this stands a chair, which once belonged to bishop Bonner.—A certain bishop of London, more than two hundred years after the death of the aforesaid Bonner. one morning just as the clock of the Gothic chapel had struck six, undertook to cut with his own hand a narrow walk through this thicket, which is since called the *Monk's-walk*. He had no sooner begun to clear the way, than lo! suddenly up-started from the chair the ghost of bishop Bonner, who, in a tone of just and bitter indignation, uttered the following verses.

Reformer, hold! ah, spare my shade,
Respect the hallow'd dead!
Vain pray'r! I see the op'ning glade,
See utter darkness fled.
Just so your innovating hand
Let in the moral light;
So, chas'd from this bewilder'd land,
Fled intellectual night.
Where now that holy gloom which hid
Fair Truth from vulgar ken?
Where now that wisdom which forbid
To think that monks were men?
The tangled mazes of the schools,
Which spread so thick before;
Which knaves entwin'd to puzzle fools,
Shall catch mankind no more.
Those charming intricacies where?
Those venerable lies?
Those legends, once the church's care?
Those sweet perplexities?
Ah! fatal age, whose sons combin'd
Of credit to exhaust us:
Ah! fatal age, which gave mankind
A Luther and a Faustus!*
Had only Jack and Martin† liv'd,
Our pow'r had slowly fled;
Our influence longer had surviv'd,
Had layman never read.

* The same age which brought heresy into the church, unhappily introduced printing among the arts, by which means the Scriptures were unluckily disseminated among the vulgar.

† How bishop *Bonner* came to have read *Swift's* Tale of a Tub it may now be in vain to inquire.

For knowledge flew, like magic spell,
By typographic art;
Oh, shame! a peasant now can tell
If priests the truth impart.
Ye councils, pilgrimages, creeds
Synods, decrees, and rules!
Ye warrants of unholy deeds,
Indulgences and bulls!
Where are ye now? and where, alas?
The pardons we dispense!
And penances, the sponge of sins;
And Peter's holy pence?
Where now the beads that used to swell
Lean Virtue's spare amount?
Here only faith and goodness fill
A heretic's account.
But soft—what gracious form appears
Is this a convent's life!
Atrocious sight! by all my fears,
A prelate with a wife!
Ah! sainted Mary,* not for this
Our pious labour's join'd;
The witcheries of domestic bliss
Had shook ev'n Gardner's mind,
Hence all the sinful, human ties,
Which mar the cloister's plan;
Hence all the weak fond charities,
Which makes man feel for man.
But tortur'd Memory vainly speaks
The projects we design'd;

* An orthodox queen of the sixteenth century, who laboured with might and main, conjointly with these two venerable bishops to extinguish a dangerous heresy ycleped the Reformation.

While this apostate bishop seeks
The freedom of mankind.
Oh, born in ev'ry thing to shake
The systems plann'd by me!
So heterodox, that he would make
Both soul and body free.
Nor clime nor colour stay his hand;
With charity deprav'd,
He would from Thames to Gambia's strand,
Have all be free and sav'd.
And who shall change his wayward heart
His wilful spirit turn?

For those his labours can't convert,
His weakness will not burn.
A GOOD OLD PAPIST
Ann. Dom. 1900.

*** By the lapse of time the three last stanzas are become unintelligible. Old chronicles say, that towards the latter end of the 18th century, a bill was brought into the British parliament, by an active young reformer, for the abolition of a pretended traffic of the human species. But this only shows how little faith is to be given to the exaggerations of history; for as no vestige of this incredible trade now remains, we look upon the whole story to have been one of those fictions, not uncommon among authors, to blacken the memory of former ages.

FLORIO.

A TALE FOR FINE GENTLEMEN AND FINE LADIES.

IN TWO PARTS.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.*

My Dear Sir,——It would be very flattering to me, if I might hope that the little tale, which I now take the liberty of presenting to you, could amuse a few moments of your tedious indisposition. It is, I confess, but a paltry return for the many hours of agreeable information and elegant amusement which I have received from your spirited and very entertaining writings: yet I am persuaded, that you will receive it with favour, as a small offering of esteem and gratitude; as an offering of which the intention alone makes all the little value.

The slight verses, sir, which I place under your protection, will not, I fear, impress the world with a very favourable idea of my poetical powers; But I shall, at least, be suspected of having some taste, and of keeping good company, when I confess that some of the pleasantest hours of my life have been passed in your conversation. I should be unjust to your very engaging and well-bred turn of wit, if I did not declare that, among all the lively and brilliant things I have heard from you, I do not remember ever to have heard an unkind or an ungenerous one. Let me be allowed to bear my feeble testimony to your temperate use of this charming faculty, so delightful in itself, but which can only be safely trusted in such hands as yours, where it is guarded by politeness, and directed by humanity.

I have the honour to be, sir, your much obliged,
and most obedient, humble servant,

January, 27, 1786. THE AUTHOR.

* Afterwards Earl of Orford.

PART I.

Florio, a youth of gay renown,
Who figur'd much about the town,
Had pass'd, with general approbation,
The modish forms of education;
Knew what was proper to be known,
Th' establish'd jargon of bon-ton;
Had learnt, with very moderate reading,
The whole new system of good breeding:
He studied to be bold and rude.
Tho' native feeling would intrude:
Unlucky sense and sympathy,
Spoilt the vain thing he strove to be.
For Florio was not meant by nature,
A silly or a worthless creature:
He had a heart dispos'd to feel,
Had life and spirit taste and zeal;
Was handsome, generous; but by fate,
Predestin'd to a large estate!
Hence, all that grac'd his op'ning days,
Was marr'd by pleasure, spoilt by praise.

The Destiny, who wove the thread
Of Florio's being, sigh'd, and said,
'Poor youth! this cumbrous twist of gold,
More than my shuttle well can hold,
For which thy anxious father toil'd,
Thy white and even thread has spoil'd:
'Tis this shall warp thy pliant youth
From sense, simplicity and truth,
Thy erring fire, by wealth mislead,
Shall scatter pleasures round thy head,
When wholesome discipline's controul,
Should brace the sinews of thy soul;
Coldly thou'lt toil for Learning's prize,
For why should he that's rich be wise?
The gracious Master of mankind,
Who knew us vain, corrupt and blind,
In mercy, tho' in anger said,
That man should earn his daily bread
His lot, inaction renders worse,
While labour mitigates the curse.

The idle, life's worst burthens bear,
And meet, what toil escapes, despair!
Forgive, nor lay the fault on me,
This mixture of mythology;
The muse of Paradise has deign'd
With truth to mingle fables feign'd;
And tho' the bard, who would attain
The glories, MILTON, of thy strain,
Will never reach thy style or thoughts,
He may be like thee in thy faults!
Exhausted FLORIO, at the age,
When youth should rush on glory's stage;
When life should open fresh and knew,
And ardent Hope her schemes pursue;
Of youthful gaiety bereft,
Had scarce an unbreach'd pleasure left;
He found already to his cost,
The shining gloss of life was lost;
And Pleasure was so coy a prude,
She fled the more, the more pursu'd;
Or if, o'ertaken and caress'd,
He loath'd and left her when possess'd.
But FLORIO knew the world that science
Sets sense and learning at defiance;
He thought the world to him was known,
Whereas he only knew the town;
In men this blunder still you find,
All think their little set—mankind.
Tho' high renown the youth had gain'd,
No flagrant crimes his life had stain'd,
No tool of falsehood, slave of passion,
But spoilt by CUSTOM, and the FASHION.
Tho' known among *a certain set*,
He did not like to be in debt;
He shudder'd at the dicer's box,
Nor thought it very heterodox,
That tradesmen should be sometimes paid,
And bargains kept as well as made.
His growing credit as a sinner,
Was that he lik'd to spoil a dinner;
Made pleasure and made business wait,
And still, by system, came too late;
Yet, 'twas a hopeful indication,
On which to forund a reputation;
Small habits well pursu'd betimes,
May reach the dignity of crimes.
And who a juster claim preferr'd,
Than one who always broke his word!
His mornings were not spent in vice,
'Twas lounging, sauntering, eating ice:
Walk up and down St. James's-street,
Full fifty times the youth you'd meet:
He hated cards, detested drinking,
But strell'd to shun the toil of thinking;
'Twas doing nothing was his curse,
Is there a vice can plague us worse?
The wretch who digs the mine for bread,
Or ploughs, that others may be fed,
Feels less fatigued than that decreed
To him who cannot think, or read.
Not all the peril of temptations,
Not all the conflict of the passions,
Can quench the spark of glory's flame,
Or quite extinguish virtue's name;
Like the true taste for genuine saunter,
Like sloth, the soul's most dire enchanter.
The active fires that stir the breast,
Her poppies charm to fatal rest,
They rule in short and quick succession,
But SLOTH keeps one long, fast possession;
Ambition's reign is quickly clos'd,
Th' usurper rage is soon depos'd;
Intemperance, where there's no temptation,
Makes voluntary abdication;
Of other tyrants short the strife,
But INDOLENCE is king for life.
The despot twists with soft control,
Eternal fetters round the soul.
Yet tho' so polish'd FLORIO's breeding,
Think him not ignorant of reading;
For he to keep him from the vapours,
Subscrib'd at HOOKHAM's, saw the papers·
Was deep in poet's corner wit;
Knew what was in italics writ;
Explain'd fictitious names at will,
Each gutted syllable could fill;
There oft, in paragraphs, his name
Gave symptom sweet of growing fame;
Tho' yet they only serv'd to hint
That FLORIO lov'd to see in print,
His ample buckles' alter'd shape,
His buttons chang'd, his varying cape.
And many a standard phrase was his
Might rival *bore*, or banish *quiz;*
The man who grasps this young renown,
And early starts for Fashion's crown;
In time that glorious prize may wield,
Which clubs, and ev'n Newmarket yield.
He studied while he dress'd, for true 'tis,
He read *compendiums*, *extracts*, *beauties*,
Abreges, *dictionaries*, *recueils*,
Mercures, *journaux*, *extracts*, and *feuilles*,
No work in substance now is follow'd,
The chemic extract only's swallow'd.
He lik'd those literary cooks
Who skim the cream of other's books,
And ruin half an author's graces,
By plucking bon-mots from their places
He wonders any writing sells,
But these spic'd mushrooms and morells
His palate these alone can touch,
Where every mouthful is *bonne bouche*.
Some phrase, that with the public took,
Was all he read of any book;
For plan, detail, arrangement, system,
He let *them* go, and never miss'd 'em.
Of each new play he saw a part,
And all the *anas* had by heart;
He found whatever they produce
Is fit for conversation-use;
Learning so ready for display,
A page would prime him for a day;
They cram not with a mass of knowledge,
With smacks of toil, and smells of college,
Which in the memory useless lies,
Or only makes men—good and wise.
This might have merit once indeed,
But now for other ends we read.
A friend he had, BELLARIO hight,
A reasoning, reading, learned wight;
At least, with men of FLORIO's breeding
He was a prodigy of reading.
He knew each stale and vapid lie
In tomes of French philosophy;
And then, we fairly may presume,
From PYRRHO down to DAVID HUME,
'Twere difficult to single out
A man more full of shallow doubt;
He knew the little sceptic prattle,
The sophist's paltry arts of battle.

Talk'd gravely of th' Atomic dance,
Of moral fitness, fate, and chance;
Admir'd the system of LUCRETIUS,
Whose matchless verse makes nonsense specious!
To this his doctrine owes its merits,
Like pois'nous reptiles kept in spirits.
Tho' sceptics dull his scheme rehearse,
Who have not souls to taste his verse.
BELLARIO founds his reputation
On dry stale jokes, about creation;
Would prove, by argument circuitous,
The combination was fortuitous.
Swore priests' whole trade was to deceive,
And prey on bigots who believe;
With bitter ridicule could jeer,
And had the true free-thinking sneer.
Grave arguments he had in store,
Which have been answer'd o'er and o'er;
And us'd, with wond'rous penetration
The trite, old trick of false citation;
From ancient authors fond to quote
A phrase or thought they never wrote.
Upon his highest shelf there stood
The classics neatly cut in wood;
And in a more commodious station,
You found them in a French translation:
He swears, 'tis from the Greek he quotes,
But keeps the French—just for the notes.
He worshipp'd certain modern names
Who history write in epigrams,
In pointed periods, shining phrases,
And all the small poetic daisies,
Which crowd the pert and florid style,
Where fact is dropt to raise a smile;
Where notes indecent or profane
Serve to *raise* doubts, but not *explain:*
Where all is spangle, glitter, show,
And truth is overlaid below:
Arts scorn'd by History's sober muse,
Arts CLARENDON disdain'd to use.
Whate'er the subject of debate,
'Twas larded still with sceptic prate;
Begin whatever theme you will,
In unbelief he lands you still;
The good, with shame I speak it, feel
Not half this proselyting zeal:
While cold their master's cause to own
Content to go to heaven alone;
The infidel in liberal trim,
Would carry all the world with him:
Would treat his wife, friend, kindred, nation,
Mankind—with what! Annihilation.
Tho' FLORIO did not quite believe him,
He thought, why should a friend deceive him?
Much as he priz'd BELLARIO's wit,
He liked not all his notions yet;
He thought him charming, pleasant, odd,
But hop'd one might believe in God;
Yet such the charms that grac'd his tongue,
He knew not how to think him wrong.
Tho' FLORIO tried a thousand ways,
Truth's insuppressive torch would blaze;
Where once her flame has burnt, I doubt
If ever it go fairly out.
Yet, under great BELLARIO's care,
He gain'd each day a better air;
With many a leader of renown,
Deep in the learning of the town,
Who never other science knew,
But what from that prime source they drew;
Pleas'd, to the opera they repair,
To get recruits of knowledge there;
Mythology gain at a glance,
And learn the classics from a dance:
In OVID they ne'er car'd a groat,
How far'd the vent'rous ARGONAUT;
Yet charm'd they see MEDEA rise
On fiery dragons to the skies.
For DIDO,* tho' they never knew her
As MARO's magic pencil drew her,
Faithful and fond, and broken-hearted,
Her pious vagabond departed;
Yet, for DIDONE how they roar
And *Cara! Cara!* loud encore.
One taste, BELLARIO's soul possess'd
The master passion of his breast;
It was not one of those frail joys,
Which, by possession, quickly cloys
This bliss was solid, constant, true,
'Twas action, and 'twas passion too
For tho' the business might be finish'd,
The pleasure scarcely was diminish'd;
Did he ride out, or sit, or walk,
He liv'd it o'er again in talk;
Prolong'd the fugitive delight,
In words by day, in dreams by night,
'Twas *eating* did his soul allure,
A deep, keen, modish epicure;
Tho' once this name, as I opine,
Meant not such men as live to dine;
Yet all our modern wits assure us,
That's all *they* know of EPICURUS:
They fondly fancy, that repletion
Was the *chief good* of that fam'd Grecian.
To live in gardens full of flowers,
And talk Philosophy in bowers,
Or, in the covert of a wood,
To descant on the *sovereign good*,
Might be the notion of their founder,
But they have notions vastly sounder;
Their bolder standards they erect,
To form a more substantial sect;
Old EPICURUS would not own 'em,
A dinner is *their summum bonum.*
More like you'll find such sparks as these,
To EPICURUS' deities;
Like them they mix not with affairs,
But loll and laugh at human cares.
To beaux this difference is allow'd,
They choose a sofa for a cloud;
BELLARIO had embrac'd with glee,
This practical philosophy.
Young FLORIO's father had a friend,
And ne'er did heaven a worthier send;
A cheerful knight of good estate,
Whose heart was warm, whose bounty great
Where'er his wide protection spread,
The sick were cheer'd, the hungry fed;
Resentment vanish'd where he came;
And lawsuits fled before his name;
The old esteem'd, the young caress'd him,
And all the smiling village bless'd him,
Within his castle's Gothic gate,
Sat Plenty, and old-fashioned state:
Scarce Prudence could his bounties stint;—
Such characters are out of print;
O! would kind heav'n, the age to mend,

* *Medea* and *Dido* were the two reigning operas at this time.

A new edition of them send,
Before our tottering castles fall,
And swarming nabobs seize on all!
Some little whims he had, 'tis true,
But they were harmless, and were few;
He dreaded nought like alteration,
Improvement still was innovation;
He said, when any change was brewing,
Reform was a fine name for ruin;'*
This maxim firmly he would hold,
'*That* always must be good that's old.'
The acts which dignify the day
He thought portended its decay:
And fear'd twould show a falling state,
If STERNHOLD should give way to TATE.
The church's downfall he predicted,
Were modern tunes not interdicted;
He scorn'd them all, but crown'd with palm
The man who set the hundredth psalm.
Of moderate parts, of moderate wit,
But parts for life and business fit:
Whate'er the theme; he did not fail,
At popery and the French to rail;
And started wide, with fond digression
To praise the protestant succession.
Of BLACKSTONE he had read a part,
And all BURN'S JUSTICE knew by heart.
He thought man's life too short to waste
On idle things call'd wit and taste.
In books that he might lose no minute,
His very verse had business in it.
He ne'er had heard of bards of GREECE,
But had read half of DYER'S FLEECE.
His sphere of knowledge still was wider,
His Georgics, 'PHILIPS upon cider:'
He could produce in proper place,
Three apt quotations from the 'Chase,'†
And in the hall, from day to day,
Old ISAAC WALTON'S *Angler* lay.
This good and venerable knight
One daughter had, his soul's delight:
For face no mortal could resist her,
She smil'd like HEBE'S youngest sister;
Her life, as lovely as her face,
Each duty mark'd with every grace;
Her native sense improv'd by reading,
Her native sweetness by good-breeding:
She had perus'd each choicer sage
Of ancient date, or later age;
But her best knowledge still she found
On sacred, not on classic ground;
'Twas thence her noblest stores she drew,
And well she practis'd what she knew.
Led by Simplicity divine,
She pleas'd, and never tried to shine;
She gave to chance each unschool'd feature,
And left her cause to sense and nature.
The sire of FLORIO, ere he died,
Decreed fair CELIA FLORIO'S bride
Bade him his latest wish attend,
And win the daughter of his friend:
When the last rites to him were paid,
He charg'd him to address the maid:
Sir GILBERT'S heart the wish approv'd
For much his ancient friend he lov'd.
Six rapid months like lightning fly,
And the last gray was now thrown by;
FLORIO reluctant, calls to mind
The orders of a sire too kind:
Yet go he must; he must fulfil
The hard conditions of the will:
Go, at that precious hour of prime,
Go, at that swarming, bustling time,
When the full town to joy invites,
Distracted with its own delights;
When Pleasure pours from her full urn,
Each tiresome transport in its turn;
When Dissipation's altars blaze,
And men run mad a thousand ways;
When, on his tablets, there were found
Engagements for full six weeks round;
Must leave, with grief and desperation,
Three packs of cards of invitation,
And all the ravishing delights
Of slavish days, and sleepless nights.
Ye nymphs, whom tyrant Power drags down,
With hand despotic from the town,
When ALMACK'S doors wide open stand,
And the gay partner's offer'd hand
Courts to the dance; when steaming rooms,
Fetid with ungents and perfumes,
Invite you to the mobs polite
Of three sure balls in one short night
You may conceive what FLORIO felt,
And sympathetically melt;
You may conceive the hardship dire
To lawns and woodlands to retire,
When, freed from Winter's icy chain,
Glad Nature revels on the plain;
When blushing Spring leads on the Hours,
And May is prodigal of flow'rs;
When Fashion warbles thro' the grove,
And all is song, and all is love;
When new-born breezes sweep the vale,
And Health adds fragrance to the gale.

PART II.

Six bays unconscious of their weight,
Soon lodg'd him at Sir GILBERT'S gate:
His trusty Swiss, who flew still faster,
Announc'd th' arrival of his master:
So loud the rap which shook the door,
The hall re-echo'd to the roar;
Since first the castle walls were rear'd
So dread a sound had ne'er been heard:
The din alarm'd the frighten'd deer,
Who in a corner slunk for fear,
The butler thought 'twas beat of drum,
The steward swore the French were come:
It ting'd with red poor FLORIO'S face,
He thought himself in Portland-place.
Short joy! he enter'd, and the gate
Clos'd on him with its ponderous weight.
Who, like Sir GILBERT, now was blest?
With rapture he embrac'd his guest.
Fair CELIA blush'd, and FLORIO utter'd
Half sentences, or rather mutter'd
Disjointed words—as, 'honour! pleasure!
'Kind!—vastly good, ma'am!—beyond measure:
Tame expletives, with which dull fashion
Fills vacancies of sense and passion.
Yet, tho' disciple of cold art,
FLORIO soon found he had a heart;

* These lines were written many years before the French revolution had in a manner realized Sir *Gilbert's* idea of *reform*.

† A poem by Mr. Somerville.

He saw; and but that admiration
Had been too active, too like passion;
Or had he been to *Ton* less true,
Cupid had shot him thro' and thro';
But, vainly speeds the surest dart,
Where FASHION's mail defends the heart;
The shaft her cold repulsion found,
And fell without the pow'r to wound:
For FASHION, with a mother's joy,
Dipp'd in her lake the darling boy;
That lake, whose chilling waves impart
The gift to freeze the warmest heart:
Yet guarded as he was with phlegm,
With such delight he ey'd the dame,
Found his cold heart to melt before her,
And felt so ready to adore her;
That FASHION fear'd her son would yield,
And flew to snatch him from the field;
O'er his touch'd heart her ægis threw,
The goddess mother straight he knew;
Her power he own'd, she saw and smil'd,
And claim'd the triumph of her child.

CELIA a table still supplied,
Which modish luxury might deride:
A modest feast the hope conveys,
The master eats on other days;
While gorgeous banquets oft bespeak
A hungry household all the week.
A decent elegance was there,
And Plenty with her liberal air.
But vulgar Plenty gave offence,
And shock'd poor FLORIO's nicer sense;
Patient he yielded to his fate,
When good Sir GILBERT pil'd his plate;
He bow'd snbmissive, made no question,
But that 'twas sovereign for digestion;
But, such was his unlucky whim,
Plain meats would ne'er agree with him;
Yet feign'd to praise the Gothic treat,
And, if he ate not, seem'd to eat.

In sleep sad FLORIO hop'd to find,
The pleasures he had left behind.
He dreamt, and lo! to charm his eyes,
The form of WELTJE* seem'd to rise;
The gracious vision wav'd his wand,
And banquets sprung to FLORIO's hand;
Th' imaginary savours rose
In tempting odours to his nose.
A bell, not Fancy's false creation,
Gives joyful 'note of preparation:'
He starts, he wakes, the bell he hears;
Alas! it rings for morning pray'rs.

But how to spend next tedious morning,
Was past his possible discerning;
Uuable to amuse himself,
He tumbled every well-ranged shelf;
This book was dull, and that was wise,
And this was monstrous as to size,
With eager joy he gobbled down
Whate'er related to the town;
Whate'er look'd small, whate'er look'd new
Half-bound, or stitch'd in pink or blue;
Old play-bills, ASTLEY's last year's feats,
And Opera disputes in sheets.
As these dear records meet his eyes,
Ghosts of departed pleasures rise;
He lays the book upon the shelf,
And leaves the day to spend itself.

To cheat the tedious hours, whene'er
He sallied forth to take the air,
His sympathetic ponies knew
Which way their lord's affections drew,
And, every time he went abroad,
Sought of themselves the London road;
He ask'd each mile of every clown,
How far they reckon'd it to town?
And still his nimble spirits rise,
Whilst thither he directs his eyes;
But when his coursers back he guides
The sinking mercury quick subsides.

A week he had resolv'd to stay
But found a week in every day;
Yet if the gentle maid was by,
Faint pleasure glisten'd in his eye;
Whene'er she spoke, attention hung
On the mild accents of her tongue;
But when no more the room she grac'd,
The slight impression was effac'd.
Whene'er Sir GILBERT's sporting guests
Retail'd old news, or older jests,
FLORIO, quite calm, and debonair,
Still humm'd a new Italian air;
He did not even feign to hear 'em,
But plainly show'd he could not bear 'em.

CELIA perceived his secret thoughts,
But like the youth with all his faults;
Yet 'twas unlike, she softly said,
The tales ot love which she had read,
Where heroes vow'd, and sigh'd, and knelt;
Nay, 'twas unlike the love she felt;
Tho' when her sire the youth would blame,
She clear'd his but suspected fame,
Ventur'd to hope, with fault'ring tongue,
'He would reform—he was but young;'
Confess'd his manners wrong in part,
'But then—he had so good a heart!'
She sunk each fault, each virtue rais'd,
And still where truth permitted, prais'd;
His interest farther to secure,
She prais'd his bounty to the poor
For, votary as he was of art,
He had a kind and melting heart;
Tho', with a smile, he us'd to own
He had no *time* to feel in town;
Not that he blush'd to show compassion,—
It chanc'd that year to be the fashion.
And equally the modish tribe,
To clubs or hospitals subscribe.

At length, to wake ambition's flame,
A letter from BELLARIO came;
Announcing the supreme delight,
Preparing for a certain night,
By FLAVIA fair, return'd from France,
Who took him captive at a glance:
The invitations all were given!
Five hundred cards!—a little heaven!
A dinner first—he would present him,
And nothing, nothing must prevent him,
Whoever wish'd a noble air,
Must gain it by an *entree* there;
Of all the glories of the town,
'Twas the first passport to renown,
Then ridicul'd his rural schemes,
His pastoral shades, and purling streams;
Sneer'd at his present *brilliant* life,
His polish'd sire, and high-bred wife
Thus, doubly to inflame, he tried,
His curiosity and pride.

The youth, with agitated heart,

* A celebrated cook and confectioner.

Prepar'd directly to depart;
But, bound in honour to obey
His father at no distant day;
He promis'd soon to hasten down,
Tho' business call'd him now to town;
Then faintly hints a cold proposal—
But leaves it to the knight's disposal—
Stammer'd half words of love and duty,
And mutter'd much of—'worth and beauty;'
Something of passion then he dropt,
'And hop'd his *ardour*'—Here he stopt;
For some remains of native truth
Flush'd in his face, and check'd the youth;
Yet still th' ambiguous suffusion,
Might pass for artless love's confusion.
The doating father thought 'twas strange,
But fancied men like times might change;
Yet own'd, nor could he check his tongue,
It was not so when he was young.
That was the reign of love he swore,
Whose halcyon days are now no more.
In that blest age, for honour fam'd,
Love paid the homage Virtue claim'd;
Not that insipid, daudling Cupid,
With heart so hard, and air so stupid,
Who coldly courts the charms which lie
In Affectation's half-clos'd eye.
Love then was honest, genuine passion,
And manly gallantry the fashion;
Yet pure as ardent was the flame
Excited by the beauteous dame;
Hope could subsist on slender bounties,
And suitors gallop'd o'er two counties,
The ball's fair partner to behold,
Or humbly hope—she caught no cold.
But mark how much Love's annals mend.
Should beauty's goddess now descend;
On some adventure should she come,
To grace a modish drawing-room;
Spite of her form and heavenly air,
What beau would hand her to a chair?
Vain were that grace, which to her son,
Disclos'd what Beauty had not done:
Vain were that motion which betray'd,
The goddess was no earth-born maid;
If noxious Faro's baleful spright,
With rites infernal rul'd the night,
The group absorb'd in play and pelf,
Venus might call her doves herself.
As Florio pass'd the castle-gate,
His spirits seem to lose their weight;
He feasts his lately vacant mind
With all the joys he hopes to find;
Yet on whate'er his fancy broods,
The form of Celia still intrudes;
Whatever other sound he hears,
The voice of Celia fills his ears;
Howe'er his random thoughts might fly,
Her graces dance before his eye;
Nor was the obtrusive vision o'er,
E'en when he reach'd Bellario's door.
The friends embrac'd with warm delight,
And Flavia's praises crown'd the night.
Soon dawn'd the day which was to show,
Glad Florio what was heaven below.
Flavia, admir'd wherever known,
Th' acknowledg'd empress of bon-ton;
O'er Fashion's wayward kingdom reigns,
And holds Bellario in her chains;
Various her powers; a wit by day,
By night unmatch'd for lucky play.
The flattering, fashionable tribe,
Each stray bon-mot to her ascribe;
And all her 'little senate' own
She made the best *charade* in town;
Her midnight suppers always drew
Whate'er was fine, whate'er was new;
There oft the brightest fame you'd see
The victim of a repartee;
For Slander's priestess still supplies
The spotless for the sacrifice.
None at her polish'd table sit,
But who aspire to modish wit,
The *persiflage*, th' unfeeling jeer,
The civil, grave, ironic sneer;
The laugh which more than censure wounds
Which, more than argument, confounds.
There the fair deed, which would engage
The wonder of a nobler age,
With unbelieving scorn is heard,
Or still to selfish ends refer'd;
If in the deed no flaw they find,
To some base motive 'tis assign'd
When Malice longs to throw her dart,
But finds no vulnerable part,
Because the Virtues all defend,
At every pass, their guarded friend;
Then by one slight insinuation,
One scarce perceiv'd exaggeration;
Sly Ridicule, with half a word,
Can fix her stigma of—absurd;
Nor care, nor skill, extracts the dart,
With which she stabs the feeling heart;
Her cruel caustics inly pain,
And scars indelible remain.
Supreme in wit, supreme in play,
Despotic Flavia all obey;
Small were her natural charms of face,
Till heighten'd with each foreign grace;
But what subdued Bellario's soul
Beyond Philosophy's control,
Her constant table was as fine
As if ten rajahs were to dine;
She every day produc'd such fish as
Would gratify the nice Apicius,
Or realize what we think fabulous
I' th' bill of fare of Heliogabalus.
Yet still the natural taste was cheated,
'Twas delug'd in some sauce one hated.
'Twas sauce! 'twas sweetmeat! 'twas confection!
All poignancy! and all perfection!
Rich *entremets*, whose name none knows,
Ragouts, *tourtes*, *tendrons*, *fricandeux*,
O' th' hogs of Epicurus' sty;
Yet all so foreign and so fine,
'Twas easier to admire, than dine.
O! if the muse had power to tell
Each dish, no muse has power to spell
Great goddess of the French *Cuisine!*
Not with unhallow'd hands I mean
To violate thy secret shade,
Which eyes profane shall ne'er invade;
No! of thy dignity supreme,
I, with 'mysterious reverence,' deem!
Or, should I venture with rash hand,
The vulgar would not understand;
None but th' initiated know
The raptures keen thy rights bestow.
Thus much to tell I lawful deem,
Thy works are never what they seem;

Thy will this general law has past,
That nothing of itself shall taste.
Thy word this high decree enacted,
'In all be nature counteracted!'
Conceive, who can, the perfect bliss,
For 'tis not given to all who guess,
The rapturous joy BELLARIO found,
When thus his ev'ry wish was crown'd.
To FLORIO, as the best of friends,
One dish he secretly commends
Then hinted, as a special favour,
What gave it that delicious flavour;
A mystery he so much reveres,
He never to unhallow'd ears
Would trust it, but to him would show
How far true friendship's power would go.
FLORIO, tho' dazzled by the *fete*,
With far inferior transport eat;
A little warp his taste had gain'd,
Which, unperceived, till now remain'd;
For, from himself he would conceal
The change he did not choose to feel;
He almost wish'd he could be picking
An unsophisticated chicken;
And when he cast his eyes around,
And not one simple morsel found,
O give me, was his secret wish,
My charming CELIA's plainest dish!
Thus Nature, struggling for her rights,
Lets in some little, casual lights:
And Love combines to war with Fashion,
Tho' yet 'twas but an infant passion;
The practis'd FLAVIA tried each art
Of sly attack to steal his heart;
Her forc'd civilities oppress,
Fatiguing thro' mere graciousness:
While many a gay intrepid dame,
By bold assault essay'd the same.
Fill'd with disgust, he strove to fly
The artful glance and fearless eye;
Their jargon now no more he praises,
Nor echoes back their flimsy phrases.
He felt not CELIA's powers of face,
Till weigh'd against *bon-ton* grimace;
Nor half her genuine beauties tasted,
'Till with factitious charms contrasted;
Th' industrious carpies hover'd round,
Nor peace nor liberty he found!
By force and flattery circumvented,
To play, reluctant, he consented;
Each dame her power of pleasing tried,
To fix the novice by her side,
Of *pigeons* he the very best,
Who wealth with ignorance possest.
But FLAVIA's rhetoric best persuades,
That sybil leads him to the shades;
The fatal leaves around the room,
Prophetic tell the approaching doom!
Yet, different from the tale of old,
It was the fair one pluck'd the gold;
Her arts the pond'rous purse exhaust;
A thousand borrow'd, stak'd, and lost,
Wakes him to sense and shame again,
Nor force, nor fraud could more obtain.
He rose, indignant, to attend
The summons of a ruin'd friend,
Whom keen BELLARIO's arts betray
To all the depths of desperate play;
A thoughtless youth who near him sat,
Was plunder'd of his whole estate;
Too late he call'd for FLORIO's aid,
A beggar in a moment made.
And now, with horror, FLORIO views
The wild confusion which ensues;
Marks how the dames, of late so fair,
Assume a fierce demoniac air;
Marks where the infernal furies hold
Their orgies foul o'er heaps of gold;
And spirits dire appear to rise,
Guarding the horrid mysteries;
Marks how deforming passions tear
The bosoms of the losing fair;
How looks convuls'd, and haggard faces,
Chase the scar'd Loves, and frighten'd Graces!
Touch'd with disdain, with horror fir'd,
CELIA! he murmur'd, and retir'd.
That night no sleep his eyelids prest,
He thought; and thought's a foe to rest:
Or if, by chance, he clos'd his eyes,
What hideous spectres round him rise!
Distemper'd Fancy wildly brings
The broken images of things;
His ruin'd friend, with eye-ball fixt,
Swallowing the draught Despair had mixt;
The frantic wife beside him stands,
With bursting heart, and wringing hands;
And every horror dreams bestow,
Of pining want or raving wo.
Next morn, to check, or cherish thought,
His library's retreat he sought;
He view'd each book, with cold regard,
Of serious sage, or lighter bard;
At length, among the motley band,
The IDLER fell into his hand;
Th' alluring title caught his eye,
It promis'd cold inanity:
He read with rapture and surprise,
And found 'twas pleasant, tho' 'twas wise
His tea grew cold, whilst he, unheeding,
Pursu'd this reasonable reading.
He wonder'd at the change he found,
Th' elastic spirits nimbly bound;
Time slipt, without disgust, away,
While many a card unanswer'd lay:
Three papers, reeking from the press,
Three pamphlets thin, in azure dress,
Ephemeral literature well known,
The lie and scandal of the town;
Poison of letters, morals, time!
Assassin of our day's fresh prime!
These, on his table, half the day,
Unthought of, and neglected lay.
FLORIO had now full three hours read
Hours which he us'd to waste in bed;
His pulse beat virtue's vigorous tone,
The reason to himself unknown;
And if he stopped to seek the cause,
Fair CELIA's image filled the pause.
And now, announc'd BELLARIO's name
Had almost quench'd the new-born flame.
'Admit him,' was the ready word
Which first escap'd him, not unheard
When sudden, to his mental sight,
Uprose the horrors of last night;
His plunder'd friend before him stands,
And—'not at home,' his firm commands,
He felt the conquest as a joy
The first temptation would destroy.
He knew next day that Hymen's hand,
Would tack the slight and slippery band,

Which, in loose bondage, would ensnare
Bellario bright and Flavia fair.
Oft had he promis'd to attend
The nuptials of his happy friend:
To go—to stay—alike he fears;
At length a bolder flight he dares:
To Celia he resolves to fly,
And catch fresh virtue from her eye,
Though three full weeks did yet remain,
Ere he engag'd to come again.
This plan he tremblingly embrac'd,
With doubtful zeal, and fluttering haste;
Nor ventur'd he one card to read,
Which might his virtuous scheme impede;
Each note, he dreaded might betray him,
And shudder'd lest each rap should stay him.
Behold him seated in his chaise;
With face that self distrust betrays;
He hazards not a single glance,
Nor through the glasses peeps by chance,
Lest some old friend, or haunt well known,
Should melt his resolution down.
Fast as his foaming coursers fly,
Hyde-park attracts his half-rais'd eye;
He steals one fearful, conscious look,
Then drops his eye upon his book.
Triumphant he persists to go;
But gives one sigh to *Rotten-row*.
Long as he view'd Augusta's tow'rs,
The sight relax'd his thinking pow'rs;
In vain he better plans revolves,
While the soft scene his soul dissolves;
The tow'rs once lost, his view he bends,
Where the receding smoke ascends;
But when nor smoke, nor tow'rs arise,
To charm his heart or cheat his eyes;
When once he got entirely clear
From this enfeebling atmosphere;
His mind was brac'd, his spirits light,
His heart was gay, his humour bright.
Thus feeling, at his inmost soul,
The sweet reward of self-controul,
Impatient now, and all alive,
He thought he never should arrive;
At last he spies Sir Gilbert's trees;
Now the near battlements he secs;
The gates he enter'd with delight,
And, self-announc'd, embrac'd the knight:
The youth his joy unfeign'd exprest,
The knight with joy receiv'd his guest,
And own'd, with no unwilling tongue,
'Twas done like men when he was young.
Three weeks subducted, went to prove,
A feeling like old-fashion'd love.
For Celia, not a word she said,
But blush'd, 'celestial, rosy red!'
Her modest charms transport the youth,
Who promis'd everlasting truth.
Celia, in honour of the day,
Unusual splendour would display:
Such was the charm her sweetness gave,
He thought her wedgwood had been *séve*,
Her taste diffused a gracious air,
And chaste Simplicity was there,
Whose secret power, though silent, great is,
The loveliest of the sweet Penates.
Florio, now present to the scene,
With spirits light, and gracious mien,
Sir Gilbert's port politely praises,
And carefully avoids French phrases;
Endures the daily dissertation
On land-tax, and a ruin'd nation;
Listens to many a tedious tale
Of poachers, who deserv'd a jail;
Heard all the business of the quorum,
Each cause and crime produc'd before 'em:
Heard them abuse with complaisance
The language, wines, and wits of France;
Nor did he hum a single air,
While good Sir Gilbert fill'd his chair.
Abroad, with joy and grateful pride,
He walks, with Celia by his side:
A thousand cheerful thoughts arise,
Each rural scene enchants his eyes;
With transports he begins to look
On Nature's all instructive book;
No objects now seem mean, or low,
Which point to Him from whom they flow
A berry or a bud excites
A chain of reasoning which delights,
Which spite of sceptic ebulitions,
Proves atheists not the best logicians.
A tree, a brook, a blade of grass,
Suggests reflections as they pass,
Till Florio, with a sigh, confest
The simplest pleasures are the best
Bellario's systems sink in air,
He feels the perfect, good, and fair.
As pious Celia rais'd the theme
To holy faith and love supreme;
Enlighten'd Florio learn'd to trace
In Nature's God the God of grace.
In wisdom as the convert grew
The hours on rapid pinions flew,
When call'd to dress, that Titus wore
A wig the alter'd Florio swore;
Or else, in estimating time,
He ne'er had mark'd it as a crime,
That he had lost but *one day's* blessing,
When we so many lose, by dressing.
The rest, suffice it now to say,
Was finish'd in the usual way.
Cupid, impatient for his hour,
Revil'd slow Themis' tedious power,
Whose parchment legends, singing, sealing,
Are cruel forms for Love to deal in.
At length to Florio's eager eyes,
Behold the day of bliss arise!
The golden sun illumes the globe,
The burning torch, the saffron robe.
Just as of old, glad Hymen wears,
And Cupid, as of old, appears
In Hymen's train; so strange the case
They hardly knew each other's face;
Yet both confess'd with glowing heart
They never were design'd to part;
Quoth Hymen, sure you're strangely slighted
At weddings not to be invited;
The reason's clear enough, quoth Cupid,
My company is thought but stupid,
Where Plutus is the favourite guest,
For he and I scarce speak at best.
The self-same sun which joins the twain
Sees Flavia sever'd from her swain;
Bellario sues for a divorce,
And both pursue their sep'rate course.
Oh wedded love! thy bliss how rare!
And yet the ill-assorted pair;
The pair who choose at Fashion's voice,
Or drag the chain of venal choice;

Have little cause to curse the state,
Who *make*, should never *blame* their fate,
Such flimsy ties, say where's the wonder,
If Doctors Commons snap asunder.
In either case, 'tis still the wife,
Gives cast and colour to the life.
Florio escap'd from Fashion's school
His heart and conduct learns to rule;
Conscience his useful life approves;
He serves his God, his country loves;
Reveres her laws, protects her rights,
And, for her interests, pleads or fights
Reviews with scorn his former life,
And, for his rescue, thanks his wife.

THE SLAVE TRADE:

A POEM.

———O great design!
Ye sons of mercy! O complete your work;
Wrench from Oppression's hand the iron rod,
And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
Thompson's "*Liberty.*"

If Heaven has into being deign'd to call
Thy light, O liberty! to shine on all;
Bright intellectual sun! why does thy ray
To earth distribute only partial day?
Since no resisting cause from spirit flows
Thy universal presence to oppose;
No obstacles by nature's hand imprest,
Thy subtle and ethereal beams arrest;
Not sway'd by Matter is thy course benign,
Or more direct or more oblique to shine;
Nor Motion's laws can speed thy active course,
Nor strong Repulsion's pow'rs obstruct thy force;
Since there is no convexity in mind,
Why are thy genial beams to parts confin'd?
While the chill north with thy bright ray is blest,
Why should fell darkness half the south invest?
Was it decreed, fair Freedom! at thy birth,
That thou should'd ne'er irradiate *all* the earth?
While Britain basks in thy full blaze of light,
Why lies sad *A*fric quench'd in total night?
Thee only, *sober* goddess! I attest,
In smiles chastis'd, and decent graces drest,
To thee alone pure daughter of the skies,
The hallow'd incense of the bard should rise?
Not that mad liberty, in whose wild praise
Too oft he trims his prostituted bays;
Not that unlicens'd monster of the crowd,
Whose roar terrific bursts in peals so loud,
Deaf'ning the ear of Peace; fierce Faction's tool,
Of rash Sedition born, and mad Misrule;
Whose stubborn mouth, rejecting Reason's reign,
No strength can govern, and no skill restrain;
Whose magic cries the frantic vulgar draw
To spurn at Order, and to outrage Law;
To tread on grave Authority and Pow'r,
And shake the work of ages in an hour:
Convuls'd her voice, and pestilent her breath,
She raves of mercy, while she deals out death;
Each blast is fate; she darts from either hand
Red conflagration o'er the astonish'd land;
Clamouring for peace, she rends the air with noise,
And to reform a part, the whole destroys.
Reviles oppression only to oppress,
And in the act of murder, breathes redress.
Such have we seen on Freedom's genuine coast,
Bellowing for blessings which were never lost.
'Tis past, and Reason rules the lucid hour,
And beauteous Order reassumes his power:
Lord of the bright ascendant may he reign,
Till perfect Peace eternal sway maintain!*
O, plaintive Southerne!† whose impassion'd page
Can melt the soul to grief, or rouse to rage!
Now, when congenial themes engage the Muse,
She burns to emulate thy generous views;
Her failing efforts mock her fond desires,
She shares thy feelings, not partakes thy fires.
Strange pow'r of song the strain that warms the heart
Seems the same inspiration to impart;
Touch'd by th' extrinsic energy alone,
We think the flame which melts us is our own:
Deceiv'd, for genius we mistake delight,
Charm'd as we read, we fancy we can write.
Though not to me, sweet bard, thy pow'rs belong,
The cause I plead shall sanctify my song.
The Muse awakes no artificial fire,
For Truth rejects what Fancy would inspire:
Here Art would weave her gayest flow'rs in vain,
The bright invention Nature would disdain.
For no fictitious ills these numbers flow,
But living anguish, and substantial wo;
No individual griefs my bosom melt,
For millions feel what Oronoko felt:
Fir'd by no single wrongs, the countless host
I mourn, by rapine dragg'd from Afric's coast.
Perish th' illiberal thought which would debase
The native genius of the sable race!
Perish the proud philosophy, which sought
To rob them of the pow'rs of equal thought!
Does then th' immortal principle within
Change with the casual colour of the skin?
Does Matter govern Spirit? or is mind
Degraded by the form to which 'tis join'd?
No: they have heads to think, and hearts to feel,
And souls to act, with firm, though erring zeal:
For they have keen affections, kind desires,
Love strong as death, and active patriot fires;

* Alluding to the riots of London in the year 1780.
† Author of the tragedy of Oronoko.

All the rude energy, the fervid flame,
Of high-soul'd passion, and ingenuous shame:
Strong, but luxuriant virtues boldly shoot
From the wild vigour of a savage root.
Nor weak their sense of honour's proud control,
For Pride is virtue in a Pagan soul;
A sense of worth, a conscience of desert,
A high, unbroken haughtiness of heart;
That self-same stuff which erst proud empires made.
sway'd,
Of which the conquerors of the world were
Capricious fate of men! that very pride
In Afric scourg'd, in Rome was deify'd.
No muse, O Quashi!* shall thy deeds relate,
No statue snatch thee from oblivious fate!
For thou wast born where never gentle Muse
On valour's grave the flow'rs of Genius strews;
And thou wast born where no recording page
Plucks the fair deed from Time's devouring rage:
Had Fortune plac'd thee on some happier coast,
Where *polis'd* Pagans souls heroic boast,
To thee who sought'st a voluntary grave,
Th' injur'd honours of thy name to save,
Whose generous arm thy barbarous master spar'd,
Altars had smok'd, and temples had been rear'd.
Whene'er to Afric's shores I turn my eyes,
Horrors of deepest, deadliest guilt arise;
I see, by more than Fancy's mirror shown,
The burning village and the blazing town:
See the dire victim torn from social life,
The shrieking babe, the agonizing wife!
She, wretch forlorn! is dragg'd by hostile hands,
To distant tyrants sold, in distant lands!
Transmitted miseries, and successive chains,
The sole sad heritage her child obtains!
E'en this last wretched boon their foes deny,
To weep together, or together die.
By felon hands, by one relentless stroke,
See the fond links of feeling Nature broke!
The fibres twisting round a parent's heart,
Torn from their grasp, and bleeding as they part.
Hold! murderer's, hold! nor aggravate distress;
Respect the passions you yourselves possess,
Ev'n you of ruffian heart, and ruthless hand,
Love your own offspring, love your native land:
Ev'n you, with fond impatient feelings burn,
Though free as air, though certain of return,
Then, if to you who voluntarily roam,
So dear the memory of your distant home,
O think how absence the lov'd scene endears
To him whose food is groans, whose drink is tears;

Think on the wretch whose aggravated pains
To exile misery adds, to misery chains.
If warm *your* heart, to British feelings true,
As dear his land to him as yours to you;
And Liberty, in you a hallow'd flame,
Burns, unextinguish'd in his breast the same.
Then leave him holy Freedom's cheering smile
The heav'n-taught fondness for the parent soil;
Revere affections mingled with our frame,
In every nature, every clime the same;
In all, these feelings equal sway maintain:
In all the love of Home and Freedom reign;
And Tempe's vale, and parch'd Angola's sand,
One equal fondness of their son's command.
Th' unconquer'd savage laughs at pain and toil,
Basking in Freedom's beams which gild his native soil.
Does thirst of empire, does desire of fame,
(For these are specious crimes) our rage inflame?
No: sordid lust of gold their fate controls,
The basest appetite of basest souls;
Gold, better gain'd by what their ripening sky,
Their fertile fields, their arts,* and mines supply.
What wrongs, what injuries does Oppression plead,
To smooth the crime and sanctify the deed?
What strange offence, what aggravated sin?
They stand convicted—of a darker skin!
Barbarians, hold! th' opprobrious commerce spare,
Respect HIS sacred image which they bear.
Though dark and savage, ignorant and blind,
They claim the common privilege of kind;
Let malice strip them of each other plea,
They still are men, and men should still be free.
Insulted Reason loaths the inverted trade—
Loathes, as she views the human purchase made;
The outrag'd goddess, with abhorrent eyes,
Sees MAN the traffic, SOULS the merchandise!
Man, whom fair Commerce taught with judging eye,
And liberal hand, to barter or to buy,
Indignant Nature blushes to behold,
Degraded man himself, truck'd, barter'd, sold:
Of ev'ry native privilege bereft,
Yet curs'd with ev'ry wounded feeling left.
Hard lot! each brutal suff'ring to sustain,
Yet keep the sense acute of human pain.
Plead not, in reason's palpable abuse,
Their sense of feeling† callous and obtuse:
From heads to hearts lies Nature's plain appeal,
Though few can reason, all mankind can feel.
Though wit may boast a livelier dread of shame,
A loftier sense of long refinement claim;
Though polish'd manners may fresh wants invent,
And nice distinctions nicer souls torment;
Though these on finer spirits heavier fall,
Yet natural evils are the same to all.
Tho' wounds there are which reason's force may heal,
There needs no logic sure to make us feel.
The nerve, howe'er untutor'd, can sustain
A sharp unutterable sense of pain;

* It is a point of honour among negroes of a high spirit to die rather than to suffer their glossy skin to bear the mark of the whip. Quashi had somehow offended his master, a young planter with whom he had been bred up in the endearing intimacy of a play-fellow. His services had been faithful; his attachment affectionate. The master resolved to punish him, and pursued him for that purpose. In trying to escape Quashi stumbled and fell; the master fell upon him: they wrestled long with doubtful victory; at length Quashi got uppermost, and being firmly seated on his master's breast, he secured his legs with one hand, and with the other drew a sharp knife, then said, 'master, I have been bred up with you from a child; I loved you as myself; in return, you have condemned me to a punishment of which I must ever have borne the marks—thus only can I avoid them;' so saying, he drew the knife with all his strength across his own throat, and fell down dead, without a groan, on his master's body.—*Ramsay's Essay on the Treatment of African Slaves.*

* Besides many valuable productions of the soil, cloths and carpets of exquisite manufacture are brought from the coast of Guinea.

† Nothing is more frequent than this cruel and stupid argument, that they do not feel the miseries inflicted on them as Europeans would do.

As exquisitely fashion'd in a slave,
As where unequal fate a sceptre gave.
Sense is as keen where Gambia's waters glide,
As where proud Tiber rolls his classic tide.
Though verse or rhetoric point the feeling line,
They do not whet sensation, but define.
Did ever wretch less feel the galling chain,
When Zeno prov'd there was no ill in pain?
In vain the sage to smooth its horror tries;
Spartans and Helots see with different eyes;
Their miseries philosophic quirks deride,
Slaves groan in pangs disown'd by stoic pride.
When the fierce sun darts vertical his beams,
And thirst and hunger mix their wild extremes;
When the sharp iron* wounds his inmost soul,
And his strain'd eyes in burning anguish roll;
Will the parch'd negro own, ere he expire,
No pain in hunger, and no heat in fire?
For him, when agony his frame destroys,
What hope of present fame or future joys?
For *that* have heroes shorten'd nature's date,
For *this* have martyrs gladly met their fate;
But him forlorn, no heroes pride sustains,
No martyr's blissful vision soothe his pains;
Sullen, he mingles with his kindred dust,
For he has learn'd to dread the Christian's trust;
To him what mercy can that God display,
Whose servants murder, and whose sons betray?
Savage! thy venial error I deplore,
They are *not* Christians who infest thy shore.
O thou sad spirit, whose preposterous yoke
The great deliverer Death, at length has broke,
Releas'd from misery, and escap'd from care,
Go, meet that mercy man deny'd thee here.
In thy dark home, sure refuge of th' oppress'd,
The wicked vex not, and the weary rest.
And, if some notions, vague and undefin'd,
Of future terrors have assail'd thy mind;
If such thy masters have presum'd to teach,
As terrors only they are prone to preach;
(For should they paint eternal Mercy's reign,
Where were the oppressor's rod, the captive's chain?)
If, then, thy troubled soul has learn'd to dread
The dark unknown thy trembling footsteps tread;
On Him, who made thee what thou art, depend;
He, who withholds the means, accepts the end.
Thy metal night thy Saviour will not blame;
He died for those who never heard his name.
Not *thine* the reckoning dire of Light abus'd,
Knowledge disgrac'd, and Liberty misus'd;
On *thee* no awful judge incens'd shall sit
For parts perverted, and dishonour'd wit.
Where ignorance may be found the safest plea,
How many learn'd and wise shall envy *thee!*
And thou, white savage! whether lust of gold
Or lust of conquest rule thee uncontroll'd!
Hero, or robber!—by whatever name!—
Thou plead thy impious claim to wealth or fame;
Whether inferior mischief be thy boast,
A tyrant trader rifling *Congo's* coast;
Or bolder carnage track thy crimson way,
Kings dispossess'd, and provinces thy prey;
Whether thou pant to tame earth's distant bound;

* This is not said figuratively. The writer of these lines has seen a complete set of chains, fitted to every separate limb of these unhappy, innocent men; together with instruments for wrenching open the jaws, contrived with such ingenious cruelty as would gratify the tender mercies of an inquisitor.

All Cortez murder'd, all Columbus found;
O'er plunder'd realms to reign, detested lord,
Make millions wretched, and thyself abhorr'd:—
Whether Cartouche in forests break the law.
Or bolder Cæsar keep the world in awe;
In Reason's eye, in Wisdom's fair account,
Your sum of glory boasts a like amount;
The means may differ, but the end's the same,
Conquest is pillage with a nobler name,
Who makes the sum of human blessings less,
Or sinks the stock of general happiness,
Tho' erring fame may grace, tho' false renown
His life may blazon or his memory crown;
Yet the last audit shall reverse the cause;
And God shall vindicate his broken laws.
Had those advent'rous spirits who explore
Thro' ocean's trackless wastes, the far-sought shore;
Whether of wealth insatiate, or of pow'r,
Conquerors who waste, or ruffian's who devour:
Had these possess'd, O Cook! thy gentle mind,
Thy love of arts, thy love of human kind;
Had these pursued thy mild and liberal plan,
Discoveries had not been a curse to man!
Then, bless'd Philanthropy! thy social hands,
Had link'd dissever'd worlds in brothers' bands;
Careless, if colour, or if clime divide;
Then lov'd and loving, man had liv'd and died.
Then with pernicious skill we had not known
To bring their vices back and leave our own.
The purest wreaths which hang on Glory's shrine,
For empires founded, peaceful Penn! are thine;
No blood-stain'd laurels crown'd thy virtuous toil, [soil,
No slaughter'd natives drench'd thy fair-earn'd
Still thy meek spirit in thy flock* survives,
Consistent still, *their* doctrines rule their lives;
Thy followers only have effac'd the shame,
Inscrib'd by Slavery on the Christian name.
Shall Britain, where the soul of freedom reigns,
Forge chains for others she herself disdains?
Forbid it, Heaven! O let the nations know
The liberty she loves, she will bestow;
Not to herself the glorious gift confin'd,
She spreads the blessing wide as human kind;
And, scorning narrow views of time and place,
Bids all be free in earth's extended space.
What page of human annals can record
A deed so bright as human rights restor'd?
O may that god-like deed, that shining page,
Redeem our fame, and consecrate our age!
And let this glory mark our favour'd shore,
To curb False Freedom and the True restore.
And see the cherub Mercy from above,
Descending softly, quits the sphere of love!
On Britain's isle she sheds her heavenly dew;
And breathes her spirit o'er th' enlighten'd few.
From soul to soul the spreading influence steals,
Till every breast the soft contagion feels.
She speeds, exulting, to the burning shore,
With the best message angel ever bore;
Hark! 'tis the note which spoke a Saviour's birth!
Glory to God on high, and peace on earth!
She vindicates the pow'r in Heaven ador'd,

* The Quakers have emancipated all their slaves throughout America.

She stills the clank of chains, and sheathes the sword;
She cheers the mourner, and with soothing hands
From bursting hearts unbinds th' oppressor's bands;
Restores the lustre of the Christian name,
And clears the foulest blot that dimm'd its fame.
As the mild spirit hovers o'er the coast,
A fresher hue their wither'd landscapes boast;
Her healing smiles the ruin'd scenes repair,
And blasted Nature wears a joyous air;
While she proclaims thro' all their spicy groves,
'Henceforth your fruits, your labours, and your loves,
'All that your sires possess'd, or you have sown,
'Sacred from plunder—all is now YOUR OWN.'
And now, her high commission from above,
Stamp'd with the holy characters of love,
The meek-ey'd spirit waving in her hand,
Breathes manumission o'er the rescu'd land;
She tears the banner stain'd with blood and tears,
And LIBERTY! thy shining standard rears!
As the bright ensign's glory she displays,
See pale OPPRESSION faints beneath the blaze!
The giant dies! no more his frown appals,
The chain, untouch'd drops off; the fetter falls.
Astonish'd Echo tells the vocal shore,
Oppression's fall'n, and Slavery is no more!
The dusky myriads crowd the sultry plain,
All hail that MERCY, long invok'd in vain.
Victorious Pow'r! she bursts their two-fold bands,
And Faith and Freedom spring from Britain's hands.
And Thou! great source of Nature and of Grace,
Who of one blood didst form the human race
Look down in mercy in thy chosen time,
With equal eye on Afric's suff'ring clime:
Disperse her shades of intellectual night,
Repeat thy high behest—Let there be Light
Bring each benighted soul, great God, to Thee,
And with thy wide salvation make them free!

DAN AND JANE:

OR FAITH AND WORKS.—A TALE.

Good Dan and Jane were man and wife,
And liv'd a loving kind of life;
One point, however, they disputed,
And each by turns his mate confuted.
'Twas Faith and Works—this knotty question
They found not easy of digestion.
While Dan alone for faith contended,
Jane equally good works defended.
'They are not Christians sure, but Turks
Who build on faith and scoff at works,'
Quoth Jane—while eager Dan reply'd,
'By none but heathens faith's deny'd.'
'I'll tell you wife,' at length quoth Dan,
'A story of a right good man.
A patriarch sage, of ancient days,
A man of faith, whom all must praise
In his own country he possess'd,
Whate'er can make a wise man blest;
His was the flock, the field, the spring,
In short, a little rural king.
Yet, pleas'd, he quits his native land,
By faith in the divine command.
God bade him go; and he, content,
Went forth, not knowing where he went.
He trusted in the promise made,
And, undisputing strait obey'd.
The heavenly word he did not doubt,
But prov'd his faith by going out.
Jane answer'd, with some little pride—
'I've an example on my side;
And tho' my tale be somewhat longer,
I trust you'll find it vastly stronger.
I'll tell you, Daniel, of a man,
The holiest since the world began:
Who now God's favour is receiving
For prompt *obeying*, not *believing*.
One only son this man possest,
In whom his righteous age was blest;
And more to mark the grace of heaven,
This son by miracle was given.
And from this child the word divine
Had promis'd an illustrious line.
When lo! at once a voice he hears,
Which sounds like thunder in his ears.
God says—Go sacrifice thy son!
—This moment, Lord, it shall be done.
He goes, and instantly prepares,
To slay the child of many prayers.
Now here you see the grand expedience,
Of *works*, of actual sound *obedience*.
This was not *faith*, but *act* and deed,
The Lord commands—the child shalt bleed.'
Thus Abraham *acted*,' Jenny cried;
'Thus Abraham *trusted*,' Dan replied
'Abraham,' quoth Jane, 'why that's my man!'
'No, Abraham's him I mean,' says Dan.
'He stands a monument of *faith*;'—
'No, 'tis for *works* the Scripture saith.
''Tis for his faith that I defend him;'
''Tis for obedience I commend him.'
Thus he—thus she—both warmly feel,
And lose their temper in their zeal;
Too quick each other's choice to blame,
They did not see each meant the same.
'At length, good wife,' said honest Dan,
'We're talking of the self-same man,
The works you praise I own indeed,
Grow from that faith for which I plead;
And Abraham, whom for faith I quote,
For works deserves especial note:
'Tis not enough of faith to *talk*,
A man of God with God must walk
Our doctrines are at last the same,
They only differ in the name:
The faith I fight for, is the root;
The works you value are the fruit
How shall you know my creed 's sincere,
Unless in works my faith appear?
How shall I know a tree's alive,
Unless I see it bear and thrive?
Your works not growing on my root,
Would prove they were not genuine fruit

If faith produce no works, I see,
That faith is not a living tree.
Thus faith and works together grow,
No separate life they e'er can know:
They're soul and body, hand and heart,
What God hath join'd let no man part.'

AN HEROIC EPISTLE.

TO MISS SALLY HORNE,—AGED THREE YEARS,

YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF DR. HORNE, LATE BISHOP OF NORWICH.

Written on the blank leaves of "Mother Bunch's Tales;" and showing their superiority of these histories to most others.

To thee, fair creature, SALLY HORNE,
And sure a fairer ne'er was born;
A grave biographer I send,
By NEWBERRY in the church-yard penn'd;
(Or if to truth my phrase I stinted,
By NEWBERRY in the church-yard printed;)
Might Mother Bunch—a worthier sage,
Ne'er fill'd, I ween th' historic page;
For she, of kings and queens can prate,
As fast as patriotic KATE;*
Nor vents like her, her idle spleen,
Merely because *'tis* king or queen.
KATE, who each subject makes a slave,
Would make each potentate a knave;
Though Britons can the converse prove,
A king who reigns and rules by love.
While Mother Bunch's honest story,
Unaw'd by WHIG, unwarp'd by TORY;
Paints sovereigns with impartial pen,
Some good, some bad, like other men.
Oh, there are few such books as these,
Which only mean to teach or please;
Read Mother Bunch, then charming SALLY,
Her writings, with your taste will tally.
No pride of learning she displays,
Nor reads one word an hundred ways;
To please the young she lays before 'em
A simple tale, *sans variorum;*
With notes and margins unperplext,
And comments which confuse the text.
No double senses interfere
To puzzle what before was clear.
Here no mistaken dates deceive ye,
Which oft occur from HUME to LIVY.
Her dates, more safe and more sublime,
Seize the broad phrase—'*Once on a time.*'
Then Mother Bunch is no misleader
In citing authors who precede her;
Unlike our modern wits of note,
Who purposely and oft misquote;
Who injure history, or intend it,
As much as KENNICOT to mend it;
And seek no less the truth to mangle,
Than he to clear and disentangle.
These short digressions we apply
Our author's fame to magnify:
She seeks not to bewilder youth,
But all is true she gives for truth:
And still, to analyze you're able,
Fable is safe while given as fable;
As mere invention you receive it,
You know 'tis false, and disbelieve it;
While that bad chemistry which brings
And mixes up incongruous things,
With genuine fact invention blending
As if true history wanted mending;
Or flav'ring, to mislead our youth,
Mere fable with a dash of truth;
In all these heterogeneous tales
The injudicious project fails;
Of *truth* you do not get your measure,
And of pure *fiction* lose the pleasure.
But Mother Bunch rejects such arts,
A sounder taste her work imparts.
Then if for prosperous turns you look,
There's no such other history book.
Old authors show, nor do I wrong 'em,
How tyrants shar'd the world among em
And all we learn of ancient times,
Are human woes and human crimes.
They tell us naught but dismal tales,
How virtue sinks, and vice prevails;
And all their labours but declare
The miseries of the good and fair;
How one brave captive in a quarrel
Was tumbled down hill in a barrel!
In fiery flames how some did fry,
Only because they dar'd not lie!
How female victims meet their doom,
At Aulis one, and more at Rome!
How ease the hero's laurels stain'd
How CAPUA lost what CANNÆ gain'd!
How *he*, whom long success attends,
Is kill'd at home among his friends!
How ATHENS, him who serv'd so well,
Rewarded with an oyster-shell!
How NERO stabb'd a mother's breast
Ah, barbarous CLIO, spare the rest;
Conceal these horrors, if thou'rt able,
If these be truth, oh give me fable!
Till real deed are fit to mention,
Regale my feelings with invention.
But Mother Bunch's morals tell
How blest all were who acted well!
How the good little girl 's regarded,
And boy who learns his book rewarded.
How loss of favour follows rudeness,
While sugar-plumbs repay all goodness;
How she who learns to read or write,
Will get a coach or chariot by't;
And not a faggot-maker's daughter
But has it at her christening taught her,
By some invited fairy guest,
That she shall wed a prince at least;
And thro' the whole this truth's pursu'd
That to be happy 's to be good.
If these to life be contradictions,
Mark the morality of fictions;
Axioms more popular they teach,

* See Mrs. *Macaulay's* History of England.

That to be good is to be rich!
For all the misses marry kings,
And diamonds are but common things;
While dames in history hardly get 'em,
Our heroines ope their mouths and spit 'em.
Oh, this is profitable learning,
Past cold historians' dull discerning,
Who, while their annals they impart,
Expose, but seldom mend the heart.
I grant, they teach to know mankind,
To learn we're wretched, weak, and blind:
But till the heart from vice is clear,
Who wants to know what passes there?
Till Hercules to cleanse was able,
No doubt they *shut* th' Augean stable.
Here too in high emphatic tone
The power of female worth is shown;
Ev'n enterprising Joan of Arc
Falls short of true heroic mark:
THALESTRIS was a mere home-keeper,
And swift CAMILLA but a creeper.
Here deeds of valour are as common
As song or dance to real woman;
And meekest damsels find it facile
To storm a giant's moated castle;
Where drawbridges do open fly
If virgin foot approaches nigh;
And brazen-gates with twenty locks,
At which an army vainly knocks,
Fly ope, nor on their hinges linger,
At touch of virgin's little finger.
Then slow attacks, and tiresome sieges,
Which history makes the work of ages,
Are here, by means of fairy power,
Achiev'd with ease in half an hour.
Tactics! *they* prove, there 's nothing in it,
Who conquer kingdoms in a minute:
They never hear of ten years jars,
(For TROY's the average length of wars.)
And diplomatic form and rule
Might learn from Mother Bunch's school,
How rapidly are state intrigues
Convey'd with boots of seven long leagues.
Here farther too, our great commanders,
Who conquer'd France, and rescued Flanders,
From Mother Bunch's Tales might he
Some secrets worth a general's ear;
How armies need not stop to bait,
And heroes never drink or eat;
Wrapt in sublimer occupation
They scorn such vulgar renovation.
Your British generals cannot keep
Themselves and fellows half so cheap;
For men and horses, out of books,
Call, one for corn, and one for cooks;
And dull historic nags must stay
For provender of oats and hay;
While *these* bold heroes wing their flight
Through twenty kingdoms in a night;
Of silvery dews they snatch a cup,
Or on a slice of moonshine sup;
And while they fly to meet their queen,
With half the convex world between,
Their milk-white palfreys, scorning grass,
Just crop a rose-leaf as they pass.
Then Mother Bunch's morals strike,
By praising friend and foe alike.
What virtue to the world is lost,
Because on thy ill-fated coast,
O Carthage! sung alone by foes,
The sun of history never rose!
Fertile in heroes, didst thou own
The muse that makes those heroes known;
Then had the bright reverse appear'd
And Carthaginian truth been clear'd:
On Punic faith, so long revil'd,
The wily African had smil'd;
And, possibly, not much had err'd,
If we of *Roman* fraud had heard.
Then leave your Robertson's and Bryants
For John, the murderer of giants;
Since all mythology profane
Is quite as doubtful, quite as vain.
Though Bryant, learned friend of youth
His fable consecrates to truth:
And Robertson with just applause
His finish'd portraits fairly draws.
Yet history, great Raleigh knew,
And knowing, griev'd, may not be true:
For how the facts are we to know
Which pass'd a thousand years ago
When he no just account could get
Of quarrel in the adjacent street;
Though from his chair the noise he heard,
The tale of each relater err'd.
But if the fact 's recorded right,
The motive seldom comes in sight;
Hence, while the fairest deed we blame,
We often crown the worst with fame.
Then read, if genuine truth you'd glean,
Those who were actors in the scene;
Hear, with delight, the modest Greek,
Of his renown'd *ten thousand* speak
His commentaries* read again
Who led the troops and held the pen,
The way to conquest best he show'd,
Who trod ere he prescrib'd the road.
Read *him*, for lofty periods fam'd,
Who Charles's age adorn'd and sham'd;
Read Clarendon; unaw'd, unbrib'd,
Who rul'd th' events his pen describ'd;
Who law and courts, and senates knew,
And saw the sources whence he drew.
Yet, lovely SALLY, be not frighten'd,
Nor dread to have thy mind enlighten'd;
Admire with me the fair alliance
Which mirth, at Maudlin,† makes with science:
How humour may with learning dwell,
Go ask papa—for he can tell.

MARGERY TWO-SHOES.

* Cesar:

† Dr. *Horne* was at this time president of Magdalen College, Oxford, where this little poem was written.

SENSIBILITY:

AN EPISTLE TO THE HONOURABLE MRS. BOSCAWEN.

ACCEPT, BOSCAWEN! these unpolished lays,
Nor blame too much the verse you cannot praise.
For you, far other bards have wak'd the string,
Far other bards for you were wont to sing;

Yet on the gale their parting music steals,
Yet your charm'd ear the lov'd impression feels:
You heard the lyres of Littleton and Young,
And this a grace, and that a seraph strung.
These are no more! but not with these decline
The attic chasteness or the vig'rous line.
Still *sad Elfrida's poet** shall complain,
Still, either Warton breathe his classic strain:
While for the wonders of the Gothic page,
Otranto's fame shall vindicate the age,
Nor tremble lest the tuneful art expire,
While Beattie strikes anew old Spencer's lyre;
He best to paint the genuine minstrel knew,
Who from himself, the living portrait drew.
Though Latian bards had gloried in his name,
When in full brightness burnt the Latian flame;
Yet fir'd with loftier hopes than transient bays,
See Lowth† despise the meed of mortal praise;
Spurn the cheap wreath by human science won,
Borne on the wing sublime of Amos' son!
He seiz'd the mantle as the prophet flew,
And with his mantle caught his spirit too.
To snatch bright beauty from devouring fate,
And lengthen nature's transitory date;
At once the critic's and the painter's art,
With Fresnoy's skill and Guido's grace impart:
To form with code correct the graphic school,
And lawless fancy curb by sober rule;
To show how genius fires, how taste restrains,
While, what both are, his pencil best explains;
Have we not Reynolds ?‡ lives not Jenyns yet,
To prove his lowest title was a wit?§
Though purer flames thy hallow'd zeal inspire
Than e'er were kindled at the Muse's fire,
Thee, mitred Chester !‖ all the Nine shall boast;
And is not Johnson ours? himself a host!
Yes, still for you your gentle stars dispense:
The charm of friendship and the feast of sense:
Yours is the bliss, and Heav'n no dearer sends,
To call the wisest, brightest, best, your friends.
And while to these I raise the votive line,
O! let me grateful own these friends are mine;
With Carter trace the wit to Athens known,
Or view in Montague that wit our own:
Or mark, well pleas'd, Chapone's instructive page,
Intent to raise the morals of the age:
Or boast, in Walsingham, the various power,
To cheer the lonely, grace the letter'd hour;
Delany too is ours, serenely bright,
Wisdom's strong ray, and virtue's milder light:
And she who bless'd the friend, and grac'd the lays
Of poignant Swift, still gilds our social days;
Long, long protract thy light, O star benign!
Whose setting beams with milder lustre shine.
Nor, Barbauld, shall my glowing heart refuse
Its tribute to thy virtues, or thy muse;
This humble merit shall at least be mine,
The poet's chaplet for thy brow to twine;
My verse thy talents to the world shall teach,
And praise the genius it despairs to reach.
Yet what is wit, and what the poet's art?
Can genius shield the vulnerable heart?
Ah no! where bright imagination reigns,
The fine wrought spirit feels acuter pains;
Where glow exalted sense and taste refin'd,
There keener anguish rankles in the mind;
There, feeling is diffus'd through ev'ry part,
Thrills in each nerve, and lives in all the heart;
And those whose gen'rous souls each tear would keep
From other's eyes, are born themselves to weep.
Can all the boasted pow'rs of wit and song,
Of life one pang remove, one hour prolong?
Fallacious hope! which daily truths deride;
For you, alas! have wept, and Garrick dy'd!
O shades of Hampton! witness, as I mourn,
Could wit or song elude your fav'rite's urn?
Though living virtue still your haunt endears,
Yet buried worth shall justify my tears.
Who now with spirit keen, yet judgment cool,
The errors of my orphan muse shall rule?
With keen acumen how his piercing eye,
The fault conceal'd from vulgar view would spy!
While with a generous warmth he strove to hide,
Nay vindicate the fault his taste had spy'd.
So pleas'd could he detect a happy line
That he would fancy merit ev'n in mine.
His wit so pointed it ne'er miss'd its end,
And so well temper'd it ne'er lost a friend;
How his keen eye, quick mind, and ardent heart,
Impov'rish'd nature, and exhausted art,
A *muse of fire* has sung,* if muse could trace,
Or verse retrieve the evanescent grace!
How rival bards with rival statesmen strove,
Who most should gain his praise or win his love!
Opposing parties to one point he drew,
Thus Tully's Atticus was Cæsar's too.
Tho' time his mellowing hand across has stole,
Soft'ning the tints of sorrow on the soul;
The deep impression long my heart shall fill,
And ev'ry fainter trace be perfect still.
Forgive, my friend, if wounded memory melt,
You best can pardon who have deepest felt,
You, who for Britain's hero† and your own,
The deadliest pang which rend the soul have known;
You, who have found how much the feeling heart
Shapes its own wound, and points itself the dart;
You, who are call'd the varied loss to mourn;
You, who have clasp'd a son's untimely urn;
You, who from frequent fond experience feel
The wounds such minds receive can never heal;
That grief a thousand entrances can find,
Where parts superior dignify the mind;
Yet would you change that sense acute to gain
A dear bought absence from the poignant pain;
Commuting ev'ry grief whose feelings give
In loveless, joyless apathy to live?

* Milton calls Euripides sad *Electra's poet.*

† Then bishop of London.

‡ See Sir *Joshua Reynold's* very able notes to *Du Fresnoy's* poem on the art of painting, translated by Mr. Mason.—Also, his series of *Discourses to the academy*, which, though written professedly on the subject of painting, contain the principles of general art, and are delivered with so much perspicuous good sense, as to be admirably calculated to assist in forming the taste of the general reader.

§ Mr. *Soame Jenyns* had just published his work *On the internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.*

‖ Now bishop of London—See his admirable poem on death.

* See Mr. *Sheridan's* beautiful monody.

† Admiral *Boscawen.*

For though in souls where energies abound,
Pain through its numerous avenues can wound;
Yet the same avenues are open still,
To casual blessings as to casual ill.
Nor is the trembling temper more awake
To every wound calamity can make,
Than is the finely fashion'd nerve alive
To ev'ry transport pleasure has to give.
Let not the vulgar read this pensive strain,
Their jests the tender anguish would profane.
Yet these some deem the happiest of their kind,
Whose low enjoyments never reach the mind;
Who ne'er a pain but for themselves have known,
Who ne'er have felt a sorrow but their own:
Who deem romantic ev'ry finer thought
Conceiv'd by pity, or by friendship wrought;
Whose insulated souls ne'er feel the pow'r
Of gen'rous sympathy's extatic hour;
Whose disconnected hearts ne'er taste the bliss
Extracted from another's happiness;
Who ne'er the high heroic duty know,
For public good the private to forego.
Then wherefore happy? where's the kindred mind?
Where the large soul which takes in human kind?
Yes—'tis the untold sorrow to explain,
To mitigate the unsuspected pain;
The rule of holy sympathy to keep,
Joy for the Joyful, tears for them that weep:
To these the virtuous half their pleasures owe,
Pleasures, the selfish are not born to know;
They never know in all their coarser bliss,
The sacred rapture of a pain like this.
Then take ye happy vulgar take your part
Of sordid joy which never touch'd the heart.
Benevolence, which seldom stays to choose,
Lest pausing Prudence tempt her to refuse;
Friendship, which once determin'd, never swerves,
Weighs ere it trusts, but weighs not ere it serves.
And soft-ey'd Pity, and Forgiveness bland,
And melting *Charity with open hand;*
And artless love, believing and believ'd,
And honest Confidence which ne'er deceiv'd;
And mercy, stretching out ere Want can speak,
To wipe the tear which stains Affliction's cheek;
These ye have never known—then take your part
Of sordid joy which never touch'd the heart.
You who have melted in bright glory's flame,
Or felt the grateful breath of well-earn'd fame;
Or you, the chosen agents from above,
Whose bounty vindicates Almighty love;
You, who subdue the vain desire of show,
Not to accumulate but to bestow;
You who the dreary haunts of sorrow seek,
Raise the sunk heart, and flush the fading cheek;
You, who divide the joys and share the pains,
When merit triumphs, or oppress'd complains;
You, who with pensive Petrarch, love to mourn,
Or weave the garland for Tibullus' urn;
You, whose touch'd hearts with real sorrows swell,
Or feel, when genius paints those sorrows well,
Would you renounce such energies as these
For vulgar pleasures or for selfish ease?
Would you to 'scape the pain, the joy forego,
And miss the transport to avoid the wo?
Would you the sense of actual pity lose,
Or cease to share the mournings of the muse?
No, Greville,* no!—thy song, tho' steep'd in tears,
Though all thy soul in all thy strain appears;
Yet would'st thou all thy well sung anguish choose,
And all th' inglorious peace thou begg'st refuse:
And while discretion all our views should guide,
Beware, lest secret aims and ends she hide;
Though 'midst the crowd of virtues, 'tis her part,
Like a firm sentinel—to guard the heart;
Beware, lest Prudence 'self become unjust,
Who never was deceiv'd, I would not trust;
Prudence must never be suspicion's slave,
The World's wise man is more than half a knave.
And you, Boscawen, while you fondly melt,
In raptures none but mothers ever felt;
And as you view, prophetic, in your race,
All Levison's sweetness, and all Beaufort's grace;
Yet dread what dangers each lov'd child may share,
The youth, if valiant, or the maid, if fair;
You who have felt, so frail is mortal joy!
That, while we clasp the phantom, we destroy;
That perils multiply as blessings flow,
That sorrows grafted on enjoyments grow;
That clouds impending dim our brightest views,
That who have most to love have most to lose;
Yet from these fair possessions would you part,
To shelter from contingent ills your heart?
Would you forego the objects of your prayer
To save the dangers of a distant care?
Renounce the brightness op'ning to your view
For all the safety dulness ever knew?
Would you consent, to shun the fears you prove
That they should merit less, or you less love.
Yet while we claim the sympathy divine,
Which makes, O man, the woes of others thine;
While her fair triumphs swell the modish page,
She drives the sterner virtues from the stage:
While Feeling boasts her ever tearful eye,
Fair Truth, firm Faith, and manly Justice fly:
Justice, prime good! from whose prolific law,
All worth, all virtue, their strong essence draw;
Justice, a grace quite obsolete we hold,
The feign'd Astrea of an age of gold:
The sterling attribute we scarcely own,
While spurious Candour fills the vacant throne.
Sweet Sensibility! Thou secret pow'r
Who shed'st thy gifts upon the natal hour,
Like fairy favours; Art can never seize,
Nor Affectation catch thy power to please;
Thy subtle essence still eludes the chains
Of Definition, and defeats her pains.
Sweet Sensibility! thou keen delight!
Unprompted moral! sudden sense of right!
Perception exquisite! fair Virtue's seed!
Thou quick precursor of the lib'ral deed!
Thou hasty conscience! reason's blushing morn!
Instinctive kindness e'er reflection 's born!
Prompt sense of equity! to thee belongs
The swift redress of unexamin'd wrongs!

* See her beautiful Ode to Indifference.

Eager to serve, the cause perhaps untried,
But always apt to chuse the suff'ring side!
To those who know thee not, no word can paint,
And those who know thee, know all words are faint!
She does not feel thy pow'r who boasts thy flame,
And rounds her every period with thy name;
Nor she who vents her disproportion'd sighs
With pining *Lesbia* when her sparrow dies:
Nor she who melts when hapless *Shore* expires,
While real mis'ry unreliev'd retires!
Who thinks feign'd sorrow all her tears deserve,
And weeps o'er Werter while her children starve,
As words are but th' external marks to tell
The fair ideas in the mind that dwell;
And only are of things the outward sign,
And not the things themselves they but define;
So exclamations, tender tones, fond tears,
And all the graceful drapery Feeling wears;
These are her garb, not her, they but express
Her form, her semblance, her appropriate dress;
And these fair marks, reluctant I relate,
These lovely symbols may be counterfeit.
There are, who fill with brilliant plaints the page,
If a poor linnet meet the gunner's rage;
There are, who for a dying fawn deplore,
As if friend, parent, country, were no more;
Who boast quick rapture trembling in their eye,
If from the spider's snare they snatch a fly;
There are, whose well sung plaints each breast inflame,
And break all hearts—but his from whom they came!
He, scorning life's low duties to attend,
Writes odes on friendship, while he cheats his friend.
Of jails and punishments he grieves to hear,
And pensions 'prison'd virtue with a tear;
While unpaid bills his creditor presents,
And ruin'd innocence his crime laments.
Not so the tender moralist of Tweed,
His gen'rous *man of feeling* feels indeed.
O Love divine! sole source of charity!
More dear one genuine deed perform'd for thee,
Than all the periods Feeling e'er could turn,
Than all thy touching page, perverted Sterne!
Not that by deeds alone this love 's express'd,
If so the affluent only were the bless'd;
One silent wish, one prayer, one soothing word,
The page of mercy shall, well-pleas'd record;
One soul-felt sigh by pow'rless pity given,
Accepted incense! shall ascend to heav'n!
Since trifles make the sum of human things,
And half our misery from our foibles springs,
Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
And though but few can serve, yet all may please;
O let th' ungentle-spirit learn from hence,
A small unkindness is a great offence.
To spread large bounties, though we wish in vain,
Yet all may shun the guilt of giving pain:
To bless mankind with tides of flowing wealth,
With rank to grace them, or to crown with health,
Our little lot denies; yet lib'ral still,
Heav'n gives its counterpoise to every ill,
Nor let us murmur at our stinted pow'rs,
When kindness, love, and concord, may be ours.
The gift of minist'ring to other's ease,
To all her sons impartial she decrees;
The gentle offices of patient love,
Beyond all flattery, and all price above;
The mild forbearance at a brother's fault,
The angry word suppress'd the taunting thought;
Subduing and subdu'd, the petty strife,
Which clouds the colour of domestic life;
The sober comfort, all the peace which springs,
From the large aggregate of little things;
On these small cares of daughter, wife, or friend,
The almost sacred joys of *home* depend:
There Sensibility, thou best may'st reign,
Home is thy true legitimate domain.
A solitary bliss thou ne'er could'st find,
Thy joys with those thou lov'st are intertwin'd
And he whose helpless tenderness removes
The rankling thorn which wounds the breast he loves,
Smooths not another's rugged path alone,
But clears th' obstruction which impedes his own.
The hint malevolent, the look oblique,
The obvious satire, or implied dislike;
The sneer equivocal, the harsh reply,
And all the cruel language of the eye;
The artful injury, whose venom'd dart,
Scarce wounds the hearing, while it stabs the heart;
The guarded phrase, whose meaning kills, yet told
The list'ner wonders, how you thought it cold;
Small slights, neglect, unmix'd perhaps with hate,
Make up in number what they want in weight.
These and a thousand griefs minute as these,
Corrode our comfort and destroy our ease.
As Feeling tends to good or leans to ill,
It gives fresh force to vice or principle;
'Tis not a gift peculiar to the good,
'Tis often but the virtue of the blood:
And what would seem compassion's moral flow,
Is but a circulation swift or slow:
But to divert it to its proper course,
There wisdom's pow'r appears, there reason's force:
If ill-directed it pursue the wrong,
It adds new strength to what before was strong;
Breaks out in wild irregular desires,
Disorder'd passions, and illicit fires;
Without, deforms the man, depraves within,
And makes the work of God the slave of sin.
But if Religion's bias rule the soul,
Then Sensibility exalts the whole;
Sheds its sweet sunshine on the moral part,
Nor wastes on fancy what should warm the heart.
Cold and inert the mental powers would lie,
Without this quick'ning spark of Deity.
To melt the rich materials from the mine,
To bid the mass of intellect refine,
To bend the firm, to animate the cold,
And heav'ns own image stamp on Nature's gold;
To give immortal mind its finest tone,
Oh, Sensibility! is all thy own.
This is th' eternal flame which lights and warms,
In song enchants us and in action charms.

'Tis this that makes the pensive strains of Gray*
Win to the open heart their easy way;
Makes the touch'd spirit glow with kindred fire,
When sweet Serena's poet wakes the lyre:
Makes Portland's face its brightest rapture wear,
When her large bounty smooths the bed of care:
'Tis this that breathes through Sevigne's fair page,
That nameless grace which sooths a second age;
'Tis this, whose charm the soul resistless seize,
And gives Boscawen half her power to please.
Yet why those terrors? Why that anxious care?
Since your last hope† the deathful war *will* dare?
Why dread that energy of soul which leads
To dang'rous glory by heroic deeds?
Why mourn to view his ardent soul aspire?
You fear the son because you knew the sire.
Hereditary valour you deplore,
And dread, yet wish to find one hero more.

* This is meant of the *Elegy in a Country Church yard*, of which exquisite poem *Sensibility* is perhaps the characteristic beauty.

† Viscount Falmouth, admiral Boscawen's only remaining son was then in America, and at the battle of Lexington.

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

A LEGENDARY TALE.

IN TWO PARTS.

Of them who, wrapt in earth so cold,
No more the smiling day shall view,
Should many a tender tale be told,
For many a tender thought is due.—*Langhorne.*

PART I.

O nostra Vita, ch'e si bella in vista!
Com' perde agevolmente in un momento,
Quel, ch'en molt' anni a grand pena s'acquista.—*Petrarca.*

THERE was a young and valiant knight,
Sir ELDRED was his name,
And never did a worthier wight
The rank of knighthood claim.
Where gliding *Tay*, her stream sends forth,
To feed the neighbouring wood,
The ancient glory of the north,
Sir Eldred's castle stood.
The knight was rich as knight might be
In patrimonial wealth;
And rich in nature's gift was he,
In youth, and strength, and health.
He did not think, as some have thought,
Whom honour never crown'd.
The fame a father dearly bought,
Could make the son renown'd,
He better thought, a noble sire,
Who gallant deeds had done,
To deeds of hardihood should fire
A brave and gallant son.
The fairest ancestry on earth
Without desert is poor;
And ev'ry deed of former worth
Is but a claim for more.
Sir Eldred's heart was ever kind,
Alive to pity's call;
A crowd of virtues grac'd his mind,
He lov'd and felt for all.
When merit rais'd the sufferer's name,
He show'rd his bounty then;
And those who could not prove that claim,
He succour'd still as men.
But sacred truth the muse compels
His errors to impart;
And yet the muse reluctant tells
The faults of Eldred's heart.
Though mild and soft as infant love
His fond affections melt;
Though all that kindest spirits prove
Sir Eldred keenly felt:
Yet if the passions storm'd his soul,
By jealousy led on;
The fierce resentment scorn'd controul,
And bore his virtues down,
Not Thule's waves so widely break
To drown the northern shore;
Not Etna's entrails fiercer shake,
Or Scythia's tempest roar.
As when in summer's sweetest day
To fan the fragrant morn,
The sighing breezes softly stray
O'er fields of ripen'd corn;
Sudden the lightning's blast descends,
Deforms the ravag'd fields;
At once the various ruin blends,
And all resistless yields.
But when, to clear his stormy breast,
The sun of reason shone,
And ebbing passions sunk to rest,
And show'd what rage had done:
O then what anguish he betray'd!
His shame how deep, how true!
He view'd the waste his rage had made,
And shudder'd at the view.
The meek-ey'd dawn, in saffron robe,
Proclaim'd the op'ning day,
Up rose the sun to gild the globe,
And hail the new-born May;
The birds their vernal notes repeat
And glad the thick'ning grove;
And feather'd partners fondly greet
With many a song of love:
When pious Eldred early rose
The Lord of all to hail;

Who life with all its gifts bestows,
Whose mercies never fail!
That done—he left his woodland glade,
And journey'd far away;
He lov'd to court the distant shade,
And through the lone vale stray.
Within the bosom of a wood,
By circling hills embrac'd,
A little, modest mansion stood,
Built by the hand of taste;
While many a prouder castle fell,
This safely did endure;
The house where guardian virtues dwell
Is sacred and secure.
Of eglantine an humble fence
Around the mansion stood,
Which serv'd at once to charm the sense,
And screen an infant wood.
The wood receiv'd an added grace,
As pleas'd it bent to look,
And view'd its ever verdant face
Reflected in a brook:
The smallness of the stream did well
The master's fortunes show;
But little streams may serve to tell
The source from whence they flow.
This mansion own'd an aged knight,
And such a man was he,
As heaven just shows to human sight,
To tell what man should be.
His youth in many a well-fought field
Was train'd betimes to war:
His bosom, like a well-worn shield,
Was grac'd with many a scar.
The vigour of a green old age
His reverend form did bear;
And yet, alas! the warrior-sage
Had drain'd the dregs of care:
And sorrow more than age can break,
And wound its hapless prey,
'Twas sorrow furrow'd his firm cheek,
And turn'd his bright locks gray.
One darling daughter sooth'd his cares,
A young and beauteous dame,
Sole comfort of his failing years,
And Birtha was her name.
Her heart a little sacred shrine,
Where all the Virtues meet,
And holy Hope and Faith divine
Had claim'd it for their seat.
She lov'd to raise her fragrant bower
Of wild and rustic taste,
And there she screen'd each fav'rite flower
From ev'ry ruder blast;
And not a shrub or plant was there
But did some moral yield;
For wisdom, by a father's care,
Was found in ev'ry field.
The trees, whose foliage fell away,
And with the summer died,
He thought an image of decay
Might lecture human pride:
While fair perennial greens that stood,
And brav'd the wintry blast,
As types of the fair mind be view'd,
Which shall for ever last.
He taught her that the gaudiest flowers
Were seldom fragrant found,
But wasted soon their little powers,
Dropt useless on the ground:
While the sweet-scented rose shall last,
And still retain its power,
When life's imperfect day is past
And beauty's shorter hour.
And here the virgin lov'd to lead
Her inoffensive day,
And here she oft retir'd to read,
And oft retir'd to pray.
Embower'd, she grac'd the woodland shades,
From courts and cities far,
The pride of Caledonian maids,
The peerless northern star.
As shines that bright and lucid star,
The glory of the night,
When beaming through the cloudless air
She sheds her silver light:
So Birtha shone!—But when she spoke
The muse herself was heard,
As on the ravish'd air she broke,
And thus her prayer preferr'd:
'O bless thy Birtha, Power Supreme
In whom I live and move,
And bless me most by blessing him,
Whom more than life I love.'
She starts to hear a stranger's voice,
And with a modest grace,
She lifts her meek eye in surprise,
And see's a stranger's face:
The stranger lost in transport stood,
Bereft of voice and power,
While she with equal wonder view'd
Sir Eldred of the bower.
The virgin blush which spreads her cheek
With nature's purest dye,
And all those dazzling beams which break
Like morning from her eye—
He view'd them all, and as he view'd
Drank deeply of delight;
And still his raptur'd eye pursued
And feasted on the sight.
With silent wonder long they gaz'd,
And neither silence broke;
At length the smother'd passion blaz'd,
Enamour'd Eldred spoke:
'O sacred virtue, heav'nly power!
Thy wond'rous force I feel:
I gaze, I tremble, I adore,
Yet die my love to tell.
My scorn has oft the dart repell'd
Which guileful beauty threw;
But goodness heard, and grace beheld,
Must every heart subdue.'
Quick on the ground her eyes were cast,
And now as quickly rais'd:—
Just then her father hap'ly past,
On whom she trembling gaz'd.
Good Ardolph's eye his Bertha meets
With glances of delight;
And thus with courteous speech he greets
The young and graceful knight;
'O gallant youth, whoe'er thou art,
Right welcome to this place!
There's something rises at my heart
Which says I've seen that face.'
'Thou gen'rous knight,' the youth rejoin'd,
'Though little known to fame,
I trust I bear a grateful mind—
Sir Eldred is my name.'
'Sir Eldred?'—Ardolph loud exclaim'd
'Renown'd for worth and power?

For valour and for virtue fam'd,
Sir Eldred of the bower?
Now make me grateful, righteous heaven,
As thou art good to me,
Since to my aged eyes 'tis given
Sir Eldred's son to see!'
Then Ardolph caught him by the hand,
And gaz'd upon his face,
And to his aged bosom strain'd,
With many a kind embrace.
Again he view'd him o'er and o'er,
And doubted still the truth,
And ask'd what he had ask'd before,
Then thus addresst the youth:
'Come now beneath my roof, I pray,
Some needful rest to take,
And with us many a cheerful day,
Thy friendly sojourn make!
He enter'd at the gate straightway,
Some needful rest to take;
And with them many a cheerful day
Did friendly sojourn make.

PART II.

Once—in a social summer's walk,
The gaudy day was fled;
They cheated time with cheerful talk,
When thus Sir Ardolph said:
Thy father was the firmest friend
That e'er my being blest;
And every virtue heaven could send,
Fast bound him to my breast.
Together did we learn to bear
The casque and ample shield;
Together learn in many a war
The deathful spear to wield.
To make our union still more dear,
We both were doom'd to prove,
What is most sweet and most severe
In heart dissolving love.
The daughter of a neighbouring knight
Did *my* fond heart engage;
And ne'er did heaven the virtues write
Upon a fairer page.
His bosom felt an equal wound,
Nor sigh'd we long in vain;
One summer's sun beheld us bound
In Hymen's holy chain.
Thou wast Sir Eldred's only child,
Thy father's darling joy;
On me a lovely daughter smil'd,
On me a blooming boy;
But man has woes, has clouds of care
That dim his star of life—
My arms receiv'd the little pair,
The earth's cold breast, my wife.
Forgive, thou gentle knight, forgive,
Fond foolish tears *will* flow;
One day like mine thy heart may heave,
And mourn its lot of wo.
But grant, kind heaven! thou ne'er may'st know
The pangs I now impart;
Nor even feel the parting blow
That rives a husband's heart.
Beside the blooming banks of *Tay*,
My angel's ashes sleep;
And wherefore should her Ardolph stay,
Except to watch and weep?
I bore my beauteous babes away
With many a gushing tear;
I left the blooming banks of *Tay*,
And brought my darlings here.
I watch'd my little household cares,
And formed their growing youth;
And fondly train'd their infant years
To piety and truth.'
'Thy blooming Birtha here I see,'
Sir Eldred straight rejoin'd;
'But why thy son is not with thee,
Resolve my doubting mind.'
When Birtha did the question hear,
She sigh'd, but could not speak;
And many a soft and silent tear
Stray'd down her damask cheek.
Then pass'd o'er good Sir Ardolph's face,
A cast of deadly pale;
But soon compos'd, with manly grace,
He thus renew'd his tale:
'For him my heart too much has bled;
For him, my darling son,
Has sorrow press'd my hoary head;
But heav'n's high will be done!'
Scarce eighteen winter's had revolv'd,
To crown the circling year,
Before my valiant boy resolv'd
The warrior's lance to bear.
Too high I priz'd my native land,
Too dear his fame I held,
T' oppose a parent's stern command,
And keep him from the field.
He left me—left his sister too,
Yet tears bedew'd his face—
What could a feeble old man do?
He burst from my embrace.
O thirst of glory, fatal flame!
O laurels dearly bought!
Yet sweet is death when earn'd with fame—
So virtuous Edwy thought.
Full manfully the brave boy strove,
Though pressing ranks oppose;
But weak the strongest arm must prove
Against an host of foes.
A deadly wound my son receives,
A spear assails his side:
Grief does not kill—for Ardolph lives
To tell that Edwy died.
His long-lov'd mother died again
In Edwy's parting groan;
I wept for her, yet wept in vain—
I wept for both in one.
I would have died—I sought to die,
But heaven restrain'd the thought,
And to my passion-clouded eye
My helpless Birtha brought.
When lo! array'd in robes of light,
A nymph celestial came.
She clear'd the mists that dimm'd my sight—
Religion was her name.
She prov'd the chastisement divine,
And bade me kiss the rod;
She taught this rebel heart of mine
Submission to its God.
Religion taught me to sustain
What nature bade me feel;
And piety reliev'd the pain
Which time can never heal.'
He ceas'd—with sorrow and delight
The tale Sir Eldred hears:
Then weeping cries—'Thou noble knight,

For thanks accept my tears.
O Ardolph, might I dare aspire
To claim so bright a boon!—
Good old Sir Eldred was my sire—
And thou hast lost a son.
And though I want a worthier plea
To urge so dear a cause;
Yet, let me to thy bosom be
What once thy Edwy was.
My trembling tongue its aid denies
For thou may'st disapprove;
Then read it in my ardent eyes,
Oh! read the tale of love.
Thy beauteous Birtha!'—'Gracious power!
How could I e'er repine,'
Cries Ardolph, 'since I see this hour?
Yes—Birtha shall be thine.'
A little transient gleam of red
Shot faintly o'er her face,
And ev'ry trembling feature spread
With sweet disorder'd grace.
The tender father kindly smil'd
With fulness of content;
And fondly ey'd his darling child,
Who, bashful, blush'd consent.
O then to paint the vast delight
That fill'd Sir Eldred's heart,
To tell the transports of the knight,
Would mock the Muse's art.
But ev'ry kind and gracious soul,
Where gentle passions dwell,
Will better far conceive the whole,
Than any muse can tell.
The more the knight his Birtha knew,
The more he priz'd the maid;
Some worth each day produc'd to view
Some grace each hour betray'd.
The virgin too was fond to charm
The dear accomplish'd youth;
His single breast she strove to warm,
And crown'd with love, his truth.
Unlike the dames of modern days,
Who *general* homage claim;
Who court the *universal* gaze,
And pant for *public* fame.
Then beauty but on merit smil'd,
Nor were her chaste smiles sold;
No venal father gave his child,
For grandeur, or for gold.
The ardour of young Eldred's flame
But ill could brook delay,
And oft he press'd the maid to name
A speedy nuptial day.
The fond impatience of his breast
'Twas all in vain to hide,
But she his eager suit represt
With modest maiden pride.
When oft Sir Eldred press'd the day
Which was to crown his truth,
The thoughtful sire would sigh and say,
'O happy state of youth!
It little recks the woes which wait
To scare it dreams of joy;
Nor thinks to-morrow's alter'd fate
May all those dreams destroy.
And though the flatterer Hope deceives,
And painted prospects shows;
Yet man, still cheated, still believes,
Till death the bright scene close.
So look'd *my* bride, so sweetly mild,
On me her beauty's slave;
But whilst she look'd, and whilst she smil'd
She sunk into the grave.
Yet, O forgive an old man's care,
Forgive a father's zeal;
Who fondly loves must greatly fear,
Who fears must greatly feel.
Once more in soft and sacred bands
Shall Love and Hymen meet;
To-morrow shall unite your hands,
And—be your bliss complete!'
The rising sun inflam'd the sky,
The golden orient blush'd;
But Birtha's cheeks a sweeter dye,
A brighter crimson flush'd.
The priest in milk-white vestments clad,
Perform'd the mystic rite;
Love lit the hallow'd torch that led
To Hymen's chaste delight.
How feeble language were to speak
Th' immeasurable joy,
That fir'd Sir Eldred's ardent cheek,
And triumph'd in his eye!
Sir Ardolph's pleasure stood confest,
A pleasure all his own;
The guarded pleasure of a breast
Which many a grief had known.
'Twas such a sober sense of joy
As angels well might keep
A joy chastis'd by piety,
A joy prepared to weep.
To recollect her scatter'd thought,
And shun the noon-tide hour,
The lovely bride in secret sought
The coolness of her bower.
Long she remain'd—th' enamour'd knight,
Impatient at her stay;
And all unfit to taste delight
When Birtha was away;
Betakes him to the secret bower;
His footsteps softly move;
Impell'd by ev'ry tender power,
He steals upon his love.
O, horror! horror! blasting sight!
He sees his Birtha's charms,
Reclin'd with melting, fond delight,
Within a stranger's arms.
Wild frenzy fires his frantic hand.
Distracted at the sight,
He flies to where the lovers stand;
And stabs the stranger knight.
'Die, traitor, die! thy guilty flames
Demand th' avenging steel!'—
'It is my brother,' she exclaims!
''Tis Edwy—Oh farewell!'
An aged peasant, Edwy's guide,
The good old Ardolph sought;
He told him that his bosom's pride,
His Edwy, he had brought.
O how the father's feelings melt!
How faint and how revive!
Just so the Hebrew patriarch felt,
To find his son alive.
'Let me behold my darling's face,
And bless him ere I die!'
Then with a swift and vigorous pace,
He to the bower did hie;
O sad reverse!—Sunk on the ground
His slaughter'd son he view'd;
And dying Birtha, close he found

In brother's blood imbru'd.
Cold, speechless, senseless, Eldred near,
Gaz'd on the deed he'd done;
Like the blank statue of *Despair*,
Or *Madness* grav'd in stone.
The father saw—so Jephthah stood,
So turn'd his wo-fraught eye,
When the dear, destin'd child he view'd
His zeal had doom'd to die.
He look'd the wo he could not speak,
And on the pale corse prest
His wan discolour'd, dying cheek,
And silent sunk to rest.
Then Birtha faintly rais'd her eye,
Which long had ceas'd to stream.
On Eldred fix'd, with many a sigh,
Its dim departing beam.
The cold, cold dews of hastening death,
Upon her pale face stand;
And quick and short her failing breath,
And tremulous her hand.
The cold, cold dews of hastening death,
The dim departing eye,
The quiv'ring hand, the short quick breath,
He view'd—and did not die.
He saw her spirit mount in air,
Its kindred skies to seek!
His heart its anguish could not bear,
And yet it would not break.
The mournful muse forbears to tell
How wretched Eldred died;
She draws the Grecian* painter's veil,
The vast distress to hide.
Yet heaven's decrees are just and wise,
And man is born to bear:
Joy is the portion of the skies,
Beneath them all is care.
Yet blame not heav'n; 'tis erring man,
Who mars his own best joys;
Whose passions uncontroll'd, the plan
Of promis'd bliss destroys.
Had Eldred *paus'd* before the blow,
His hand had never err'd;
What guilt, what complicated wo,
His soul had then been spar'd!
The deadliest wound with which we bleed,
Our crimes inflict alone;
Man's *mercies* from God's hand proceed,
His *miseries* from his *own*.

* In the celebrated picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Timanthes having exhausted every image of grief in the bystanders, threw a veil over the face of the father, whose sorrow he was utterly unable to express. Plin. book xxxv.

THE BLEEDING ROCK:

OR

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A NYMPH INTO STONE

——— The annual wound allur'd
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate,
In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, suppos'd with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded.—*Milton.*

Where beauteous *Belmont* rears her modest brow
To view *Sabrina's* silver wave below,
Liv'd young Ianthe, fair as beauty's queen;
She reign'd unrivall'd in the sylvan scene;
Hers every charm of symmetry and grace,
Which aids the triumph of the fairest face;
With all that softer elegance of mind,
By genius heighten'd, and by taste refin'd
Yet early was she doom'd the child of care,
For hapless love subdu'd th' ill-fated fair,
Ah! what avails each captivating grace,
The form enchanting, or the fairest face?
Or what each beauty of the heav'n-born mind,
The soul superior, or the taste refin'd?
Beauty but serves destruction to insure,
And *sense* to feel the pang it cannot cure.
Each neighb'ring youth aspir'd to gain her hand,
And many a suitor came from many a land:
But all in vain each neighb'ring youth aspir'd,
And distant suitors all in vain admir'd.
Averse to hear, yet fearful to offend,
The lover she refus'd she made a friend:
Her meek rejection wore so mild a face,
More like acceptance seem'd it, than disgrace.
Young Polydore, the pride of rural swains,
Was wont to visit *Belmont's* blooming plains.
Who has not heard how Polydore could throw
Th' unerring dart to wound the flying doe?
How leave the swiftest at the race behind,
How mount the courser, and outstrip the wind?
With melting sweetness, or with magic fire,
Breathe the soft flute, or sweep the well-strung lyre?
From that fam'd lyre no vulgar music sprung,
The Graces tun'd it, and Apollo strung.
Apollo too was once a shepherd swain,
And fed the flock, and grac'd the rustic plain:
He taught what charms to rural life belong,
The social sweetness, and the sylvan song;
He taught fair Wisdom in her grove to woo,
Her joys how precious, and her wants how few!
The savage herds in mute attention stood,
And ravish'd *Echo* fill'd the vocal wood;
The sacred sisters, stooping from their sphere,
Forgot their golden harps, intent to hear;
Till Heaven the scene survey'd with jealous eyes,
And Jove, in envy, call'd him to the skies.
Young Polydore was rich in large domains,
In smiling pastures, and in flow'ry plains;
With these, he boasted each exterior charm,
To win the prudent, and the cold to warm;

The fairest semblance of desert he bore,
And each fictitious mark of goodness wore;
Could act the tenderness he never felt,
In sorrow soften, and in anguish melt.
The sigh elaborate, the fraudful tear,
The joy dissembled, and the well feign'd fear,
All these were his; and his each treach'rous art,
That steals the guileless and unpractis'd heart.
Too soon he heard of fair Ianthe's fame,
'Twas each enamour'd shepherd's fav'rite theme;
Return'd the rising, and the setting sun,
The shepherd's fav'rite theme was never done.
They prais'd her wit, her worth, her shape, her air!
And even inferior beauties own'd her fair.
Such sweet perfection all his wonder moved:
He saw, admired, nay, fancied that he loved:
But Polydore no gen'rous passion knew,
Lost to all truth in feigning to be true.
No lasting tenderness could warm a heart,
Too vain to feel, too selfish to impart.
Cold as the snows of Rhodope descend,
And with the chilling wave of Hebrus blend;
So cold the breast where Vanity presides,
And the whole subject soul absorbs and guides.
Too well he knew to make his conquest sure,
Win her soft heart, yet keep his own secure.
So oft he told the well imagin'd tale,
So oft he swore—how should he *not* prevail?
The well-imagin'd tale the nymph believ'd;
Too unsuspecting not to be deceiv'd:
She lov'd the youth, she thought herself belov'd,
Nor blush'd to praise whom every maid approv'd.
The conquest once achiev'd, the brightest fair,
When conquer'd, was no longer worth his care:
When to the world her passion he could prove,
Vain of his pow'r, he jested at her love.
The perjur'd youth, from sad Ianthe far
To win fresh triumphs, wages cruel war.
With other nymphs behold the wand'rer rove,
And tell the story of Ianthe's love;
He mocks her easy faith, insults her wo,
Nor pities tears himself had taught to flow.
To sad Ianthe soon the tale was borne,
How Polydore to treach'ry added scorn.
And now her eyes' soft radiance 'gan to fail,
And now the crimson of her cheek grew pale;
The lily there in faded beauty shows
Its sickly empire o'er the vanquish'd rose.
Devouring Sorrow marks her for his prey,
And, slow and certain, mines his silent way.
Yet, as apace her ebbing life declin'd,
Increasing strength sustain'd her firmer mind.
'O had my heart been hard as his,' she cried,
'An hapless victim thus I had not died:
If there be gods, and gods there surely are,
Insulted virtue doubtless is their care.
Then hasten, righteous Powers; my tedious fate,
Shorten my woes, and end my mortal date:
Quick let your power transform this failing frame,
Let me be any thing but what I am!
And since the cruel woes I'm doom'd to feel,
Proceed, alas! from having lov'd too well:
Grant me some form where love can have no part,
No human weakness reach my guarded heart;
Where no soft touch of passion can be felt,
No fond affection this weak bosom melt.
If Pity has not left your blest abodes,
Change me to flinty adamant, ye gods!
To hardest rock, or monumental stone,
So may I know no more the pangs I've known;
So shall I thus no farther torments prove,
Nor taunting rivals say she died for love:
For sure, if aught can aggravate our wo,
'Tis the feign'd pity of a prosp'rous foe.'
Thus pray'd the nymph, and straight the Pow'rs addrest,
Accord the weeping suppliant's sad request.
Then strange to tell! if rural folks say true,
To harden'd rock the stiff'ning damsel grew,
No more her shapeless features can be known,
Stone is her body, and her limbs are stone;
The growing rock invades her beauteous face,
And quickly petrifies each living grace;
The stone, her stature nor her shape retains,
The nymph is vanish'd, but the rock remains.
No vestige now of human shape appears.
No cheeks for blushes, and no eyes for tears:
Yet—strange the marvels poets can impart!
Unchang'd, unchill'd, remain'd the glowing heart;
Its vital spirits destin'd still to keep,
It scorn'd to mingle with the marble heap.
When babbling Fame the wondrous tidings bore,
Grief seiz'd the soul of perjur'd Polydore;
And now the falsehood of his soul appears,
And now his broken vows assail his ears.
Appall'd his smitten fancy seems to view
The nymph so lovely, and the friend so true.
For since her absence, all the virgin train,
His admiration sought to win in vain.
Though not to keep him ev'n Ianthe knew,
From vanity alone his falsehood grew:
O let the youthful heart, thus warn'd beware,
Of vanity, how deep, how wide the snare;
That half the mischiefs youth and beauty know,
From Vanity's exhaustless fountain flow.
Now deep remorse deprives his soul of rest:
And deep compunction wounds his guilty breast:
Then to the fatal spot in haste he flew,
Eager some vestige of the maid to view,
The shapeless rock he mark'd, but found no trace
Of lost Ianthe's form, Ianthe's face.
He fix'd his streaming eyes upon the stone,
'And take sweet maid,' he cried, 'my parting groan;
Since we are doom'd thus terribly to part,
No other nymph shall ever share my heart;
Thus only I'm absolv'd'—he rashly cried,
Then plung'd a deadly poinard in his side!
Fainting, the steel he grasp'd, and as he fell
The weapon pierc'd the rock he lov'd so well;
The guiltless steel assail'd the living part,
And stabb'd the vital, vulnerable heart.
And though the rocky mass was pale before,
Behold it ting'd with ruddy streams of gore!
The life-blood issuing from the wounded stone,
Blends with the crimson current of his own;
From Polydore's fresh wound it flow'd in part,
But chief emitted from Ianthe's heart.
And though revolving ages since have past,
The meeting torrents undiminish'd last;
Still gushes out the sanguine stream amain,
The standing wonder of the stranger swain
Now once a year, so rustic records tell,

When o'er the heath resounds the midnight bell;
On eve of midsummer, that foe to sleep,
What time young maids their annual vigils keep,
The tell-tale shrub,* fresh gather'd to declare
The swains who false, from those who constant are;
When ghosts in clanking chains the church-yard walk,
And to the wond'ring ear of fancy talk:
When the scar'd maid steals trembling thro' the grove,
To kiss the grave of him who died for love;
When, with long watchings, Care at length oppprest,
Steals broken pauses of uncertain rest;
Nay, Grief short snatches of repose can take,
And nothing but Despair is quite awake;
Then, at that hour, so still, so full of fear,
When all things horrible to thought appear,
Is perjur'd Polydore observ'd to rove
A ghastly spectre through the gloomy grove;
Then to the rock, the *Bleeding-rock* repair,
Where, sadly sighing it dissolves to air.

* Midsummer-men, consulted as oracular by village maids.

Still when the hours of solemn rites return,
The village train in sad procession mourn;
Pluck ev'ry weed which might the spot disgrace,
And plant the fairest field flowers in their place.
Around no noxious plant, or flow'ret grows,
But the first daffodil, and earliest rose;
The snow-drop spreads its whitest blossom here,
And golden cowslips grace the vernal year:
Here the pale primrose takes a fairer hue,
And ev'ry violet boasts a brighter blue.
Here builds the wood-lark, here the faithful dove
Laments his lost, or woos his living love.
Secure from harm is ev'ry hallow'd nest,
The spot is sacred where true lovers rest.
To guard the rock from each malignant sprite,
A troop of guardian spirits watch by night;
Aloft in air each takes his little stand,
The neighb'ring hill is hence call'd *Fairy Land.**

* By contraction, *Failand*, a hill well known in Somersetshire: not far from this is *The Bleeding Rock*, from which constantly issues a crimson current. A desire to account for this appearance, gave rise to a whimsical conversation, which produced these slight verses.

ODE.

FROM H. M. AT BRISTOL, TO DRAGON, MR. GARRICK'S HOUSE DOG, AT HAMPTON.

I. Dragon! since lyrics are the mode,
To thee I dedicate my ode,
And reason good I plead:
Are those who cannot write, to blame
To draw their hopes of future fame,
From those who cannot read?
II. O could I like that nameless wight,*
Find the choice minute when to write,
Tho *mollia tempora fandi!*
Like his, my muse should learn to whistle
A true *heroical epistle*,
In strains which ne'er can die.
III. Father of lyrics, tuneful Horace!
Can thy great shade do nothing for us
To mend the British lyre?
Our luckless bards have broke the strings,
Seiz'd the scar'd muses, pluck'd their wings,
And put out all their fire.†
IV. Dragon! thou tyrant of the yard,
Great namesake of that furious guard
That watch'd the fruits Hesperian!
Thy choicer treasures safely keep,
Nor snatch one moment's guilty sleep,
Fidelity's criterion.
V. O Dragon! change with me thy fate,
To give me up thy place and state,
And I will give thee mine:
I, left to think, and thou to feed!
My mind enlarg'd, thy body freed,
How blest *my* lot and *thine!*
VI. Then shalt thou scent the rich regale
Of turtle and diluting ale,
Nay, share the sav'ry bit;

* See the admirable epistle to sir William Chambers.
† A profusion of odes had appeared about this time, which strikingly violated all the rules of lyrical composition.

And see, what thou hast never seen,
For thou hast but at Hampton been,
A feast devoid of wit.
VII. Oft shalt thou snuff the smoking venison,
Devour'd *alone*, by hungry denizen,
So fresh, thoul't long to tear it;
Though Flaccus* tells a diff'rent tale
Of social souls who chose it stale,
Because their *friends* should share it.
VIII. And then on me what joys would wait,
Were I the guardian of thy gate,
How useless bolt and latch!
How vain were locks, and bars how vain,
To shield from harm the household train
Whom I, from love, would watch!
IX. Not that 'twould crown with joy my life
That Bowden,† or that Bowden's wife,
Brought me my daily pickings:
Though she, accelerating fate,
Decrees the scanty moral date
Of turkeys and of chickens!
X. Though fir'd with innocent ambition,
Bowden, great Nature's rhetorician,
More flow'rs than Burke produces;
And though he 's skill'd more roots to find,
Than ever stock'd an Hebrew's mind,
And knows their various uses.
XI. I'd get my master's ways by rote,
Ne'er would I bark at ragged coat,
Nor tear the tatter'd sinner;
Like him I'd love the dog of merit
Caress the cur of broken spirit,
And give them all a dinner.
XII. Nor let me pair his blue-ey'd dame
With Venus' or Minerva's name,

* Hor. lib. ii. Sat. 2.
† The gardener and poultry woman at Hampton.

One warrior, one coquet;
No, Pallas and the queen of Beauty
Shunn'd, or betray'd that nuptial duty,
Which *she* so high has set.
XIII. Whene'er I heard the rattling coach
Proclaim their long-desir'd approach,
How would I haste to greet 'em!
Nor ever feel I wore a chain,
Till, starting, I perceiv'd with pain
I could not fly to meet 'em!
XIV. The master loves his sylvan shade:
Here, with the nine melodious maids,
His choicest hours are spent:
Yet shall I hear some wittling cry,
(Such wittling from my presence fly!)
'Garrick will soon repent:
XV. 'Again you'll see him, never fear;
Some half a dozen times a year
He still will charm the age;
Accustom'd long to be admir'd,
Of shades and streams he'll soon be tir'd,
And languish for the stage.'
XVI. Peace! To his solitude he bears
The full-blown fame of thirty years;
He bears a nation's praise;
He bears his lib'ral, polish'd mind,
His worth, his wit, his sense refin'd
He bears his well-earn'd bays.
XVII. When warm admirers drop a tear
Because this sun has left his sphere,
And set before his time;
I who have felt and lov'd his rays,
What they condemn will loudly praise,
And call the deed sublime.
XVIII. How wise long-pamper'd with applause,
To make a voluntary pause
And lay his laurels down!
Boldly repelling each strong claim,
To dare assert to Wealth and Fame,
'Enough of both I've known.'
XIX. How wise! a short retreat to steal,
The vanity of life to feel,
And from its cares to fly:
To act one calm, domestic scene,
Earth's bustle, and the grave between,
Revere, and learn to die!

EPITAPHS.

ON THE REVEREND MR. PENROSE,

Thirty-two years Vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall.

If social manners, if the gentlest mind,
If zeal for God, and love for human kind,
If all the charities which life endear,
May claim affection, or demand a tear,
Then o'er Penrose's venerable urn
Domestic love may weep, and friendship mourn.
The path of duty still, untir'd, he trod,
He walk'd in safety, for he walk'd with God!
When past the power of precept and of pray'r,
Yet still his flock remain'd the shepherd's care;
Their wants still kindly watchful to supply,
He taught his best, last lesson, how to die!

ON MRS. BLANFORD.

Meek shade, farewell! go seek that quiet shore
Where sin shall vex, and sorrow wound no more;
Thy lowly worth obtains that final bliss,
Which pride disdains to seek, and wit may miss.
That path thou'st found which science cannot teach,
But faith and goodness never fail to reach:
Then share the joy the words of life impart,
The Vision promis'd to the *pure in heart.*

ON MRS. LITTLE,

In Redcliff Church, England.

O could this verse her fair example spread,
And teach the living while it prais'd the dead!
Then, reader! should it speak her hope divine,
Not to record her faith, but strengthen thine;
Then should her ev'ry virtue stand confest,
Till ev'ry virtue kindle in thy breast.
But, if thou slight the monitory strain,
And she has liv'd, to thee at least, in vain;
Yet let her death, an awful lesson give,
The dying Christian speaks to all that live.
Enough for her that here her ashes rest,
Till God's own plaudit hall her worth attest.

ON GENERAL LAWRENCE,

Memorable for his conquests in India, and for his clemency to the vanquished.

On a Monument erected by Sir Robert Palk.

Born to command, to conquer, and to spare,
As mercy mild, yet terrible in war,
Here Lawrence rests in death; while living fame
From Thames to Ganges wafts his honour'd name.
To him this frail memorial Friendship rears,
Whose noblest monument's a nation's tears;
Whose deeds on fairer columns stand engrav'd,
In provinces preserv'd and cities sav'd.

TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. ELIZABETH VES,

Aged Ninety-one, of Northampton.

Her pious and useful life,
was extended to an honourable old age,
and closed by an exemplary death,
Her *Charity* had its source
In *Religion:*
Her love of her neighbour
was the genuine effect
of her love of God:
Her *Resignation*
was the Fruit of her *Faith,*
and she died in *Hope*
because she had lived
A Christian.

ON THE REVEREND MR. HUNTER,

Who receiv'd a degree from the University of Oxford for his work against Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy.

Go, happy spirit, seek that blissful land
Where zealous Michael leads the glorious band
Of those who fought for truth; blest spirit, go
And perfect all the good begun below:
Go, hear applauding saints, delighted, tell
How vanquish'd Falsehood, at thy bidding fell!
Blest in that heav'n whose paths thy virtue sought;
Blest in that God whose cause thou well hast fought;
O let thy honour'd shade *his* care approve,
Who this memorial rears of filial love:
A son, whose father, living, was his pride;
A son who mourns that such a father died.

ON C. DICEY, Esq.

In Claybrook Church, Leicestershire.

O THOU, or friend or stranger, who shall tread
These solemn mansions of the silent dead!
Think, when this record to inquiring eyes,
No more shall tell the spot where Dicey lies;
When this frail marble, faithless to its trust,
Mould'ring itself, resigns its moulder'd dust;
When time shall fail, and Nature's self decay,
And earth, and sun, and skies dissolve away;
Thy soul, this consummation shall survive,
Defy the wreck, and but *burn* to live.
This truth, long slighted, these ashes teach,
Though cold, instruct yet, and though silent preach:
O pause! reflect, repent, resolve, amend!
Life has no length, eternity no end!

ON A YOUNG LADY.

Go, peaceful shade exchange for sin and care
The glorious palm which patient suff'rers wear!
Go, take the meed victorious meekness gains,
Go, wear the crown triumphant faith obtains.
Those silent graces which the good conceal,
The day of dread disclosure shall reveal;
Then shall thy mild, retiring virtues rise,
And God, both judge and witness, give the prize.

INSCRIPTION FOR A CENOTAPH IN A GARDEN.

ERECTED TO A DECEASED FRIEND.

Ye lib'ral souls who rev'rence Friendship's name,
Who boast her blessings, and who feel her flame;
Oh! if from early youth one friend you've lov'd,
Whom warm affection chose, and taste approv'd;
If you have known what anguish rends the heart
When she, so known, so lov'd, for ever part;
Approach—For you the mourner rears this stone,
To sooth your sorrows, and record his own.

ON THE REVEREND MR. LOVE.

In the Cathedral, at Bristol.

WHEN worthless grandeur fills th' embellish'd urn.
No poignant grief attends the sable bier:
But when distinguish'd excellence we mourn,
Deep is the sorrow, genuine is the tear.
Stranger! should'st thou approach this awful shrine,
The merits of the honour'd dead to seek;
The friend, the son, the Christian, the divine,
Let those who knew him, those who lov'd him speak.
Oh let them in some pause of anguish say,
What zeal inflam'd, what faith enlarg'd his breast!
How glad the unfetter'd spirit wing'd its way
From earth to heav'n, from blessing to be blest!

ON THE REVEREND

SIR JAMES STONHOUSE, BART. M. D.

In the Chapel at the Hot-Wells, Bristol.

HERE rest awhile, in happier climes to shine,
The orator, physician, and divine:
'Twas his, like Luke, the double task to fill,
To heal the nat'ral and the moral ill.
You, whose awaken'd hearts his labours blest,
Where ev'ry truth, by ev'ry grace was drest;
Oh! let your lives evince that still you feel
Th' effective influence of his fervent zeal.
One spirit rescued from eternal wo
Were nobler fame than marble can bestow;
That lasting monument will mock decay
And stand, triumphant, at the final day.

ON SARAH STONHOUSE,

Second wife of the Rev. Sir James Stonhouse, Bart.

COME resignation! wipe the human tear,
Domestic anguish drops o'er Virtue's bier;
Bid selfish sorrow hush the fond complaint,
Nor, from the God she lov'd, detain the saint,
Truth, meekness, patience, honour'd shade were thine;
And holy hope, and charity divine:
Though these thy forfeit being could not save,
Thy faith subdu'd the terrors of the grave.
Oh! if thy *living* excellence could teach.
Death has a loftier emphasis of speech:
Let death thy strongest lesson then impart;
And write *prepare to die*, on ev'ry heart.

THE FOOLISH TRAVELLER:

OR, A GOOD INN IS A BAD HOME.

THERE was a prince of high degree,
As great and good as prince could be;
Much pow'r and wealth were in his hand,
With lands and lordships at command,
One son, a fav'rite son, he had,
An idle thoughtless kind of lad;
Whom, spite of all his follies past,
He meant to make his heir at last.

The son escap'd to foreign lands,
And broke his gracious sire's commands;
Far, as he fancied, from his sight,
In each low joy he took delight.
The youth, detesting peace and quiet,
Indulg'd in vice, expense, and riot;
Of each wild pleasure rashly tasted,
Till health declined, and substance wasted
The tender sire, to pity prone,
Promis'd to pardon what was done;
And, would he certain terms fulfil
He should receive a kingdom still.
The youth the *pardon* little minded,
So much his sottish soul was blinded;
But though he mourn'd no past transgression,
He lik'd the future rich possession.
He lik'd the kingdom when obtain'd,
But not the terms on which 'twas gain'd;
He hated pain and self-denial,
Chose the reward, but shunn'd the trial.
He knew his father's power how great,
How glorious too the promis'd state!
At length resolves no more to roam
But straight to seek his father's home.
His sire had sent a friend to say,
He must be cautious on his way;
Told him what road he must pursue,
And always keep his home in view.
The thoughtless youth set out indeed,
But soon he slacken'd in his speed;
For ev'ry trifle by the way
Seduc'd his idle heart astray.
By ev'ry casual impulse sway'd,
On ev'ry slight pretence he stay'd;
To each, to all, his passions bend,
He quite forgets his journey's end.
For ev'ry sport, for ev'ry song,
He halted as he pass'd along;
Caught by each idle sight he saw,
He'd loiter e'en to pick a straw.
Whate'er was present seiz'd his soul,
A feast, a show, a brimming bowl;
Contented with this vulgar lot,
His father's house he quite forgot.
Those slight refreshments by the way,
Which were but meant his strength to stay,
So sunk his soul in sloth and sin,
He look'd no farther than his inn.
His father's friend would oft appear
And sound the *promise* in his ear;
Oft would he rouse him, 'Sluggard come!
This is thy inn, and not thy home.'
Displeas'd he answers, 'Come what will,
Of present bliss I'll take my fill;
In vain you plead, in vain I hear,
Those joys are distant, these are near.'
Thus perish'd, lost to worth and truth,
In sight of home this hapless youth;
While beggars, foreigners, and poor,
Enjoy'd the father's boundless store.

APPLICATION.

My fable, reader, speaks to thee,
In God this bounteous father see;
And in his thoughtless offspring trace,
The sinful, wayward, human race.
The friend, the generous father sent
To rouse, and to reclaim him, meant
The faithful minister you'll find,
Who calls the wand'ring, warns the blind.
Reader, awake! this youth you blame,
Are not *you* doing just the same?
Mindless your comforts are but given
To help you on your way to heav'n.
The pleasures which beguile the road,
The flow'rs with which your path is strew'd
To these your whole desires you bend
And quite forget your journey's end.
The meanest toys your soul entice,
A feast, a song, a game at dice;
Charm'd with your present paltry lot,
Eternity is quite forgot.
Then listen to a warning friend,
Who bids you mind your journey's end;
A wand'ring pilgrim here you roam;
This world's your *inn*, the next your *home*.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY CONQUERED:

OR, LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.

IN THE MANNER OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

THE OBJECTOR,

I. Each man who lives the Scriptures prove,
Must as himself his neighbour love;
But though the precept 's full of beauty,
'Tis an impracticable duty:
  I'll prove how hard it is to find
  A lover of this wond'rous kind.
II. Who loves himself to great excess,
You'll grant *must* love his neighbour less;
When self engrosses all the heart
How can another have a part?
  Then if self-love most men enthral,
  A neighbour's share is none at all.
III. Say, can the man who hoards up pelf
E'er love his neighbour as himself?
For if he did, would he not labour
To hoard a little for his neighbour?
  Then tell me, friend, can hoarding elves
  E'er love their neigbour as themselves?
IV. The man whose heart is bent on *pleasure*
Small love will to his neighbour measure:
Who solely studies his own good,
Can't love another if he would.
  Then how can pleasure-hunting elves
  E'er love their neighbour as themselves!
V. Can he whom sloth and loitering please
E'er love his neighbour like his *ease*?
Or he who feels ambition's flame
Loves he his neighbour like his *fame*?
  Such lazy, or such soaring elves
  Can't love their neighbour as themselves.
VI. He, whose gross appetites enslave him,
Who spends or feasts the wealth God gave him,
Full, pamper'd, gorg'd at ev'ry meal,
He *cannot* for the empty feel.
  How can such *gormandizing* elves
  E'er love their neighbour as themselves?

VII. Then since the man who lusts for *gold*,
Since he who is to *pleasure* sold;
Who soars in *pride*, or sinks in *ease*,
His neighbour will not serve or please;
Where shall we hope the man to find
To fill this great command inclin'd?
VIII. I dare not blame God's holy word,
Nor censure Scripture as absurd;
But sure the rule 's of no avail
If plac'd so high that all must fail;
And 'tis *impossible* to prove
That *any* can his neighbour love.

THE ANSWERER.

IX. Yes, such there are of heav'nly mould,
Unwarp'd by pleasure, ease, or gold;
He who fulfils the nobler part
By loving God with all his heart,
He, only he, the Scriptures prove,
Can, as himself, his *neighbour* love.
X. Then join, to make a perfect plan,
The love of God to love of man;
Your heart in union both must bring,
This is the stream, and that the spring;
This done, no more in vain you'll labour,
A Christian can't *but* love his neighbour.
XI. If then the rule 's too hard to please ye,
Turn Christian, and you'll find it easy.
'Still, 'tis impossible.' you'll cry,
'In vain shall feeble nature try.'
'Tis true; but know a Christian is a creature
Who does things quite impossible to nature.

INSCRIPTION

IN A BEAUTIFUL RETREAT, CALLED FAIRY BOWER.

Airy spirits, you who love
Cooling bow'r, or shady grove:
Streams that murmur as they flow,
Zephyrs bland that softly blow;
Babbling echo, or the tale
Of the love-lorn nightingale;
Hither airy spirits, come,
This is your peculiar home,
If you love a verdant glade,
If you love a noon-tide shade,
Hither, sylphs and fairies fly,
Unobserv'd of earthly eye.
Come, and wander ev'ry night,
By the moon-beam's glimm'ring light
And again at early day
Brush the silver dews away.
Mark where first the daisies blow,
Where the bluest violets grow;
Where the sweetest linnet sings,
Where the earliest cowslip springs;
Where the largest acorn lies.
Precious in a fairy's eyes;
Sylphs, though unconfin'd to place,
Love to fill an acorn's space.
Come, and mark within what bush
Builds the blackbird or the thrush;
Great his joy who first espies,
Greater his who spares the prize!
Come, and watch the hallow'd bow'r,
Chase the insect from the flow'r;
Little offices like these,
Gentle souls and fairies please.
Mortals! form'd of grosser clay,
From our haunts keep far away;
Or, if you should dare appear,
See that you from vice are clear.
Folly's minion, Fashion's fool,
Mad Ambition's restless tool!
Slave of passion, slave of pow'r,
Fly, ah fly! this tranquil bow'r!
Son of Av'rice, soul of frost,
Wretch! of Heav'n abhorred the most,
Learn to pity others' wants,
Or avoid these hallow'd haunts.
Eye unconscious of a tear,
When Afflictions train appear;
Heart that never heav'd a sigh,
For another, come not nigh.
But, ye darling sons of Heav'n,
Giving freely what was giv'n;
You, whose lib'ral hand dispense
The blessings of benevolence:
You, who wipe the tearful eye,
You, who stop the rising sigh;
You, whose souls have understood
The luxury of doing good—
Come, ye happy virtuous few,
Open is my bow'r to you;
You, these mossy banks may press,
You, each guardian fay shall bless.

THE BAD BARGAIN:

OR, THE WORLD SET UP TO SALE.

The Devil, as the Scriptures show,
Tempts sinful mortals high and low;
And acting well his various part,
Suits every bribe to every heart:
See where the prince of darkness stands
With baits for souls in both his hands.
To one he offers empires whole,
And gives a sceptre for a soul;
To one, he freely gives in barter,
A peerage, or a star and garter;
To one he pays polite attention,
And begs him just to take a pension.
Some are so fir'd with love of fame,
He bribes them by an empty name;
For fame they toil, they preach, they write,
Give alms, build hospitals or fight;
For human praise renounce salvation,
And sell their souls for reputation.
But the great gift, the mighty bribe,
Which Satan pours amid the tribe,
Which millions seize with eager haste,
And all desire at least to taste,

Is—plodding reader!—what d'ye think?
Alas!—tis money—money—chink!
Round the wide world the tempter flies,
Presents to view the glittering prize;
See how he hastes from shore to shore,
And how the nations all adore:
Souls flock by thousands to be sold,
Smit with the fond desire of gold.
See, at yon needy tradesman's shop,
The universal tempter stop;
'Would'st thou,' he cries, 'increase thy treasures,
Use lighter weights and scantier measures,
Thus thou shalt thrive:' the trader's willing,
And sells his soul to get a shilling.
Next Satan to a farmer hies,
'I scorn to cheat,' the farmer cries:
Yet still his heart on wealth is bent,
And so the Devil is content;
Now markets rise, and riches roll,
And Satan quite secures his soul.
Mark next yon cheerful youth so jolly.
So fond of laughter and of folly;
He hates a stingy griping fellow,
But gets each day a little mellow;
To Satan too he sells his soul
In barter for a flowing bowl.
But mark again yon lass a spinning,
See how the tempter is beginning:
Some beau presents a top-knot nice,
She grants her virtue as the price;
A slave to vanity's controul,
She, for a riband, sells her soul!
Thus Satan tries each different state:
With mighty bribes he tempts the great;
The poor, with equal force he plies,
But wins them with a humbler prize:
Has gentler arts for young beginners,
And fouler sins for older sinners.
Oft too he cheats our mortal eyes,
For Satan father is of lies;
A thousand swindling tricks he plays us,
And promises, but never pays us;
Thus we poor fools are strangely caught,
And find we've sold our souls for nought.
Nay, oft, with quite a juggler's art,
He bids the proffer'd gift depart;
Sets some gay joy before our face,
Then claps a trouble in its place;
Turns up some loss for promis'd gain,
And conjures pleasure into pain.
Be wise then, oh! ye worldly tribe,
Nor sell your conscience for a bribe;
When Satan tempts you to begin,
Resist him, and refuse to sin:
Bad is the bargain on the whole,
To gain the world and lose the soul!

BALLADS.

ROBERT AND RICHARD.

OR, THE GHOST OF POOR MOLLY,

Who was drowned in Richard's Mill-pond.

Tune—'Collin's Mulberry Tree.'

Quoth Richard to Bob, 'Let things go as they will,
Of pleasure and fun I will still have my fill;
In frolic and mirth I see nothing amiss,
And though I get tipsy, *what harm is in this?*
For e'en Solomon says, and I vow he says truth,
Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth.'
I'm glad,' answered Bob, 'you're of Solomon's creed, [proceed;
But I beg, if you quote him, you'll please to
'For God (as the wise man continues to sing)
Thy soul into judgment for all this will bring.
Thus a man may get plung'd in a woful abyss,
By choosing to say, *Pray what harm is in this?*'
'Come, come,' says gay Richard, 'don't grudge me a cup,
I'm resolv'd, while I'm able, I'll still keep it up;
Let old gray-beard's deny that in frolic there's bliss,
I'll game, love, and drink—*and what harm is in this?*'
Says Robert, 'I grant if you live for to-day,
You may game, love, and drink, and may frolic away;
But then, my dear Dick, I again must contend,
That the Wise Man has bid us—*Remember the end!*'
Says Richard, 'When sickness or peevish old age
Shall advance to dismiss me from life's merry stage;
Repentance just then, boy, may not be amiss,
But while young I'll be jolly, *what harm is in this?*'
They parted; and Richard his pastimes begun,
'Twas Richard the jovial, the soul of all fun;
Each dancing bout, drinking bout, Dick would attend
And he sung and he swore, *nor once thought of the end.*
Young Molly he courted, the pride of the plain,
He promis'd her marriage, but promis'd in vain;
She trusted his vows, but she soon was undone,
And when she lamented, he thought it good fun.
Thus scorn'd by her Richard, sad Molly run wild,
And roam'd through the woods with her destitute child;
'Till Molly and Molly's poor baby were found,
One evening, in Richard's own mill-pond both drown'd.
Then his conscience grew troubled by night and by day,
But its clamour he drown'd in more drink and more play;
Still Robert exhorted, and like a true friend
He warn'd him and pray'd him *to think on the end!*
Now disturb'd in his dreams, poor Molly each night
With her babe stood before him, how sad was the sight!
O how ghastly she look'd as she bade him attend,
And so awfully told him, '*Remember the end.*'

She talk'd of the woes and unquenchable fire
Which await the licentious, the drunkard, and liar:
How he ruin'd more maidens, she bade him [beware,
Then she wept, and she groan'd, and she vanish'd in air.
Now beggar'd by gaming, distemper'd by drink,
Death star'd in his face, yet he dar'd not to think;
Desparing of mercy, despising all truth,
He dy'd of old age in the prime of his youth.
On his tomb-stone, good Robert, these verses engrav'd,
Which he hop'd some gay fellow might read [and be saved:

THE EPITAPH.

HERE lies a poor youth, who call'd drinking his bliss.
And was ruin'd by saying, *what harm is in [this?*
Let each passer by to his error attend,
And learn of poor Dick to *remember the end!*

THE CARPENTER:

Or, the Danger of Evil Company.

THERE was a young west countryman,
A carpenter by trade,
A skilful wheelright too was he,
And few such wagons made.
No man a tighter barn could build,
Throughout his native town;
Through many a village round was he
The best of workmen known,
His father left him what he had,
In sooth it was enough,
His shining pewter, pots of brass,
And all his household stuff.
A little cottage too he had,
For ease and comfort plann'd;
And that he might not lack for aught,
An acre of good land.
A pleasant orchard too there was
Before his cottage door;
Of cider and of corn likewise,
He had a little store.
Active and healthy, stout and young
No business wanted he;
Now tell me, reader, if you can;
What man more blest could be?
To make his comfort quite complete;
He had a faithful wife;
Frugal, and neat, and good was she,
The blessing of his life.
Where is the lord, or where the squire,
Had greater cause to praise
The goodness of that bounteous hand
Which blest his prosp'rous days?
Each night when he return'd from work,
His wife so meek and mild,
His little supper gladly dress'd,
While he caress'd his child,
One blooming babe was all he had,
His only darling dear,
The object of their equal love,
The solace of their care.
O what could ruin such a life,
And spoil so fair a lot?
O what could change so kind a heart,
And ev'ry virtue blot?
With grief the cause I must relate,
The dismal cause reveal;
'Twas EVIL COMPANY and DRINK,
The source of ev'ry ill.
A cooper came to live hard by,
Who did his fancy please;
An idle rambling man was he,
Who oft had cross'd the seas,
This man could tell a merry tale,
And sing a merry song;
And those who heard him sing or talk,
Ne'er thought the ev'ning long.
But vain and vicious was the song,
And wicked was the tale;
And ev'ry pause he always fill'd,
With cider, gin, or ale.
Our carpenter delighted much
To hear the cooper talk;
And with him to the alehouse oft,
Would take his evening walk.
At first he did not care to drink,
But only lik'd the fun;
But soon he from the cooper learnt,
The same sad course to run,
He said the cooper's company
Was all for which he car'd;
But soon he drank as much as he,
To swear like him soon dar'd.
His hammer now neglected lay,
For work he little car'd;
Half finish'd wheels and broken tools,
Were strew'd about his yard.
To get him to attend his work,
No prayers could now prevail,
His hatchet and his plane forgot,
He never drove a nail.
His cheerful ev'nings now no more
With peace and plenty smil'd;
No more he sought his pleasing wife,
Nor hugg'd his smiling child.
For not his drunken nights alone,
Were with the cooper past,
His days were at the Angel spent,
And still he stay'd the last.
No handsome Sunday suit was left,
Nor decent Holland shirt:
No nose-gay mark'd the sabbath-morn;
But all was rags and dirt.
No more his church he did frequent,
A symptom ever sad:
Where once the Sunday is mispent,
The week days must be bad.
The cottage mortgag'd for its worth;
The fav'rite orchard sold;
He soon began to feel the effects
Of hunger and of cold.
The pewter dishes one by one
Were pawn'd, till none were left;
A wife and babe at home remain'd
Of ev'ry help bereft.
By chance he call'd at home one night,
And in a surley mood,
He bade his weeping wife to get
Immediately some food.
His empty cupboard well he knew
Must needs be bare of bread;
No rasher on the rack he saw,
Whence could he then be fed!
His wife* a piteous sigh did heave,

* See Berquin's Gardener.

And then before him laid,
A basket cover'd with a cloth,
But not a word she said.
Then to her husband gave a knife,
With many a silent tear,
In haste he tore the cover off,
And saw his child lie there.
'There lies thy babe,' the mother said,
'Oppress'd with famine sore'
O kill us both—'twere kinder far
We could not suffer more.
The carpenter struck to the heart,
Fell on his knees straightway,
He wrung his hands—confess'd his sins,
And did both weep and pray.
From that same hour the cooper more
He never would behold;
Nor would he to the ale house go;
Had it been pav'd with gold.
His wife forgave him all the past;
And sooth'd his sorrowing mind,
And much he griev'd that e'er he wrong'd
The worthiest of her kind.
By lab'ring hard, and working late,
By industry and pains,
His cottage was at length redeem'd,
And sav'd were all his gains.
His Sundays now at church were spent,
His home was his delight;
The following verse himself he made,
And read it ev'ry night.

The drunkard murders child and wife,
Nor matters it a pin,
Whether he stabs them with his knife,
Or starves them with his gin.

THE RIOT:

OR, HALF A LOAF IS BETTER THAN NO BREAD.

In a Dialogue between Jack Anvil and Tom Hod.

To the tune of 'A cobler there was.'

Written in ninety-five, a year of scarcity and Alarm.

TOM.

Come neighbours, no longer be patient and quiet,
Come let us go kick up a bit of a riot;
I'm hungry, my lads, but I 've little to eat,
So we 'll pull down the mills, and we 'll seize all the meat:
I 'll give you good sport, boys, as ever you saw,
So a fig for the justice, a fig for the law.
Derry Down.
Then his pitchfork Tom seiz'd—hold a moment, says Jack,
I 'll show thee thy blunder, brave boy, in a crack,
And if I don't prove we had better be still,
I 'll assist thee straightway to pull down ev'ry mill;
I 'll show thee how passion thy reason doth cheat,
Or I 'll join thee in plunder for bread and for meat.
Derry Down.
What a whimsey to think thus our bellies to fill,
For we stop all the grinding by breaking the mill!
What a whimsey to think we shall get more to eat,
By abusing the butcher who gets us the meat!
What a whimsey to think we shall mend our spare diet,
By breeding disturbance, by murder and riot?
Derry Down.
Because I am dry, 'twould be foolish, I think,
To pull out my tap and to spill all my drink;
Because I am hungry, and want to be fed,
That is sure no wise reason for wasting my bread;
And just such wise reasons for minding their diet,
Are us'd by those blockheads who rush into riot.
Derry Down.
I would not take comfort from others' distresses,
But still I would mark how God our land blesses;
For though in old England the times are but sad,
Abroad I am told they are ten times as bad;
In the land of the Pope there is scarce any grain,
And 'tis worse still, they say, both in Holland and Spain.
Derry Down.
Let us look to the harvest our wants to beguile,
See the lands with rich crops how they ev'ry where smile!
Meantime to assist us, by each western breeze!
Some corn is brought daily across the salt seas!
Of tea we 'll drink little, of gin none at all,
And we 'll patiently wait, and the prices will fall.
Derry Down.
But if we 're not quiet, then let us not wonder,
If things grow much worse by our riot and plunder;
And let us remember, whenever we meet,
The more ale we drink, boys, the less we shall eat,
On those days spent in rioting bread you brought home,
Had you spent them in labour you must have had *some*.
Derry Down.
A dinner of herbs, says the wise man, with quiet,
Is better than beef amid discord and riot.
If the thing could be help'd I'm a foe to all strife,
And I pray for a peace ev'ry night of my life;
But in matters of state not an inch will I budge,
Because I conceive I'm no very good judge.
Derry Down.
But though poor, I can work, my brave boy with the best,
Let the king and the parliament manage the rest;
I lament both the war and the taxes together,
Though I verily think they don't alter the weather.
The king, as I take it, with very good reason,
May prevent a bad law, but can't help a bad season.
Derry Down.
The parliament men, although great is their power,
Yet they cannot contrive us a bit of a shower
And I never yet heard though our rulers are wise,
That they know very well how to manage the skies;
For the best of them all, as they found to their cost,
Were not able to hinder last winter's hard frost.
Derry Down.
Besides, I must share in the wants of the times,
Because I have had my full share in its crimes;
And I'm apt to believe the distress which is sent,
Is to punish and cure us of all discontent.

But harvest is coming—potatoes are come!
Our prospect clears up; ye complainers be dumb! *Derry Down.*
And though I 've no money, and though I 've no lands,
I 've a head on my shoulders, and a pair of good hands.
So I 'll work the whole day, and on Sundays I 'll seek
At church how to bear all the wants of the week.
The gentlefolks too will afford us supplies;
They 'll subscribe—and they 'll give up their puddings and pies. *Derry Down.*
Then before I 'm induc'd to take part in a riot,
I 'll ask this short question—what shall I get by it?
So I 'll e'en wait a little till cheaper the bread,
For a mittimus hangs o'er each rioter's head:
And when of two evils I 'm ask'd which is best,
I 'd rather be hungry than hang'd, I protest. *Derry Down.*
Quoth Tom, thou art right, If I rise I 'm a Turk:
So he threw down his pitchfork, and went to his work.

PATIENT JOE:

OR, THE NEW CASTLE COLLIER.

Have you heard of a collier of honest renown,
Who dwelt on the borders of Newcastle town?
His name it was Joseph—you better may know
If I tell you he always was call'd patient Joe.
Whatever betided he thought it was right,
And Providence still he kept ever in sight;
To those who love God, let things turn as they would,
He was certain that all work'd together for good.
He prais'd his Creator whatever befel;
How thankful was Joseph when matters went well!
How sincere were his carols of praise for good health,
And how grateful for any increase in his wealth!
In trouble he bow'd him to God's holy will;
How contented was Joseph when matters went ill!
When rich and when poor he alike understood,
That all things together were working for good.
If the land was afflicted with war he declar'd,
'Twas a needful correction for sins which he shar'd,
And when merciful Heaven bade slaughter to cease,
How thankful was Joe for the blessing of peace!
When taxes ran high, and provisions were dear,
Still Joseph declar'd he had nothing to fear;
It was but a trial he well understood,
From Him who made all work together for good.
Though his wife was but sickly his gettings but small,
Yet a mind so submissive prepar'd him for all;
He liv'd on his gains were they greater or less,
And the giver he ceas'd not each moment to bless. [joy,
When another child came he received him with
And Providence bless'd who had sent him the boy;
But when the child died—said poor Joe I 'm content,
For God had a right to recall what he lent.
It was Joseph's ill fortune to work in a pit
With some who believ'd that profaneness was wit;
When disasters befel him much pleasure they show'd,
And laugh'd and said—Joseph, will this work for good?
But ever when these would profanely advance
That *this* happen'd by luck, and *that* happen'd by chance;
Still Joseph insisted no chance could be found,
Not a sparrow by accident falls to the ground.
Among his companions who work'd in the pit,
And made him the butt of their profligate wit,
Was idle Tim Jenkins, who drank and who gam'd,
Who mock'd at his Bible, and was not asham'd.
One day at the pit his old comrades he found,
And they chatted, preparing to go under ground,
Tim Jenkins, as usual, was turning to jest,
Joe's notion—*that all things which happen'd were best.*
As Joe on the ground had unthinkingly laid
His provision for dinner, of bacon and bread,
A dog on the watch, seiz'd the bread and the meat,
And off with his prey ran with foot-steps so fleet.
Now to see the delight that Tim Jenkins express'd!
'Is the loss of thy dinner too, Joe for the best?'
'No doubt on't,' said Joe; 'but as I must eat,
'Tis my duty to try to recover my meat.'
So saying, he follow'd the dog a long round,
While Tim, laughing and swearing, went down under ground. [lost,
Poor Joe soon return'd, though his bacon was
For the dog a good dinner had made at his cost.
When Joseph came back he expected a sneer,
But the face of each collier spoke horror and fear; [said,
What a narrow escape hast thou had, they all
The pit 's fall'n in, and *Tim Jenkins* is dead!
How sincere was the gratitude Joseph express'd!
How warm the compassion which glow'd in his breast!
Thus events great and small, if aright understood,
Will be found to be working together for good.
'When my meat,' Joseph cry'd 'was just now stol'n away,
And I had no prospect of eating to-day,
How could it appear to a short-sighted sinner,
That my life would be sav'd by the loss of my dinner.'

THE GIN SHOP:

OR A PEEP INTO PRISON.

Look through the land from north to south,
And look from east to west,
And see what is to Englishmen
Of life the deadliest pest:
It is not want, though that is bad,
Nor war, though that is worse
But Britons brave endure, alas!
A self-inflicted curse.
Go where you will, throughout the realm,
You'll find the reigning sin,
In cities, villages, and towns,
—The monster's name is Gin.

The prince of darkness never sent
To man a deadlier foe,
'My name is Legion,' it may say,
The source of many a wo.
Nor does the fiend alone deprive
The labourer of his wealth:
That is not all, it murders too
His honest name and health.
We say the times are grievous hard,
And hard they are, 'tis true;
But, drunkards, to your wives and babes,
They're harder made by you.
The drunkard's tax is self-impos'd,
Like every other sin;
The taxes altogether lay
No weight so great as Gin.
The state compels no man to drink,
Compels no man to game,
'Tis Gin and Gambling sink him down
To rags, and want, and shame.
The kindest husband, chang'd by Gin,
Is for a tyrant known;
The tenderest heart that nature made,
Becomes a heart of stone.
In many a house the harmless babes
Are poorly cloth'd and fed,
Because the craving Gin-shop takes
The children's daily bread.
Come, neighbour, take a walk with me,
Through many a London street,
And see the cause of penury
In hundreds we shall meet.
We shall not need to travel far—
Behold that great man's door;
He well discerns yon idle crew
From the deserving poor.
He will relieve with liberal hand,
The child of honest thrift;
But where long scores of Gin-shops stand
He will withhold his gift.
Behold that shiv'ring female there,
Who plies her woful trade!
'Tis ten to one you'll find that Gin
That hopeless wretch has made.
Look down those steps, and view below
Yon cellar under ground,
There ev'ry want and ev'ry wo
And ev'ry sin is found.
Those little wretches trembling there,
With hunger and with cold,
Were by their parents' love of Gin,
To sin and misery sold.
Blest be those friends* to human kind
Who take these wretches up,
E'er they have drunk the bitter dregs
Of their sad parents' cup.
Look through that prison's iron bars,
Look through that dismal grate,
And learn what dire misfortune brought
So terrible a fate.
The debtor and the felon too,
Though differing much in sin,
Too oft you'll find were thither brought
By all-destroying Gin.
Yet Heav'n forbid I should confound
Calamity with guilt!
Or name the debtor's lesser fault
With blood of brother spilt.
To prison dire misfortune oft
The guiltless debtor brings;
Yet oft'ner far it will be found
From Gin the misery springs.
See the pale manufacturer there,
How lank and lean he lies!
How haggard is his sickly cheek!
How dim his hollow eyes!
He plied the loom with good success,
His wages still were high,
Twice what the village lab'rer gains,
His master did supply.
No book-debts kept him from his cash,
All paid as soon as due
His wages on the Saturday
To fail he never knew.
How amply had his gains suffic'd
On wife and children spent!
But all must for his pleasures go,
All to the Gin-shop went.
See that apprentice, young in years,
But hackney'd long in sin,
What made him rob his master's till?
Alas! 'twas love of Gin.
That serving man—I knew him once,
So jaunty, spruce, and smart!
Why did he steal, then pawn the plate?
'Twas Gin ensnar'd his heart.
But hark! what dismal sound was that?
'Tis Saint Sepulchre's bell!
It tolls, alas, for human guilt,
Some malefactor's knell.
O! woful sound! O! what could cause
Such punishment and sin?
Hark! hear his words, he owns the cause—
Bad Company and Gin.
And when the future lot is fix'd
Of darkness, fire, and chains,
How can the drunkard hope to 'scape
Those everlasting pains!
For if the murd'rer 's doom'd to wo,
As Holy-Writ declares,
The drunkard with self-murderers,
That dreadful portion shares.

* The Philanthropic Society.

TALES.

THE TWO GARDENERS.

Two gardeners once beneath an oak,
Lay down to rest, when Jack thus spoke:
'You must confess dear Will that Nature
Is but a blundering kind of creature;
And I—nay, why that look of terror?
Could teach her how to mend her error.'
'Your talk,' quoth Will, is bold and odd,
What you call Nature, I call God.'
'Well, call him by what name you will,
Quoth Jack, 'he manages but ill;
Nay, from the very tree we 're under,
I'll prove that Providence can blunder.'
Quoth Will, 'Through thick and thin you dash.
I shudder Jack, at words so rash.

I trust to what the Scriptures tell,
He hath done always all things well.'
Quoth Jack, 'I'm lately grown a wit,
And think all good a *lucky hit.*
To Prove that Providence can err,
Not words but facts the truth aver.
To this vast oak lift up thine eyes,
Then view that acorn's paltry size;
How foolish on a tree so tall,
To place that tiny cup and ball.
Now look again, yon pompion* see,
It weighs two pounds at least, nay three;
Yet this large fruit, where is it found?
Why, meanly trailing on the ground.
Had Providence ask'd my advice,
I would have chang'd it in a trice;
I would have said at Nature's birth,
Let Acorns creep upon the earth;
But let the pompion, vast and round,
On the oak's lofty boughs be found.'
He said—and as he rashly spoke,
Lo! from the branches of the oak,
A wind, which suddenly arose,
Beat showers of acorns on his nose;
'Oh! oh:' quoth Jack, 'I'm wrong I see,
And God is wiser far than me.
For did a show'r of pompions large,
Thus on my naked face discharge,
I had been brus'd and blinded quite,
What heav'n appoints I find is right;
Whene'er I'm tempted to rebel,
I'll think how light the acorns fell;
Whereas on oaks had pompions hung,
My broken skull had stopp'd my tongue.

THE LADY AND THE PIE:

OR KNOW THYSELF.

A WORTHY squire of sober life
Had a conceited boasting wife:
Of *him* she daily made complaint,
Herself she thought a very saint.
She lov'd to load mankind with blame,
And on their errors build her fame.
Her fav'rite subject of dispute
Was Eve and the forbidden fruit.
'Had I been Eve,' she often cried,
'Man had not fall'n, nor woman died;
I still had kept the orders giv'n,
Nor for an apple lost my heav'n;
To gratify my curious mind
I ne'er had ruin'd all mankind
Nor from a vain desire to know,
Entail'd on all my race such wo.'
The squire reply'd; 'I fear 'tis true,
The same ill spirit lives in you;
Tempted alike, I dare believe,
You would have disobey'd like Eve.'
The lady storm'd, and still deny'd
Sin, curiosity, and pride.
The squire, some future day at dinner,
Resolv'd to try this boastful sinner;
He griev'd such vanity possest her,
And thus in serious terms address'd her:
'Madam, the usual splendid feast,
With which our wedding day is grac'd,
With you I must not share to-day
For business summons me away.

* A Gourd.

Of all the daintics I've prepar'd,
I beg not any may be spar'd;
Indulge in ev'ry costly dish,
Enjoy, 'tis what I really wish;
Only observe one prohibition,
Nor think it a severe condition;
On one small dish which cover'd stands,
You must not dare to lay your hands
Go—Disobey not on your life,
Or henceforth you 're no more my wife.'
The treat was serv'd, the squire was gone,
The murm'ring lady din'd alone:
She saw whate'er could grace a feast,
Or charm the eye, or please the taste:
But while she rang'd from this to that,
From ven'son haunch to turtle fat;
On one small dish she chanc'd to light,
By a deep cover hid from sight:
O! here it is—yet not for me!
I must not taste, nay, dare not see;
Why place it there? or why forbid
That I so much as lift the lid?
Prohibited of this to eat,
I care not for the sumptuous treat
I wonder if 'tis fowl or fish,
To know what 's there I merely wish.
I 'll look—O no, I lose forever,
If I 'm betray'd, my husband's favour.
I own I think it vastly hard,
Nay, tyranny, to be debarr'd.
John, you may go—the wine's decanted,
I 'll ring or call you when you 're wanted.
Now left alone, she waits no longer;
Temptation presses more and stronger.
'I 'll peep—the harm can ne'er be much,
For though I peep, I will not touch;
Why I 'm forbid to lift this cover,
One glance will tell, and then 'tis over
My husband 's absent; so is John,
My peeping never can be known,'
Trembling, she yielded to her wish,
And rais'd the cover from the dish:
She starts—for lo! an open pie
From which six living sparrows fly.
She calls, she screams, with wild surprise,
'Haste, John, and catch these birds,' she cries
John hears not; but to crown her shame,
In at her call her husband came.
Sternly he frown'd as thus he spoke:
'Thus is your vow'd allegiance broke!
Self-ign'rance led you to believe
You did not share the sin of Eve
Like hers, how blest was your condition!
Like heav'ns, how small my prohibition!
Yet you, though fed with every dainty
Sat pining in the midst of plenty;
This dish, thus singled from the rest,
Of your obedience was the test;
Your mind, unbroke by self-denial,
Could not sustain this tender trial.
Humility from this be taught,
Learn candour to another's fault;
Go know, like Eve, from this sad dinner
You 're both a vain a curious sinner.'

THE PLUM-CAKES:

Or, the Farmer and his Three Sons.

A FARMER, who some wealth possest,
With three fine boys was also blest;

The lads were healthy, stout and young,
And neither wanted sense nor tongue.
Tom, Will, and Jack, like other boys,
Lov'd tops and marbles, sport and toys.
The father scouted that false plan,
That money only makes the man;
But, to the best of his discerning,
Was bent on giving them good learning;
He was a man of observation,
No scholar, yet had penetration;
So with due care, a school he sought,
Where his young sons might well be taught.
Quoth he, 'I know not which rehearses
Most properly his themes or verses;
Yet I can do a father's part,
And school the temper, mind, and heart;
The natural bent of each I 'll know,
And trifles best that bent may show.'
'Twas just before the closing year,
When Christmas holidays were near,
The farmer call'd to see his boys,
And ask how each his time employs.
Quoth Will, 'There's father, boys, without,
He 's brought us something good, no doubt.'
The father sees their merry faces,
With joy beholds them, and embraces.
'Come, boys, of home you 'll have your fill.'
'Yes, Christmas now is near,' says Will;
''Tis just twelve days—these notches see,
My notches with the days agree.'
'Well,' said the sire, 'again I'll come,
And gladly fetch my brave boys home!
You two the dappled mare shall ride,
Jack mount the pony by my side;
Meantime, my lads, I've brought you here
No small provision of good cheer.'
Then from his pocket straight he takes,
A vast profusion of plum-cakes;
He counts them out, a plenteous store,
No boy shall have or less or more;
Twelve cakes he gives to each dear son,
When each expected only one;
And then, with many a kind expression,
He leaves them to their own discretion;
Resolv'd to mark the use each made
Of what he to their hands convey'd.
The twelve days past, he comes once more,
And brings the horses to the door
The boys with rapture see appear
The poney and the dappled mare;
Each moment now an hour they count,
And crack their whips and long to mount.
As with the boys his ride he takes,
He asks the history of the cakes.
Says Will, 'Dear father, life is short,
So I resolv'd to make quick sport;
The cakes were all so nice and sweet,
I thought I'd have one jolly treat;
Why should I balk, said I, my taste?
I 'll make at once a hearty feast.
So snugly by myself I fed,
When every boy was gone to bed;
I gorg'd them all, both paste and plum,
And did not spare a single crumb;
Indeed they made me, to my sorrow,
As sick as death upon the morrow;
This made me mourn my rich repast,
And wish I had not fed so fast.'
Quoth Jack, 'I was not such a dunce,
To eat my quantum up at once;
And though the boys all long'd to clutch 'em
I would not let a creature touch 'em;
Nor though the whole were in my pow'r,
Would I one single cake devour;
Thanks to the use of keys and locks,
They 're all now snug within my box;
The mischief is, by hoarding long,
They 're grown so mouldy and so strong,
I find they won't be fit to eat,
And I have lost my father's treat.'
'Well, Tom,' the anxious parent cries,
'How did you manage?' Tom replies,
'I shun'd each wide extreme to take,
To glut my maw, or hoard my cake;
I thought each day its wants would have,
And appetite again might crave;
Twelve school-days still my notches counted
To twelve my father's cakes amounted;
So ev'ry day I took out one,
But never ate my cake alone;
With ev'ry needy boy I shar'd,
And more than half I always spar'd.
One ev'ry day, 'twixt self and friend,
Has brought my dozen to an end:
My last remaining cake to-day
I would not touch, but gave away;
A boy was sick, and scarce could eat,
To him it prov'd a welcome treat:
Jack call'd me spendthrift not to save,
Will dubb'd me fool because I gave;
But when our last day came, I smil'd,
For Will's were gone, and Jack's were spoil'd
Not hoarding much, nor eating fast,
I serv'd a needy friend at last.'
These tales the father's thoughts employ;
'By these,' said he, 'I know each boy:
Yet Jack, who hoarded what he had,
The world will call a frugal lad;
And selfish gormandizing Will
Will meet with friends and fav'rers still:
While moderate Tom, so wise and cool,
The mad and vain will deem a fool:
But I, his sober plan approve,
And Tom has gain'd his father's love.'

APPLICATION.

So when our day of life is past,
And all are fairly judg'd at last;
The miser and the sensual find
How each misused the gifts assign'd:
While he, who wisely spends and gives,
To the true ends of living lives;
'Tis self-denying moderation
Gains the Great Father's approbation.

TURN THE CARPET:
OR, THE TWO WEAVERS.

IN A DIALOGUE BETWEEN DICK AND JOHN

As at their work two weavers sat,
Beguiling time with friendly chat;
They touch'd upon the price of meat,
So high, a weaver scarce could eat.
'What with my brats and sickly wife,'
Quoth Dick, 'I 'm almost tir'd of life;
So hard my work, so poor my fare,
'Tis more than mortal man can bear
'How glorious is the rich man's state!
His house so fine! his wealth so great!

Heav'n is unjust, you must agree;
Why all to him? why none to me?
'In spite of what the Scripture teaches,
In spite of all the parson preaches,
This world (indeed I 've thought so long)
Is rul'd, methinks, extremely wrong.
'Where'er I look, howe'er I range,
'Tis all confus'd, and hard, and strange;
The good are troubled and oppress'd
And all the wicked are the bless'd.'
Quoth John: 'Our ign'rance is the cause
Why thus we blame our Maker's laws;
Parts of his ways alone we know,
'Tis all that man can see below,
'See'st thou that carpet, not half done,
Which thou, dear Dick, hast well begun?
Behold the wild confusion there,
So rude the mass it makes one stare!
'A stranger, ign'rant of the trade,
Would say, no meaning's there convey'd;
For where 's the middle, where 's the border?
Thy carpet now is all disorder.'
Quoth Dick, 'My work is yet in bits,
But still in ev'ry part it fits;
Besides, you reason like a lout,
Why, man, that *carpet 's inside out.*'

Says John, 'Thou say'st the thing I mean,
And now I hope to cure thy spleen;
This world, which clouds thy soul with doubt,
Is but a carpet inside out.
'As when we view these shreds and ends,
We know not what the whole intends;
So when on earth things look but odd,
They 're working still some scheme of God.
'No plan, no pattern, can we trace,
All wants proportion, truth, and grace;
The motley mixture we deride,
Nor see the beauteous upper side.
'But when we reach that world of light,
And view those works of God aright,
Then shall we see the whole design,
And own the workman is divine.
'What now seems random strokes, will there
All order and design appear;
Then shall we praise what here we spurn'd,
For then the *carpet shall be turn'd.*'
'Thou 'rt right,' quoth Dick, 'no more I 'll grumble
That this sad world 's so strange a jumble;
My impious doubts are put to flight,
For my own carpet sets me right.'

HYMNS.

THE TRUE HEROES:

Or, the Noble Army of Martyrs

You who love a tale of glory,
Listen to the song I sing;
Heroes of the Christian story,
Are the heroes I shall bring.
Warriors of the world, avaunt!
Other heroes me engage:
'Tis not such as you I want,
Saints and martyrs grace my page.
Warriors, who the world o'ercame
Were in brother's blood imbru'd;
While the saints of purer fame,
Greater far, themselves subdu'd.
Fearful Christian! hear with wonder,
Of the saints of whom I tell;
Some were burnt, some sawn asunder,
Some by fire or torture fell;
Some to savage beasts were hurl'd,
One escap'd the lion's den;
Was a persecuting world
Worthy of these wond'rous men?
Some in fiery furnace thrown,
Yet escap'd unsing'd their hair;
There Almighty pow'r was shown:
For the Son of God was there.
Let us crown with deathless fame
Those who scorn'd and hated fell;
Martyrs met contempt and shame,
Fearing nought but sin and hell.
How the show'r of stones descended,
Holy Stephen, on thy head!
While his tongue the truth defended,
How the glorious martyr bled!
See his fierce reviler Saul,
How he rails with impious breath!
Then observe converted Paul,
Oft in perils, oft in death.

'Twas that God, whose sov'reign pow'r,
Did the lion's fury 'swage,
Could alone, in one short hour,
Still the persecutor's rage.
E'en a woman—women hear,
Read in Maccabees the story!
Conquer'd nature, love, and fear,
To obtain a crown of glory.
Seven stout sons she saw expire,
(How the mother's soul was pain'd.)
Some by sword, and some by fire,
(How the martyr was sustain'd!)
E'en in death's acutest anguish,
Each the tyrant still defy'd;
Each she saw in torture languish,
Last of all the mother dy'd.
Martyrs who were thus arrested,
In their short but bright career,
By their blood the truth attested,
Prov'd their faith and love sincere.
Though their lot was hard and lowly,
Though they perish'd at the stake,
Now they live with Christ in glory,
Since they suffer'd for his sake.
Fierce and unbelieving foes
But their bodies could destroy;
Short though bitter were their woes
Everlasting is their joy.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

O how wond'rous is the story
Of our blest Redeemer's birth!
See the mighty Lord of Glory
Leave his heav'n to visit earth!
Hear with transport, ev'ry creature,
Hear the Gospel's joyful sound;

Christ appears in human nature,
In our sinful world is found;
Comes to pardon our transgression,
Like a cloud our sins to blot;
Comes to his own favour'd nation,
But his own receive him not.
If the angels who attended
To declare the Saviour's birth,
Who from heav'n with songs descended
To proclaim good will on earth:
If, in pity to our blindness,
They had brought the pardon needed,
Still Jehovah's wond'rous kindness
Had our warmest hopes exceeded:
If some prophet had been sent
With Salvation's joyful news,
Who that heard the blest event
Could their warmest love refuse?
But 'twas He to whom in Heav'n
Hallelujahs never cease:
He, the mighty God, was given,
Given to us a Prince of Peace.
None but He who did create us
Could redeem from sin and hell;
None but He could reinstate us
In the rank from which we fell.
Had he come, the glorious stranger,
Deck'd with all the world calls great;
Had he liv'd in pomp and grandeur,
Crown'd with more than royal state;
Still our tongues with praise o'erflowing,
On such boundless love would dwell;
Still our hearts, with rapture glowing,
Feel what words could never tell.
But what wonder should it raise
Thus our lowest state to borrow!
O the high mysterious ways,
God's own Son a child of sorrow!
'Twas to bring us endless pleasure,
He our suff'ring nature bore;
'Twas to give us heav'nly treasure,
He was willing to be poor.
Come, ye rich, survey the stable
Where your infant Saviour lies;
From your full o'erflowing table
Send the hungry good supplies.
Boast not your ennobled stations,
Boast not that you 're highly fed;
Jesus, hear it, all ye nations,
Had not where to lay his head.
Learn of me, thus cries the Saviour,
If my kingdom you 'd inherit;
Sinner, quit your proud behaviour,
Learn my meek and lowly spirit.
Come, ye servants, see your station,
Freed from all reproach and shame;
He who purchas'd your salvation,
Bore a servant's humble name.
Come, ye poor, some comfort gather
Faint not in the race you run,
Hard the lot your gracious Father
Gave his dear, his only Son.
Think, that if your humbler stations,
Less of worldly good bestow,
You escape those strong temptations
Which from wealth and grandeur flow.
See your Saviour is ascended!
See he looks with pity down!
Trust him all will soon be mended,
Bear his cross, you 'll share his crown.

A HYMN OF PRAISE,

FOR THE ABUNDANT HARVEST OF 1796,

After a year of scarcity.

GREAT GOD! when famine threaten'd late
To scourge our guilty land,
O did we learn from that dark fate
To dread thy mighty hand?
Did then our sins to mem'ry rise?
Or own'd we God was just?
Or rais'd we penitential cries?
Or bow'd we in the dust?
Did we forsake one evil path?
Was any sin abhor'd?
Or did we deprecate thy wrath,
And turn us to the Lord?
'Tis true we fail'd not to *repine*,
But did we too *repent*?
Or own the chastisement divine,
In awful judgment sent?
Though the bright chain of Peace he broke
And War with ruthless sword,
Unpeoples nations at a stroke,
Yet who regards the Lord?
But God, who in his strict decrees,
Remembers mercy still,
Can, in a moment, if he please,
Our hearts with comfort fill.
He mark'd our angry spirits rise,
Domestic hate increase;
And for a time withheld supplies,
To teach us love and peace.
He, when he brings his children low,
Has blessings still in store;
And when he strikes the heaviest blow,
He loves us but the more.
Now *Frost*, and *Flood*, and *Blight** no more
Our golden harvest spoil!
See what an unexampled store
Rewards the reaper's toil!
As when the promis'd harvest fail'd
In Canaan's fruitful land;
The envious Patriarchs were assail'd
By Famine's pressing hand!
The angry brothers then forgot
Each fierce and jarring feud;
United by their adverse lot,
They lov'd as brothers should.
So here, from Heav'n's correcting hand,
Though Famine fail'd to move;
Let Plenty now throughout the land,
Rekindle peace and love.
Like the rich fool, let us not say,
Soul! thou hast goods in store!
But shake the overplus away,
To feed the hungry poor.
Let rich and poor, on whom are now
Such bounteous crops bestow'd,
Raise many a pure and holy vow
Of gratitude to God!
And while his gracious name we praise,
For bread so kindly given;
Let us beseech him all our days,
To give the bread of heav'n.
In that blest pray'r our Lord did frame,
Of all our pray'rs the guide,
We ask that 'Hallow'd be *his* name,'

* These three visitations followed each other in quick succession.

And then *our* wants supplied.
For grace he bids us first implore,
Next, that we may be fed;
We say, 'Thy will be done,' before
We ask 'our daily bread.'

HERE AND THERE

OR, THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.

Being Suitable Thoughts for a New Year.

HERE bliss is short, imperfect, insincere,
But total, absolute, and perfect *there*.
Here time 's a moment, short our happiest state,
There infinite duration is our date.
Here Satan tempts, and troubles e'en the best,
There Satan's pow'r extends not to the blest.
In a weak sinful body *here* I dwell,
But *there* I drop this frail and sickly shell.
Here my best thoughts are stain'd with guilt and fear,
But love and pardon shall be perfect *there*.
Here my best duties are defil'd with sin,
There all is ease without and peace within.
Here feeble faith supplies my only light,
There faith and hope are swallow'd up in sight.
Here love of self my fairest works destroys,
There love of God shall perfect all my joys.
Here things, as in a glass, are darkly shown,
There I shall know as clearly as I 'm known,
Frail are the fairest flow'rs which bloom below,
There freshest palms on roots immortal grow.
Here wants or cares perplex my anxious mind,
But spirits *there* a calm fruition find.
Here disappointments my best schemes destroy
There those that sow'd in tears shall reap in joy.
Here vanity is stamp'd on all below,
Perfection *there* on ev'ry good shall grow.
Here my fond heart is fasten'd on some friend,
Whose kindness *may*, whose life *must* have an end;
But *there* no failure can I ever prove,
God cannot disappoint, for God is love.
Here Christ for sinners suffer'd, groan'd, and bled,
But *there* he reigns the great triumphant head:
Here, mock'd and scourg'd, he wore a crown of thorns,
A crown of glory *there* his brow adorns.
Here error clouds the will, and dims the sight,
There all is knowledge, purity, and light.
Here so imperfect is this mortal state,
If blest myself I mourn some other's fate.
At ev'ry human wo I *here* repine,
The joy of ev'ry saint shall *there* be mine.
Here if I lean, the world shall pierce my heart,
But *there* that broken reed and I shall part.
Here on no promis'd good can I depend,
But *there* the rock of Ages is my friend.
Here if some sudden joy delight, inspire,
The dread to lose it damps the rising fire;
But *there* whatever good the soul employ,
The thought that 'tis *eternal* crowns the joy.

BALLADS.

THE HONEST MILLER

OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

A True Ballad.

OF all the callings and the trades
Which in our land abound,
The miller's is as useful sure
As can on earth be found.
The lord or squire of high degree
Is needful to the state,
Because he lets the land he owns
In farms both small and great.
The farmer he manures the land,
Or else what corn could grow?
The ploughman cuts the furrow deep,
Ere he begins to sow.
And though no wealth he has, except
The labour of his hands;
Yet honest Industry 's as good
As houses or as lands.
The thrasher he is useful too
To all who like to eat;
Unless he winnow'd well the corn,
The chaff would spoil the wheat.
But vain the squire's and farmer's care,
And vain the thrasher's toil;
And vain would be the ploughman's pains
Who harrows up the soil;
And vain, without the miller's aid,
The sowing and the dressing;
Then sure an honest miller he
Must be a public blessing.
And such a miller now I make
The subject of my song,
Which, though it shall be very true,
Shall not be very long.
This miller lives in Glo'stershire,
I shall not tell his name;
For those who seek the praise of God,
Desire no other fame.
In last hard winter—who forgets
The frost of ninety-five?
Then was all dismal scarce, and dear,
And no poor man could thrive.
Then husbandry long time stood still,
And work was at a stand;
To make the matter worse, the mills
Were froze throughout the land.
Our miller dwelt beside a stream,
All underneath the hill;
Which flow'd amain when others froze,
Nor ever stopp'd the mill.
The clam'rous people came from far
This favour'd mill to find,
Both rich and poor our miller sought,
For none but he could grind.
His neighbours cry'd, 'Now miller seize
The time to heap up store,
Since thou of young and helpless babes
Hast got full half a score.'
For folks, when tempted to grow rich,
By means not over nice,
Oft make their numerous babes a plea
To sanctify the vice.
Our miller scorn'd such counsel base,
And when he ground the grain,

With steadfast hand refus'd to touch
Beyond his lawful gain.
'When God afflicts the land,' said he,
'Shall I afflict it more?
And watch for times of public wo
To wrong both rich and poor?
'Thankful to that Almighty Pow'r
Who makes my river flow,
I'll use the means he gives to sooth
A hungry neighbour's wo.
'My river flows when others freeze,
But 'tis at his command;
For rich and poor I'll grind alike,
No bribe shall stain my hand.'
So all the country who had corn
Here found their wants redrest;
May ev'ry village in the land
Be with such millers blest!

KING DIONYSIUS AND SQUIRE DAMOCLES;

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD STORY.

Proper to be sung at all feasts and merry meetings.

'THERE was a heathen man, sir,
Belonging to a king;
And still it was his plan, sir,
To covet ev'ry thing.
And if you don't believe me,
I'll name him if you please,
For let me not deceive ye,
'Twas one squire Damocles,
He thought that jolly living
Must ev'ry joy afford;
His heart knew no misgiving,
While round the festive board.
He wanted to be great, sir,
And feed on fare delicious;
And have his feasts in state, sir,
Just like king Dionysius.
The king, to cure his longing,
Prepar'd a feast so fine,
That all the court were thronging
To see the courtier dine.
And there to tempt his eye, sir,
Was fish, and flesh, and fowl;
And when he was a-dry, sir,
There stood the brimming bowl.
Nor did the king forbid him
From drinking all he could,
The monarch never chid him,
But fill'd him with his food.
O then, to see the pleasure
Squire Damocles exprest
'Twas joy beyond all measure,
Was ever man so blest?
With greedy eyes the squire
Devour'd each costly dainty;
You'd think he did aspire
To eat as much as twenty.
But just as he prepar'd, sir,
Of bliss to take his swing;
O, how the man was scar'd, sir,
By this so cruel king!
When he to eat intended,
Lo! just above his head,
He spied a sword suspended
All by a single thread.
How did it change the feasting
To wormwood and to gall,
To think, while he was tasting,
The pointed sword might fall
Then in a moment's time, sir,
He loath'd the luscious feast;
And dreaded as a crime, sir,
The brimming bowl to taste
Now, if you're for applying
The story I have told,
I think there's no denying
'Tis worth its weight in gold.
Ye gay, who view this stranger,
And pity his sad case;
And think there was great danger
In such a fearful place;
Come, let this awful truth, sir,
In all your minds be stor'd;
To each intemp'rate youth, sir,
Death is that pointed sword,
And though you see no reason
To check your mirth at all,
In some licentious season
The sword on you may fall.
So learn, while at your ease, sir
You drink down draughts delicious,
To think of Damocles, Sir,
And old king Dionysius.

THE HACKNEY COACHMAN:

OR, THE WAY TO GET A GOOD FARE.

To the tune of 'I wish I was a fisherman.'

I AM a bold coachman, and drive a good hack,
With a coat of five capes that quite covers my back;
And my wife keeps a sausage-shop, not many miles
From the narrowest alley in all broad St. Giles.
Though poor, we are honest and very content;
We pay as we go, for meat, drink, and for rent.
To work all the week I am able and willing,
I never get drunk, and I waste not a shilling,
And while at a tavern my gentleman tarries,
The coachman grows richer than he whom he carries,
And I'd rather (said I) since it saves me from sin,
Be the driver without, than the toper within.
Yet though dram-shops I hate, and the dram-drinking friend,
I'm not quite so good, but I wish I may mend;
I repent of my sins, since we all are deprav'd,
For a coachman, I hold, has a soul to be sav'd.
When a riotous multitude fills up a street,
And the greater part know not, boys, wherefore they meet;
If I see there is mischief, I never go there,
Let others get tipsy so I get my fare.
Now to church, if I take some good lady to pray,
It grieves me full sore to be kept quite away;
So I step within side, though the sermon's begun,
For a slice of the service is better than none.
Then my glasses are whole, and my coach is so neat,
I am always the first to be call'd in the street;
And I'm known by the name ('tis a name rather rare)
Of the coachman that never asks more than his fare.

Though my beasts should be dull, yet I don't use them ill;
Though they stumble I swear not, nor cut them up hill,
For I firmly believe there's no charm in an oath
That can make a nag trot, when to walk he is loth.
And though I'm a coachman, I'll freely confess,
I beg of my Maker my labours to bless;
I praise Him each morning, and pray ev'ry night,
And 'tis this makes my heart feel so cheerful and light.
When I drive to a fun'ral I care not for drink,
That is not the moment to guzzle, but think;
And I wish I could add, both of coachman and master,
That both of us strove to amend a bit faster.

VILLAGE POLITICS.

ADDRESSED TO

ALL THE MECHANICS, JOURNEYMEN, AND LABOURERS, IN GREAT BRITAIN.

BY WILL CHIP, A COUNTRY CARPENTER.

[Written early in the French Revolution.]

It is a privilege to be prescribed to in things about which our minds would otherwise be tost with various apprehensions. And for pleasure, I shall profess myself so far from doating on that popular idol, Liberty, that I hardly think it possible for any kind of obedience to be more painful than an unrestrained liberty. Were there not true bounds, of magistrates, of laws, of piety, of reason in the heart, every man would have a fool, nay, a mad tyrant to his master, that would multiply him more sorrows than the briars and thorns did to Adam, when he was freed from the bliss at once, and the restraint of Paradise, and became a greater slave in the wilderness than in the enclosure.—*Dr. Hammond's Sermon.*

A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN JACK ANVIL, THE BLACKSMITH, AND TOM HOD, THE MASON.

Jack. WHAT's the matter, Tom? Why dost look so dismal!

Tom. Dismal, indeed! Well enough I may.

Jack. What! is the old mare dead? or work scarce?

Tom. No, no, work's plenty enough, if a man had but the heart to go to it.

Jack. What book art reading? Why dost look so like a hang dog?

Tom. (*Looking on his book.*) Cause enough. Why I find here that I'm very unhappy, and very miserable; which I should never have known if I had not had the good luck to meet with this book. Oh 'tis a precious book!

Jack. A good sign though; that you can't find out you're unhappy without looking into a book for it! What is the matter?

Tom. Matter? Why I want liberty.

Jack. Liberty! That's bad indeed! What! has any one fetched a warrant for thee? Come, man, cheer up, I'll be bound for thee. Thou art an honest fellow in the main, though thou dost tipple and prate a little too much at the Rose and Crown.

Tom. No, no, I want a new constitution.

Jack. Indeed! Why I thought thou hadst been a desperate healthy fellow. Send for the doctor directly.

Tom. I'm not sick; I want liberty and equality, and the rights of man.

Jack. O, now I understand thee. What! thou art a leveller and a republican, I warrant!

Tom. I'm a friend to the people. I want a reform.

Jack. Then the shortest way is to mend thy self.

Tom. But I want a *general reform.*

Jack. Then let every one mend one.

Tom. Pooh! I want freedom and happiness, the same as they have got in France.

Jack. What, Tom, we imitate them? We follow the French! Why they only began all this mischief at first in order to be just what *we* are already; and what a blessed land must this be, to be in actual possession of all they ever hoped to gain by all their hurly-burly. Imitate them indeed!—why I'd sooner go to the negroes to get learning, or to the Turks to get religion, than to the French for freedom and happiness.

Tom. What do you mean by that? ar'n't the French free?

Jack. Free, Tom! ay free with a witness. They are all so free that there's nobody safe. They make free to rob whom they will, and kill whom they will. If they don't like a man's looks, they make free to hang him without judge or jury, and the next lamp-post serves for the gallows; so then they call themselves free, because you see they have no law left to condemn

them, and no king to take them up and hang them for it.

Tom. Ah, but Jack, did'nt their king formerly hang people for nothing too? and besides, were they not all papists before the revolution?

Jack. Why, true enough, they had but a poor sort of religion; but bad is better than none, Tom. And so was the government bad enough too; for they could clap an innocent man into prison, and keep him there too as long as they would, and never say, with your leave or by your leave, gentlemen of the jury. But what's all that to us?

Tom. To us! Why don't many of our governors put many of our poor folks in prison against their will? What are all the jails for? Down with the jails, I say; all men should be free.

Jack. Harkee, Tom, a few rogues in prison keep the rest in order, and then honest men go about their business in safety, afraid of nobody; that's the way to be free. And let me tell thee, Tom, thou and I are tried by our peers as much as a lord is. Why the *king* can't send me to prison if I do no harm; and if I do, there's reason good why I should go there. I may go to law with sir John at the great castle yonder; and he no more dares lift his little finger against me than if I were his equal. A lord is hanged for hanging matter, as thou or I should be; and if it will be any comfort to thee, I myself remember a peer of the realm being hanged for killing his man, just the same as the man would have been for killing *him*.*

Tom. A lord! Well, that is some comfort to be sure. But have you read the Rights of Man?

Jack. No, not I: I had rather by half read the *Whole Duty of Man*. I have but little time for reading, and such as I should therefore only read a bit of the best.

Tom. Don't tell me of those old-fashioned notions. Why should not we have the same fine things they have got in France? I'm for a *constitution*, and *organization*, and *equalization*, and *fraternization*.

Jack. Do be quiet. Now, Tom, only suppose this nonsensical equality was to take place; why it would not last while one could say Jack Robinson; or suppose it could—suppose in the general division, our new rulers were to give us half an acre of ground a-piece; we could to be sure raise potatoes on it for the use of our families; but as every other man would be equally busy in raising potatoes for *his* family, why then you see if thou wast to break thy spade, I, whose trade it is, should no longer be able to mend it. Neighbour Snip would have no time to make us a suit of clothes, nor the clothier to weave the cloth; for all the world would be gone a digging. And as to boots and shoes, the want of some one to make them for us, would be a still greater grievance than the tax on leather. If we should be sick, there would be no doctor's stuff for us; for doctors would be digging too. And if necessity did not compel, and if inequality subsisted, we could not get a chimney swept, or a load of coal from pit, for love or money.

* Lord Ferrers was hang'd in 1760, for killing his steward.

Tom. But still I should have no one over my head.

Jack. That's a mistake: I'm stronger than thou; and Standish, the exciseman, is a better scholar; so that we should not remain equal a minute. I should out-*fight* thee, and he'd out-*wit* thee. And if such a sturdy fellow as I am, was to come and break down thy hedge for a little firing, or take away the crop from thy ground, I'm not so sure that these new-fangled laws would see thee righted. I tell thee, Tom, we have a fine constitution already, and our forefathers thought so.

Tom. They were a pack of fools, and had never read the Rights of Man.

Jack. I'll tell thee a story. When sir John married, my lady, who is a little fantastical, and likes to do every thing like the French, begged him to pull down yonder fine old castle, and build it up in her frippery way. No, says sir John, what shall I pull down this noble building, raised by the wisdom of my brave ancestors; which outstood the civil wars, and only underwent a little needful repair at the revolution; a castle which all my neighbours come to take a pattern by—shall I pull it all down, I say, only because there may be a dark closet, or an awkward passage, or an inconvenient room or two in it? Our ancestors took *time* for what they did. They understood *foundation* work; no running up your little slight lath and plaster buildings, which are up in a day, and down in a night. My lady mumpt and grumbled; but the castle was let stand, and a glorious building it is; though there may be a trifling fault or two, and though a few decays want stopping; so now and then they mend a little thing, and they'll go on mending, I dare say, as they have leisure, to the end of the chapter, if they are let alone. But no pull-me-down works. What is it you are crying out for, Tom?

Tom. Why for a perfect government.

Jack. You might as well cry for the moon. There's nothing perfect in this world, take my word for it: though sir John says, we come nearer to it than any country in the world ever did.

Tom. I don't see why we are to work like slaves, while others roll about in their coaches, feed on the fat of the land, and do nothing.

Jack. My little maid brought home a story-book from the charity school t'other day, in which was a bit of a fable about the belly and the limbs. The hands said, I won't work any longer to feed this lazy belly, who sits in state like a lord and does nothing. Said the feet I won't walk and tire myself to carry him about; let him shift for himself; so said all the members; just as your levellers and republicans do now. And what was the consequence? Why the belly was pinched to be sure, and grew thin upon it; but the hands and the feet, and the rest of the members, suffered so much for want of their old nourishment, which the belly had been all the time administering, while they accused him of sitting in idle state, that they all fell sick, pined away, and would have died, if they had not come to their senses just in time to save their lives, as I hope all you will do.

Tom. But the times—but the taxes, Jack.

Jack. Things are dear to be sure, but riot and murder is not the way to make them cheap. And taxes are high; but I 'm told there 's a deal of old scores paying off, and paying off, by them who did not contract the debt neither, Tom. Besides things are mending, I hope; and what little is done is for us poor people; our candles are somewhat cheaper, and I dare say, if the honest gentleman who has the management of things, is not disturbed by you levellers, things will mend every day. But bear one thing in mind: the more we riot, the more we shall have to pay: the more mischief is done, the more will the repairs cost: the more time we waste in meeting to redress public wrongs, the more we shall increase our private wants. And mind too, that 'tis working, and not murmuring, which puts bread in our children's mouths, and a new coat on our backs. Mind another thing too, we have not the same ground of complaint; in France the poor paid all the taxes, as I have heard 'em say, and the quality paid nothing.

Tom. Well, I know what 's what, as well as another; and I 'm as fit to govern—

Jack. No, Tom, no. You are indeed as good as another man, seeing you have hands to work, and a soul to be saved. But are all men fit for all kind of things? Solomon says; 'How can he be wise whose talk is of oxen?' Every one in his way. I am a better judge of a horse-shoe than Sir John; but he has a deal better notion of state affairs than I; and I can no more do without his employ than he can do without my farriery. Besides, few are so poor but they may get a vote for a parliament-man; and so you see the poor have as much share in the government as they well know how to manage.

Tom. But I say all men are equal. Why should one be above another?

Jack. If that 's thy talk, Tom, thou dost quarrel with Providence, and not with government. For the woman is below her husband, and the children are below their mother, and the servant is below his master.

Tom. But the subject is not below the king: all kings are 'crown'd ruffians:' and all governments are wicked. For my part, I 'm resolv'd I 'll pay no more taxes to any of them.

Jack. Tom, Tom, if thou didst go oft'ner to church, thou wouldst know where it is said, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;' and also, 'Fear God, honour the king.' *Your* book tells you that we need obey no government but that of the people; and that we may fashion and alter the government according to our whimsies: but *mine* tells me, 'Let every one be subject to the higher powers, for all power is of God, the powers that be are ordained of God; whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.' Thou say'st, thou wilt pay no taxes to any of them.—Dost thou know who it was that worked a miracle, that he might have money to pay tribute with, rather than set you and me an example of disobedience to government? an example, let me tell thee, worth an hundred precepts, and of which all the wit of man can never lessen the value. Then there 's another thing worth minding, when St. Paul was giving all those directions, in the epistle to the Romans, for obedience and submission; what sort of a king now dost think they had? Dost think 'twas a *saint* which he ordered them to obey?

Tom. Why it was a kind, merciful, charitable king to be sure; one who put nobody to death or to prison.

Jack. You was never more out in your life. Our parson says he was a monster—that he robbed the rich, and murdered the poor—set fire to his own town, as fine a place as London—fiddled to the flames, and then hanged and burnt the Christians, who were all poor, as if they had burnt the town. Yet there 's not a word about rising.—Duties are fixed, Tom.—Laws are settled; a Christian can't pick and choose, whether he will obey or let it alone. But *we* have no such trials.—We have a king the very reverse.

Tom. I say we shall never be happy, till we do as the French have done.

Jack. The French and we contending for liberty, Tom, is just as if thou and I were to pretend to run a race; thou to set out from the starting-post when I am in already; thou to have all the ground to travel when I have reached the end. Why we 've got it man! we 've no race to run! we 're there already! Our constitution is no more like what the French one was, than a mug of our Taunton beer is like a platter of their soup-maigre.

Tom. I know we shall be undone, if we don't get a new *constitution*—that 's all.

Jack. And I know we shall be undone if we *do.* I don't know much about politics, but I can see by a little, what a great deal means. Now only to show thee the state of public credit, as I think Tim Standish calls it. There 's farmer Furrow, a few years ago he had an odd fifty pounds by him; so to keep it out of harm's way, he put it out to use, on government security, I think he calls it; well, t'other day he married one of his daughters, so he thought he 'd give her that fifty pounds for a bit of a portion. Tom, as I 'm a living man, when he went to take it out, if his fifty pounds was not almost grown to an hundred! and would have been a full hundred, they say, by this time, if the gentlemen had been let alone.*

Tom. Well, still as the old saying is—I should like to do as they do in France.

Jack. What, shouldest like to be murdered with as little ceremony as Hackabout, the butcher, knocks down a calf? or shouldest like to get rid of thy wife for every little bit of tiff? And as for liberty of *conscience*, which they brag so much about, why they have driven away their parsons (ay, and murdered many of 'em) because they would not swear as they would have them. And then they talk of liberty of the press; why, Tom, only t'other day they hang'd a man for printing a book against this pretty government of theirs.

Tom. But you said yourself it was sad times in France, before they pull'd down the old government.

Jack. Well, and suppose the French were as much in the right as I know them to be in the wrong; what does that argue for *us*?—Because

* This was written before the war, when the funds were at the highest.

my neighbour Furrow, t'other day pulled down a crazy old barn, is that a reason why I must set fire to my tight cottage?

Tom. I don't see for all that why one man is to ride in his coach and six, while another mends the highway for him.

Jack. I don't see why the man in the coach is to *drive over* the man on foot, or hurt a hair of his head, any more than you. And as to our great folks, that you levellers have such a spite against, I don't pretend to say they are a bit better than they should be; but that 's no affair of mine; let them look to that they 'll answer for that in another place. To be sure, I wish they 'd set us a better example about going to church, and those things; but still *hoarding 's* not the sin of the age; they don't lock up their *money*—away it goes, and every body's the better for it.—They do spend too much, to be sure, in feastings and fandangoes; and so far from commending them for it, if I was a parson I 'd go to work with 'em, but it should be in another kind of way; but as I am only a poor tradesman, why 'tis but bringing more grist to my mill. It all comes among the people. Their very extravagance, for which, as I said before, their parsons should be at them, is a fault by which, as poor men, we are benefitted; so you cry out just in the wrong place. Their coaches and their furniture, and their buildings, and their planting, employ a power of tradesmen and labourers. Now in this village, what should we do without the castle? Though my lady is too rantipolish, and flies about all summer to hot water and cold water, and fresh water and salt water, when she ought to stay at home with sir John: yet when she does come down, she brings such a deal of gentry that I have more horses than I can shoe, and my wife more linen than she can wash. Then all our grown children are servants in the family, and rare wages they have got. Our little boys get something every day by weeding their gardens, and the girls learn to sew and knit at Sir John's expense, who sends them all to school of a Sunday besides.

Tom. Ay, but there 's not Sir Johns in every village.

Jack. The more 's the pity. But there 's other help. 'Twas but last year you broke your leg, and was nine weeks in the Bristol Infirmary, where you was taken as much care of as a lord, and your family was maintained all the while by the parish. No poor-rates in France, Tom; and here there 's a matter of two million and a half paid for the poor every year, if 'twas but a little better managed.

Tom. Two million and a half!

Jack. Ay, indeed, Not translated into tenpences, as your French millions are, but twenty good shillings to the pound. But when this levelling comes about, there will be no infirmaries, no hospitals, no charity-schools, no Sunday-schools, where so many hundred thousand poor souls learn to read the word of God for nothing. —For who is to pay for them? *Equality* can't afford it; and those that may be willing won't be able.

Tom. But we shall be one as good as another for all that.

Jack. Ay, and bad will be the best. But we must work as we do now, and with this difference, that no one will be able to pay us. Tom! I have got the use of my limbs, of my liberty, of the laws, and of my Bible. The two first I take to be my *natural* rights; the two last my *civil* and *religious* rights: these, I take it, are the *true Rights of Man*, and all the rest is no thing but nonsense, and madness, and wickedness. My cottage is my castle; I sit down in it at night in peace and thankfulness, and 'no man maketh me afraid.' Instead of indulging discontent, because another is richer than I in this world (for envy is at the bottom of your equality works) I read my Bible, go to church, and look forward to a treasure in Heaven.

Tom. Ay, but the French have got it in *this* world.

Jack. 'Tis all a lie, Tom. Sir John's butler says his master gets letters which *say* 'tis all a lie. 'Tis all murder, and nakedness, and hunger, many of the poor soldiers fight without victuals, and march without clothes. These are your *democrats!* Tom.

Tom. What then, dost think all the men on our side wicked?

Jack. No—not so neither—If some of the leaders are knaves, more of the followers are fools. Sir John, who is wiser than I, says the whole system is the operation of fraud upon folly. They 've made fools of most of you, as I believe. I judge no man Tom; I hate no man. Even republicans and levellers, I hope, will always enjoy the protection of our laws; though I hope they will never be our law *makers*. There are many true dissenters, and there are some hollow churchmen; and a good man is a good man, whether his church has got a steeple to it or not.—The new fashion'd way of proving one's religion is to *hate* somebody. Now, though some folk pretend that a man's hating a papist, or a presbyterian, proves him to be a good *churchman*, it don't prove him to be a good *Christian*, Tom. As much as I hate republican works, I 'd scorn to *live* in a country where there was not liberty of conscience; and where every man might not worship God in his own way. Now that liberty they had not in France: the Bible was shut up in an unknown and heathenish tongue.—While here, thou and I can make as free use of ours as a bishop: can no more be sent to prison unjustly than the judge who tries us; and are as much taken care of by the laws as the parliament-man who makes them.—Then, as to your thinking that the new scheme will make you happy, look among your own set and see if any thing can be so dismal and discontented as a leveller.—Look at France. These poor French fellows used to be the merriest dogs in the world; but since equality came in, I don't believe a Frenchman has ever laughed.

Tom. What then dost thou take French *liberty* to be?

Jack. To murder more men in one night, than ever their poor king did in his whole life.

Tom. And what dost thou take a *democrat* to be?

Jack. One who lives to be governed by a thousand tyrants, and yet can't bear a king.

Tom. What is *equality*?

Jack. For every man to pull down every one that is above him: while, instead of raising those below him, to his own level, he only makes use of them as steps to raise himself to the place of those he has tumbled down.

Tom. What is the *new Rights of Man?*

Jack. Battle, murder, and sudden death.

Tom. What is it to be *an enlightened people?*

Jack. To put out the light of the Gospel, confound right and wrong, and grope about in pitch darkness.

Tom. What is *philosophy*, that Tim Standish talks so much about?

Jack. To believe that there's neither God, nor devil, nor heaven, nor hell: to dig up a wicked old fellow's* rotten bones, whose books, Sir John says, have been the ruin of thousands; and to set his figure up in a church and worship him.

Tom. And what is a *patriot* according to the new school?

Jack. A man who loves every other country better then his own, and France best of all.

Tom. And what is *Benevolence?*

Jack. Why, in the new fangled language, it means contempt of religion, aversion to justice, overturning of law, doating on all mankind in general, and hating every body in particular.

Tom. And what mean the other hard words that Tim talks about—*organization* and *function*, and *civism*, and *incivism*, and *equalization*, and *inviolability*, and *imperscriptible*, and *fraternization?*

Jack. Nonsense, gibberish, downright hocus-pocus. I know 'tis not English; sir John says 'tis not Latin; and his valet de sham says 'tis not French neither.

Tom. And yet Tim says he never shall be happy till all these fine things are brought over to England.

Jack. What! in this christian country, Tom? Why dost know they have no *Sabbath* in France? Their mob parliament meets on a Sunday to do their wicked work, as naturally as we do to go to church.† They have renounced God's word and God's day, and they don't even date in the year of our Lord. Why dost turn pale, man? And the rogues are always making such a noise, Tom, in the midst of their parliament-house, that their speaker rings a bell, like our penny-post man, because he can't keep them in order.

Tom. And dost thou believe they are as cruel as some folks pretend?

Jack. I am sure they are, and I think I know the reason. We christians set a high value on life, because we know that every fellow-creature has an immortal soul: a soul to be saved or lost, Tom—Whoever believes that, is a little cautious how he sends a soul unprepared to his grand account. But he who believes a man is no better than a dog, who make no more scruple of killing one than the other.

Tom. And dost thou think our Rights of Man will lead to all this wickedness?

Jack. As sure as eggs are eggs.

* Voltaire.

† Since this they have crammed ten days into the week, in order to throw Sunday out of it.

Tom. I begin to think we're better off as we are.

Jack. I'm sure on't. This is only a scheme to make us go back in every thing. 'Tis making ourselves poor when we are getting rich, and discontented when we are comfortable.

Tom. I begin to think I'm not so very unhappy as I had got to fancy.

Jack. Tom, I don't care for drink myself, but thou dost, and I'll argue with thee, not in the way of principle, but in thy own way; when there's all equality there will be no *superfluity*; when there's no wages there 'll be no drink: and levelling will rob thee of thy ale more than the malt tax does,

Tom. But Standish says, if we had a good government, there'd be no want of any thing.

Jack. He is like many others, who take the king's money and betray him: let him give up the profits of his place before he kicks at the hand that feeds him.—Though I'm no scholar, I know that a good government is a good thing. But don't go to make me believe that *any* government can make a bad man good, or a discontented man happy.—What art musing upon, man?

Tom. Let me sum up the evidence, as they say at 'sizes—Hem! To cut every man's throat who does not think as I do, or hang him up at a lamp-post!—Pretend liberty of conscience, and then banish the parsons only for being conscientious!—Cry out liberty of the press, and hang up the first man who writes his mind!—Lose our poor laws!—Lose one's wife perhaps upon every little tiff!—March without clothes, and fight without victuals!—No trade!—No Bible! No Sabbath nor day of rest!—No safety, no comfort, no peace in this world—and no world to come!—Jack, I never knew thee tell a lie in my life.

Jack. Nor would I now, not even against the French.

Tom. And thou art very sure we are not ruined?

Jack. I'll tell thee how we are ruined. We have a king, so loving, that he would not hurt the people if he could: and so kept in, that he could not hurt the people if he would. We have as much liberty as can make us happy, and more trade and riches than allows us to be good. We have the best laws in the world, if they were more strictly enforced; and the best religion in the world if it was but better followed. While old England is safe, I'll glory in her, and pray for her, and when she is in danger. I'll fight for her, and die for her.

Tom. And so will I too, Jack, that's what I will, (*Sings*)

'*O the roast beef of old England!*'

Jack. Thou art an honest fellow, Tom.

Tom. This is Rose and Crown night, and Tim Standish is now at his mischief; but we'll go and put an end to that fellow's work, or he'll corrupt the whole club.

Jack. Come along.

Tom. No; first I'll stay to burn my book, and then I'll go and make a bonfire and—

Jack. Hold, Tom. There is but one thing worse than a bitter enemy—and that is an im-

prudent friend. If thou would'st show thy love to thy king and country, let's have no drinking, no riot, no bonfires: put in practice this text, which our parson preach'd on last Sunday, 'Study to be quiet, work with your own hands, and mind your own business.'

Tom. And so I will, Jack—Come on

BIBLE RHYMES,

ON THE NAMES OF ALL THE BOOKS OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT:

WITH ALLUSION TO SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL INCIDENTS AND CHARACTERS.

As a homely digger may show a man a rich mine, so whatever the Book may be which is *presented* to you, that which I *recommend* to you is a *matchless* one.

Hon. Robert Boyles's *Preface to the Style of the Holy Scriptures.*

THESE RHYMES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, BY ONE, WHO HAVING LONG BEEN ANXIOUS FOR THEIR HIGHEST INTERESTS, CANNOT CONSULT THEM BETTER, THAN BY EARNESTLY RECOMMENDING TO THEIR SERIOUS AND DAILY PERUSAL,

THAT SACRED VOLUME, EMPHATICALLY CALLED

THE BOOK.

PREFACE.

THIS little piece requires some apology. It was written without the remotest intention of its ever being published. Some friends, for whose opinion the author entertains great deference, suggested that, at a time when such insidious attempts are making, by industry of impiety, to corrupt the principles, and to alienate the mind altogether from the study and belief of the Holy Scriptures, this slight publication might not be wholly useless or unseasonable.

Had health and other circumstances been favourable, many important characters, many striking facts, many engaging histories, might have been additionally introduced, and thus this slight work had been rendered less imperfect. But the writer having in an early attempt to treat on sacred subjects,* introduced many of the most interesting characters and incidents of the Old Testament, they are here frequently omitted or more slightly touched on.

With a hope to excite an increasing interest in the Bible, by inducing the readers to search it for themselves, the writer has generally forborne to make any particular reference to the specific chapter or verse to which the different passages allude. To increase their admiration of the Word of God by such research, is her fervent desire; and this more especially at a period when, by so many recent attacks, its truth is impugned, its authority denied, its doctrines vilified, and the characters it exhibits viewed with abhorrence, or treated with ridicule.

The familiar measure here adopted is very unfavourable to the subject. The author never remembers to have seen a serious poem written in it, except hymns; and even hymns, besides being short, are generally in the quatrain stanza; which, by making the rhyme alternate, gives greater room for elevation in the diction, and expansion of the thought, both of which the measure here used is calculated to cramp and contract.

This trifle, which was intended for little more than a *Catalogue Raisonne* of the *names* of the *books* of the Bible, admits of little poetical embellishment, even were the Author better qualified to bestow it. Indeed, the dignity of the Sacred Volume is so commanding, its superiority to all other compositions so decided, that it never gains any thing by human infusions; paraphrase dilutes it, amplification weakens, imitation debases, parody profanes.

Much more latitude is given in the Old than in the New Testament. The latter consists chiefly of fact and doctrine. It has less imagery; it exhibits a more explicit rule of faith; a more spiritualized code of morals; it is more specifically didactic. On this holy ground, therefore, we must tread with peculiar caution; because here every article of faith is definite; every rule of practice is established; the scheme of salvation is completed: so that all who enlarge on it must carefully avoid the awful sentence denounced on those who add to, or take from, what is written

Barley Wood, April 2, 1821.

* See Sacred Dramas, and Reflections of King Hezekiah.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

HERE the first history of mankind
From its first origin we find;
God is its author, truth its name,
Salvation all its end and aim:
Here we are shown "the good old way,"
First to believe, and then obey.
God's Spirit dictates; men proclaim
The doctrines as from him they came.
And not by miracles alone,
By prophecy the truth is shown.
Tho' 'tis no scheme for dry dispute,
No scene to wrangle and confute;
Not an arena for debate,
A field for harsh polemic hate;
Yet strict enquiry may be mov'd,
The more 'tis search'd the more 'tis prov'd,
It is a boon by mercy given,
That man may gain some taste of heaven;
Best medicine for the sin-sick soul,
For guilty passions best controul;
To all, its precepts are applied,
The rich man's guard, the poor man's guide;
To fill with gratitude the hearts
Where God his larger gifts imparts;
To cheer with higher hopes the poor,
To teach the suff'rer to endure;
The meek to raise, repress the bold,
To warn the young, to wean the old;
The arms its lends are faith and prayer,
Its fruits, oblivion sweet of care.
Here are the only precepts given
For peace on earth, or rest in heaven.
Sole lesson since the world began,
For fear of God and love to man:
It came with blessings in its train,
Which to recount, the attempt were vain.
It came to hinder fell despair,
The ravages of sin repair;
It came to cheer the contrite heart,
Redemption's wonders to impart;
That he who sins should sin no more;
It came—a lost world to restore.

PART THE FIRST.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS, PSALMS, PROVERBS, AND ECCLESIASTES.

THE PENTATEUCH.

THE first five books for author claim
Moses, and Pentateuch their name.
In GENESIS, which first we call,
Is man's creation, and his fall.
But soon to Adam came the word
That rebel man should be restor'd.
Yet, tho' the gracious promise came,
The first-born bore a murderer's name.
See the whole world by flood expire;
The cities of the plain by fire!
You ask, perhaps, "Who slew all these?"
'Twas sin, the original disease!
From Adam the infection ran;
In downward course from man to man.
Tho' all who draw the vital breath
Must pay the penalty of death,
Yet one* immortal pair we see:
Pledge of *our* immortality!
Enoch, in a corrupted time,
Bequeath'd to us this truth sublime;
God's service is not merely talk,
The man of God with God must walk.
From general laws, immunity
He found, for Enoch did not die,
"God took him!" O emphatic word!
No more was needful to record.
The world grew worse as old it grew,
Sin gathering strength, grew bolder too,
Long-suffering patience now was past,
The appalling sentence comes at last;
"My Spirit shall not always strive,
No further respite will I give."
God bids a refuge straight prepare
For those his goodness meant to spare.
Bless'd Noah, and his favoured race,
Alone obtain the special grace.
A picture of *our* world remark,
In those who labour'd in the ark;
A stronger instance need we find
Of the hard heart of base mankind
Howe'er assiduously they wrought,
No builder his *own* safety sought;
A century was the task pursu'd,
Not one his *own* destruction view'd:
Oh, blind, God's menaced blow to slight!
What! perish with the ark in sight?
See God his awful threat'ning keep,
Break up the fountains of the deep;
Remove the limits long assign'd
Th' encroaching waters fast to bind!
Heaven's windows open; lo, the sky
Pours down its deluge from on high!
The floods that rise, the floods that fall,
Meet at one point and cover all:
All cry, none aid; with anguish wild
The frantic mother grasps her child.
The weak their safety seek below,
The rapid waves above them flow;
The strong attempt the mountain's steep,
The mountains are become the deep.
Half dead with famine, half with fear,
Now few, and fewer now, appear!
All strive, all sink—sink beasts and men;
Perish'd each living substance then.
Existence is extinct!—The world
Itself to dire destruction hurl'd.
Good Noah's house alone remain'd;
The waves his floating ark sustain'd.
There *is* an ark that's open still,
Where all may shelter if they will.
Awful, indeed, if Christians too
Should perish with *their* ark in view!
But if the moral plague abound,
Yet still some righteous men were found;
Righteous, not perfect, you may see
Throughout mankind's long history;
As stars in darkness seem more bright,
So these illume the moral night.
See Abraham full of faith and grace,
Sire of the patriarchal race:
To Isaac turn your wond'ring eyes,
Prefiguring the great Sacrifice!
What Abraham felt, fond parents, say,
Himself his only son must slay!
Though much he mourn'd, for much he lov'd,

* Elijah and Enoch.

His faith, his prompt obedience prov'd;
What dauntless faith those words implied,
"God will himself a lamb provide!"
Joseph, the virtuous, next behold,
Like Christ by his own brethren sold:
The pit, the prison, all unite,
To make his character more bright:
Whence came that strength which could sustain him,
From tempting pleasure's snares restrain him?
Could made the prison, pit, and court,
To him alike a safe resort?
What made him thus unyielding stand?
His God was still at his right hand!
Religion was to him a law;
He knew the Omnipresent saw:
No secrecy his soul can win,
No fancied safety tempt to sin:
Omniscience sees the skulking shame,
Darkness and light to God the same!

Now Exodus records the story
Of Pharaoh's fall and Moses' glory.
By learning form'd, and form'd by nature,
For general, guide, and legislator;
At great Jehovah's high command,
By faith he left th' oppressor's land;
Escap'd the snares by Pharaoh spread,
The numerous phalanx forth he led.
Mark on the margin how they stand;
Behold they cross the sea by land!
God's mighty power is seen once more,
Oh, miracle! they reach the shore!
Egypt pursues, the ocean braves,
They rush between the parted waves!
Back to their course the waves retreat,
Again the refluent waters meet!
If Egypt's shrieks are mix'd with prayer,
They pray to gods who cannot hear!
See Egypt sink, ingulf'd their host,
The rider and his horse are lost!
Israel, unworthy of the boon,
Forgets the wond'rous rescue soon:
Sav'd, not converted;—discontent
Defeats the mighty blessing sent.
By miracle they still were fed,
From heaven receiv'd their daily bread;
Yet murmur'd at the bounteous hand
Which fed them in that desert land:
Yet *we*, these pilgrims while we blame,
And cast reproach on Israel's name;
To murmur, too, we sometimes dare,
Though we have bread to eat and spare!
Moses! thy parting song sublime,
Shall outlive worlds and bury time.
No hallow'd bard, whate'er his worth,
E'er pour'd more warm effusions forth!
O'er Israel's sin how does he sigh,
His God, his Rock, how glorify!
'Attend—the awful truth I sing,
Is no indifferent, no vain thing;
It is your life, your hope, your all;
God is the Lord; obey his call:
In vain for molten Gods you strive,
'Tis I that kill, that make alive!
Fountain of Jacob, just and true!
Thou wat'rest earth with heavenly dew!
From Thee descend the corn and wine,
All health, all gifts, all grace is thine!"
Then pouring the rich blessing round,
He shows them where true rest is found.
'Oh, people sav'd, adore the Lord,
Shield of thy help, celestial sword!
Approach, abide, secure from harms,
Safe in the everlasting arms!
Beneath that panoply divine,
Oh! save us, Lord, for we are thine!'

Leviticus the law proclaims,
And brands two* sacrilegious names.
The Gospel truth this book must own,
Anticipating Christ unknown.
Such types thro' the Old Scriptures run,
And, like the shadow, prove the sun.

Numbers the Hebrews' names declare,
In due arrangement, just and fair:
The nomenclature so exact,
Not deists can disprove the fact.

While Deuteronomy repeats
That law of which the other treats;
Enlarges on th' important theme;
With Moses' death completes the scheme.

See Joshua, type of Jesus, stand,
Fighting for Canaan's promis'd land!

While Judges learn'd their wisdom bring,
Before the Jews demand a king.

God's tender care of pious youth
Is sweetly seen in past'ral Ruth:
Here filial piety is found,
And with its promis'd blessing crown'd.

Good Samuel, as the Lord appoints,
The king so loudly ask'd, anoints;
With sorrow deep th' historian brings
Succession sad of Israel's Kings;

And Chronicles prolongs the story,
So little to the royal glory:
Though some were faithful, just, and true,
We grieve to say they were but few
No prophet on the rolls of fame
Eclipses great Elijah's name:
Impell'd by faith, disdaining fear,
To kings and priests alike sincere!
The altar once on Carmel built
To God, proclaims th' apostate's guilt.
'Twas there th' illustrious Tishbite, born
On Baal to pour indignant scorn,
With keenest irony maintains
His power divine, in heaven who reigns
Contemns, as round the trench he trod,
Their talking, sleeping, journeying god!
To heaven behold him still aspire,
Then reach it in a car of fire!

Ezra deserves immortal praise,
Who sought the temple's walls to raise.

How shall I Nehemiah paint,
At once the courtier and the saint?

In Esther, Providence displays,
To us inscrutable, his ways;
Here the fair queen with modest grace
Obtains protection for her race:
The oppress'd from hence a lesson draws
Of courage in a righteous cause;
And here, the snares for virtue spread,
Return to plague the inventor's head.

* Nadab and Abihu.

Job, on his dunghill, far more great
Than when he dwelt in regal state!
He heard, before, Jehovah's grace,
But now he sees him face to face.
Meekly he bow'd before his God,
He felt the smart, but kiss'd the rod.
"In me, great God, complete thy will!
Slay me, and I will trust Thee still."

Is it a seraph strikes the strings?
Or is it royal David sings?
Thy Psalms divinely bring to view
Jesus, thy root and offspring too.
Mark, how the author's hallowed lays
Begin with prayer, and end with praise!
Commerce how sure! which, while it gives
Due payment, rich returns receives;
As tides, which from the shore recede,
Return to fill the native bed,
So praise which we to God impart,
Comes back in blessings to the heart.
Gainful return, to man when given
Such interchange 'twixt earth and heaven!
As long as inborn sin is felt,
Or penitence in tears shall melt;
As long as Satan shall molest,
Or anguish rend the human breast;
As long as prayer its voice shall raise,
Or gratitude ascend in praise,
So long God's poet shall impart
A balm to every broken heart;
So long the fainting spirit cheer,
And save the contrite from despair.
To Sion's bard it shall be given
To join the immortal choir in heaven;
And when with their's his accents float,
He shall not need to change his note.
Tho' due this tributary praise,
One sin embittered all his days.
The prudent prophet chose the veil
Of fiction for the bloody tale;
The tale enrag'd the blinded king;
"The man shall die who did this thing!"
Thou art the man!—the appalling word
Cuts deeper than a two-edged sword;
All self-deceit is put to flight,
Scar'd conscience re-assumes its right.
Awak'd, the king, in wild surprise,
Prostrate in dust and ashes lies.
The monarch rous'd himself abhorr'd,
And own'd his guilt before the Lord:
Now agoniz'd in prayer he speaks,
The multitude of mercies seeks.
His prayer, his penitence, obtain
A respite from the threaten'd pain.
Tho' God decreed he should not die,
Nor perish everlastingly,
Yet justice sought not to prevent,
Tho' he delay'd the punishment.
The dire effect of sin we see
In his degenerate family.
To him no future peace was known,
One son rebell'd against his throne;
Ungrateful friends, domestic jars,
Intestine tumults, foreign wars:
Contending brothers fiercely strive,
Dark enmity is kept alive;
Now murmurs loud, now famine great,
Now fierce convulsions shake the state;
Divided empire soon we see
Distract his near posterity.
Thus, tho' his pardon mercy seals,
Sin's temporal results he feels.
God with offence will have no part,
E'en in the man of his own heart.
All sadly serves to prove our fall
From purity original.

Taught by the wisdom from above,
See Proverbs full of truth and love.

To thee, O Solomon! belong
The graces of the mystic Song.

Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,
Displays the powerful moral teacher.
How could'st thou, sapient king, combine
Thy faulty life, and verse divine?
Why were thy Proverbs still at strife
With thy dishonoured close of life?
Thou rear'st the Temple—oh, the sin
To quit the God who dwelt within!
Of all, O king, thy *books* have taught,
With holy wisdom richly fraught;
Still more thy large *experience* brings
The emptiness of human things.
In all thy keen and wide pursuit
Of love, power, pleasure, what the fruit?
Satiety in all we see,
In each enjoyment vanity!
Youth might be spar'd a world of woe,
The truth without the trial know,
Would they with abler hands advise,
And trust king Solomon the wise,
That the vex'd heart and sated mind,
In God alone repose can find.

PART THE SECOND.

THE PROPHETS.

Thee, great Isaiah, dare I paint,
Prophet, evangelist, and saint?
So just thy strong prospective view,
'Tis prophecy and history too.
Rapt in futurity, he saw,
The Gospel supersede the law.
Prophet! in thy immortal lines,
The fulness of perfection shines;
There, present things the Spirit seals,
There, things that shall be he reveals,
Doctrine and warning, prayer and praise
Alike our admiration raise.
Amaz'd, we see the hand divine
Each thought direct, inspire each line.
Still has the seraph's burning coal
Left its deep impress on the soul;
Still shall the sacred fire survive,
Warm all who read, touch all who live!
'Twere hopeless to attempt the song,
So vast, so deep, so sweet, so strong!
Fain would I tell how Sharon's rose,
In solitary deserts blows;
Fain would I speak of Carmel's hill,
Whose trees the barren waste shall fill;
Of Lebanon's transplanted shade,
To sandy valleys how convey'd;
The noble metaphors we find
To loftiest objects there assign'd.
These splendid scenes before us bring
Th' invisible redeeming King.

In every image, every line,
Messiah! we behold Thee shine.
But who shall dare these charms to tell,
One British* bard has sung so well?
His *Christian* page shall never die,
O si sic omnia! all reply.
Blest Prophet! who a theme could'st find
Congenial to restore thy mind!
Here we behold together brought
Splendour of diction and of thought;
In these bold images we see
Grandeur without hyperbole.
Here all God's attributes unite;
The gracious and the infinite;
Beyond imagination's dream,
Thy true, august, and holy theme.
All that the loftiest mind conceives,
All that the strongest faith believes,
All were too feeble to express
God's love, his pow'r, his holiness!
His length, and breadth, and depth, and height,
In all their wide extremes unite;
No danger of excess is here;
To sink too low is all thy fear.
To His broad eye, all nations see
Are less than nought, are vanity.
To him all Lebanon could bring
Only a worthless offering;
The waters at his bidding, stand
Within the hollow of his hand;
The mountains in his scales are weigh'd,
The hills are in his balance laid;
Measur'd by his almighty hand,
The globe 's a particle of sand!
Though with tremendous arm he come,
With power which strikes the nations dumb;
Centre and source of light and love,
In whom we are, and live, and move;
Though not confin'd to time or place,
Not to the vast extent of space;
Objects of his paternal care,
The meanest still his mercies share;
He who in highest heaven resides,
Yet in the contrite heart abides.
Now, shepherd-like, his flock he feeds,
The tender bears, the feeble leads;
Power to the weak, but trusting saints
He gives, and might to him that faints.
The young may fail, the strong be weak,
But all who his salvation seek,
Strong in the Lord, shall be renew'd;
With new-born vigour be endu'd;
On eagles' wings sublimely soar,
To fear, and faint, and sin no more.†

Hear JEREMIAH'S plaintive song
Pour its full tide of grief along!
By predisposing grace ordain'd,
The prophet's functions he sustain'd;
By his predicting voice reveal'd,
Thy doom, O Babylon, is seal'd!
On Judah 'twas his fate to see
Accomplish'd his own prophecy.
In what pathetic strains he show'd
Their miseries from their vices flow'd!
The *form* of goodness they defend,
But hate its *power* and miss its *end*,
For lying vanities abhorr'd,
They plead 'the Temple of the Lord;'
'The Temple of the Lord are these!'
Their varnish'd falsehoods more displease,
As if the edifice alone
Their practis'd evils could atone.
The Temple is beyond dispute:
A means, but not a substitute:
A fair profession may be found,
With lives unholy, hearts unsound.

No reigning vice he left untold,
Expostulation sad, yet bold,
Lays bare the sins they sought to hide,
Vain boasting, arrogance, and pride:
Reproves alike both age and youth;
Neither is valiant for the truth.
Wisdom, or wealth, or power, or might,
Alone, as rightly us'd, is right.
All glorying is by Heaven abhorr'd,
Save that which glories in the Lord.

Sublimely sad his woes impart
Their LAMENTATIONS to the heart.
Pity and woe his bosom share,
Anger and fondness, grief and prayer.
Fountains of tears could scarce express
His sorrows' and his love's excess.

EZEKIEL comes in awful state,
His vision mystically great!
The Prophet, see, his watch-tower keep,
The shepherd blame, console the sheep.

When Babylon's imperial lord
Crush'd Judah by his conqu'ring sword,
DANIEL, erect, of noble mind,
With three believing brothers join'd,
Captives among the Jews were brought,
And in the royal palace taught;
Chaldea's learning they acquir'd,
The king the ingenious youths admir'd;
At dainty tables gave them meat,
Himself ordain'd the plenteous treat.
The tempting cates he bade provide,
The daily bounties he supplied;
The wines, the royal vintage find,
Seduce not Daniel's guarded mind,
Tempt not the self-denying three
All shun the snares of luxury.
'No food, but pulse, before us bring,
No drink but the translucent spring.
The king an image vast display'd,
Enormous was the statue made;
With impious zeal his laws ordain,
All should repair to Dura's plain.
Princes and counsellors appear
Rulers of provinces be there!
At sound of sackbut, psaltry, flute,
All must attend: who dares dispute
The high behest, who will not own
The idol's godhead, shall be thrown
Deep in the fiery cauldron's blaze,
And burn in that capacious vase.
See Dura's plain how crowded now!
All make the prostituted vow;
All praise, all honour, all adore;
The zealous king can ask no more.
What, all? Is no exception found,
In idol worship *all* abound?
The holy brotherhood behold
In God's almighty strength how bold!

* See Pope's exquisite poem of "the Messiah."
† Isaiah chap. xl.

Nor flute nor sackbut's sound controuls
The firm, fix'd purpose of their souls.
Their eyes, their hearts are rais'd n high,
The burning cauldron they defy,
Now hear the valiant brothers speak,
See them magnanimously meek.
No arts to soothe the haughty king,
No charge against his idol bring,
No doubts, no fears, no hesitation;
They wait no slow deliberation.
Prepar'd they stand. They scorn to swerve
'Thy gods, O king, we will not serve;
We serve Jehovah; his command
Can save his servants from thy hand,
E'en from the flames his children save,
Snatch from the fearful fiery grave.
If not, obedience is his due,
In life, in death, resolv'd and true,
No image shall our worship see,
No idol, though set up by thee.'
The king with madd'ning fury turns;
With sevenfold heat the cauldron burns;
To such intensity it grew,
The men who cast them in, it slew.
The ardent blaze unaw'd they dare,
They burn not! God's own Son is there!
Sav'd by an all controlling hand,
Unhurt, amidst the flames they stand.
Triumphant Lord! sav'd by thy power,
Nor floods shall drown, nor flames devour.
The awe-struck king the scene surveys;
Hear him the cry of rapture raise:
'They live! come forth! let my command
Be straight proclaim'd throughout the land;
Let Babylon's wide empire know
God reigns above, and rules below.
If any dare my law deny,
Or Azariah's God defy,
On dunghill heaps they shall be trod;
No God delivers like this God.'
Let youthful readers not despise
The hints which from this tale arise;
If base intemperance had possess'd
Its empire o'er the yielding breast:
Or did excess in wine obtain
A conquest o'er the youthful brain,'
By these joint enemies subdu'd,
Where might have been their fortitude?
Who rules the appetite, shall find
An easier task to rule the mind.

Daniel, the statesman, saint, and sage,
Brav'd, yet unhurt, the lion's rage.
How fervently the Prophet spoke!
Warm from his lips the rapture broke:
Our right'ousness we dare not plead,
For we have none in thought or deed:
Thy oracles neglected lie;
Abus'd, thy dreadful majesty!
Our sins are great, yet greater still
Thy power to pardon, and thy will;
Oh, Lord, forgive! Oh, hear us, Lord!
For thy own sake thy help afford.
So prompt to prayer to grant thine aid,
'Tis heard almost before 'tis made.
Soon may it come, the day all hail;
When God's free Spirit shall prevail:
In full effusion, large and wide,
In ev'ry heart be multiplied.
What *must* arrive, if God be true,
Why wait for in a distant view?
Why not at once besiege the throne,
Till Heaven the supplication own?

Hosea, in each indignant line,
Denounc'd on sin the wrath divine.

Joel directs to fast and pray,
And God's displeasure turn away;
The threat'nings of the Lord he brings,
And then his goodness sweetly sings:
Why will ye perish! turn, O turn,
Before his indignation burn!
Bow down your heart, his kindness prove,
Not merely loving,—God is love;
Quick to forgive, slow to resent:
Approach his footstool and repent.
He will your contrite prayers receive,
Perhaps he may a blessing leave:
Corn, wine, and oil, again bestow,
Remove the plague, and heal the woe.

Amos exhorts, and warns, and strives
That Judah should reform their lives.
His powerful precepts never cease
To warn the rich who live at ease.
You that on downy couches lie,
Or doze on beds of ivory;
You who voluptuously consume
Your wealth, whose meal's a hecatomb;
Who at a single feast exhaust
A vineyard of uncounted cost;
Whose perfumes, floating in the air,
A Sybarite might be proud to share;
Whose festive luxuries must be crown'd
With the soft lute and viol's sound;
Are *you* the men of grief who melt
At tales of woe by brethren felt?
Ask Amos: he this truth imparts,
That pleasure hardens human hearts,
That selfish feelings most abound
Where ease and luxury are found.
How strange the paradox, yet true,
That what dissolves should harden too!

Brief Obadiah, full of grace,
Says much, though in a little space.

Jonah! How high thy honours stand,
Who by one sermon rous'd a land!
At the last day how will thy fame,
Oh Nineveh, my country shame!
Jonah! thy honours sunk how low
When wrath deform'd thy sullen brow.
Better a mighty empire fall,
Than Jonah's credit sink at all!
Oh human selfishness how great,
To mourn a gourd and not a state!
The prophet here the pastor teaches
To practice what so well he preaches.

Micah, admir'd through ev'ry age,
The babe of Bethlehem crowns thy page!
With what precision dost thou trace
The then obscure, now honour'd place!

Nahum, all hail thy muse of fire,
The glories of thy dying lyre!
"The still small voice" no more is heard,
As when of old the Lord appear'd.
The whirlwind, and the driving storm,
His fearful wonders now perform;

How terrible his thunders sound!
The awe-struck sinner how confound!
No horrors can the guilty move,
Like the fierce wrath of injur'd love.
Blest Prophet! had thy strains been heard
From the proud lyre of Theban bard,
How would the wrapt enthusiast turn,
"To thoughts that breathe, and words that burn!"
But tho' not nurs'd on Pindus' mount,
Nor fed from Aganippe's fount;
Thou offerest at a loftier shrine
Than Delphi own'd, thy ode divine.
Thy muse with nobler claims shall rise:
Her inspirations from the skies;
This the chief glory of thy lays,
Thou hadst a *living* God to praise.

Though, HABAKKUK, thy name refuse
To bend obedient to the muse,
Yet thy sweet promises impart
Warm comfort to the drooping heart.
In thy fam'd prayer, sublimely sweet,
The saint and muse in concert meet.
God came from Teman; what array
Of confluent glories marks his way!
Brightness above, around was sent;
The pestilence before him went.
The skies with unknown splendours blaze,
Heaven shows his power, and earth his praise;
The everlasting mountains fled,
The rivers trembled in their bed;
Bow'd the perpetual hills; the deep
Through its dark caves was heard to sweep.
His arrows fly! Lord, at thy will
Th' astonish'd sun and moon stand still!
The shining of thy glitt'ring spear,
Transfix the heathen bands with fear.
One glance of thy pervading eye
Measures the earth; the nations fly
Dissolv'd and scatter'd; Cushan's tents
Burst forth in deep and loud laments.
They tremble at the distant sound,
Sudden thy troops their tents surround.
Yet tho' Chaldea's hostile band
Pour in their hordes, despoil the land;
Yet though the fig tree may be found
With neither fruit nor blossom crown'd;
The olive and the vine decay,
And flocks and herds be torn away;
My song of praise my God shall hear,
More free, more fervent, more sincere.
"Revive thy work;" tho' all should fail,
Let grace and godliness prevail.
Lord of my strength; my joy, my crown,
Thy boundless mercies let me own!
Thy great salvation sets me free,
I shall have all in having Thee.
Thou ZEPHANIAH, dost record
Boldly the terrors of the Lord!
HAGGAI the slothful Jews exhorts
To build the temple's hallow'd courts:
They, while their splendid mansions shine,
Neglect JEHOVAH's sacred shrine.

Thy visions, ZECHARIAH, stand
As beacons to a guilty land;
Tho' awfully obscure, yet true,
They teach the Briton as the Jew.
Known to the Lord, the day will come
Reversing Salem's awful doom!
Where nought was seen but waste and woe,
There shall the living waters flow;
Destructions direful work be past,
And Christ the King be crown'd at last.
Her courts, by those who long have fought
Against her, eagerly he sought:
One Lord, one God, shall reign alone,
His name, long prophesied, be ONE.
On every vessel, every breast,
One grand inscription be imprest;
And HOLINESS TO GOD be found
Within, without, above around!

Thou, MALACHI, though last not least,
Prepar'st for us the Gospel feast.
* * * * *
Yet e'er the ancient books you leave,
This truth in all yeur hearts receive,—
That all the saints unite with care
To prove the omnipotence of prayer.
Search thro' the annals of mankind,
One solitary instance find;
Prove that you know one prayer preferr'd
In faith by man, by God not heard;
Then boldly venture, if you dare,
No more to lift your heart in prayer.
Till then, pray on; 'twill clear your way:
Chiefly for God's own Spirit pray:
There we shall find, if there we seek,
Wealth for the poor, strength for the weak;
Soundness for sickness, life for death,
Deriv'd from this inspiring breath;
Till every nation, tongue and tribe,
The healing influence shall imbibe
Distil like genial drops of rain,
Or dews upon the tender grain:
This in the secret of the soul
Each strong temptation shall controul,
And some faint image, lost before,
Of its bright origin restore.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

PART THE THIRD.

THE GOSPELS.

THIS dispensation, clear and bright,
Brings immortality to light;
Proclaims the rebel Man restor'd,
Th'Apostate brought to know the Lord.
Within this consecrated ground
Discrepancies are never found;
The writers vary just to prove
That not in concert do they move;
While Jesus' glory stands reveal'd,
The author's faults are not conceal'd;
No selfish arts, no private ends,
But all to one grand centre tends;
No fact disguis'd however wrong,
No truth kept back, however strong.
One sure criterion leaves no doubt,
Consistency prevails throughout:
The doctrine who shall dare disprove,
Of genuine faith which works by love?

MATTHEW and MARK divinely treat
Those truths which LUKE and JOHN repeat:
Tho' all concur in one grand scheme,
Each throws fresh light upon the theme
MATTHEW by no vain hope entic'd,

Left all he had to follow Christ;
Behold him faithfully record
The matchless Sermon of his Lord.
Here, every want its refuge seeks,
Here, every grace its nature speaks;
Each in its own appropriate place,
The blessing suited to the case.
Each gift to its own want confin'd;
Mercy the merciful shall find.
How cheering to the poor in spirit,
Promis'd a kingdom to inherit!
Told e'en on earth the meek man knows
The best enjoyments Heaven bestows;
Lovers of peace shall peace possess,
Comfort the comfortless shall bless;
That he who feels the oppressor's rod
Feels more the mercies of his God;
Proclaims, the pure in heart shall see,
In God, Essential Purity.

MARK, next among the historic saints,
The Baptist of the desert paints.
Herod the prophet gladly heard,
In many things obey'd his word.
But mark the rapid race of sin!
They fast advance who once begin.
Long train'd in vice, the tempter now
Ensnares him to a sinful vow:
Her graceful movements with his heart,
He will with half his kingdom part:
Sudden he cries, by passion driven,
"Make thy demand it shall be given."
Fearless she ask'd the Baptist's head,
The king was griev'd, the king obey'd:
O fruitless sorrow, vainly spent,
To mourn the crime he might prevent;
If sinful such a vow to make,
More sin to keep it than to break,
To death he doom'd the saint he lov'd;
Condemn'd the preacher he approv'd;
And she, whose softness charm'd before,
Herself the bleeding victim bore.
What wonder if the king, amaz'd,
Should dread in Christ that John was rais'd.

See LUKE the glorious scene record,
The scene of his transfigur'd Lord!
This sight of wonder and of love
Confirms the glorious state above:
How blest the three* to whom 'twas given
To view three† witnesses from heaven!
The representatives they saw
Of Gospel, Prophecy, and Law.
Luke more Christ's miracles records,
John more preserves his gracious words;
Records for Christian consolation,
His Saviour's heavenly conversation,
Though John for ever stands approv'd
The blest disciple Jesus lov'd;
Yet all one path devoutly trod,
And follow'd their redeeming God.
In HIM the wond'rous union view,
Atonement and *example* too!
His death sole means lost man to save;
His life our lives a pattern gave.
Explore the mystery as we can,
The perfect God was perfect man:
As man he felt affliction's rod,
As man he suffer'd, rose as God.
This union all his actions prove,

* Peter, James, and John.
† Jesus, Moses, and Elias.

As God, as man, he show'd his love,
As man to man in every state
Something he left to imitate.
Divine Philanthropist! to Thee
We lift the heart, and bow the knee
As man, man's sympathies he felt;
In tears of tenderness could melt;
Weep o'er the fated city's doom;
Weep, Lazarus, o'er thy honour'd tomb!
The hidden heart of man he knew;
Felt for his wants and weakness too.
The bruised reed he never broke,
His burden easy, light his yoke;
From heaven to earth his mercies reach,
Alike to save us, or to teach.
When call'd on, error to reprove,
Reproof was kindness, censure love:
A cure his ready hand applies
For blindness, or of heart, or eyes.
Tho' with a look, a touch, a word
The long-lost vision he restor'd;
A casual hint may pastors seize
For those who yet see men as trees:
Jesus watch'd o'er th' imperfect sight,
And blest the blind with *gradual* light.
His saints no vain display relate,
No miracles for pomp or state;
No artful show for private ends,
But all to use and mercy tends.
His life a constant lecture reads
For minor as for greater deeds;
Not that *his* hunger might be fed,
He multiplies the scanty bread:
The famish'd troops in order plac'd,
He ne'er forgot to bless the feast:
Though endless stores he could produce,
He sav'd the fragments for their use.
We pass each suffering, glorious scene,
The manger and the Cross between;
All 'he began to do, and teach'
We pass, till Calvary we reach.
The attempt almost too bold we deem,
And trembling touch the awful theme.
All eloquence, all power of speech,
Imagination's loftiest reach,
Fall short, and could but faintly prove
Th' incarnate God's last scene of love.
Abandon'd, none his woes partake;
One friend denies him, all forsake.
Yet tho' the sacred blood was shed,
'Captivity was captive led.'
The annals of mankind explore,
Did ever conqueror before
Make palpable to human eyes,
Achieve, such glorious victories?
Besides the triumphs of his grace,
Which only faith's purg'd eye can trace;
Marvels applied to sight and sense,
Exhibit his omnipotence.
Shrouded Divinity confest,
What prodigies the Lord attest!
Things contrary, opposing creatures
Struck at the sight, forget their natures,
The human voice is mute; the dumb
And senseless eloquent become.
Things breathless, things inanimate
Renounce, nay contradict their fate.
Things never meant to sympathise
Astonish unbelieving eyes.
The firm earth trembled at the view;

Th' indignant sun his light withdrew;
No natural cause eclips'd his face,
He would not witness man's disgrace.
Asunder torn, the rocks proclaim
Their sympathies with loud acclaim.
The yawning sepulchres unclose;
To life their sleeping tenants rose;
The Temple's vail is seen to rend,
And with it all distinctions end!
All various nature takes a part,
All, save the obdurate human heart.
The soldier, and th' expiring thief
Alone, proclaim their firm belief.
Lord, 'IT IS FINISHED:' here we meet
Promise and prophecy complete.

Then come the APOSTLES' wond'rous facts,
Their travels, miracles, and ACTS.
The Holy Spirit from above,
Given as the Messenger of Love.
The various languages once sent,
To Babel as its punishment,
Here take a diff'rent nature quite,
Not meant to scatter but unite;
That every nation here below,
In its own tongue God's word might know.
Ye, who to idols long confin'd,
Are blind in heart, and dark in mind;
Half quench'd the intellectual ray,
While man withheld the moral day;
To the strong hold, ye prisoners, turn,
Prisoners of hope! no longer mourn.
See Christ extended empire gains,
See mountains sinking into plains!
The Builders on the CORNER-STONE,
Cease not like Babel's—they work on,
Till Saba and Arabia bring
Due tribute to th' Eternal King;
The living WORD shall life impart
Unseal the eye, and change the heart;
Till Jew and Gentile truth shall see,
Greek and Barbarian, bond and free;
Not by man's might, nor deed, nor word,
But by the Spirit of the Lord.
Hear martyr'd Stephen, as he dies,
Pray for his murd'rous enemies!
Then bring from Greek or Roman story
So pure an instance of true glory!
And *is* the furious bigot Saul
Become, indeed, the humble Paul?
Strange pow'r of all-transforming grace,
The lamb assumes the lion's place!
So blind, when persecution's rod
He held he thought 'twas serving God:
But now so meek, himself he paints
'Less than the least of all the saints!'
Stephen! thy prayer in death preferr'd
To save thy enemies, is heard;
And Paul perhaps the earliest fruit
Of the first martyr's dying suit.
Forgive the Muse if she recall
So oft to mind the sainted Paul;
We pass the awful truths he tells,
His labours, woes, and miracles;
We pass the pow'rs his cause who heard;
How Felix trembled, Festus fear'd;
Pass, how the Jewish king receiv'd
The truth, half doubted, half believ'd;
We pass the different works of grace
In Lydia, and the jailor's case;
We pass the perils Paul endur'd
From stripes; in prison how immur'd;
In nakedness and hunger groan'd;
Betray'd, thrice beaten, shipwreck'd, ston'd!
In every varying state we see
Only a change in misery.
How oft has admiration hung
On the great lyric bard, who sung
The warrior fam'd in Punic story,
Who swell'd the tide of Roman glory.
With magnanimity heroic,
He dignifies the noble Stoic,
See the illustrious captive stand,
Resolv'd unshaken, on the strand.
Imploring friends around him weep;
All mourn the hero all would keep.
E'en the stern senators in vain
The patriot would at last detain.
No blessings of domestic life,
No darling child, nor tender wife
He heeds; repels his wife's embrace,
Th' endearments of his infant race.
No sigh he heaves, he drops no tear,
Naught but his oath and country dear.
He knows the tortures which await,
Knows all the horrors of his fate;
By death in direst shapes unmov'd,
He coolly quitted all he lov'd.
Compos'd, as if hard law-suits past,
He sought a calm retreat at last;
Such calm as crowns Venafrian fields,
Such charms as cool Tarentum yields.
The great Apostle now behold,
A hero cast in Christian mould;
Though learn'd, he will not take his rule
From Doctors of the Stoic school.
Religion stops not nature's course,
But turns to other streams its force.
Forewarn'd, he knew where'er he went
'Twas prison, death, or banishment.
'Twas not a vague, uncertain fear;
God's Spirit show'd him what was near,
Show'd him the woes which must befall,
Not in one country, but in all.
Behold him now encircled stand,
Like the brave Roman on the strand:
A lovelier scene* adorns no page
Than that which now our thoughts engage.
Weeping, his Christian friends surround,
Their tender anguish knows no bound;
Their tears to him their grief impart,
'Mean you to weep and break my heart?'
Hear him with modest grace record
His toils for his forgiving Lord:
Pour out the tender love he feels,
Then to their justice he appeals.
Still to your highest interests true,
Witness, I sought not yours, but you.
This heart for you my daily care,
Is lifted up in ceaseless prayer;
These hands have oft procur'd my bread,
And labour'd that the poor be fed.
O treasure close in every breast,
Your Saviour's posthumous bequest,
If 'tis a blessing to receive,
Far more a blessing 'tis to give,
Then warns to feed the church of God,
Purchas'd by his redeeming blood.

*Acts, Chap. xx.

Thrice bless'd the Pastor who, like Paul,
The past with comfort can recall;
His life and doctrine both review
To auditors who feel both true;
Fears not his conduct to declare
Holy, unblameable, sincere.
His preaching catholic; he speaks
Impartially to Jews and Greeks.
No words of doubtful disputation
Allure from his grand end—salvation;
Faith and repentance form his theme,
Compendium of the Christian scheme!
No searching truth he e'er conceal'd,
But God's whole counsel still reveal'd.
He speaks:—'The woes which must befall
My trusting soul shall ne'er appal.
If I for God my span employ;
If He my course may crown with joy;
If I may spend my painful race,
To testify redeeming grace;
No dread of death my soul shall move,
Secure in him I serve and love.'
His friends, lamenting, crowd the shore,
They part, they see his face no more:
Their sorrows and his own to cheer,
He consecrates the scene with prayer.

PART THE FOURTH.

THE EPISTLES.

Next come the Romans, here we trace
The flagrant manners of their race.
Tho' Nero then Rome's sceptre sway'd,
Yet conscientious Paul obey'd;
Fearless he taught that all should bring
Allegiance to their rightful king.
In this epistle we may find
The depths and heights of his great mind:
Here rhetoric and logic meet
The cause of faith to vindicate.
Paul, when the rich Corinthians came,
Found much to praise and much to blame:
Luxurious, negligent, and proud;
No error was by him allow'd.
As Christian truth should still be told,
The righteous Paul is meekly bold;
And yet such tenderness appears,
His very frowns are mix'd with tears!
One glorious truth he here defends,
That truth on which *all* truth depends:
Labours one doctrine to maintain,
Which if not true, he preach'd in vain;
Vain to their faith, which might not trust
The resurrection of the just.
Then mounting above space of time,
He soars with energy sublime;
Exhausts on this grand contemplation
High argument, bold illustration!
Created nature see he brings,
Attested to the truth he sings:
All grain, all flesh, their tribute lend;
The diff'ring stars the truth defend:
If these proclaim God's glory true,
When the material heavens we view,
His glory sun and moon declare,
When on this doctrine brought to bear.
In vain shall death his prey devour,
'Twas sown in weakness, rais'd in power!
Nor slow the process: Heaven is nigh:
Quick, in the twinkling of an eye.
Methinks I see the mould'ring clay
Start into life, wake into day!
Dread sound! 'tis the last trumpet's voice!
Reviv'd, transported, all rejoice.
Hark! heard I not that rapturous cry,
Death's swallow'd up in victory?
Jesus—the ransom'd join to sing,
Jesus, oh, Death! extracts thy sting.
Can Paul, absorb'd in scenes so bright,
Again on earth vouchsafe to light?
To drop from his exhaustless store,
One parting, pointed moral more?
One added precept deign to press?
He can—awake to righteousness:
In God's great work still more abound,
Nor shall your labours vain be found.

The bold Galatians Paul reproves,
And much he blames, tho' much he loves;
Condemns the teachers whom he saw
Exchange the Gospel for the law.
To clear his doctrine from suspicion,
He vindicates his heavenly mission.

Th' Ephesians stand in glory bright,
On whom Paul shed the Gospel-light,
Where great Diana was ador'd,
They follow'd on to know the Lord:
This matchless letter you will find
A perfect model of its kind.
Where Anthony with Brutus fought,
There Christian Paul a refuge sought.
Yet e'en Philippians could be found
The Saviour in his saint to wound:
A prison the reward they gave
The man who came their souls to save
Did Paul the cruelty resent,
Or in reproach his anger vent?
No;—if the saint *exceeds* in love,
Invokes *more* favours from above:
If e'er his full o'erflowing heart
Sought *warmer* blessings to impart;
If *more* for any friends he pray'd,
For showers of mercies on their head,
It was for this distinguish'd place,
The scene of his most foul disgrace!
How does his fervent spirit burn
Their recent kindness to return!
What terms, what arguments employ,
To fill their hearts with holy joy!
What consolation from above;
What comfort from eternal love;
From God's blest Spirit drawing nigh;
Communion sweet, communion high!
Such strong persuasions must controul,
Convince the reason, melt the soul!
He urges motives as a law,
Which some would think deter not draw.
'Take as a *gift* reserv'd for you,
Power to believe and *suffer* too!'

The good Colossians now stand forth,
Excell'd by none in grace and worth,
Behold the saint his touchstone give,
To try with Christ if Christians live.
Oh, let your aspirations rise,
Nor stop at aught beneath the skies.
Your fruitless cares no more bestow
On perishable things below.
From sordid joys indignant fly;
Know, avarice is idolatry,

False worship 's not confin'd alone
To images of wood and stone;
Whate'er you grasp with eager hold,
Honours or pleasures, fame or gold;
These are your idols, these you'll find,
Possess your soul, engross your mind.
Heaven will with idols have no part:
That robs your God which steals your heart.

The THESSALONIANS next appear,
The bountiful and the sincere.
Here precept pure and doctrine sound,
In sweet accordance may be found.
Mark the triumphant Christian's voice,
'Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!'
As he would echo back to heaven,
The holy transport grace had given.

Young TIMOTHY is on record,
Who sought betimes to know the Lord.
Here true maternal love we find,
Which form'd the heart, and taught the mind.
Here may the British mother learn,
Her child's best interests to discern;
Her faithfulness to God best prove,
And best evince her Christian love.
Paul, while his pupil's good he seeks,
Thro' him to unborn pastors speaks:
'Reprove, exhort, be earnest still
Your high commission to fulfil;
Watch, labour, pray; in these consist
The works of an Evangelist.'
As Bishop, he commands again,
'Commit the trust to faithful men;'
Bids him observe, that those who preach
Need to *remind* as well as *teach*
To raise his soul to solemn thought,
God's judgment is before him brought;
When seated in tremendous state,
The blest and only Potentate,
The members of the living head
Shall meet the Judge of quick and dead,
Then Christ his faithful sons shall own,
Who bore his Cross, shall wear his Crown.

Next TITUS, youthful yet discreet,
First Bishop of the Isle of Crete.
Here prudent Paul, divines to show
They ought their people's faults to know,
Quotes their own poet, to declare
The Cretans sensual, insincere.
Such knowledge teaches to reprove
The erring, and the just to love.
Now in the gentle tone of friend
See him to private life descend;
The sober duties to impart,
Which grace the life, and mend the heart.
Shows on what consecrated ground
Domestic happiness is found;
Warns the fair convert not to roam:
The truest joys are found at home;
'Tis there the chaste obedient mind
Will life's best charm confer, and find.

Follows PHILEMON, who forgave,
Yea, honour'd, his converted slave.

Paul to the HEBREWS writes:—O, then,
What inspiration guides his pen!
Let wits revile, let Atheists rail,
Such evidence shall never fail,
As the first pages here supply
Of Christ's unclouded Deity.
As he proceeds, to faith 'tis given
To soar on loftier wing to heaven.
See here the doctrine prov'd by facts,
Belief exhibited in acts.
See conquering Faith's heroic hand
Church-militant in order stand!
The Red-Sea passengers we view,
Jephtha and Gideon, Barak too.
Had we all time, the time would fail
Of heroes to record the tale,
Whose deeds their attestation bring
That faith is no ideal thing.
Say, could ideal faith aspire
To quench the violence of fire?
To stop the famish'd lion's rage!
With dread temptations to engage;
All deaths despise, all dangers dare,
With no support, save God and prayer?
'Tis pride,' the sneering Sceptic cries,
'Rank pride, the martyr's strength supplies:
His fortitude by praise is fed,
Praise is Religion's daily bread.
The public show, the attendant crowd,
The admiration fond and loud;
The gaze, the noise his soul sustains,
Applause the opiate of his pains;
Withdraw the charm spectators bring,
And torture is no joyous thing.'
Thy triumphs, Faith, we need not take
Alone from the blest martyr's stake;
In scenes obscure, no less we see
That faith is a reality.
An evidence of things not seen,
A substance firm whereon to lean,
Go search the cottager's lone room,
The day scarce piercing thro' the gloom:
The Christian on his dying bed
Unknown, unletter'd, hardly fed;
No flatt'ring witnesses attend,
To tell how glorious was his end,
Save in the book of life, his name
Unheard, he never dreamt of fame.
No human consolation near,
No voice to soothe, no friend to cheer.
Of every earthly stay bereft,
And nothing but his SAVIOUR left.
Fast sinking to his kindred dust,
The Word of Life is still his trust.
The joy God's promises impart
Lies like a cordial at his heart;
Unshaken faith its strength supplies,
He loves, believes, adores, and dies.

The great Apostle ceases;—then
To holy JAMES resigns the pen;
James, full of faith and love, no doubt,
The practical and the devout.
Ye rich, the saint indignant cried,
Curs'd are all riches misapplied!
Abhorr'd the wealth which useless lies,
When merit claims, or hunger cries!
The wise alike with scorn behold
The hoarded as the squander'd gold.
In man opposing passions meet
The liberal feelings to defeat:
PLEASURE and AVARICE both agree
To stop the tide of charity:
Tho' each detests the other's deeds

The same effect from both proceeds:
Curs'd is the gold, or sav'd, or spent,
Which God for mercy's portion meant:
Chemists in transmutation bold
Attempt to make base metals gold.
Let Christians then transmute their pelf
To something nobler than itself;
On heaven their rescued wealth bestow,
And send it home before they go:
He will the blest deposit own:
Who seals the pardon, gives the crown.

Peter the bold, who perils hail'd
Who promis'd much, and much he fail'd;
Peter, the generous rash, and warm,
Who lov'd his Lord, but shrunk from harm;
Peter the coward and the brave,
Denying him he wish'd to save;
O Peter, what reproachful word,
What dagger keen, what two-edg'd sword,
Could pierce thy bosom like the last,
Last look thy Saviour on thee cast?
That speechless eloquence divine,
No pen, no pencil can define.
Peter, how bitter were thy tears!
Remorse absorb'd thy guilty fears.
Still, Peter, did thy risen Lord,
Conqueror of death, his grace afford;
Not to the men of faith approv'd,
Not to the saint whom Jesus loved.
It was to heal thy broken heart,
Comfort to anguish to impart:
Yes—'twas to Peter that by name
Alone the glorious tidings came.
Now mark the wond'rous power of grace!
His character has chang'd its face;
The noblest attitude assumes:
Who now on his own strength presumes?
Where now his fears? we only see
True Christian magnanimity.
Who now the foremost to declare
Their grand commission? who to dare
The standard of the cross to raise,
And his ador'd Redeemer praise?
Applause he scorn'd however true,
But gave the glory where 'twas due,
With what majestic grace he rose,
Fearless of all surrounding foes;
Brought the old Scriptures to apply
His argument from prophecy:
From miracles which well accord,
He prov'd that Jesus was the Lord.
When requisite in some hard case
To check deceit, unmask the base,
'Twas Peter's office: see him dare
Seize the prevaricating pair.*
One question stops the fraudful breath,
And blasts them both with instant death.
Ask you the truth he lov'd to teach,
The theme selected first to preach?
Repentance!—What he felt he taught:
A mighty change his preaching wrought
The fruits were equal to the zeal,
They best can teach who deepest feel.
Crown'd were his labours: Peter died
A martyr to the Crucified.

With love his pure Epistles fraught,
John teaches what his gospel taught;
He needs no argument to prove,
Save his own heart, that God is love.

Jude, what his letter wants in length,
Redeems by energy and strength.
Confirms the truth from revelation
Of Enoch's marvellous translation.
Hear him in awful terms declare,
The mis'ries which the ungodly share!
Clouds without water, dark yet dry,
Spots in the feasts of charity;
Trees withering, destitute of fruit,
Exterminated branch and root.
Now in its pomp and dread array,
He summons to the judgment-day.
O, what conflicting trains of thought,
Has this amazing image brought!
O, what a fire this spark has kindled,
Of terror and of transport mingled!
Spirits who lost their first estate
Retaining their immortal hate.
The bold impenitent shall hear
His doom; his sentence black despair.
The hypocrite detected lie,
Naked, laid bare to every eye.
To crown the horrors which await,
All feel the justice of their fate.
Their fears their punishment foretell,
And conscience does the work of Hell.
They as the achme of their pain,
Acquit their Judge themselves arraign.
No shelter now from rocks or caves,
No refuge from the fiery waves;
What wonder, wildly if they call
The mountains on their heads to fall.
Then see the Man of Sorrows found,
The Lord of life and glory crown'd.
Jesus appears, as Enoch paints,
Surrounded by ten thousand saints.
Lo! heaven and earth their tribute bring
Of glory to the eternal king!
Angels, archangels, each degree
Of heaven's celestial hierarchy!
The noble martyr's valiant band
Before their conq'ring Captain stand!
The goodly prophets here behold
Fulfill'd the scenes they once foretold.
Their Lord encircling, here we see
The Apostles' glorious company:
Heaven kindly vails from human sight
All that dread day will bring to light.

THE REVELATION.

The saint of Patmos last we meet,
And revelation stands complete.
In this bright vision, tho' he brings
Scenes of unutterable things;
He tempers heaven's effulgent light,
Too powerful else for mortal sight.
Partly by negatives are shown
Joys which hereafter shall be known:
Suffering, and sin, and death, are o'er,
For former things are seen no more;
No sorrow felt, and heav'd no sigh,
And tears are wip'd from every eye.
Yet not by negative alone,
Consummate glory shall be known;
Not only shall be found no night,
The Lamb himself shall be the light.

* Ananias and Sapphira.

Sun, moon, and stars, shall fade away,
Lost in one cloudless, endless day;
Redemption finish'd, sin forgiven,
'Tis God's own presence makes it heaven.
Of future bliss, if such the sum,
Then come, Lord JESUS! quickly come!

SACRED DRAMAS:

CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

THE SUBJECTS TAKEN FROM THE BIBLE.

All the books of the Bible are either most admirable and exalted pieces of poetry, or the best materials in the world for it.—*Cowley.*

TO HER GRACE

THE DUTCHESS OF BEAUFORT,

THESE SACRED DRAMAS ARE, WITH THE MOST PERFECT RESPECT, INSCRIBED:

As, among the many amiable and distinguished qualities which adorn her mind, and add lustre to her rank, her excellence in the maternal character gives a peculiar propriety to her protection of this little work; written with an humble wish to promote the love of piety and virtue in young persons,

By her grace's most obedient, most obliged, and most humble servant,
HANNAH MORE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I AM as ready as the most rigid critic to confess, that nothing can be more simple and inartificial than the plans of the following dramas. In the construction of them I have seldom ventured to introduce any person* of my own creation: still less did I imagine myself at liberty to invent circumstances. I reflected, with awe, that *the place whereon I stood was holy ground.* All the latitude I permitted myself was, to make such persons as I selected act under such circumstances as I found, and express such sentiments as, in my humble judgment, appeared not unnatural to their characters and situations. Some of the speeches are so long as to retard the action; for I rather aspired after moral instruction than the purity of dramatic composition. I am aware that it may be brought as an objection, that I have now and then made my Jewish characters speak too much like Christians, as it may be questioned whether I have not occasionally ascribed to them a degree of light and knowledge greater than they probably had the means of possessing: but I was more anxious in consulting the advantage of my youthful readers by leading them on to higher religious views, than in securing to myself the reputation of critical exactness.

It will be thought that I have chosen, perhaps, the least important passage in the eventful life of David, for the foundation of the drama which bears his name. Yet even in this his first exploit, the sacred historian represents him as exhibiting no mean lesson of modesty, humility, courage, and piety. Many will think that the introduction of Saul's daughter would have added to the effect of the piece: and I have no doubt but that it would have made the intrigue more complicated and amusing had this drama been intended for the stage. There, all that is tender, and all that is terrible in the passions, find a proper place. But I write for the young, in whom it will be always time enough to have the passions awakened; I write for a class of readers, to whom it is not easy to accommodate one's subject,† so as to be at once useful and interesting.

The amiable poet,‡ from whom I have taken my motto, after showing the superiority of the sacred over the profane histories, some instances of which I have noticed in my introduction, concludes with the following remark, which I may apply to myself with far more propriety than it was used by the author:—'I am far from assuming to myself to have fulfilled the duty of this weighty undertaking; and I shall be ambitious of no other fruit from this weak and imperfect attempt of mine, but the opening of a way to the courage and industry of some other persons, who may be better able to perform it thoroughly and successfully.'

* Never indeed, except in Daniel, and that of necessity; as the Bible furnishes no more than two persons, Daniel and Darius, and these were not sufficient to carry on the business of the piece.

† It would not be easy, nor perhaps proper, to introduce sacred tragedies on the English stage. The pious would think it profane, while the profane would think it dull. Yet the excellent Racine, in a profligate country and a voluptuous court, ventured to adapt the story of *Athalia* to the French theatre; and it remains to us a glorious monument of its author's courageous piety, while it exhibits the perfection of the dramatic art.

‡ Cowley.

INTRODUCTION.

O for the sacred energy which struck
The harp of Jesse's son! or for a spark
Of that celestial flame which touch'd the lips
Of bless'd Isaiah:* when the Seraphim
With living fire descended, and his soul
From sin's pollution purg'd! or one faint ray,
If human things to heavenly I may join,
Of that pure spirit which inflam'd the breast
Of Milton, God's own poet! when retir'd
In fair enthusiastic vision wrapt,
The *nightly visitant* deign'd bless his couch
With inspiration, such as never flow'd
From Acidale or Aganippe's fount!
Then, when the sacred fire within him burnt,
He spake as man or angels might have spoke,
When man was pure, and angels were his guests.
It will not be.—Nor prophet's burning zeal,
Nor muse of fire, nor yet to sweep the strings
With sacred energy, to me belongs;
Nor with Miltonic hand to touch the chords
That wake to ecstacy. From me, alas!
The secret source of harmony is hid;
The magic pow'rs which catch the ravish'd soul
In melody's sweet maze, and the clear streams
Which to pure fancy's yet untasted springs
Enchanted lead. Of these I little know!
Yet, all unknowing, dare thy aid invoke,
Spirit of truth! to bless these worthless lays:
Nor impious is the hope; for thou hast said,
That none who ask in faith should ask in vain.
You I invoke not now, ye fabled Nine!
I not invoke you though you well were sought
In Greece and Latium, sought by deathless bards.
Whose syren song enchants; and shall enchant
Through time's wide circling round, tho' false their faith,
And less than human were the gods they sung.
Though false their faith they taught the best they knew;
And (blush, O Christians!) liv'd above their faith.
They would have bless'd the beam and hail'd the day
Which chas'd the moral darkness from their souls.
O! had their minds receiv'd the clearer ray
Of Revelation, they had learn'd to scorn
Their rites impure, their less than human gods,
Their wild mythology's fantastic maze.
Pure Plato! how had thy chaste spirit hail'd
A faith so fitted to thy moral sense!
What hadst thou felt to see the fair romance
Of high imagination, the bright dream
Of thy pure fancy, more than realiz'd!
Sublime enthusiast! thou hadst blest a scheme
Fair, good, and perfect. How had thy wrapt soul
Caught fire, and burnt with a diviner flame!
For e'en thy fair idea ne'er conceiv'd
Such plenitude of bliss, such boundless love,
As Deity made visible to sense.
Unhappy Brutus! philosophic mind!
Great 'midst the errors of the Stoic school!
How had thy kindling spirit joy'd to find
That thy lov'd virtue was no empty name:
Nor hadst thou met the vision at Philippi;
Nor hadst thou sheath'd thy bloody dagger's point
Or in the breast of Cæsar or thy own.
The pagan page how far more wise than ours!
They with the gods they worshipp'd grac'd their song:
Our song we grace with gods we disbelieve:
Retain the manners but reject the creed.
Shall fiction only raise poetic flame,
And shall no altar blaze, O Truth, to thee?
Shall falsehood only please and fable charm?
And shall eternal truth neglected lie?
Because immortal, slighted, or profan'd?
Truth has our rev'rence only, not our love;
Our praise, but not our hearts: a deity,
Confess'd, but shunn'd; acknowledged, not ador'd;
Alarm'd we dread her penetrating beams:
She comes too near us, and too brightly shines.
Why shun to make our duty our delight?
Let *pleasure* be the motive, disallow
All high incentives drawn from God's command;
Where shall we trace, through all the page profane,
A livelier pleasure and a purer source
Of innocent delight, than the fair book
Of holy truth presents? for ardent youth,
The sprightly narrative! for years mature,
The moral document, in sober robe
Of grave philosophy array'd: which all
Had heard with admiration, had embrac'd
With rapture, had the shades of Academe,
Or the learn'd Porch produc'd it:—Tomes had then
Been multiplied on tomes, to draw the veil
Of graceful allegory, to unfold
Some hidden source of beauty now not felt!
Do not the pow'rs of soul-enchanting song,
Strong imagery, bold figure, every charm
Of eastern flight sublime, apt metaphor,
And all the graces in thy lovely train,
Divine simplicity! assemble all
In Sion's songs, and bold Isaiah's strain?
Why should the classic eye delight to trace
The tale corrupted from its prime pure source;
How Pyrrha and the fam'd Thessalian king
Restor'd the ruin'd race of lost mankind:
Yet turn, incurious, from the patriarch sav'd
The rescued remnant of a delug'd world?
Why are we taught, delighted to recount
Alcides' labours, yet neglect to note
Heroic Samson 'midst a life of toil
Herculean? Pain and peril marking both,
A life eventful and disasterous death.
Can all the tales which Grecian story yields;
Can all the names the Roman page records,
Of wond'rous friendship and surpassing love
Can gallant Theseus and his brave compeer
Orestes and the partner of his toils;
Achates and his friend: Euryalus
And blooming Nisus, pleasant in their lives,
And undivided by the stroke of death;
Can each, can all, a lovelier picture yield
Of virtuous friendship: can they all present
A tenderness more touching than the love
Of Jonathan and David?—Speak, ye young!
Who, undebauched as yet by fashion's lore,
And unsophisticate, unbiass'd judge:
Say, is your quick attention more arous'd

* Isaiah, chap. vi.

By the red plagues which wasted smitten Thebes,
Than heav'n's avenging hand, on Pharaoh's host?
Or do the vagrant Trojans, driven by fate
On adverse shores successive, yield a theme
More grateful to the eager appetite
Of young impatience, than the wand'ring tribes
The Hebrew leader through the desert led?
The beauteous maid,* (though tender is the tale;)
Whose guiltless blood on Aulis' altar stream'd,
Smites not the bosom with a softer pang
Than her in fate how sadly similar,
The Gileaditish virgin—victims both
Of vows unsanctify'd.——
Such are the lorely themes which court the bard,
Scarce yet essay'd in verse—for verse how meet!
While heav'n-descended song, forgetting oft
Her sacred dignity and high descent,
Debases her fair origin; oft spreads
Corruption's deadly bane, pollutes the heart
Of innocence, and with unhallow'd hand
Presents the poison'd chalice, to the brim
Fill'd with delicious ruin, minist'ring
The unwholesome rapture to the fever'd taste,
While its fell venom, with malignant pow'r,
Strikes at the root of Virtue, with'ring all
Her vital energy. Oh! for some balm
Of sov'reign power, to raise the drooping Muse
To all the health of virtue! to infuse
A gen'rous warmth, to rouse an holy zeal
And give her high conceptions of herself,
Her dignity, her worth, her aim, her end!
For me, eternal Spirit, let thy word
My path illume! O thou compassionate God!
Thou know'st our frame, thou know'st we are but dust;
From dust a Seraph's zeal thou wilt not seek,
Nor wilt thou ask an angel's purity.
But hear, and hearing pardon; as I strive,
Though with a feeble voice and flagging wing
A glowing heart, but pow'rless hand, to paint
The faith of favour'd man to heav'n; to sing
The ways inscrutable of heav'n to man;
May I, by thy celestial guidance led,
Fix deep in my own heart the truths I teach!
In my own life transcribe whate'er of good
To others I propose! and by thy rule
Correct th' irregular,* reform the wrong,
Exalt the low, and brighten the obscure!
Still may I note, how all th' agreeing parts
Of this consummate system join to frame
One fair, one finish'd, one harmonious whole!
Trace the close links which form the perfec chain
In beautiful connexion; mark the scale
Whose nice gradations, with progression true,
For ever rising, end in Deity!

* Iphigenia.

* What in me is dark
Illumine! What is low, raise and support!
PARADISE LOST.

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

A SACRED DRAMA.

Let me assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man.—*Paradise Lost.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HEBREW WOMEN.

JOCHEBED, mother of Moses.
MIRIAM, his sister.

EGYPTIANS.

The PRINCESS, king Pharaoh's daughter.
MELITA; and other attendants.

Scene—On the banks of the Nile.

This subject is taken from the second chapter of the book of Exodus.

PART I.

JOCHEBED, MIRIAM.

Joch. WHY was my pray'r accepted? why did heaven
In anger hear me, when I ask'd a son?
Ye dames of Egypt! ye triumphant mothers!
You no imperial tyrant marks for ruin;
You are not doom'd to see the babes you bore,
The babes you fondly nurture, bleed before you!
You taste the transport of a mother's love,
Without a mother's anguish! wretched Israel!
Can I forbear to mourn the different lot
Of thy sad daughters!—Why did God's own hand
Rescue his chosen race by Joseph's care?
Joseph! th' elected instrument of heaven,
Decreed to save illustrious Abraham's sons,
What time the famine rag'd in Canaan's land.
Israel, who then was spar'd, must perish now!
Thou great mysterious Pow'r, who hast involv'd
Thy wise decrees in darkness, to perplex
The pride of human wisdom, to confound
The daring scrutiny, and prove, the faith
Of thy presuming creatures! hear me now:
O vindicate thy honour, clear this doubt,
Teach me to trace this maze of Providence:
Why save the fathers, if the sons must perish?
Mir. Ah me, my mother! whence these floods of grief?
Joch. My son! my son! I cannot speak the rest;
Ye who have sons can only know my fondness

Ye who have lost them, or who fear to lose,
Can only know my pangs! none else can guess them.
A mother's sorrows cannot be conceiv'd
But by a mother—would I were not one!
Mir. With earnest pray'rs thou didst request this son,
And heaven has granted him.
Joch. O sad estate
Of human wretchedness; so weak is man,
So ignorant and blind, that did not God
Sometimes withhold in mercy what we ask,
We should be ruin'd at our own request.
Too well thou know'st, my child, the stern decree
Of Egypt's cruel king, hard-hearted Pharaoh;
That every male, of Hebrew mother born,
Must die! Oh! do I live to tell it thee!
Must die a bloody death! My child, my son,
My youngest born my darling must be slain!
Mir. The helpless innocent! and must he die?
Joch. No: if a mother's tears, a mother's prayers,
A mother's fond precautions can prevail,
He shall not die. I have a thought my Miriam,
And sure the God of mercies who inspir'd,
Will bless the secret purpose of my soul,
To save his precious life.
Mir. Hop'st thou that Pharaoh—
Joch. I have no hope in Pharaoh, much in God;
Much in the Rock of Ages.
Mir. Think, O think,
What perils thou already hast incurr'd,
And shun the greater which may yet remain,
Three months, three dangerous months thou hast preserv'd
Thy infant's life, and in thy house conceal'd him!
Should Pharaoh know!
Joch. Oh! let the tyrant know,
And feel what he inflicts! Yes, hear me, heaven!
Send thy right aiming thunderbolts—but hush,
My impious murmurs! is it not thy will;
Thou, infinite in mercy? Thou permitt'st
The seeming evil for some latent good.
Yes, I will laud thy grace, and bless thy goodness
For what I have, and not arraign thy wisdom
For what I fear to lose. O, I will bless thee
That Aaron will be spar'd; that my first born
Lives safe and undisturbed! that he was giv'n me
Before this impious persecution rag'd!
Mir. And yet who knows, but the fell tyrant's rage
May reach *his* precious life.
Joch. I fear for him.
For thee, for all. A doating parent lives
In many lives; through many a nerve she feels;
From child to child the quick affections spread,
Forever wand'ring, yet forever fix'd.
Nor does division weaken, nor the force
Of constant operation e'er exhaust
Parental love. All other passions change
With changing circumstances; rise or fall,
Dependent on their object; claim returns;
Live on reciprocation, and expire
Unfed by hope. A mother's fondness reigns
Without a rival, and without an end.
Mir. But say what heav'n inspires to save thy son?
Joch. Since the dear fatal morn which gave him birth,
I have revolv'd in my distracted mind
Each means to save his life: and many a thought
Which fondness prompted, prudence has oppos'd
As perilous and rash. With these poor hands
I've fram'd a little ark of slender reeds;
With pitch and slime I have secur'd the sides.
In this frail cradle I intend to lay
My little helpless infant, and expose him
Upon the banks of the Nile.
Mir. 'Tis full of danger.
Joch. 'Tis danger to expose, and death to keep him.
Mir. Yet, oh! reflect. Should the fierce crocodile,
The native and the tyrant of the Nile,
Seize the defenceless infant!
Joch. Oh forbear!
Spare my fond heart. Yet not the crocodile,
Nor all the deadly monsters of the deep,
To me are half so terrible as Pharaoh,
That heathen king, that royal murderer!
Mir. Should he escape, which yet I dare not hope,
Each sea-born monster, yet the winds and waves
He cannot 'scape.
Joch. Know, God is every where;
Not to one narrow, partial spot confin'd:
No, not to chosen Israel: he extends
Through all the vast infinitude of space:
At his command the furious tempests rise—
The blasting of the breath of his displeasure.
He tells the world of waters when to roar;
And, at his bidding, winds and seas are calm:
In him, not in an arm of flesh, I trust;
In him, whose promise never yet has fail'd,
I place my confidence.
Mir. What must I do?
Command thy daughter; for thy words have wak'd
An holy boldness in my youthful breast.
Joch. Go then, my Miriam, go, and take the infant.
Buried in harmless slumbers there he lies:
Let me not see him—spare my heart that pang.
Yet sure, one little look may be indulg'd,
And I may feast my fondness with his smiles,
And snatch one last, last kiss.—No more my heart; [him.
That rapture would be fatal—I should keep
I could not doom to death the babe I clasp'd
Did ever mother kill her sleeping boy?
I dare not hazard it—The task be thine.
Oh! do not wake my child; remove him softly;
And gently lay him on the river's brink.
Mir. Did those magicians, whom the sons of Egypt
Consult and think all-potent, join their skill
And was it great as Egypt's sons believe;
Yet all their secret wizard arts combin'd,
To save this little ark of bulrushes,
Thus fearfully expos'd, could not effect it.
Their spells, their incantations, and dire charms
Could not preserve it.
Joch. Know this ark is charm'd

With incantations Pharaoh ne'er employ'd ;
With spells, which impious Egypt never knew :
With invocations to the living God,
I twisted every slender reed together,
And with a pray'r did every ozier weave.
Mir. I go.
Joch. Yet e'er thou go'st, observe me well ;
When thou hast laid him in his wat'ry bed,
O leave him not : but at a distance wait,
And mark what Heaven's high will determines for him.
Lay him among the flags on yonder beach,
Just where the royal gardens meet the Nile.
I dare not follow him, Suspicion's eye
Would note my wild demeanor ! Miriam, yes,
The mother's fondness would betray the child.
Farewell ! God of my fathers. Oh, protect him !

PART II.

Enter MIRIAM *after having deposited the child.*

Mir. YES, I have laid him in his wat'ry bed,
His wat'ry grave, I fear !—I tremble still ;
It was a cruel task—still I must weep !
But ah, my mother ! who shall sooth thy griefs !
The flags and sea-weeds will awhile sustain
Their precious load ; but it must sink ere long !
Sweet babe, farewell ! Yet think not I will leave thee :
No, I will watch thee till the greedy waves
Devour thy little bark : I'll sit me down,
And sing to thee, sweet babe ; thou can'st not hear
But 'twill amuse me, while I watch thy fate.
[*She sits down on a bank, and sings.*

SONG.

I.

THOU, who canst make the feeble strong,
O God of Israel, hear my song !
Not mine such notes as Egypt's daughter's raise ;
'Tis thee, O God of Hosts, I strive to praise.

II.

Ye winds, the servants of the Lord,
Ye waves, obedient to his word,
Oh spare the babe committed to your trust ;
And Israel shall confess the Lord is just !

III.

Though doom'd to find an early grave,
This infant, Lord, thy power can save,
And he, whose death 's decreed by Pharaoh s hand,
May rise a prophet to redeem the land.
[*She rises and looks out.*

What female form bends thitherward her steps ?
Of royal port she seems ; perhaps some friend,
Rais'd by the guardian care of bounteous Heaven,
To prop the falling house of Levi.—Soft !
I'll listen unperceiv'd ; these trees will hide me.
[*She stands behind.*

Enter the PRINCESS OF EGYPT, *attended by a train of ladies.*

Prin. No farther, virgins, here I mean to rest.
To taste the pleasant coolness of the breeze ;
Perhaps to bathe in this translucent stream.
Did not our holy law* enjoin th' ablution
Frequent and regular, it still were needful
To mitigate the fervours of our clime.
Melita, stay—the rest at distance wait.
[*They all go out, except one*

The PRINCESS *looks out.*

Sure, or I much mistake, or I perceive
Upon the sedgy margin of the Nile
A chest ; entangled in the reeds it seems :
Discern'st thou aught ?
Mel. Something, but what I know not.
Prin. Go and examine what this sight may mean. [*Exit maid.*

MIRIAM *behind.*

O blest, beyond my hopes ! he is discover'd ;
My brother will be sav'd !—who is the stranger ?
Ah ! 'tis the princess, cruel Pharaoh's daughter.
If she resemble her inhuman sire,
She must be cruel too ; yet fame reports her
Most merciful and mild.—Great Lord of all,
By whose good Spirit bounteous thoughts are given
And deeds of love perform'd—be gracious now,
And touch her soul with mercy !

Re-enter MELITA.

Prin. Well, Melita !
Hast thou discover'd what the vessel is ?
Mel. Oh, princess, I have seen the strangest sight !
Within the vessel lies a sleeping babe,
A fairer infant have I never seen !
Prin. Who knows but some unhappy Hebrew woman
Has thus expos'd her infant, to evade
The stern decree of my too cruel sire.
Unhappy mothers ! oft my heart has bled
In secret anguish o'er your slaughter'd sons,
Powerless to save, yet hating to destroy.
Mel. Should this be so, my princess knows the danger.
Prin. No danger should deter from acts of mercy.

MIRIAM *behind.*

A thousand blessings on her princely head ;
Prin. Too much the sons of Jacob have endur'd
From Royal Pharaoh's unrelenting hate ;
Too much our house has crush'd their alien race.
Is 't not enough that cruel task-masters
Grind them by hard oppression ? not enough
That iron bondage bows their spirits down ?
Is 't not enough my sire his greatness owes,
His palaces, his fanes magnificent,
Those structures which the world with wonder views,
To much insulted Israel's patient race ?
To them his growing cities owe their splendour ·
Their toils fair Rameses and Pythom built ;
And shall we fill the measure of our crimes,
And crown our guilt with murder ? and shall I
Sanction the sin I hate ? forbid it, Mercy !

* The ancient Egyptians used to wash their bodies four times every twenty-four hours.

Mel. I know thy royal father fears the strength
Of this still growing race, who flourish more
The more they are oppress'd: he dreads their numbers.
Prin. Apis forbid! Pharaoh afraid of Israel!
Yet should this outcast race, this hapless people
Ere grow to such a formidable greatness,
(Which all the gods avert whom Egypt worship)
This infant's life can never serve their cause,
Nor can his single death prevent their greatness.
Mel. Trust not to that vain hope. By weakest means
And most unlikely instrument, full oft
Are great events produc'd. This rescued child
Perhaps may live to serve his upstart race
More than an host.
Prin. How ill it does beseem
Thy tender years and gentle womanhood,
To steel thy breast to Pity's sacred touch!
So weak, so unprotected is our sex,
So constantly expos'd, so very helpless,
That did not Heaven itself enjoin compassion,
Yet human policy should make us kind,
Lest in the rapid turn of Fortune's wheel,
We live to need the pity we refuse.
Yes, I will save him—Mercy, thou hast conquered!
Lead on—and from the rushes we'll remove
The feeble ark which cradles this poor babe.
[*The* PRINCESS *and her maid go out.*

MIRIAM *comes forward.*

How poor were words to speak my boundless joy!
The princess will protect him; bless her, Heaven!
[*She looks out after the princess, and describes her action.*
With what impatient steps she seeks the shore!
Now she approaches where the ark is laid!
With what compassion, with what angel sweetness,
She bends to look upon the infant's face!
She takes his little hand in hers—he wakes—
She smiles upon him—hark, alas! he cries;
Weep on, sweet babe! weep on, till thou hast touch'd
Each chord of pity, waken'd every sense
Of melting sympathy, and stolen her soul!
She takes him in her arms—O lovely princess!
How goodness heightens beauty! now she clasps him
With fondness to her heart, she gives him now
With tender caution to her damsel's arms:
She points her to the palace, and again
This way the princess bends her gracious steps;
The virgin train retire and bear the child.

Re-enter the PRINCESS.

Prin. Did ever innocence and infant beauty
Plead with such dumb but powerful eloquence?
If I, a stranger, feel these soft emotions,
What must the mother who expos'd him feel!
Go, fetch a woman of the Hebrew race,
That she may nurse the babe: and, by her garb,
Lo, such a one is here!
Mir. Princess, all hail!
Forgive the bold intrusion of thy servant,
Who stands a charm'd spectator of thy goodness.
Prin. I have redeem'd an infant from the waves,
Whom I intend to nurture as mine own.
Mir. My transports will betray me! [*aside.*
Gen'rous Princess!
Prin. Know'st thou a matron of the Hebrew race
To whom I may confide him?
Mir. Well I know
A prudent matron of the house of Levi;
Her name Jochebed, is the wife of Amram;
Of gentle manners, fam'd throughout her tribe
For soft humanity; full well I know
That she will rear him with a mother's love.
[*Aside.*] Oh truly spoke! a mother's love indeed!
To her despairing arms I mean to give
This precious trust: the nurse shall be the mother!
Prin. With speed conduct this matron to the palace.
Yes, I will raise him up to princely greatness,
And he shall be my son; I'll have him train'd
By choicest sages, in the deepest lore
Of Egypt's sapient son;—his name be *Moses*,
For I have drawn him from the perilous flood.
[*They go out. She kneels.*
Thou Great unseen! who causest gentle deeds,
And smil'st on what thou causest; thus I bless thee.
That thou did'st deign consult the tender make
Of yielding human hearts, when thou ordain'dst
Humanity a virtue! did'st not make it
A rigorous exercise to counteract
Some strong desire within; to war and fight
Against the powers of Nature; but did'st bend
The nat'ral bias of the soul to mercy:
Then mad'st that mercy duty! Gracious Power!
Mad'st the keen rapture exquisite as right;
Beyond the joys of sense; as pleasure sweet,
As reason vigorous, and as instinct strong!

PART III.

Enter JOCHEBED.

I've almost reach'd the place—with cautious steps
I must approach the spot where he is laid,
Lest from the royal gardens any 'spy me:
—Poor babe! ere this the pressing calls of hunger
Have broke thy short repose; the chilling waves,
Ere this have drench'd thy little shiv'ring limbs.
What must my babe have suffer'd!—No one sees me!
But soft, does no one listen!—Ah! how hard,
How very hard for fondness to be prudent!
Now is the moment to embrace and feed him,
[*She looks out*
Where's Miriam? she has left her little charge,
Perhaps through fear; perhaps she was detected.
How wild is thought! how terrible is conjecture!
A mother's fondness frames a thousand fears,
With thrilling nerve feels every real ill,

And shapes imagin'd miseries into being.
[*She looks towards the river.*
Ah me! where is he? soul-distracting sight!
He is not there—he 's lost, he 's gone, he 's drown'd!
Toss'd by each beating surge my infant floats.
Cold, cold, and wat'ry is thy grave, my child!
O no—I see the ark—transporting sight!
[*She goes towards it.*
I have it here—Alas, the ark is empty!
The casket's left, the precious gem is gone!
You spar'd him, pitying spirits of the deep!
But vain your mercy; some insatiate beast,
Cruel as Pharaoh, took the life you spar'd—
And I shall never, never see my boy!

Enter MIRIAM.

Joch. Come and lament with me thy brother's loss!
Mir. Come and adore with me the God of Jacob!
Joch. Miriam—the child is dead!
Mir. He lives! he lives!
Joch. Impossible—Oh, do not mock my grief!
See'st thou that empty vessel?
Mir. From that vessel
Th' Egyptian princess took him.
Joch. Pharaoh's daughter?
Then still he will be slain: a bloodier death
Will terminate his woes.
Mir. His life is safe;
For know, she means to rear him as her own.
Joch. [*Falls on her knees in rapture.*
To God, the Lord, the glory be ascrib'd!
O magnify'd forever be thy might
Who mock'st all human forethought! who o'cr-rulest
The hearts of all sinners to perform thy work,
Defeating their own purpose! who canst plant
Unlook'd-for mercy in a heathen's heart,
And from the depth of evil bring forth good?
[*She rises.*
Mir. O blest event, beyond our warmest hopes!
Joch. What! shall my son be nurtur'd in a court,
In princely grandeur bred? taught every art
And ev'ry wond'rous science Egypt knows?
Yet ah! I tremble Miriam; should he learn,
With Egypt's polish'd arts her baneful faith!
O worse exchange for death! yes, should he learn
In yon proud palace to disown *His* hand
Who thus has sav'd him: should he e'er embrace
(As sure he will, if bred in Pharaoh's court)
The gross idolatries which Egypt owns,
Her graven images, her brutish gods,
Then shall I wish he had not been preserv'd
To shame his fathers and deny his faith.
Mir. Then to dispel thy fears and crown thy joy,
Hear farther wonders—Know, the gen'rous princess
To thine own care thy darling child commits.
Joch. Speak, while my joy will give me leave to listen! [here,
Mir. By her commission'd, thou behold'st me
To seek a matron of the Hebrew race
To nurse him: thou, my mother, art that matron
I said I knew thee well; that thou would'st rear him,
E'en with a mother's fondness; she who bare him
(I told the princess) would not love him more.
Joch. Fountain of Mercy! whose pervading eye
Can look within and read what passes there,
Accept my thoughts for thanks! I have no words.
My soul, o'erfraught with gratitude, rejects
The aid of language—Lord! behold my heart.
Mir. Yes, thou shalt pour into his infant mind
The purest precepts of the purest faith.
Joch. O! I will fill his tender soul with virtue,
And warm his bosom with devotion's flame!
Aid me celestial Spirit! with thy grace,
And be my labours with thy influence crown'd!
Without it they were vain. Then, then, my Miriam,
When he is furnish'd 'gainst the evil day,
With God's whole armour,* girt with sacred truth,
And as a breastplate wearing righteousness,
Arm'd with the Spirit of God, the shield of faith,
And with the helmet of salvation crown'd,
Inur'd to watching and dispos'd to prayer;
Then may I send him to a dangerous court,
And safely trust him in a perilous world,
Too full of tempting snares and fond delusions!
Mir. May bounteous Heav'n thy pious cares reward!
Joch. O Amram! O my husband! when thou com'st,
Wearied at night, to rest thee from the toils
Impos'd by haughty Pharaoh, what a tale
Have I to tell thee! Yes: thy darling son
Was lost, and is restor'd; was dead, and lives!
Mir. How joyful shall we spend the live-long night
In praises to Jehovah; who thus mocks
All human forcsight, and converts the means
Of seeming ruin into great deliverance!
Joch. Had not my child been doom'd to such strange perils
As a fond mother trembles to recal,
He had not been preserv'd.
Mir. And mark still farther;
Had he been sav'd by any other hand,
He had been still expos'd to equal ruin.
Joch. Then let us join to bless the hand of Heaven,
That this poor outcast of the house of Israel,
Condemn'd to die by Pharaoh, kept in secret
By my advent'rous fondness; then expos'd
E'en by that very fondness which conceal'd him,
Is now, to fill the wondrous round of mercy,
Preserv'd from perishing by Pharaoh's daughter,
Sav'd by the very hand which sought to crush him.
Wise and unsearchable are all thy ways,
Thou God of Mercies—Lead me to my child.

* Thess. chap. 5. Ephes chap. vi.

DAVID AND GOLIATH;

A SACRED DRAMA.

O bienheureux mille fois,
L'Enfant que le Seigneur aime,
Qui de bonne heure entend sa voix,
Et que ce Dieu diagne instruire lui-meme!
Loin du monde eleve; de tous les dons des Cieur,
Il est orne des sa naissance;
Et du mechant l'abord contagieux
N'altere point son innocence.—*Athalie.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

SAUL, king of Israel.
ABNER, his general.
JESSE.
ELIAB, } sons of Jesse.
ABINADAB, }
DAVID, }
GOLIATH, the Philistian giant.
Philistines, Israelites, &c. &c.
Chorus of Hebrew women.

The scene lies in the camp in the valley of Elah, and the adjacent plain.

The subject is taken from the seventh chapter of the First Book of Samuel.

PART I.

SCENE—A shepherd's tent on a plain.

DAVID, *under a spreading tree, plays on his harp and sings.*

I.

GREAT Lord of all things! Pow'r divine!
Breathe on this erring heart of mine
Thy grace serene and pure;
Defend my frail, my erring youth,
And teach me this important truth,
The humble are secure!

II.

Teach me to bless my lowly lot,
Confin'd to this paternal cot,
Remote from regal state!
Content to court the cooling glade,
Inhale the breeze, enjoy the shade,
And love my humble fate.

III.

No anxious vigils here I keep,
No dreams of gold distract my sleep,
Nor lead my heart astray;
Nor blasting Envy's tainted gale
Pollutes the pleasures of the vale,
To vex my harmless day.

IV.

Yon tow'r which rears its head so high,
And bids defiance to the sky,
Invites the hostile winds:
Yon branching oak extending wide,
Provokes destruction by its pride,
And courts the fall it finds.

V.

Then let me shun th' ambitious deed,
And all the dang'rous paths which lead
To honours falsely won;
Lord! in thy sure protection blest,
Submissive will I ever rest,
And may thy will be done!

[*He lays down his harp and rises.*

David. Methinks this shepherd's life were dull and tasteless
Without the charm of soothing song or harp:
With it, not undelightful is the haunt
Of wood, or lonely grove, or russet plain,
Made vocal by the Muse. With this lov'd harp
This daily solace of my cares, I sooth'd
The melancholy monarch, when he lay
Smit by the chill and spirit-quenching hand
Of black despair. God of my fathers, hear me!
Here I devote my harp, my verse, myself,
To thy best service! gladly to proclaim
Glory to God on high, on earth good-will
To man; to pour my grateful soul before thee;
To sing thy pow'r, thy wisdom, and thy love,
And ev'ry gracious attribute; to paint
The charms of heaven-born Virtue! So shall I
(Though with long interval of worth) aspire
To imitate the work of saints above,
Of Cherub and of Seraphim. My heart,
My talents, all I am, and all I have,
Is thine, O Father! Gracious Lord, accept
The humble dedication! Offer'd gifts
Of slaughter'd bulls and goats sacrificial
Thou hast refus'd: but lo, I come, O Lord!
To do thy will; the living sacrifice
Of an obedient heart I lay before thee:
This humble off'ring more shall please thee, Lord,
Than horned bullocks, ceremonial rites,
New moons, and Sabbaths, passovers, and fasts:
Yet those I too will keep; but not in lieu
Of holiness substantial, inward worth;
As commutation cheap for pious deeds
And purity of life, but as the types
Of better things; as fair external signs
Of inward holiness and secret truth.
But see, my father, good old Jesse comes!
To cheer the setting evening of whose life,
Content, a simple shepherd here I dwell,
Though Israel is in arms; and royal Saul,
Encamp'd in yonder field, defies Philistia.

JESSE, DAVID.

Jesse. Blest be the gracious pow'r who gave my age
To boast a son like thee! Thou art the staff

Which props my bending years, and makes me bear
The heavy burden of declining age
With fond complacence. How unlike thy fate,
O venerable Eli! But two sons,
But only two to gild the dim remains
Of life's departing day, and bless thy age,
And both were curses to thee! Witness, Heaven,
In all the cruel catalogue of pains
Humanity turns o'er, if there be one
So terrible to human tenderness
As an unnatural child!

David. O! my lov'd father!
Long may'st thou live, in years and honours rich;
To taste and to communicate the joys,
The thousand fond endearing charities,
Of tenderness domestic; Nature's best
And loveliest gift, with which she well atones
The niggard boon of fortune.

Jesse. O! my son!
Of all the graces which adorn thy youth,
I, with a father's fondness, must commend
Thy try'd humility. For though the seer
Pour'd on thy chosen head, the sacred oil
In sign of future greatness, in sure pledge
Of highest dignity, yet here thou dwell'st
Content with toil and careless of repose;
And (harder still for an ingenuous mind)
Content to be obscure; content to watch
With careful eye, thy humble father's flock!
O earthly emblem of celestial things!
So Israel's shepherd watches o'er his fold:
The weak ones in his fost'ring bosom bears:
And gently leads in his sustaining hand,
The feeble ones with young.

David. Know'st thou, my father,
Aught from the field? for though so near the camp,
Though war's proud ensigns stream on yonder plain,
And all Philistia's swarming hosts encamp,
Oppos'd to royal Saul, beneath whose banners
My brothers lift the spear—I have not left
My fleecy charge, by thee committed to me,
To learn the various fortunes of the war.

Jesse. And wisely hast thou done. Thrice happy realm,
Who shall submit one day to his command
Who can so well obey! Obedience leads
To certain honours. Not the tow'ring wing
Of eagle-plum'd ambition mounts so surely
To fortune's highest summit, as obedience.
[*A distant sound of trumpets.*
But why that sudden ardour, O my son?
That trumpet's sound (though so remote its voice,
We hardly catch the echo as it dies)
Has rous'd the mantling crimson in thy cheek,
Kindled the martial spirit in thine eye;
And my young shepherd feels an hero's fire!

David. Thou hast not told the posture of the war,
And much my beating bosom pants to hear.

Jesse. Uncertain is the fortune of the field.
I tremble for thy brothers, thus expos'd
To constant peril; nor for them alone
Does the quick feeling agonize my heart.
I feel for all!—I mourn, that ling'ring War
Still hangs his banner o'er my native land.
Belov'd Jerusalem! O War! what art thou?
At once the proof and scourge of man's fall'n state!
After the brightest conquest, what appears
Of all thy glories? for the vanquish'd, chains!
For the proud victor, what? Alas! to reign
O'er desolated nations! a drear waste,
By one man's crime, by one man's lust of pow'r,
Unpeopled! Ravag'd fields assume the place
Of smiling harvests, and uncultur'd plains
Succeed the fertile vineyard; barren waste
Deforms the spot once rich with luscious fig
And the fat olive.—Devastation reigns.
Here, rifled temples are the cavern'd dens
Of savage beasts, or haunt of birds obscene;
There, pop'lous cities blacken in the sun,
And in the general wreck, proud palaces
Lie undistinguish'd save by the dun smoke
Of recent conflagration. When the song
Of dear-bought joy, with many a triumph swell'd,
Salutes the victor's ear, and soothes his pride,
How is the grateful harmony profan'd
With the sad dissonance of virgin's cries,
Who mourn their brothers slain! of matrons hoar,
Who clasp their wither'd hands, and fondly ask,
With iteration shrill, their slaughter'd sons!
How is the laurel's verdure stain'd with blood,
And soil'd with widows' tears!

David. Thrice mournful truth!
Yet when our country's sacred rights are menac'd,
Her firm foundations shaken to their base;
When all we love, and all that we revere,
Our hearths and altars, children, parents, wives,
Our liberties and laws; the throne they guard,
Are scorn'd and trampl'd on—then, then, my father!
'Tis then Religion's voice; then God himself
Commands us to defend his injur'd name,
And think the victory cheaply bought with life.
'Twere then inglorious weakness, mean self-love:
To lie inactive, when the stirring voice
Of the shrill trumpet wakes the patriot youth,
And, with heroic valour, bids them dare
The foul idolatrous bands, e'en to the death.

Jesse. God and thy country claim the life they gave;
No other cause can sanctify resentment.

David. Sure virtuous friendship is a noble cause!
O were the princely Jonathan in danger,
How would I die, well pleas'd, in his defence;
When, 'twas long since, then but a stripling boy
I made short sojourn in his father's palace,
(At first to soothe his troubled mind with song
His armour-bearer next) I well remember
The gracious bounties of the gallant prince.
How would he sit, attentive to my strain,
While to my harp I sung the harmless joys
Which crown a shepherd's life! How would he cry,
Bless'd youth! far happier in thy native worth,
Far richer in the talent Heav'n has lent thee,
Than if a crown hung o'er thy anxious brow.
The jealous monarch mark'd our growing friendship;
And as my favour grew with those about him,

His royal bounty lessen'd, till at length,
For Bethl'hem's safer shades I left the court.
Nor would these alter'd features now be known,
Grown into manly strength; nor this chang'd form,
Enlarg'd with age, and clad in russet weed.
Jesse. I have employment for thee, my lov'd son!
Will please thy active spirit. Go, my boy!
Haste to the field of war, to yonder camp,
Where in the vale of Elah mighty Saul
Commands the hosts of Israel. Greet thy brothers;
Observe their deeds, note their demeanour well,
And mark if on their actions Wisdom waits.
Bear to them too (for well the waste of war
Will make it needful) such plain healthful viands
As furnish out our frugal shepherd's meal.
And to the valiant captain of their host
Present such rural gifts as suit our fortune:
Heap'd on the board within my tent thou'lt find them.
David. With joy I 'll bear thy presents to my brothers;
And to the valiant captain of their host
The rural gifts thy gratitude assigns him.
Delightful task!—for I shall view the camp!
What transport to behold the tented field,
The pointed spear, the blaze of shields and arms,
And all the proud accoutrements of war!
But, oh! far dearer transport would it yield me,
Could this right arm alone avenge the cause
Of injur'd Israel! could my single death
Preserve the guiltless thousands doom'd to bleed!
Jesse. Let not thy youth be dazzled, O my son!
With deeds of bold emprize, as valour only
Were virtue, and the gentle arts of peace,
Of truth, and justice, were not worth thy care.
When thou shalt view the splendours of the war,
The gay caparison, the burnish'd shield,
The plume-crown'd helmet, and the glitt'ring spear,
Scorn not the humble virtues of the shade,
Nor think that Heav'n views only with applause
The active merit and the busy toil
Of heroes, statesmen, and the bustling sons
Of public care. These have their just reward,
In wealth, in honours, and the well-earned fame
Their high achievements bring. 'Tis in this view
That virtue is her proper recompence:
Wealth, as its natural consequence, will flow
From industry: toil with success is crown'd:
From splendid actions high renown will spring.
Such is the usual course of human things;
For Wisdom Infinite permits, that thus
Effects to causes be proportionate,
And nat'ral ends by nat'ral means achiev'd.
But in the future estimate which Heaven
Will make of things terrestrial, know, my son,
That no inferior blessing is reserv'd
For the mild passive virtues: meek content,
Heroic self-denial, nobler far
Than all th' achievements noisy Fame reports,
When her shrill trump proclaims the proud success
Which desolates the nations. But, on earth,
These are not always prosperous—mark the cause:
Eternal Justice keeps them for the bliss
Of final recompence, for the dread day
Of gen'ral retribution. O, my son!
The ostentatious virtues which still press
For notice and for praise; the brilliant deeds
Which live but in the eye of observation,
These have their meed at once. But there's joy
To the fond votaries of Fame unknown,
To hear the still small voice of Conscience speak
Its whispering plaudit to the silent soul.
Heaven notes the sigh afflicted Goodness heaves
Hears the low plaint by human ear unheard,
And from the cheek of patient Sorrow wipes
The tear, by mortal eye unseen or scorn'd.
David. As Hermon's dews their grateful freshness shed,
And cheer the herbage, and the flow'rs renew,
So do thy words a quickening balm infuse,
And grateful sink in my delighted soul.
Jesse. Go then, my child! and may the gracious God
Who bless'd our fathers, bless my much lov'd son!
David. Farewell, my father!—and of this be sure,
That not one precept from thy honour'd lips
Shall fall by me unnotic'd; not one grace,
One venerable virtue which adorns
Thy daily life, but I, with watchful care
And due observance, will in mine transplant it.
[*Exit* DAVID.
Jesse. He 's gone! and still my aching eyes pursue
And strain their orbs still longer to behold him.
Oh! who can tell when next I may embrace him?
Who can declare the counsels of the Lord?
Or when the moment preordain'd by Heav'n
To fill his great designs, may come? This son
This blessing of my age, is set apart
For high exploits; the chosen instrument
Of all-disposing Heav'n for mighty deeds.
Still I recall the day, and to my mind
The scene is ever present, when the seer,
Illustrious Samuel, to the humble shades
Of Bethlehem came, pretending sacrifice,
To screen his errand from the jealous king
He sanctify'd us first, me and my sons;
For sanctity increas'd should still precede
Increase of dignity. When he declar'd
He came commission'd from on high to find,
Among the sons of Jesse, Israel's king,
Astonishment entranc'd my wond'ring soul!
Yet was it not a wild, tumultuous bliss;
Such rash delight as promis'd honours yield
To light vain minds: no, 'twas a doubtful joy,
Chastis'd by tim'rous Virtue, lest a gift
So splendid and so dang'rous might destroy
Him it was meant to raise. My eldest born,
Eliab, tall of stature, I presented;
But God, who judges not by outward form,
But tries the heart, forbade the holy prophet
To choose my eldest born. For Saul, he said,
Gave proof, that fair proportion, and the grace
Of limb and feature, ill repaid the want
Of virtue. All my other sons alike
By Samuel were rejected; till, at last,
On my young boy, on David's chosen head,
The prophet pour'd the consecrated oil.

Yet ne'er did pride elate him, ne'er did scorn
For his rejected elders swell his heart.
Not in such gentle charity to him
His haughtier brothers live: but all he pardons.
To meditation, and to humble toil,
To pray'r, and praise devoted, here he dwells.
O may the Graces which adorn retreat
One day delight a court! record his name
With saints and prophets, dignify his race,
And may the sacred songs his leisure frames
Instruct mankind, and sanctify a world!

PART II.

Scene—The Camp.

ELIAB, ABINADAB, ABNER, ISRAELITES.

Eliab. Still is the event of this long war uncertain:
Still do the adverse hosts, on either side,
Protract, with ling'ring caution, an encounter,
Which must to one be fatal.
Abinidab. This descent,
Thus to the very confines of our land,
Proclaims the sanguine hope that fires the foe.
In Ephes-dammim boldly they encamp;
Th' uncircumcis'd Philistines pitch their tents
On Judah's hallow'd earth.
Eliab. Full forty days
Has the insulting giant, proud Goliath,
The champion of Philistia, fiercely challeng'd
Some Israelitish foe. But who so vain
To dare such force unequal? who so bent
On sure destruction, to accept his terms,
And rush on death, beneath the giant force
Of his enormous bulk?
Abinadab. 'Tis near the time
When in the adjacent valley which divides
Th' opposing armies he is wont to make
His daily challenge.
Eliab. Much I marvel, brother,
No greetings from our father reach our ears.
With ease and plenty bless'd, he little recks
The daily hardships which his sons endure.
But see! behold his darling boy approaches!
Abin. How, David here! whence this unlook'd-for guest?
Eliab. A spy upon our actions; sent, no doubt,
To scan our deeds, with beardless gravity
Affecting wisdom; to observe each word,
To magnify the venial faults of youth,
And construe harmless mirth to foul offence.

Enter DAVID.

David. All hail, my dearest brothers!
Eliab. Means thy greeting
True love, or arrogant scorn?
David. O, most true love!
Sweet as the precious ointment which bedew'd
The sacred head of Aaron, and descended
Upon his hallow'd vest, so sweet, my brothers,
Is fond fraternal amity; such love
As my touch'd bosom feels at your approach.
Eliab. Still that fine glozing speech, those holy saws,
And all that trick of studied sanctity,
Of smooth-turn'd periods and trim eloquence,
Which charms thy doating father! But confess,
What dost thou here? Is it to sooth thy pride,
And gratify thy vain desire to roam
In quest of pleasures unallow'd? or com'st thou,
A willing spy, to note thy brothers' deeds?
Where hast thou left those few poor straggling sheep?
More suited to thy ignorance and years
The care of those, than here to wander idly:
Why cam'st thou hither?
David. Is there not a cause?
Why that displeasure kindling in thine eye,
My angry brother? why those taunts unkind?
Not idly bent on sport; not to delight
Mine eye with all this gay parade of war;
To gratify a roving appetite,
Or fondly to indulge a curious ear
With any tale of rumour, am I come;
But to approve myself a loving brother.
I bring the blessing of your aged sire,
With gifts of such plain cates and rural viands
As suit his frugal fortune. Tell me now,
Where the bold captain of your host encamps?
Eliab. Wherefore inquire? what boots it thee to know?
Behold him there: great Abner, fam'd in arms.
David. I bring thee, mighty Abner from my father,
(A simple shepherd swain in yonder vale)
Such humble gifts as shepherd swains bestow.
Abner. Thanks, gentle youth! with pleasure I receive
The grateful off'ring. Why does thy quick eye
Thus wander with unsatisfi'd delight?
David. New as I am to all the trade of war
Each sound has novelty; each thing I see
Attracts attention; every noise I hear
Awakes confus'd emotions; indistinct,
Yet full of charming tumult, sweet distraction.
'Tis all delightful hurry! Oh! the joy
Of young ideas painted on the mind,
In the warm glowing colours fancy spread
On objects not yet known, when all is new,
And all is lovely! Ah! what warlike sound
Salutes my ravish'd ear?
[*Sound of trumpets.*
Abner. 'Tis the Philistine
Proclaiming, by his herald, through the ranks,
His near approach. Each morning he repeats
His challenge to our bands.
David. Ha! what Philistine?
Who is he?
Eliab. Wherefore ask? for thy raw youth
And rustic ignorance, 'twere fitter learn
Some rural art! some secret to prevent
Contagion in thy flocks; some better means
To save their fleece immaculate. These mean arts
Of soft inglorious peace far better suit
Thy low obscurity, than thus to seek
High things pertaining to exploits of arms.
David. Urg'd as I am I will not answer thee
Who conquers his own spirit, O my brother!
He is the only conqueror.—Again
That shout mysterious! Pray you (*to Abner*) tell me who
This proud Philistine is, who sends defiance
To Israel's hardy chieftians?
Abner. Stranger youth
So lovely and so mild is thy demeanor,
So gentle and so patient; such the air

Of candour and of courage which adorns
Thy blooming features, thou hast won my love:
And I will tell thee.
David. Mighty Abner, thanks!
Abner. Thrice, and no more, he sounds, his daily rule!
This man of war, this champion of Philistia,
Is of the sons of Anak's giant-race:
Goliath is his name. His fearful stature,
Unparalell'd in Israel, measures more
Than twice three cubits. On his tow'ring head
A helm of burnish'd brass the giant wears,
So pond'rous, it would crush the stoutest man
In all our hosts. A coat of mailed armour
Guards his capacious trunk! compar'd with which,
The amplest oak that spreads his rugged arms
In Bashan's groves, were small. About his neck
A shining corslet hangs. On his vast thigh
The plaited cuiras, firmly jointed, stands.
But who shall tell the wonders of his spear,
And hope to gain belief! Of massive iron
Its temper'd frame, not less than the broad beam
To which the busy weaver hangs his loom:
Not to be wielded by a mortal hand,
Save by his own. An armour bearer walks
Before this mighty, champion, in his hand
Bearing the giant's shield. Thrice ev'ry morn
His herald sounds the trumpet of defiance!
Off'ring at once to end the long-drawn war
In single combat 'gainst that hardy foe
Who dares encounter him.
David. Say, mighty Abner,
What are the haughty terms of his defiance?
Abner. Proudly he stalks around th' extremest bounds
Of Elah's vale. His herald sounds the note
Of offer'd battle. Then the furious giant,
With such a voice as from the troubled sky
In vollied thunder breaks, thus sends his challenge:
'Why do you set your battle in array,
Ye men of Israel? Wherefore waste the lives
Of needless thousands? Why protract a war
Which may at once be ended? Are not you
Servants to Saul your king? and am not I
With triumph let me speak it, a Philistine?
Choose out a man from all your armed hosts,
Of courage most approv'd, and I will meet him;
His single arm to mine. Th' event of this
Shall fix the fate of Israel and Philistia.
If victory favour him, then will we live
Your tributary slaves; but if my arm
Be crown'd with conquest, you shall then live ours.
Give me a man, if your effeminate bands
A man can boast. Your armies I defy!'
David. What shall be done to him who shall subdue
This vile idolater?
Abner. He shall receive
Such ample bounties, such profuse rewards,
As might inflame the old, or warm the coward,
Were not the odds so desperate.
David. Say, what are they?
Abner. The royal Saul has promis'd that bold hero
Who should encounter and subdue Goliath,
All dignity and favour; that his house
Shall be set free from tribute, and ennobled
With the first honours Israel has to give.
As for the gallant conqueror himself,
No less a recompence than the fair princess,
Our monarch's peerless daughter.
David. Beauteous Michael!
It is indeed a boon which kings might strive for.
And has none answer'd yet this bold defiance?
What! all this goodly host of Israelites!
God's own peculiar people! all afraid,
T' assert God's injur'd honour and their own?
Where is the king, who in his early youth
Wrought deeds of fame! Where princely Jonathan?
Not so the gallant youth Philistia fear'd
At Bozez and at Seneh;* when the earth
Shook from her deep foundations to behold
The wond'rous carnage of his single hand
On the uncircumcis'd. When he exclaim'd,
With glorious confidence—'Shall numbers awe me?
God will protect his own: with him to save
It boots not, friends, by many or by few.'
This was an hero! Why does he delay
To meet this boaster? For thy courtesy,
Thrice noble Abner, I am bound to thank thee,
Wouldst thou complete thy gen'rous offices?
I dare not ask it.
Abner. Speak thy wishes freely:
My soul inclines to serve thee.
David. Then, O Abner,
Conduct me to the king! There is a cause
Will justify this boldness!
Eliab. Braggard, hold!
Abner. I take thee at thy word; and will, with speed,
Conduct thee to my royal master's presence.
In yonder tent the anxious monarch waits
Th' event of this day's challenge.
David. Noble Abner,
Accept my thanks. Now to thy private ear,
If so thy grace permit I will unfold
My secret soul, and ease my lab'ring breast,
Which pants with high designs, and beats for glory.

PART III.

Scene.—Saul's tent.

Saul. Why was I made a king? what I have gain'd
In envy'd greatness and uneasy pow'r,
I've lost in peace of mind, in virtue lost!
Why did deceitful transports fire my soul
When Samuel plac'd upon my youthful brow
The crown of Israel? I had known content,
Nay happiness, if happiness unmix'd
To mortal man were known, had I still liv'd
Among the humble tents of Benjamin.
A shepherd's occupation was my joy,
And every guiltless day was crown'd with peace,
But now, a sullen cloud forever hangs
O'er the faint sunshine of my brightest hours,
Dark'ning the golden promise of the morn.
I ne'er shall taste the dear domestic joys

* 1 Samuel, xiv.

My meanest subjects know. True, I have sons,
Whose virtues would have charm'd a private man,
And drawn down blessings on their humble sire.
I love their virtues too; but 'tis a love
Which jealousy has poison'd. Jonathan
Is all a father's fondness could conceive
Of amiable and good—Of that no more!
He is too popular; the people doat
Upon th' ingenuous graces of his youth.
Curs'd popularity! which makes a father
Detest the merit of a son he loves,
How did their fond idolatry, perforce,
Rescue his sentenc'd life, when doom'd by lot
To perish at Beth-aven,* for the breach
Of strict injunction, that of all my bands,
Not one that day should taste of food and live!
My subjects clamour at this tedious war,
Yet of my num'rous arm'd chiefs not one
Has courage to engage this man of Gath.
O for a champion bold enough to face
This giant-boaster, whose repeated threats
Strike through my inmost soul! There was a time—
Of that no more! I am not what I was.
Should valiant Jonathan accept the challenge,
'Twould but increase his influence, raise his fame,
And make the crown sit lightly on my brow.
Ill could my wounded spirit brook the voice
Of harsh comparison 'twixt sire and son.

SAUL, ABNER.

Abner. What meditation holds thee thus engag'd,
O king! and keeps thine active spirit bound;
When busy war for other cares demands
Than ruminating thought and pale despair?
Saul. Abner draw near. My weary soul sinks down
Beneath the heavy pressure of misfortune.
O for that spirit which inflam'd my breast
With sudden fervour, when, among the seers
And holy sages my prophetic voice
Was heard attentive, and th' astonish'd throng,
Wond'ring, exclaim'd,—'Is Saul among the prophets?'
Where's that bold arm which quell'd the Amalekite,
And nobly spar'd fierce Agag and his flocks?
'Tis past! the light of Israel now is quench'd:
Shorn of his beams, my sun of glory sets!
Rise Moab, Edom, angry Ammon rise!
Come Gaza, Ashdod come! let Ekron boast,
And Askelon rejoice, for Saul is—nothing.
Abner. I bring thee news, O king!
Saul. My valiant uncle!
What can avail thy news? A soul oppress'd
Refuses still to hear the charmer's voice,
Howe'er enticingly he charm. What news
Can soothe my sickly soul, while Gath's fell giant
Repeats each morning to my frighten'd hosts
His daring challenge, none accepting it?
Abner. It is accepted.
Saul. Ha! By whom? how? when?
What prince, what gen'ral, what illustrious hero,

* 1 Samuel, xiv.

What vet'ran chief, what warrior of renown,
Will dare to meet the haughty foes defiance?
Speak, my brave gen'ral! noble Abner speak!
Abner. No prince, no warrior, no illustrious chief,
No vet'ran hero dares accept the challenge;
But what will move thy wonder, mighty king,
One train'd to peaceful deeds, and new to arms,
A simple shepherd swain!
Saul. O mockery!
No more of this light talc, it suits but ill
Thy bearded gravity: or rather tell it
To credulous age, or weak believing women;
They love whate'er is marvellous, and doat
On deeds prodigious and incredible,
Which sober sense rejects. I laugh to think
Of thy extravagance. A shepherd's boy
Encounter him whom nations dread to meet!
Abner. Is valour then peculiar to high birth?
If Heav'n had so decreed, know, scornful king,
That Saul the Benjamite had never reign'd.
No!—Glory darts her soul-pervading ray
On thrones and cottages, regardless still
Of all the artificial, nice distinctions
Vain human customs make.
Saul. Where is this youth?
Abner. Without thy tent he waits. Such humble sweetness,
Fir'd with the secret conscience of desert;
Such manly bearing, temper'd with such softness,
And so adorn'd with ev'ry outward charm
Of graceful form and feature, saw I never.
Saul. Bring me the youth.
Abner. He waits thy royal pleasure.
[*Exit Abner.*
Saul. What must I think? Abner himself is brave,
And skill'd in human kind: nor does he judge
So lightly, to be caught by specious words
And Fraud's smooth artifice, were there not marks
Of worth intrinsic. But behold he comes!
The youth too with him! Justly did he praise
The candour which adorns his open brow.

Re-enter Abner and David.

David. Hail mighty king!
Abner. Behold thy proffer'd champion!
Saul. Art thou the youth whose high heroic zeal
Aspires to meet the giant son of Anak?
David. If so the king permit.
Saul. Impossible!
Why, what experience has thy youth of arms?
Where, stripling, didst *thou* learn the trade of war?
Beneath what hoary vet'ran hast *thou* serv'd?
What feats hast *thou* achiev'd, what daring deeds?
What well-rang'd phalanx, say, what charging hosts,
What hard campaigns, what sieges hast thou seen?
Hast thou e'er scal'd the city's rampir'd wall
Or hurl'd the missile dart, or learn'd to poise
The warrior's deathful spear? The use of targe,
Of helm, and buckler, is to thee unknown.
David. Arms I have seldom seen. I little know

Of war's proud discipline. The trumpet's clang,
The shock of charging hosts, the rampir'd wall,
Th' embattled phalanx, and the warrior's spear,
The use of targe and helm to me is new.
My zeal for God, my patriot love of Israel,
My reverence for my king, behold my claims!
Saul. But gentle youth! thou hast no fame in arms,
Renown, with her shrill clarion, never bore
Thy honour'd name to many a land remote;
From the fair regions where Euphrates laves
Assyria's borders to the distant Nile.
David. True, mighty king! I am indeed alike
Unbless'd by Fortune and to Fame unknown;
A lowly shepherd-swain of Judah's tribe:
But greatness ever springs from low beginnings.
That very Nile thou mention'st, whose broad stream
Bears fruitfulness and health through many a clime,
From an unknown, penurious, scanty source
Took its first rise. The forest oak, which shades
The sultry troops in many a toilsome march
Once an unheeded acorn lay. O king!
Who ne'er begins can never aught achieve
Of glorious. Thou thyself wast once unknown,
Till fair occasion brought thy worth to light.
Far higher views inspire my youthful heart
Than human praise: I seek to vindicate
Th' insulted honour of the God I serve.
Abner. 'Tis nobly said.
Saul. I love thy spirit, youth!
But dare not trust thy inexperienc'd arm
Against a giant's might. The sight of blood,
Though brave thou feel'st when peril is not nigh,
Will pale thy ardent cheek.
David. Not so, O king!
This youthful arm has been imbru'd in blood
Though yet no blood of man has ever stain'd it.
Thy servant's occupation is a shepherd.
With jealous care I watch'd my father's flock:
A brindled lion and a furious bear
Forth from the thicket rush'd upon the fold,
Seiz'd a young lamb, and tore their bleating spoil.
Urg'd by compassion for my helpless charge,
I felt a new-born vigour nerve my arm;
And, eager, on the foaming monsters rush'd.
The famish'd lion by his grisly beard,
Enrag'd, I caught, and smote him to the ground.
The panting monster struggling in my gripe,
Shook terribly his bristling mane, and lash'd
His own gaunt, gory sides; fiercely he ground
His gnashing teeth, and rolled his starting eyes,
Bloodshot with agony; then with a groan,
That wak'd the echoes of the mountain, died.
Nor did his grim associate 'scape my arm;
Thy servant slew the lion and the bear;
I kill'd them both, and bore their shaggy spoils
In triumph home: and shall I fear to meet
Th' uncircumcis'd Philistine? No: that God
Who sav'd me from the bear's destructive fang
And hungry lion's jaw, will not he save me
From this idolater?
Saul. He will, he will!
Go, noble youth! be valiant and be bless'd!
The God thou serv'st will shield thee in the fight,
And nerve thy arm with more than mortal strength.
Abner. So the bold Nazarite* a lion slew:
An earnest of his victories o'er Philistia!
Saul. Go, Abner; see the youth be well equipp'd
With shield and spear. Be it thy care to grace him
With all the fit accoutrements of war.
The choicest mail from my rich armory take,
And gird upon his thigh my own try'd sword
Of noblest temper'd steel.
Abner. I shall obey.
David. Pardon, O king! the coat of plaited mail
These limbs have never known; it would not shield,
'Twould but encumber one who never felt
The weight of armour.
Saul. Take thy wish, my son!
Thy sword then, and the God of Jacob guard thee!

PART IV.

Scene—Another part of the camp.

DAVID (*kneeling.*)

ETERNAL Justice! in whose awful scale
Th' event of battle hangs! Eternal Truth!
Whose beams illumines all! Eternal Mercy!
If, by thy attributes I may, unblam'd,
Address thee; Lord of glory! hear me now:
O teach these hands to war, these arms to fight!
Thou ever present help in time of need!
Let thy broad mercy, as a shield, defend,
And let thine everlasting arms support me!
Strong in thy strength, in thy protection safe
Then, though the heathen rage, I shall not fear.
Jehovah, be my buckler! Mighty Lord!
Thou who hast deign'd by humble instruments
To manifest the wonders of thy might,
Be present with me now! 'Tis thine own cause!
Thy wisdom sees events, thy goodness plans
Schemes baffling our conception—and, 'tis still
Omnipotence which executes the deed
Of high design, though by a feeble arm!
I feel a secret impulse drive me on;
And my soul springs impatient for the fight!
'Tis not the heated spirits, or warm blood
Of sanguine youth with which my bosom burns
And, though I thirst to meet th' insulting foe,
And pant for glory, 'tis not, witness Heav'n!
'Tis not the sinful lust of fading fame,
The perishable praise of mortal man;
His praise I covet, whose applause is Life.

DAVID, ELIAB, ISRAELITES.

Eliab. What do I hear? thou truant! thou hast dar'd
E'en to the awful presence of the king
Bear thy presumption!
David. He who fears the Lord
Shall boldly stand before the face of kings,
And shall not be asham'd.
Eliab. But what wild dream
Has urg'd thee to this deed of desp'rate rashness?
Thou mean'st, so I have learn'd, to meet Goliath,
His single arm to thine.

* Samson. See Judges, chap. xiv.

David. 'Tis what I purpose,
Ev'n on this spot. Each moment I expect
His wish'd approach.
Eliab. Go home; return, for shame!
Nor madly draw destruction on thy head.
Thy doating father, when thy shepherd's coat,
Drench'd in thy blood, is brought him, will lament,
And rend his furrow'd cheek and silver hair,
As if some mighty loss had touch'd his age;
And mourn, ev'n as the partial patriarch mourn'd
When Joseph's bloody garment he receiv'd
From his less dear, nor less deserving, sons:
But whence that glitt'ring ornament which hangs
Useless upon thy thigh?
David. 'Tis the king's gift.
But thou art right; it suits not me, my brother!
Nor sword I mean to use, nor spear to poise,
Lest men should say I put my trust in arms,
Not in the Lord of Hosts.
Eliab. Then thou indeed
Art bent to seek thy death?
David. And what is death?
Is it so terrible to die, my brother?
Or grant it terrible, is it for that
The less inevitable? If, indeed
We could by stratagem elude the blow,
When some high duty calls us forth to die,
And thus for ever shun it, and escape
The universal lot,—then fond self-love,
Then cautious Prudence, boldly might produce
Their fine-spun arguments, their learn'd harangues,
Their cobweb arts, their phrase sophistical,
Their subtle doubts, and all the specious trick
Of selfish cunning lab'ring for its end.
But since, howe'er protracted, death will come,
Why fondly study, with ingenious pains,
To put it off! To breathe a little longer
Is to defer our fate, but not to shun it.
Small gain! which Wisdom with indiff'rent eye
Beholds. Why wish to drink the bitter dregs
Of life's exhausted chalice, whose last runnings,
Ev'n at the best, are vapid! Why not die
(If Heav'n so will) in manhood's op'ning bloom,
When all the flush of life is gay about us!
When sprightly youth with many a new-born joy,
Solicits every sense! So may we then
Present a sacrifice, unmeet indeed,
(Ah, how unmeet!) but less unworthy far,
Than the world's leavings; than a worn out heart,
By vice enfeebled, and by vain desires
Sunk and exhausted!
Eliab. Hark! I hear a sound
Of multitudes approaching!
David. 'Tis the giant!
I see him not, but hear his measur'd pace.
Eliab. Look, where his pond'rous shield is borne before him!
David. Like a broad moon its ample disk portends.
But soft!—what unknown prodigy appears?
A moving mountain cas'd in polish'd brass!
Eliab (getting behind David) How's this?
Thou dost not tremble. Thy firm joints
Betray no fear; thy accents are not broken;
Thy cheek retains its red; thine eye its lustre,
He comes more near! Dost thou not fear him now?
David. No,
The vast colossal statue nor inspires
Respect nor fear. Mere magnitude of form,
Without proportion'd intellect and valour,
Strikes not my soul with rev'rence or with awe.
Eliab. Near, and more near he comes! I hold it rash
To stay so near him, and expose a life
Which may, hereafter serve the state.
Farewell. [*Exit.*

[GOLIATH *advances, clad in complete armour. One bearing his shield precedes him. The opposing armies are seen at a distance, drawn up on each side of the valley.* GOLIATH *begins to speak before he comes on.* DAVID *stands in the same place, with an air of indifference.*]

Goliath. Where is this mighty man of war, who dares
Accept the challenge of Philistia's chief?
What victor king, what gen'ral drench'd in blood,
Claims this high privilege? What are his rights?
What proud credentials does the boaster bring
To prove his claim? What cities laid in ashes?
What ruin'd provinces? What slaughter'd realms?
What heads of heroes, and what hearts of kings,
In battle kill'd, or at his altars slain,
Has he to boast? Is his bright armory
Thick set with spears, and swords, and coats of mail
Of vanquish'd nations, by his single arm
Subdu'd? Where is the mortal man so bold,
So much a wretch, so out of love with life,
To dare the weight of this uplifted spear,
Which never fell innoxious? Yet I swear,
I grudge the glory to this parting soul
To fall by this right hand. 'Twill sweeten death,
To know he had the honour to contend
With the dread son of Anak. Latest time
From blank oblivion shall retrieve his name
Who dar'd to perish in unequal fight
With Gath's triumphant champion. Come, advance.
Philistia's gods to Israel's. Sound, my herald—
Sound for the battle straight.
[*Herald sounds the trumpet.*
David. Behold thy foe!
Goliath. I see him not.
David. Behold him here!
Goliath. Say, where!
Direct my sight. I do not war with boys.
David. I stand prepar'd: thy single arm to mine.
Goliath. Why this is mockery, minion! it may chance
To cost thee dear. Sport not with things above thee!
But tell me who of all this num'rous host
Expects his death from me? Which is the man
Whom Israel sends to meet my bold defiance?
David. Th' election of my sov'reign falls on me.

Goliath. On thee! on thee! By Dagon, 'tis too much!
Thou curled minion! thou a nation's champion!
'Twould move my mirth at any other time;
But trifling 's out of tune, begone, light boy!
And tempt me not too far.
David. I do defy thee,
Thou foul idolator! Hast thou not scorn'd
The armies of the living God I serve?
By me he will avenge upon thy head
Thy nation's sins and thine. Arm'd with his name,
Unshrinking, I dare meet the stoutest foe
That ever bath'd his hostile spear in blood.
Goliath. (*ironically*) Indeed! 'tis wond'rous well,
Now, by my gods,
The stripling plays the orator! Vain boy!
Keep close to that same bloodless war of words,
And thou shalt still be safe. Tongue-valiant warrior!
Where is thy sylvan crook, with garlands hung,
Of idle field flowers? where thy wanton harp,
Thou dainty finger'd hero? better strike
Its notes lascivious, or the lulling lute
Touch softly, than provoke the trumpet's rage.
I will not stain the honour of my spear
With thy inglorious blood. Shall that fair cheek
Be scar'd with wounds unseemly? Rather go
And hold fond dalliance with the Syrian maids;
To wanton measures dance, and let them braid
The bright luxuriance of thy golden hair;
They, for their lost Adonis, may mistake
Thy dainty form.
David. Peace, thou unhallow'd railer!
O tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound
Reach Askelon, how once your slaughter'd lords
By mighty Samson* found one common grave:
When his broad shoulder the firm-pillars heav'd,
And to its base the tott'ring fabric shook.
Goliath. Insulting boy! perhaps thou hast not heard
The infamy of that glorious day,
When your weak host at Eben-ezer† pitch'd
Their quick-abandon'd tent? Then when your ark,
Your talisman, your charm, your boasted pledge
Of safety and success, was tamely lost!
And yet not tamely, since by me 'twas won.
When with this good right arm I thinn'd your ranks,
And bravely crush'd, beneath a single blow
The chosen guardians of this vaunted shrine,
Hophni‡ and Phineas. The fam'd ark itself
I bore to Ashdod.
David. I remember too,
Since thou provok'st th' unwelcome truth, how all
Your blushing priests beheld their idol's shame;
When prostrate Dagon fell before the ark,
And your frail god was shiver'd. Then Philistia,
Idolatrous Philistia, flew for succour
To Israel's help, and all her smitten nobles
Confess'd the Lord was God; and the bless'd ark.
Gladly, with reverential awe restor'd.
Goliath. By Ashod's fane thou ly'st.

* Judges, c. xvi. † Samuel. c. v.
‡ Commentators say, that Chaldee paraphrase makes Goliath boast that he had killed Hophni and Phineas, and taken the ark prisoner.

Now will I meet thee,
Thou insect warrior, since thou dar'st me thus!
Already I behold thy mangled limbs,
Dissever'd each from each, ere long to feed
The fierce blood-snuffing vulture. Mark me well.
Around my spear I'll twist thy shining locks,
And toss in air thy head all gash'd with wounds,
Thy lip yet quiv'ring with the dire convulsion
Of recent death!—Art thou not terrify'd?
David. No:
True courage is not mov'd by breath of words:
While rash bravery of boiling blood,
Impetuous, knows no settled principle.
A fev'rish tide, it has its ebbs and flows,
As spirits raise or fall, as wine inflames,
Or circumstances change: but inborn Courage,
The gen'rous child of Fortitude and Faith,
Holds its firm empire in the constant soul;
And like the steadfast pole-star, never once
From the same fix'd and faithful point declines.
Goliath. The curses of Philistia's gods be on thee!
This fine-drawn speech is meant to lengthen out
That little life thy words pretend to scorn.
David. Ha! say'st thou so? Come on then. Mark us well.
Thou com'st to me with sword, and spear, and shield;
In the dread name of Israel's God I come;
The living Lord of Hosts, whom thou defy'st!
Yet though no shield I bring, no arms except
These five smooth stones I gather'd from the brook,
With such a simple sling as shepherd's use—
Yet all expos'd defenceless as I am,
The God I serve shall give thee up a prey
To my victorious arm. This day I mean
To make the uncircumcis'd tribes confess
There is a God in Israel. I will give thee,
Spite of thy vaunted strength and giant bulk,
To glut the carrion kites. Nor thee alone;
The mangled carcases of your thick hosts
Shall spread the plains of Elah, till Philistia,
Through all her trembling tents and flying bands,
Shall own that Judah's God is God indeed!
—I dare thee to the trial.
Goliath. Follow me—
In this good spear I trust.
David. I trust in Heav'n!
The God of battle stimulates my arm,
And fires my soul with ardour not its own.

PART V

Scene—The tent of Saul.

Saul (*rising from his couch.*) Oh! that I knew the black and midnight arts
Of wizard sorcery! that I could call
The slumb'ring spirit from the shades of hell!
Or, like the Chaldean sages, could foreknow
Th' event of things unacted! I might then
Anticipate my fortune. How I 'm fall'n!
The sport of vain chimeras, the weak slave
Of fear and fancy; coveting to know
The arts obscene, which foul diviners use.
Thick blood and moping Melancholy lead

To baleful Superstition—that fell fiend,
Whose with'ring charms blast the fair bloom of Virtue.
Why did my wounded pride with scorn reject
The wholesome truths which holy Samuel told me?
Why drive him from my presence? he might now
Raise my sunk soul, and my benighted mind
Enlighten'd with religion's cheering ray.
He dar'd to menace me with loss of empire;
And I, for that bold honesty, dismiss'd him.
'Another shall possess thy thrône,' he cry'd:
'A stranger!' This unwelcome prophecy
Has lined my crown and strew'd my couch with thorns.
Each ray of op'ning merit I discern
In friend or foe, distracts my troubled soul,
Lest he should prove my rival. But this morn,
Ev'n my young champion lovely as he look'd
In blooming valour, struck me to the soul
With Jealousy's barb'd dart. O Jealousy!
Thou ugliest fiend of hell! thy deadly venom
Preys on my vitals, turns the healthful hue
Of my fresh cheek to haggard sallowness,
And drinks my spirit up.
[*A flourish of trumpets, shouting, &c.*
What sounds are those?
The combat is decided. Hark! again
Those shouts proclaim it! Now, O God of Jacob,
If yet thou hast not quite withdrawn from Saul
Thy light and favour, prosper me this once!
But Abner comes! I dread to hear his tale!
Fair hope, with smiling face but ling'ring foot,
Has long deceiv'd me.

Abner. King of Israel, hail!
Now thou art king indeed. The youth has conquer'd:
Goliath's dead.

Saul. Oh speak thy tale again,
Lest my fond ears deceive me!

Abner. Thy young champion
Has slain the giant.

Saul. Then God is gracious still,
In spite of my offences! But good Abner!
How was it? Tell me all. Where is my champion?
Quick let me press him to my grateful heart,
And pay him a king's thanks. And yet, who knows,
This forward friend may prove an active foe!
No more of that. Tell me the whole, brave Abner!
And paint the glorious acts of my young hero!

Abner. Full in the centre of the camp he stood!
Th' opposing armies rang'd on either side
In proud array. The haughty giant stalk'd
Stately across the valley. Next the youth
With modest confidence advanc'd. Nor pomp,
Nor gay parade, nor martial ornament,
His graceful form adorn'd. Goliath strait,
With solemn state began the busy work
Of dreadful preparation. In one place
His closely jointed mail an op'ning left
For air, and only one: the watchful youth
Mark'd that the beaver of his helm was up.
Meanwhile the giant such a blow devis'd
As would have crush'd him. This the youth perceiv'd,
And from his well-directed sling quick hurl'd,
With dex'trous aim a stone, which sunk, deep lodg'd,
In the capacious forehead of the foe.
Then with a cry, as loud and terrible
As Lybian lions roaring for their young,
Quite stunn'd, the furious giant stagger'd, reel'd,
And fell: the mighty mass of man fell prone.
With its own weight his shatter'd bulk was bruis'd.
His clattering arms rung dreadfully through the field,
And the firm basis of the solid earth
Shook. Chok'd with blood and dust, he curs'd his gods,
And died blaspheming! Straight the victor youth
Drew from his sheath the giant's pond'rous sword,
And from the enormous trunk the gory head,
Furious in death, he sever'd. The grim visage
Look'd threat'ning still, and still frown'd horribly.

Saul. O glorious deed! O valiant conqueror!

Abner. The youth so calm appear'd, so nobly firm,
So cool, yet so intrepid, that these eyes
Ne'er saw such temp'rate valour so chastis'd
By modesty.

Saul. Thou dwell'st upon his praise
With needless circumstance. 'Twas nobly done
But others too have fought!

Abner. None, none so bravely.

Saul. What follow'd next?

Abner. The shouting Israelites
On the Philistians rush'd, and still pursue
Their routed remnants. In dismay, their bands,
Disorder'd fly, while shouts of loud acclaim
Pursue their brave deliverer. Lo, he comes!
Bearing the giant's head and shining sword,
His well-earn'd trophies.

SAUL, ABNER, DAVID.

[DAVID *bearing* GOLIATH'S *head and sword. He kneels and lays both at* SAUL'S *feet.*

Saul. Welcome to my heart,
My glorious champion! My deliverer welcome!
How shall I speak the swelling gratitude
Of my full heart! or give thee the high praise
Thy gallant deeds deserve!

David. O mighty king!
Sweet is the breath of praise when given by those
Whose own high merit claims the praise they give.
But let not this one prosperous event,
By heav'n directed, be ascrib'd to me;
I might have fought with equal skill and courage,
And not have gain'd this conquest; then had shame
Harsh obloquy, and foul disgrace, befallen me:
But prosp'rous fortune gains the praise of valour

Saul. I like not this. In every thing superior.
He soars above me (*aside.*)—Modest youth, thou 'rt right.
And fortune, as thou say'st, deserves the praise
We give to human valour.

David. Rather say
The God of Hosts deserves it.

Saul. Tell me youth,
What is thy name, and what thy father's house?
David. My name is David; Jesse is my sire:
An humble Bethle'mite of Judah's tribe.
Saul. David, the son of Jesse! Sure that name
Has been familiar to me. Nay thy voice
Thy form and features, I remember too,
Though faint and indistinctly.
Abner. In this hero
Behold thy sweet musician; he whose harp
Expell'd the melancholy fiend, whose pow'r
Enslav'd thy spirit.
Saul. This the modest youth,
Whom for his skill and virtues I preferr'd
To bear my armour?
David. I am he, O king!
Saul. Why this concealment? tell me valiant David,
Why didst thou hide thy birth and name till now?
David. O king! I would not aught from favour claim,
Or on remember'd services presume;
But on the strength of my own actions stand
Ungrac'd and unsupported.
Abner. Well he merits
The honours which await him. Why, O king,
Dost thou delay to bless his doubting heart
With his well-earn'd rewards! Thy lovely daughter,
By right of conquest his!
Saul. (*to David.*) True: thou hast won her.
She shall be thine. Yes, a king's word is past.
David. O boundless blessing! What shall she be mine,
For whom contending monarchs might renounce
Their slighted crowns!

[*Sounds of musical instruments heard at a distance. Shouting and singing. A grand procession. Chorus of Hebrew women.*]

Saul. How 's this! what sounds of joy
Salute my ears! What means this needless pomp!
This merry sound of tabret and of harp!
What means these idle instruments of triumph?
These women, who in fair procession move,
Making sweet melody?
Abner. To pay due honour
To David are they come.
Saul. (*aside.*) A rival's praise
Is discord to my ear! They might have spar'd
This idle pageantry; it wounds my soul!

[*Martial symphony: after which, chorus of women sing.*]

I.

Prepare! your festal rites prepare!
Let your triumphs rend the air!
Idol gods shall reign no more:
We the living Lord adore!
Let heathen hosts on human helps repose,
Since Israel's God has routed Israel's foes.

II.

Let remotest nations know
Proud Goliath's overthrow.
Fall'n Philistia, is thy trust,
Dagon mingles with the dust!
Who fears the Lord of Glory, need not fear
The brazen armour or the lifted spear.

III.

See, the routed squadron fly!
Hark the clamours rend the sky!
Blood and carnage stain the field!
See the vanquish'd nations yield!
Dismay and terror fill the frighten'd land,
While conq'ring David routs the trembling band.

IV.

Lo! upon the tented field
Royal Saul has thousands kill'd!
Lo! upon th' ensanguin'd plain
David has ten thousand slain!
Let mighty Saul his vanquish'd thousands tell,
While tenfold triumphs David's victories swell.

BELSHAZZAR:

A SACRED DRAMA.

How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations!—*Isaiah.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Balshazzar, king of Babylon.
Nitocris, the queen mother.
Courtiers, Astrologers, Parasites.
Daniel, the Jewish Prophet.
Captive Jews, &c. &c.

Scene—Babylon. Time—Night.

The subject is taken from the fifth chapter of the Prophet Daniel.

PART I.

Scene—Near the palace of Babylon.

DANIEL AND CAPTIVE JEWS.

Dan. Parent of Life and Light! Sole Source of Good!
Whose tender mercies through the tide of time,
In long successive order, have sustain'd,
And sav'd the sons of Israel! Thou whose power
Deliver'd righteous Noah from the flood,
The whelming flood, the grave of human kind!
Oh Thou, whose guardian care and outstretch'd hand

Rescued young Isaac from the lifted arm,
Rais'd, at thy bidding, to devote a son,
An only son, doom'd by his sire to die:
(O saving faith, by such obedience prov'd!
O blest obedience, hallow'd thus by faith!
Thou, who in mercy sav'dst the chosen race
In the wild desert, and didst there sustain them
By wonder-working love, though they rebell'd
And murmur'd at the miracles that sav'd them!
O hear thy servant Daniel! hear and help!
Thou, whose almighty power did after raise
Successive leaders to defend our race;
Who sentest valiant Joshua to the field,
The people's champion, to the conqu'ring field,
Where the revolving planet of the night,
Suspended in her radiant round, was stay'd;
And the bright sun arrested in his course,
Stupendously stood still!

CHORUS OF JEWS.

I.

What ail'd thee, that thou stood'st still,
O sun! nor did thy flaming orb decline!
And thou, O moon! in Ajalon's low vale,
Why didst thou long before thy period shine?

II.

Was it at Joshua's dread command,
The leader of the Israelitish band?
Yes—at a mortal bidding both stood still;
'Twas Joshua's word, but 'twas Jehovah's will.

III.

What all-controlling hand had force
To stop eternal Nature's constant course?
The wand'ring moon to one fix'd spot confine,
But His whose fiat gave them first to shine?

Dan. O Thou! who, when thy discontented host,
Tir'd of Jehovah's rule, desir'd a king,
In anger gav'st them Saul; and then again
Did'st wrest the regal sceptre from his hand
To give it David—David, best belov'd!
Illustrious David! poet, prophet, king;
Thou who did'st suffer Solomon the wise
To build a glorious Temple to thy name,—
O hear thy servants, and forgive us too!
If by severe necessity compell'd,
We worship here—we have no temple now:
Altar or sanctuary none is left.

CHORUS OF JEWS.

O JUDAH! let thy captive sons deplore
Thy far-fam'd temple's now no more!
Fall'n is thy sacred fane, thy glory gone!
Fall'n is thy temple, Solomon!
Ne'er did Barbaric kings behold,
With all their shining gems, their burnish'd gold,
A fane so perfect, bright, and fair:
For God himself was wont t' inhabit there.
Between the cherubim his glory stood,
While the high-priest alone the dazzling splendour view'd.
How fondly did the Tyrian artist strive,
His name to latest time should live!
Such wealth the stranger wonder'd to behold:
Gold were the tablets, and the vases gold.
Of cedar such an ample store,
Exhausted Lebanon could yield no more.
Bending before the Ruler of the sky,
Well might the royal founder cry,
Fill'd with an holy dread, a rev'rend fear,
Will God in very deed inhabit here?
The heaven of heavens beneath his feet,
Is for the brig inhabitant unmeet:
Archangels prostrate wait his high commands,
And will he deign to dwell in temples made with hands?

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Dan. Yes, Thou art ever present, Pow'r Su-
Not circumscrib'd by time, nor fix'd to space,
Confin'd to altars, nor to temples bound.
In wealth, in want, in freedom, or in chains,
In dungeons or on thrones, the faithful find thee!
E'en in the burning caldron thou wast near
To Shadrach and the holy brotherhood:
The unhurt martyrs bless'd Thee in the flames,
They sought, and found Thee; call'd, and Thou wast there.

First Jew. How chang'd our state! Judah, thy glory 's fallen!
Thy joys for hard captivity exchang'd:
And thy sad sons breathe the polluted air
Of Babylon, where deities obscene
Insult the living God; and to his servants,
The priests of wretched idols made with hands,
Show contumelious scorn.

Dan. 'Tis heaven's high will.

Second Jew. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!
If I not fondly cherish thy lov'd image,
E'en in the giddy hour of thoughtless mirth;
If I not rather view thy prostrate walls
Than haughty Babylon's imperial tow'rs—
Then may my tongue refuse to frame the strains
Of sweetest harmony, my rude right hand
Forget, with sounds symphonius, to accord
The harp of Jesse's son to Sion's song.

First Jew. Oft on Euphrates' ever verdant banks
Where drooping willows form a mournful shade
With all the pride which prosp'rous fortunes give,
And all th' unfeeling mirth of happy men,
Th' insulting Babylonians ask a song;
Such songs as erst in better days were sung
By Korah's sons, or heav'n-taught Asaph set
To loftiest measures; then our bursting hearts
Feel all their woes afresh; the galling chain
Of bondage crushes then the free-born soul
With wringing anguish from the trembling lip
Th' unfinish'd cadence falls; and the big tear,
While it relieves, betrays the wo-fraught soul.
For who can view Euphrates' pleasant stream,
Its drooping willows, and its verdant banks,
And not to wounded memory recall
The piny groves of fertile Palestine,
The vales of Solyma, and Jordan's stream!

Dan. Firm faith and deep submission to high heaven
Will teach us to endure without a murmur
What seems so hard. Think what the holy host
Of patriarchs, saints, and prophets have sustain'd,
In the blest cause of truth! And shall not we,
O men of Judah! dare what these have dar'd
And boldly pass through the refining fire
Of fierce affliction? Yes, be witness, Heaven!
Old as I am, I will not shrink at death,
Come in what shape it may, if God so will,
By peril to confirm and prove my faith.

Oh! I would dare yon den of hungry lions,
Rather than pause to fill the task assign'd
By wisdom Infinite. Nor think I boast,
Not in myself, but in thy strength I trust,
Spirit of God!
First Jew. Prophet, thy words support,
And raise our sinking souls.
Dan. Behold yon palace;
There proud Belshazzar keeps his wanton court!
I knew it once beneath another lord,
His grandsire,* who subdu'd Jehoiachin,
And hither brought sad Judah's captive tribes;
And with them brought the rich and precious relics
Of our fam'd temple; all the holy treasure,
The golden vases, and the sacred cups,
Which grac'd, in happier times, the sanctuary.
Second Jew. May HE to whose blest use they were devoted,
Preserve them from pollution; and once more,
In his own gracious time restore the temple!
Dan. I, with some favour'd youths of Jewish race
Was lodg'd in the king's palace, and instructed
In all the various learning of the East;
But HE, on whose great name our fathers call'd,
Preserv'd us from the perils of a court,
Warn'd us to guard our youthful appetites,
And still with holy fortitude reject
The pamp'ring viands Luxury presented;
Fell Luxury; more perilous to youth
Than storms or quicksands, poverty or chains:
Second Jew. He who can guard 'gainst the low baits of sense,
Will find Temptations arrows hurtless strike
Against the brazen shield of Temperance.
For 'tis th' inferior appetites enthral
The man, and quench th' immortal light within him;
The senses take the soul an easy prey,
And sink th' imprison'd spirit into brute.
Dan. Twice,† by the Spirit of God, did I expound
The visions of the king; his soul was touch'd,
And twice did he repent, and prostrate fall
Before the God of Daniel: yet again,
Pow'r, flattery, and prosperity, undid him.
When from the lofty ramparts of his palace
He view'd the splendours of the royal city,
That magazine of wealth, which proud Euphrates
Wafts from each distant corner of the earth;
When he beheld the adamantine tow'rs,
The brazen gates, the bulwarks of his strength,
The pendant gardens, Art's stupendous work,
The wonder of the world! the proud Chaldean,
Mad with th' intoxicating fumes which rise
When uncontroll'd ambition grasps at once
Dominion absolute, and boundless wealth,
Forgot he was a man, forgot his god!
'This mighty Babylon is mine,' he cry'd;
'My wond'rous pow'r, *my* godlike arm achiev'd it.
I scorn submission; own no Deity
Above my own.'—While the blasphemer spoke,
The wrath of Heav'n inflicted instant vengeance;
Stripp'd him of that bright reason he abus'd;
And drove him from the cheerful haunts of men,
A naked, wretched, helpless, senseless thing;
Companion of the brutes, his equals now.
First Jew. Nor does his impious grandson, proud Belshazzar,
Fall short of his offences; nay, he wants
The valiant spirit and the active soul
Of his progenitor; for Pleasure's slave,
Though bound in silken chains, and only tied
In flowery fetters, seeming light and loose,
Is more subdu'd than the rash casual victim
Of anger or ambition; these indeed
Burn with a fiercer but a short-lived fire;
While pleasure with a constant flame consumes,
War slays her thousands, but destructive Pleasure,
More fell, more fatal, her ten thousands slays:
The young luxurious king she fondly woos
In ev'ry shape of am'rous blandishment;
With adulation smooth ensnares his soul;
With love betrays him, and with wine inflames.
She strews her magic poppies o'er his couch,
And with delicious opiates charms him down,
In fatal slumbers bound. Though Babylon
Is now, invested by the warlike troops
Of royal Cyrus, Persia's valiant prince;
Who, in conjunction with the Median king;
Darius, fam'd for conquest, now prepares
To storm the city: not the impending horrors
Which ever wait a siege have pow'r to wake
To thought or sense th' intoxicated king.
Dan. E'en in this night of universal dread,
A mighty army threat'ning at the gates;
This very night, as if in scorn of danger,
The dissolute Belshazzar holds a feast
Magnificently impious, meant to honour
Belus, the fav'rite Babylonish idol.
Lew'd parasites compose his wanton court,
Whose impious flatt'ries sooth his monstrous crimes:
They justify his vices and extol
His boastful phrase, as if he were some god:
Whate'er he says, they say; what he commands,
Implicitly they do; they echo back
His blasphemies with shouts of loud acclaim;
And when he wounds the tortur'd ear of Virtue,
They cry "All hail! Belshazzar live for ever!"
To-night a thousand nobles fill his hall,
Princes, and all the dames who grace the court;
All but his virtuous mother, sage Nitocris:
Ah! how unlike the impious king her son!
She never mingles in the midnight fray,
Nor crowns the guilty banquet with her presence.
The royal fair is rich in every virtue
Which can adorn the queen or grace the woman.
But for the wisdom of her prudent counsels
This wretched empire had been long undone.
Not fam'd Semiramis, Assyria's pride,
Could boast a brighter mind or firmer soul;
Beneath the gentle reign of Merodach,*
Her royal lord, our nation tasted peace.
Our captive monarch, sad Jehoiachin,
Grown gray in a close prison's horrid gloom,
He freed from bondage; brought the hoary king

* Nebuchadnezzar.
† Daniel, chap. ii. and iv.

* 2 Kings, chap. xxiv.

To taste once more the long-forgotten sweets
Of liberty and light, sustain'd his age,
Pour'd in his wounds the lenient balm of kindness,
And blest his setting hour of life with peace.
[*Sound of trumpets is heard at a distance.*
First Jew. That sound proclaims the banquet is begun.
Second Jew. Hark! the licentious uproar grows more loud,
The vaulted roof resounds with shouts of mirth,
And the firm palace shakes! Retire my friends;
This madness is not meet for sober ears.
If any of our race were found so near,
'Twould but expose us to the rude attack
Of ribaldry obscene and impious jests
From these mad sons of Belial, more inflam'd
To deeds of riot by the wanton feast.
Dan. Here part we then! but when again to meet
Who knows, save heaven? Yet, O my friends! I feel
An impulse more than human stir my breast.
Wrapt in prophetic vision,* I behold
Things hid as yet from mortal sight. I see
The dart of vengeance tremble in the air,
Ere long to pierce the impious king. E'en now
The desolating angel stalks abroad,
And brandishes aloft the two-edg'd sword
Of retribution keen; he soon will strike,
And Babylon shall weep as Sion wept.
Pass but a little while, and you shall see
This queen of cities prostrate on the earth.
This haughty mistress of the kneeling world,
How shall she sit dishonour'd in the dust,
In tarnish'd pomp and solitary wo!
How shall she shroud her glories in the dark,
And in opprobrious silence hide her head!
Lament, O virgin daughter of Chaldea!
For thou shalt fall! imperial queen, shalt fall!
No more Sidonian robes shall grace thy limbs.
To purple garments sackcloth shall succeed,
And sordid dust and ashes shall supply
The od'rous nard and cassia. Thou, who said'st
I AM, and there is none beside me: thou,
E'en thou, imperial Babylon, shalt fall!
Thy glory quite eclips'd! The pleasant sound
Of viol and of harp shall charm no more;
Nor song of Syrian damsels shall be heard,
Responsive to the lute's luxurious note:
But the loud bittern's cry, the raven's croak,
The bat's fell scream, the lonely owl's dull plaint,
And ev'ry hideous bird, with ominous shriek,
Shall scare affrighted Silence from thy walls:
While Desolation, snatching from the hand
Of Time the scythe of ruin, sits aloft,
Or stalks in dreadful majesty abroad.
I see th' exterminating fiend advance,
E'en now I see her glare with horrid joy,
See tower's imperial mould'ring at her touch;
She glances on the broken battlement,
She eyes the crumbling column, and enjoys
The work of ages prostrate in the dust—
Then, pointing to the mischiefs she has made,
Exulting cries, This once was Babylon!

* See the Prophecies of Isaiah, chap. xlvii. and others.

PART II.

Scene—the court of Belshazzar. The king seated on a magnificent throne. Princes, nobles, and attendants. Ladies of the court. Music —A superb banquet.

1*st cour.* (*rises and kneels.*) HAIL mighty king!
2*d cour.* Belshazzar, live for ever!
3*d cour.* Sun of the world, and light of kings, all hail!
4*th cour.* With lowly rev'rence, such as best becomes
The humblest creatures of imperial power,
Behold a thousand nobles bend before thee!
Princes far fam'd, and dames of high descent:
Yet all this pride of wealth, this boast of beauty,
Shrinks into nought before thine awful eye!
And lives or dies as the king frowns or smiles!
Bel. This is such homage as becomes your loves.
And suits the mighty monarch of mankind.
5*th cour.* The bending world should prostrate thus before thee;
And pay not only praise but adoration!
Belshazzar (*rises and comes forward.*)
Let dull Philosophy preach self-denial;
Let envious Poverty and snarling Age
Proudly declaim against the joys they know not.
Let the deluded Jews, who fondly hope
Some fancied heaven hereafter, mortify,
And lose the actual blessings of this world
To purchase others which may never come.
Our gods may promise less, but give us more
Ill could my ardent spirit be content
With meagre abstinence and hungry hope.
Let those misjudging Israelites, who want
The nimble spirits and the active soul,
Call their blunt feelings virtue: let them drudge,
In regular progression, through the round
Of formal duty and of daily toil;
And when they want the genius to be happy,
Believe their harsh austerity is goodness.
If there be gods, they meant we should enjoy:
Why give us else these tastes and appetites?
And why the means to crown them with indulgence?
To burst the feeble bonds which hold the vulgar,
Is noble daring.
1*st cour.* And is therefore worthy
The high imperial spirit of Belshazzar.
2*d cour.* Behold a banquet which the gods might share!
Bel. To-night, my friends, your monarch shall be blest
With ev'ry various joy; to-night is ours;
Nor shall the envious gods, who view our bliss,
And sicken as they view, to-night disturb us.
Bring all the richest spices of the East;
The od'rous cassia and the dropping myrrh,
The liquid amber and the fragant gums,
Rob Gilead of its balms, Belshazzar bids,
And leave the Arabian groves without an odour.
Bring freshest flow'rs, exhaust the blooming spring,
Twine the green myrtle with the short-liv'd rose;
And ever, as the blushing garland fades,
We 'll learn to snatch the fugitive delight,

And grasp the flying joy ere it escapes us.
Come—fill the smiling goblet for the king;
Belshazzar will not let a moment pass
Unmark'd by some enjoyment! The full bowl
Let every guest partake!
[*Courtiers kneel and drink.*
1*st cour.* Here's to the king!
Light of the world, and glory of the earth,
Whose word is fate!
Bel. Yes; we are likest gods
When we have pow'r, and use it. What is wealth
But the rich means to gratify desire?
I will not have a wish, a hope, a thought,
That shall not know fruition. What is empire?
The privilege to punish and enjoy:
To feel our pow'r in making others fear it;
To taste of Pleasure's cup till we grow giddy,
And think ourselves immortal! This is empire!
My ancestors scarce tasted of its joys:
Shut from the sprightly world, and all its charms,
In cumbrous majesty, in sullen state
And dull unsocial dignity they liv'd;
Far from the sight of an admiring world,
That world, whose gaze makes half the charms of greatness;
They nothing knew of empire but the name,
Or saw it in the looks of trembling slaves;
And all they felt of royalty was care.
But I will see, and know it of myself;
Youth, Wealth, and Greatness court me to be blest,
And Pow'r and Pleasure draw with equal force
And sweet attraction · both I will embrace
In quick succession; this is Pleasure's day;
Ambition will have time to reign hereafter;
It is the proper appetite of age.
The lust of pow'r shall lord it uncontroll'd,
When all the gen'rous feelings grow obtuse,
And stern Dominion holds, with rigid hand,
His iron rein, and sits and sways alone.
But youth is Pleasure's hour!
1*st cour.* Perish the slave
Who, with official counsel would oppose
The king's desire, whose slightest wish is law!
Bel. Now strike the loud-ton'd lyre and softer lute;
Let me have music, with the nobler aid
Of poesy. Where are those cunning men
Who boast, by chosen sounds, and measur'd sweetness,
To set the busy spirits in a flame,
And cool them at their will? who know the art
To call the hidden powers of numbers forth,
And make that pliant instrument, the mind,
Yield to the pow'rful sympathy of sound,
Obedient to the master's artful hand,
Such magic is song! Then give me song;
Yet not at first such soul dissolving strains
As melt the soften'd sense; but such bold measures
As may inflame my spirit to despise
Th' ambitious Persian, that presumptuous boy,
Who rashly dares e'en now invest our city,
And menaces th' invincible Belshazzar.
[*A grand concert of music, after which an ode.*]
In vain shall Persian Cyrus dare
With great Belshazzar wage unequal war:
In vain Darius shall combine,
Darius leader of the Median line;
While fair Euphrates' stream our walls protects,
And great Belshazzar's self our fate directs.
War and famine threat in vain,
While this demi-god shall reign!
Let Persia's prostrate king confess his pow'r,
And Media's monarch dread his vengeful hour.
On Dura's* ample plain behold
Immortal Belus,† whom the nations own;
Sublime he stands in burnish'd gold,
And richest offerings his bright altars crown.
To-night his deity we here adore,
And due libations speak his mighty pow'r.
Yet Belus' self not more we own
Than great Belshazzar on Chaldea's throne.
Great Belshazzar like a God,
Rules the nations with a nod!
To great Belshazzar be the goblet crown'd!
Belshazzar's name the echoing roofs rebound!
Belsh. Enough! the kindling rapture fires my brain,
And my heart dances to the flattering sounds,
I feel myself a god! Why not a god!
What were the deities our fathers worship'd?
What was great Nimrod our imperial founder?
What greater Belus, to whose pow'r divine
We raise to-night the banquet and the song
But youthful heroes, mortal, like myself,
Who by their daring earn'd divinity?
They were but men: nay some were less than men,
Though now rever'd as gods. What was Anubis,
Whom Egypt's sapient sons adore? A dog!
And shall not I, young, valiant, and a king,
Dare more? do more? exceed the boldest flights
Of my progenitors?—Fill me more wine,
To cherish and exalt the young idea. (*he drinks*)
Ne'er did Olympian Jupiter himself
Quaff such immortal draughts.
1*st cour.* What could that Canaan,
That heaven in hope, that nothing in possession,
That air-built bliss of the deluded Jews,
That promis'd land of milk and flowing honey,
What could that fancy'd Paradise bestow
To match these generous juices?
Belsh. Hold—enough!
Thou hast rous'd a thought. By Heav'n I will enjoy it:
A glorious thought! which will exalt to rapture
The pleasure of the banquet, and bestow
A yet untasted relish of delight.
1*st cour.* What means the king?
Belsh. The Jews! said'st thou the Jews!
1*st cour.* I spoke of that undone, that outcast people,
Those tributary creatures of thy pow'r,
The captives of thy will, whose very breath
Hangs on the sovereign pleasure of the king.
Belsh. When that abandoned race was hither brought,

* Daniel, chap. iii.
† See a very fine description of the temple of this idol.
——The tow'ring fane
Of Bel, Chaldean Jove, surpassing far
That Doric temple, which the Elean chiefs
Rais'd to their thunderer from the spoils of war,
Or that Ionic, where th' Ephesian bow'd
To Dian, queen of heaven. Eight towers arise,
Each above each, immeasurable height,
A monument at once of eastern pride,
And slavish superstition, &c.
Judah Restored, b. i.

Were not the choicest treasures of their temple,
(Devoted to their God, and held most precious)
Among the spoils which grac'd Nebassar's* triumphs,
And lodg'd in Babylon?
1*st cour.* O king! they were.
2*d cour.* The Jews, with superstitious awe, behold
These sacred symbols of their ancient faith:
Nor has captivity abated aught
The rev'rend love they bear these holy reliques.
Though we deride their law, and scorn their persons,
Yet never have we yet to human use
Devoted these rich vessels set apart
To sacred purposes.
Belsh. I joy to hear it!
Go—fetch them hither. They shall grace our banquet.
Does no one stir? Belshazzar disobey'd?
And yet you live? Whence comes this strange reluctance?
This new-born rev'rence for the helpless Jews?
This fear to injure those who can't revenge it?
Send to the sacred treasury in haste,
Let all be hither brought;—who answers dies.
[*They go out.*
The mantling wine a higher joy will yield,
Pour'd from the precious flaggons which adorn'd
Their far-fam'd temple, now in ashes laid.
Oh! 'twill exalt the pleasure into transport,
To gall those whining, praying Israelites!
I laugh to think what wild dismay will seize them
When they shall learn the use that has been made
Of all their holy trumpery!
[*The vessels are brought in.*
2*d cour.* It comes;
A goodly show! how bright with gold and gems!
Far fitter for a youthful monarch's board
Than the cold shrine of an unheeding God.
Belsh. Fill me that massy goblet to the brim.
Now, Abraham! let thy wretched race expect
The fable of their faith to be fulfill'd;
Their second temple and their promis'd king!
Now will they see the god they vainly serve
Is impotent to help; for had he pow'r
To hear and grant their pray'r, he would prevent
This profanation.
[*As the king is going to drink, thunder is heard: he starts from the throne, spies a hand, which writes on the wall these words,* MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. *He lets fall the goblet, and stands in an attitude of speechless horror. All start and seem terrified.*]
1*st cour.* (*after a long pause.* Oh, transcendant horror!
2*d cour.* What may this mean? The king is greatly mov'd!
3*d cour.* Nor is it strange—who unappall'd can view it?
Those sacred cups! I doubt we 've gone too far!
1*st cour.* Observe the fear-struck king! his starting eyes
Roll horribly. Thrice he essay'd to speak,
And thrice his tongue refus'd.
Belsh. (*in a low trembling voice.*) Ye mysti. words!
Thou semblance of an hand! illusive forms!
Ye wild fantastic images, what are ye?
Dread shadows, speak! Explain your dark in tent!
Ye will not answer me—Alas! I feel
I am a mortal now—My failing limbs
Refuse to bear me up. I am no god!
Gods do not tremble thus—Support me, hold me:
These loosen'd joints, these knees which smite each other,
Betray I'm but a man—a weak one too!
1*st cour.* In truth, 'tis passing strange, and full of horror!
Belsh. Send for the learn'd magicians, every sage
Who deals in wizard spells and magic charms.
[*Some go out.*
Ist court. How fares my lord the king?
Besh. Am I a king?
What pow'r have I? Ye lying slaves, I am not.
Oh, soul distracting sight! but is it real?
Perhaps 'tis fancy all, or the wild dream
Of mad distemperature, the fumes of wine!
I'll look on it no more!—So—now I'm well!
I am a king again, and know not fear.
And yet my eyes will seek that fatal spot,
And fondly dwell upon the sight that blast them!
Again, 'tis there! it is not fancy's work,
I see it still! 'tis written on the wall!
I see the writing, but the viewless writer,
Who! what is he! Oh, horror! horror! horror.
It cannot be the God of these poor Jews;
For what is He, that he can thus afflict?
2*d cour.* Let not my Lord the king be thus dismay'd.
3*d cour.* Let not a phantom, an illusive shade
Disturb the peace of him who rules the world.
Belsh. No more, ye wretched sycophants! no more!
The sweetest note which flatt'ry now can strike,
Harsh and discordant grates upon my soul.
Talk not of pow'r to one so full of fear,
So weak, so impotent! Look on that wall;
If thou wouldst soothe my soul explain the writing,
And thou shalt be my oracle, my God!
O tell me whence it came, and what it means,
And I'll believe I am again a king!
Friends! princes! ease my troubled breast, and say
What do the mystic characters portend?
1*st court.* 'Tis not in us, O king, to ease thy spirit;
We are not skill'd in those mysterious arts
Which wait the midnight studies of the sage:
But of the deep diviners thou shalt learn,
The wise astrologers, the sage magicians,
Who, of events unborn, take secret note,
And hold deep commerce with the unseen world.

Enter astologers, magicians, &c. &c.

Belsh. Approach, ye sages, 'tis the king commands.
[*They kneel.*
Astrologers. Hail, mighty king of Babylon!
Belsh. Nay, rise:

* The name of Nebuchadnezzar not being reducible to verse, I have adopted that of Nebassar, on the authority of the ingenious and learned Author of 'Judah Restored.'

I do not need your homage, but your help;
The world may worship, you must counsel me.
He who declares the secret of the king,
No common honours shall await his skill;
Our empire shall be tax'd for his reward,
And he himself shall name the gift he wishes.
A splendid scarlet robe shall grace his limbs,
His neck a princely chain of gold adorn:
Meet honours for such wisdom: He shall rule
The third in rank throughout our Babylon.

2d Astr. Such recompence becomes Belshazzar's bounty;
Let the king speak the secret of his soul;
Which heard, his humble creatures shall unfold.

Belsh. (points to the wall.) Be't so—look there—behold those characters!
Nay, do not start, for I will know their meaning!
Ha! answer; speak, or instant death awaits you!
What, dumb! all dumb! where is your boasted skill? [*They confer together.*
Keep them asunder—no confederacy——
No secret plots to make your tales agree,
Speak, slaves, and dare to let me know the worst! [*They kneel.*

1st Astr. O, let the king forgive his faithful servants!

2d Astr. O mitigate our threatened doom of death;
If we declare, with mingled grief and shame,
We cannot tell the secret of the king,
Nor what these mystic characters portend!

Belsh. Off with their heads! Ye shall not live an hour!
Curse on your shallow arts, your lying science!
'Tis thus you practice on the credulous world,
Who think you wise because themselves are weak!
But miscreants, ye shall die! the pow'r to punish
Is all that I have left me of a king.

1st cour. Great sire, suspend their punishment a while;
Behold Nitocris comes, thy royal mother!

Enter QUEEN.

Queen. O my misguided son!
Well may'st thou wonder to behold me here:
For I have ever shunn'd this scene of riot,
Where wild intemperance and dishonour'd mirth
Hold festival impure. Yet, O Belshazzar!
I could not hear the wonders which befel,
And leave thee to the workings of despair:
For, spite of all the anguish of my soul
At thy offences, I'm thy mother still!
Against the solemn purpose I had form'd
Never to mix in this unhallow'd crowd,
The wondrous story of the mystic writing,
Of strange and awful import, brings me here;
If hap'ly I may show some likely means
To fathom this dark mystery.

Bel. Speak, O queen!
My list'ning soul shall hang upon thy words,
And prompt obedience follow them!

Queen. Then hear me.
Among thy captive tribes which hither came
To grace Nebassar's triumph, there was brought
A youth nam'd Daniel, favour'd by high Heav'n
With pow'r to look into the secret page
Of dim Futurity's mysterious volume.
The spirit of the holy gods is in him:
No vision so obscure, so deeply hid,
No sentence so perplex'd but he can solve it:
He can unfold the dark decrees of fate,
Can trace each crooked labyrinth of thought,
Each winding maze of doubt, and make it clear
And palpable to sense. He twice explain'd
The monarch's mystic dreams. The holy seer
Saw, with prophetic spirit, what befel
The king long after. For his wond'rous skill
He was rewarded, honour'd, and caress'd,
And with the rulers of Chaldea rank'd:
Though now, alas! thrown by, his services
Forgotten or neglected.

Bel. Send with speed
A message to command the holy man
To meet us on the instant.

Nitocris. I already
Have sent to ask his presence at the palace,
And lo! in happy season see he comes.

Enter Daniel.

Bel. Welcome, thrice venerable sage! approach.
Art thou that Daniel whom my great forefather
Brought hither with the captive tribes of Judah!

Daniel. I am, O king!

Bel. Then, pardon, holy prophet;
Nor let a just resentment of thy wrongs,
And long neglected merit, shut thy heart
Against a king's request, a suppliant king!

Daniel. The God I worship teaches to forgive.

Bel. Then let thy words bring comfort to my soul.
I've heard the spirit of the gods is in thee;
That thou can'st look into the fates of men,
With prescience more than human!

Daniel. Hold, O king!
Wisdom is from above; 'tis God's own gift,
I of myself am nothing; but from Him
The little knowledge I possess, I hold:
To him be all the glory!

Bel. Then, O Daniel!
If thou indeed dost boast that wond'rous gift,
That faculty divine; look there, and tell me!
O say, what mean those mystic characters?
Remove this load of terror from my soul,
And honours, such as kings can give, await thee.
Thou shalt be great beyond thy soul's ambition,
And rich above thy wildest dream of wealth:
Clad in the scarlet robe our nobles wear,
And grac'd with princely ensigns thou shalt stand
Near our own throne, and third within our empire.

Daniel. O mighty king, thy gifts with thee remain
And let thy high rewards on others fall.
The princely ensign, nor the scarlet robe,
Nor yet to be the third within thy realm,
Can touch the soul of Daniel. Honour, fame,
All that the world calls great, thy crown itself,
Could never satisfy the vast ambition
Of an immortal spirit; I aspire
Beyond thy pow'r of giving; my high hopes
Reach also to a crown—but 'tis a crown
Unfading and eternal.

1st cour. Wond'rous man!

Our priests teach no such notions.
Daniel. Yet, O king!
Though all unmov'd by grandeur or by gift,
I will unfold the high decree of Heaven,
And straight declare the mystery.
Bel. Speak, O prophet!
Daniel. Prepare to hear what kings have seldom heard;
Prepare to hear what courtiers seldom tell,
Prepare to hear the Truth. The mighty God,
Who rules the sceptres and the hearts of kings,
Gave thy renown'd forefather* here to reign,
With such extent of empire, weight of pow'r,
And greatness of dominion, the wide earth
Trembled beneath the terror of his name,
And kingdoms stood or fell as he decreed.
Oh! dangerous pinnacle of pow'r supreme!
Who can stand safe upon its treach'rous top,
Behold the gazing prostrate world below,
Whom depth and distance into pigmies shrink,
And not grow giddy! Babylon's great king
Forgot he was a man, a helpless man,
Subject to pain, and sin, and death, like others!
But who shall fight against Omnipotence?
Or who hath harden'd his obdurate heart
Against the Majesty of Heav'n, and prosper'd?
The God he hath insulted was aveng'd;
From empire, from the joys of social life,
He drove him forth; extinguish'd reason's lamp;
Quench'd that bright spark of deity within;
Compell'd him with the forest brutes to roam
For scanty pasture; and the mountain dews
Fell, cold and wet, on his defenceless head,
Till he confess'd,—Let men, let monarchs hear!
Till he confess'd, PRIDE WAS NOT MADE FOR MAN.
Nicotris. O awful instance of divine displeasure!
Bel. Proceed! my soul is wrapt in fix'd attention!
Daniel. O king! thy grandsire not in vain had sinn'd,
If, from his error thou hadst learnt the truth.
The story of his fall thou oft has heard,
But has it taught thee wisdom? Thou like him,
Hast been elate with pow'r, and mad with pride,
Like him, thou hast defy'd the living God.
Nay, to bold thoughts hast added deeds more bold.
Thou hast outwrought the pattern he bequeath'd thee,
And quite outgone example; hast profan'd
With impious hand, the vessels of the temple:
Those vessels sanctify'd to holiest use,
Thou hast polluted with unhallow'd lips,
And made the instruments of foul debauch,
Thou hast ador'd the gods of wood and stone,
Vile, senseless deities, the work of hands:
But HE, THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,
In whom exists thy life, thy soul, thy breath,
On whom thy being hangs, thou hast deny'd.
1st cour. (*aside to the others.*) With what an holy boldness he reproves him!
2d cour. Such is the fearless confidence of virtue!
And such the righteous courage those maintain
Who plead the cause of truth. The smallest word
He utters had been death to half the court.

* Nebuchadnezzar.

Bel. Now let the mystic writing be explain'd,
Thrice venerable sage!
Daniel. O mighty king!
Hear then its awful import: *Heav'n has numbe'rd*
Thy days of royalty, and *soon will end them.*
Our God has weigh'd thee in the even balance
Of his own holy law, and *finds thee wanting:*
And last *thy kingdom shall be wrested from thee.*
And know, *the Mede and Persian shall possess it*
Bel. (*starts up.*) Prophet, when shall this be?
Daniel. In God's own time;
Here my commission ends; I may not utter
More than thou'st heard; but oh! remember king!
Thy days are number'd: hear, repent and live
Bel. Say, prophet, what can penitence avail
If Heaven's decrees immutably are fix'd,
Can pray'rs avert our fate?
Daniel. They change our hearts,
And thus dispose Omnipotence to mercy.
'Tis man that alters; God is still the same.
Conditional are all Heav'n's covenants:
And when th' uplifted thunder is withheld,
'Tis pray'r that deprecates th' impending bolt.
Good Hezekiah's* days were number'd too;
But penitence and faith were mighty pleas:
At Mercy's throne they never plead in vain.
[*He is going.*
Bel. Stay, prophet, and receive thy promis'd gift;
The scarlet robe and princely chain are thine
And let my herald publish through the land
That Daniel stands, in dignity and pow'r,
The third in Babylon. These just rewards
Thou well may'st claim, though sad thy prophecy!
Queen. Be not deceiv'd my son! nor let thy soul
Snatch an uncertain moment's treach'rous rest,
On the dread brink of that tremendous gulf
Which yawns beneath thee.
Daniel. O unhappy king,
Know what *must* happen once *may* happen soon.
Remember that 'tis terrible to meet
Great evils unprepar'd! and, O Belshazzar!
In the wild moment of dismay and death,
Remember thou wast warn'd! and, O remember,
Warnings despis'd are condemnations then.
[*Exeunt Daniel and Queen.*
Bel. 'Tis well—my soul shakes off its load of care:
'Tis only the obscure is terrible.
Imagination frames events unknown,
In wild fantastic shapes of hideous ruin,
And what it fears creates!—I know the worst;
And awful is that worst as fear could feign:
But distant are the ills I have to dread!
What is remote may be uncertain too!—
Ha! princes! hope breaks in!—This may not be.
1st cour. Perhaps this Daniel is in league with Persia;
And brib'd by Cyrus to report these horrors,
To weaken and impede the mighty plans
Of thy imperial mind.
Bel. 'Tis very like.
2d cour. Return we to the banquet.
Bel. Dare we venture?

* 2 Chron. chap. xxxiii. Isaiah, chap xxxviii.

3d. cour. Let not this dreaming seer disturb the king.
Against the pow'r of Cyrus and the Mede
Is Babylon secure. Her brazen gates
Mock all attempts to force them. Proud Euphrates,
A wat'ry bulwark, guards our ample city
From all assailants. And within the walls
Of this stupendous capltal are lodg'd
Such vast provisions, such exhaustless stores,
As a twice ten years siege could never waste.
Bel. (*embraces him.*) My better genius! Safe in such resources,
I mock the prophet.—Turn me to the banquet!
[*As they are going to resume their places at the banquet, a dreadful uproar is heard, tumultuous cries, and warlike sounds. All stand terrified. Enter soldiers with their swords drawn and wounded.*]
Soldier. Oh, helpless Babylon! Oh, wretched king!
Chaldea is no more, the Mede has conquer'd!
The victor Cyrus, like a mighty torrent
Comes rushing on, and marks his way with ruin!
Destruction is at hand; escape or perish.
Bel. Impossible! Villain and slave thou ly'st!
Euphrates and the brazen gates secure us.
While those remain, Belshazzar laughs at danger.
Soldier. Euphrates is diverted from its course;
The brazen gates are burst, the city 's taken;
Thyself a pris'ner, and thy empire lost.
Bel. Oh, prophet! I remember thee indeed!
[*He runs out. They follow in the utmost confusion.*]

Enter several Jews, Medes, and Babylonians.

1*st Jew.* He comes, he comes! the long predicted prince,
Cyrus, the destin'd instrument of Heaven,
To free our captive nation, and restore
Jehovah's temple. Carnage marks his way,
And Conquest sits upon his plume crown'd helm.
2*d Jew.* What noise is that?
1*st Jew.* Hark! 'tis Belshazzar's voice!
Bel. (*without.*) O soldier, spare my life, and aid my flight!
Such treasures shall reward the gentle deed
As Persia never saw. I 'll be thy slave;
I 'll yield my crown to Cyrus; I 'll adore
His gods and thine—I 'll kneel and kiss thy feet,
And worship thee.—It is not much I ask—
I 'll live in bondage, beggary and pain,
So thou but let me live.
Soldier. Die, tyrant, die!
Bel. O Daniel! Daniel! Daniel!

Enter Soldier.

Soldier. Belshazzar 's dead!
The wretched king breath'd out his furious soul
In that tremendous groan.
1*st Jew.* Belshazzar's dead!
Then, Judah, art thou free! The tyrant's fallen!
Jerusalem, Jerusalem is free!

PART III.

Enter Daniel *and Jews.*

Dan. Bel boweth down,* and haughty Nebo stoops!
The idols fall; the god and worshipper
Together fall! together they bow down!
Each other, or themselves they cannot save.
O, Babylon, where is thy refuge now?
Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, meant to save,
Pervert thee; and thy blessing is thy bane!
Where are thy brutish deities, Chaldea?
Where are thy gods of gold?—Oh, Lord of life!
Thou very God! so fall thy foes before thee!
1*st Jew.* So fell beneath the terrors of Thy name
The idol Chemosh, Moab's empty trust;
So Ammonitish Moloch sunk before Thee;
So fell Philistine Dagon: so shall fall,
To time's remotest period, all thy foes,
Triumphant Lord of Hosts!
Daniel. How chang'd our fate!
Not for myself, O Judah! but for thee
I shed these tears of joy. For I no more
Must view the cedars which adorn the brow
Of Syrian Lebanon; no more shall see
Thy pleasant stream, O Jordan! nor the flocks
Which whiten all the mountains of Judea;
No more these eyes delighted shall review
Or Carmel's heights, or Sharon's flow'ry vales.
I must remain in Babylon! So Heav'n,
To whose awards I bow me, has decreed.
I ne'er shall see thee, Salem! I am old;
And few and toilsome are my days to come.
But we shall meet in those celestial climes,
Compar'd with which created glories sink;
Where sinners shall have pow'r to harm no more,
And martyr'd Virtue rests her weary head.
Though ere my day of promis'd grace shall come,
I shall be tried by perils strange and new;
Nor shall I taste of death, so have I learn'd,
Till I have seen the captive tribes restor'd.
1*st Jew.* And shall we view, once more, thy hallow'd towers,
Imperial Salem?
Dan. Yes, my youthful friends!
You shall behold the second temple rise,†
With grateful ecstacy; but we, your sires,
Now bent with hoary age; we, whose charm'd eyes
Beheld the matchless glories of the first,
Should weep, rememb'ring that we once had seen
That model of perfection!
2*d Jew.* Never more
Shall such a wond'rous structure grace the earth!
Dan. Well have you borne affliction, men of Judah!
Well have sustain'd your portion of distress:
And, unrepining, drank the bitter dregs
Of adverse fortune! Happier days await you.
O guard against the perils of success!
Prosperity dissolves the yielding soul,
And the bright sun of shining fortune melts
The firmest virtue down. Beware my friends,
Be greatly cautious of prosperity!
Defend your sliding hearts; and, trembling, think
How those, who buffetted Affliction's waves

* Isaiah, chap. xlvi. † Ezra, chap. i.

With vig'rous virtue, sunk in Pleasure's calm.
He,* who of special grace had been allow'd
To rear the hallow'd fane to Israel's God,
By wealth corrupted, and by ease debauch'd,
Forsook the God to whom he rais'd the fane;
And, sunk in sensual sloth, consum'd his days
In vile idolatrous rites,—Nor think, my sons,
That virtue in sequester'd *solitude*
Is always found. Within the inmost soul
The hidden tempter lurks; nor less betrays
In the still seeming safety of retreat,
Than where the world her snares entangling spreads,
More visible to sense. Guard every thought:
Who thinks himself secure is half undone;
For Sin, unwatch'd, may reach the sanctuary:
'Tis not the place preserves us. Righteous Lot
Stem'd the strong current of Corruption's tide,
E'en in polluted Sodom; safe he liv'd,
While circumspective Virtue's watchful eye
Was anxiously awake: but in the shade,
Far from the obvious perils which alarm
With palpable temptation, secret sin
Ensnar'd his soul; he trusted in himself;
Security betray'd him, and he fell.

2d. Jew. Thy prudent counsels in our hearts shall live,
As if a pen of adamant had grav'd them.

1st Jew. The dawn approaches; let us part, my friend,
Secure of peace, since tyranny is fallen.

Dan. So perish all thine enemies, O Lord;
So mighty God, shall perish all who seek
Corrupted pleasures in the turbid waves
Of life's polluted stream, and madly quit
The living fountain of perennial grace!

* Solomon.

DANIEL:

A SACRED DRAMA.

The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.
Proverbs of Solomon.

On peut des plus grands rois surprendre la justice.
Incapable de tromper,
Ils out peine a s'echapper
Des pieges de l'artifice.
Un cœur noble ne peut soupconner en autrui
La bassesse et la malice
Qu'il ne sent point en lui.
Esther. Tragedie de Racine.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

DARIUS, king of Media and Babylon.
PHARNACES, SORANUS, } courtiers, enemies to Daniel.
ARASPES, a young Median lord, friend and convert to Daniel.
DANIEL.

Scene—The city of Babylon.

The subject is taken from the sixth chapter of the prophet Daniel.

PART I.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

Phar. YES!—I have noted with a jealous eye,
The pow'r of this new fav'rite! Daniel reigns,
And not Darius! Daniel guides the springs
Which move this mighty empire. High he sits,
Supreme in favour with both prince and people.
Where is the spirit of our Median lords,
Tamely to crouch and bend the supple knee
To this new god! By Mithras, 'tis too much!
Shall great Arbaces' race to Daniel bow!
A foreigner, a captive, and a Jew?
Something must be devis'd, and that right soon,
To shake his credit.

Sor. Rather hope to shake
The mountain pine, whose twisting fibres clasp
The earth, deep rooted! Rather hope to shake
The Scythian Taurus from his central base!
No—Daniel sits too absolute in pow'r,
Too firm in favour, for the keenest shaft
Of nicely-aiming jealousy to reach him.

Phar. Rather he sits too high to sit securely,
Yes! he has reach'd that pinnacle of pow'r
Which closely touches on depression's verge.
Hast thou then liv'd in courts? hast thou grown gray
Beneath the mask a subtle statesman wears,
To hide his secret soul, and dost not know
That of all fickle Fortune's transient gifts,
Favour is most deceitful? 'Tis a beam,
Which darts uncertain brightness for a moment!
The faint precarious, fickly shine of pow'r;
Giv'n without merit, by caprice withdrawn.
No trifle is so small as what obtains,
Save that which loses favour, 'tis a breath,
Which hangs upon a smile! A look, a word,

A frown, the air-built tower of fortune shakes,
And down the unsubstantial fabric falls!
Darius, just and clement as he is,
If I mistake not, may be wrought upon
By prudent wiles, by Flatt'ry's pleasant cup,
Administer'd with caution.
Sor. But the means?
For Daniel's life (a foe must grant him that)
Is so replete with goodness, so adorn'd
With every virtue so exactly squar'd
By wisdom's nicest rules, 'twill be most hard
To charge him with the shadow of offence.
Pure is his fame as Scythia's mountain snows,
When not a breath pollutes them! O Pharnaces,
I've scann'd the actions of his daily life
With all th' industrious malice of a foe;
And nothing meets mine eye but deeds of honour!
In office pure; for equitable acts
Renown'd: in justic and impartial truth,
The Grecian Themis is not more severe.
Phar. By yon bright sun, thou blazon'st forth his praise
As if with rapture thou did'st read the page
Where these fair deeds are written!
Sor. Thou mistak'st
I only meant to show what cause we have
To hate and fear him. I but meant to paint
His popular virtues and eclipsing merit
Then for devotion and religious zeal,
Who so renown'd as Daniel? Of his law
Observant in th' extreme. Thrice ev'ry day
With prostrate reverence, he adores his God:
With superstitious awe his face he turns
Tow'rds his belov'd Jerusalem, as if
Some local, partial God, might there be found
To hear his supplication. No affair
Of state, no business so importunate,
No pleasure so alluring, no employ
Of such high import, to seduce his zeal
From this observance due!
Phar. There, there he falls!
Enough my friend! His piety destroys him.
There, at the very footstool of his God,
Where he implores protection, there I'll crush him.
Sor. What means Pharnaces?
Phar. Ask not what I mean,
The new idea floating in my brain
Has yet receiv'd no form. 'Tis yet too soon
To give it body, circumstance, or breath.
The seeds of mighty deeds are lab'ring here,
And struggling for a birth! 'Tis near the hour
The king is wont to summon us to council:
Ere that, this big conception of my mind
I'll shape to form and being. Thou, meanwhile,
Convene our chosen friends: for I shall need
The aid of all your councils, and the weight
of grave authority.
Sor. Who shall be trusted?
Phar. With our immediate motive none, except
A chosen band of friends, who most repine
At Daniel's exaltation.—But the scheme
I meditate must be disclos'd to all
Who bear high office; all our Median rulers,
Princes and captains, presidents and lords;
All must assemble. 'Tis a common cause:
All but the young Araspes: he inclines
To Daniel and his God. He sits attent,
With ravish'd ears, to listen to his lore.
With rev'rence names Jerusalem, and reads
The volume of the law. No more he bows
To hail the golden Ruler of the Day,
But looks for some great Prophet, greater far,
So they pretend, than Mithras! From him therefore,
Conceal whate'er of injury is devis'd
'Gainst Daniel. Be it to thy care to-day
To keep him from the council.
Sor. 'Tis well thought.
'Tis now about the hour of Daniel's prayer.
Araspes too is with him! and to day
They will not sit in council. Haste we then
Designs of high importance, once conceiv'd
Should be accomplish'd! Genius which discerns,
And courage which achieves, despise the aid
Of ling'ring Circumspection! The keen spirit
Seizes the prompt occasion, makes the thought
Start into instant action, and at once
Plans and performs, resolves and executes!

PART II.

Scene—Daniel's house.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Araspes. Proceed, proceed, thrice venerable sage,
Enlighten my dark mind with this new ray,
This dawning of salvation! Tell me more
Of this expected King! this Comforter!
This Promise of the nations! this great Hope
Of anxious Israel! This unborn Prophet!
This wonderful, this mighty Counsellor!
This everlasting Lord! this Prince of Peace!
This balm of Gilead, which shall heal the wounds
Of universal nature! this Messiah!
Redeemer, Saviour, Sufferer, Victim, God!
Dan. Enough to animate our faith, we know,
But not enough to soothe the curious pride
Of vain philosophy! Enough to cheer
Our path we see, the rest is hid in clouds;
And heaven's own shadows rest upon the view!
Aras. Go on blest sage! I could for ever hear,
Untir'd, thy admonition! tell me how
I shall obtain the favour of that God
I but begin to know, but fain would serve.
Dan. By deep humility, by faith unfeign'd,
By holy deeds, best proof of living faith!
O Faith,* thou wonder-working principle,
Eternal substance of our present hope,
Thou evidence of things invisible!
What cannot man sustain, sustain'd by thee!
The time would fail, and the bright star of day
Would quench his beams in ocean, and resign
His empire to the silver queen of night;
And she again descend the steep of heaven,
If I should tell what wonders Faith achiev'd
By Gideon, Barak, and the holy seer,
Elkanah's son; the pious Gileadite,
Ill-fated Jephthah! He of Zorah too†
In strength unequall'd; and the shepherd-king
Who vanquish'd Gath's fell giant! Need I tell
Of holy prophets, who by conqu'ring Faith,

* Hebrews, chap. xi. † Samson.

Wrought deeds incredible to mortal sense;
Vanquish'd contending kingdoms, quell'd the rage
Of furious pestilence, extinguish'd fire!
Victorious Faith! others by thee endur'd
Exile, disgrace, captivity, and death!
Some uncomplaining, bore (nor be it deem'd
The meanest exercise of well-try'd Faith)
The cruel mocking, and the bitter taunt,
Foul obloquy, and undeserv'd reproach:
Despising shame, that death to human pride!

Aras. How shall this faith be sought?

Dan. By earnest prayer,
Solicit first the wisdom from above:
Wisdom, whose fruits are purity and peace!
Wisdom! that bright intelligence, which sat
Supreme, when with his golden compasses*
Th' Eternal plann'd the fabric of the world,
Produc'd his fair idea into light,
And said, that all was good! Wisdom, blest beam!
The brightness of the everlasting light!
The spotless mirror of the power of God!
The reflex image of th' all perfect Mind!
A stream translucent, flowing from the source
Of glory infinite! a cloudless light!
Defilement cannot touch nor sin pollute
Her unstain'd purity! Not Ophir's gold,
Nor Ethiopia's gems can match her price!
The ruby of the mine is pale before her!
And, like the oil Elisha's bounty bless'd,
She is a treasure which doth grow by use,
And multiply by spending! She contains,
Within herself the sum of excellence.
If riches are desir'd, wisdom is wealth!
If prudence, where shall keen Invention find
Artificer more cunning? If renown,
In her right hand it comes! If piety,
Are not her labours virtues? If the lore
Which sage Experience teaches, lo! she scans
Antiquity's dark truths; the past she knows,
Anticipates the future; not by arts
Forbidden, of Chaldean sorcerer,
But from the piercing ken of deep Foreknowledge.
From her sure science of the human heart
She weighs effects with causes, ends with means;
Resolving all into the sovereign will.
For earthly blessings moderate be thy pray'r
And qualified; for light, for strength, for grace,
Unbounded thy petition.

Aras. Now, O prophet!
Explain the secret doubts which rack my mind,
And my weak sense confound. Give me some line
To sound the depths of Providence! O say,
Why the ungodly prosper? why their root
Shoots deep, and their thick branches flourish fair,
Like the green bay tree? why the righteous man,
Like tender plants to shiv'ring winds expos'd,
Is strip'd and torn, in naked Virtue bare,
And nipp'd by cruel Sorrow's biting blast?
Explain, O Daniel, these mysterious ways
To my faint apprehension! For as yet
I've much to learn. Fair Truth's immortal sun
Is sometimes hid in clouds; not that her light
Is in itself defective; but obscur'd
By my weak prejudice. imperfect Faith,
And all the thousand causes which obstruct
The growth of goodness.

Dan. Follow me, Araspes.
Within thou shalt peruse the sacred page,
The book of life eternal! *that* will show thee
The end of the ungodly; thou wilt own
How short their longest period; wilt perceive
How black a night succeeds their brightest day!
Thy purged eye will see God is not slack,
As men count slackness, to fulfil his word.
Weigh well this book; and may the Spirit of grace,
Who stamp'd the seal of truth on the bless'd page,
Descend into thy soul, remove thy doubts,
Clear the perplex'd, and solve the intricate,
Till faith be lost in sight, and hope in joy!

* See Paradise Lost, book vii. line 225. Proverbs, chap. viii. ver. 27.

PART III.

DARIUS *on his throne*—PHARNACES, SORANUS *princes, presidents, and courtiers.*

Pharn. Hail! king Darius, live for ever!

Darius. Welcome!
Welcome my princes, presidents, and friends!
Now tell me, has your wisdom aught devis'd
To aid the commonwealth? In our new empire,
Subdu'd Chaldea, is there aught remains
Your prudence can suggest to serve the state,
To benefit the subject, to redress
And raise the injur'd, to assist the oppress'd,
And humble the oppressor? If you know,
Speak freely, princes! Why am I a king,
Except to poise the awful scale of justice
With even hand; to minister to want;
To bless the nations with a lib'ral rule,
Vicegerant of th' eternal Oromasdes?

Phar. So absolute thy wisdom, mighty king,
All counsel were superfluous.

Darius. Hold, Pharnaces!
No adulation; 'tis the death of virtue;
Who flatters is of all mankind the lowest,
Save he who courts flattery. Kings are men,
As feeble and as frail as those they rule,
And born like them, to die. The Lydian monarch,
Unhappy Crœsus, lately sat aloft,
Almost above mortality; now see him!
Sunk to the vile condition of a slave,
He swells the train of Cyrus! I, like him,
To misery am obnoxious. See this throne;
This royal throne the great Nebassar fill'd;
Yet hence his pride expell'd him! Yonder wall,
The dread terrific writing to the eyes
Of proud Belshazzar show'd; sad monuments
Of Heav'n's tremendous vengeance! and shall I,
Unwarn'd by such examples, cherish pride?
Yet to their dire calamities I owe
The brightest gem that glistens in my crown,
Sage Daniel. If my speech have aught of worth,
Or if my life with aught of good be grac'd,
To him alone I owe it.

Soranus (*aside to Pharnaces.*) Now Pharnaces,
Will he run o'er and dwell upon his praise,

As if we ne'er had heard it; nay, will swell
The nauseous catalogue with many a virtue
His own fond fancy coins.
Phar. O, great Darius!
Let thine unworthy servant's words find grace,
And meet acceptance in his royal ear,
Who subjugates the east! Let not the king
With anger hear my pray'r.
Darius. Pharnaces, speak;
I know thou lov'st me; I but meant to chide
Thy flatt'ry, not reprove thee for thy zeal.
Speak boldly, friends, as man should speak to man.
Perish the barb'rous maxims of the east,
Which basely would enslave the free-born mind,
And plunder man of the best gift of Heav'n,
His liberty of soul.
Phar. Darius! hear me.
Thy princes, and the captains of thy bands,
Thy presidents, the nobles who bear rule
O'er provinces, and I, thine humble creature.
Less than the least in merit, but in love,
In zeal, and duty, equal with the first,
We have devis'd a measure to confirm
Thy infant empire, to establish firmly
Thy pow'r and new dominion, and secure
Thy growing greatness past the pow'r of change.
Darius. I am prepar'd to hear thee. Speak Pharnaces.
Phar. The wretched Babylonians long have groan'd
Beneath the rule of princes, weak or rash.
The rod of pow'r was sway'd alike amiss,
By feeble Merodach and fierce Belshazzar.
One let the slacken'd reins too loosely float
Upon the people's neck, and lost his pow'r
By nerveless relaxation. He, who follow'd,
Held with a tyrant's hand the cruel curb,
And check'd the groaning nation till it bled;
On different rocks they met one common ruin.
Their edicts were irresolute, their laws
Were feebly plann'd, their counsels ill advis'd;
Now so relax'd, and now so overstrain'd,
That the tir'd people, wearied with the weight
They long have borne, will soon disdain controul,
Tread on all rule, and spurn the hand that guides 'em.
Darius. But say what remedy?
Phar. That too, O king!
Thy servants have provided. Hitherto
They bare the yoke submissive. But to fix
Thy pow'r and their obedience, to reduce
All hearts to thy dominion, yet avoid
Those deeds of cruelty thy nature starts at,
Thou should'st begin by some imperial act
Of absolute dominion, yet unstain'd
By aught of barbarous. For know, O king!
Wholesome severity, if wisely fram'd
With sober discipline, procures more reverence
Than all the lenient counsels and weak measures
Of frail irresolution.
Darius. Now proceed
To thy request.
Phar. Not I, but all request it.
Be thy imperial edict issued straight,
And let a firm decree be this day pass'd,
Irrevocable as our Median laws.
Ordain, that for the space of thirty days
No subject in thy realm shall aught request
Of God or man, except of thee, O king!
Darius. Wherefore this strange decree?
Phar. 'Twill fix the crown
With lasting safety on thy royal brow,
And, by a bloodless means, preserve th' obedience
Of this new empire. Think how much 'twill raise
Thy high renown! 'Twill make thy name rever'd,
And popular beyond example. What!
To be as Heav'n, dispensing good and ill
For thirty days! With thine own ears to hear
Thy people's wants, with thine own lib'ral hands
To bless thy suppliant subjects! O, Darius!
Thoul't seem as bounteous as a giving God!
And reign in ev'ry heart in Babylon
As well as Media! What a glorious state,
To be the sovereign arbiter of good!
The first efficient cause of happiness!
To scatter mercies with a plenteous hand,
And to be blest thyself in blessing others!
Darius. Is this the gen'ral wish?
[*Princes and courtiers kneel.*
Chief president. Of one, of all.
Behold thy princes, presidents and lords,
Thy counsellors, and captains! See, O king!
[*Presents the edict.*
Behold the instrument our zeal has drawn;
The edict is prepar'd. We only wait
The confirmation of thy gracious word,
And thy imperial signet.
Darius. Say, Pharnaces,
What penalty awaits the man who dares
Transgress our mandate?
Phar. Instant death, O king!
This statute says; 'Should any subject dare
Petition, for the space of thirty days,
Of God or man, except of thee, O king!
He shall be thrown into yon dreadful den
Of hungry lions!'
Darius. Hold! Methinks a deed
Of such importance should be wisely weigh'd.
Phar. We have resolv'd it, mighty king! with care,
With closest scrutiny. On us devolve
Whatever blame occurs!
Darius. I'm satisfy'd.
Then to your wisdom I commit me, princes.
Behold the royal signet: see 'tis done.
Phar. (*aside*) There Daniel fell! That signet seal'd his doom.
Darius (*after a pause.*) Let me reflect—Sure I have been too rash!
Why such intemp'rate haste? But you are wise;
And would not counsel this severe decree
But for the wisest purpose. Yet, methinks,
I might have weigh'd, and in my mind resolv'd
This statute, ere, the royal signet stamp'd,
It had been past repeal. Sage Daniel, too!
My counsellor, my guide, my well-try'd friend,
He should have been consulted; he, whose wisdom
I still have found oracular!
Phar. Mighty king!
'Tis as it should be. The decree is past
Irrevocable, as the steadfast law

Of Mede and Persian, which can never change.
Those who observe it live, as is most meet,
High in thy grace;—who violate it, die.

PART IV.

Scene—DANIEL'S *house*.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Araspes. Oh, holy Daniel! prophet, father, friend,
I come the wretched messenger of ill!
Thy foes complot thy death. For what can mean
This new-made law, extorted from the king
Almost by force? What can it mean, O Daniel,
But to involve thee in the toils they spread
To snare thy precious life?
Daniel. How! was the king
Consenting to this edict?
Araspes. They surpris'd
His easy nature; took him when his heart
Was soften'd by their blandishments. They wore
The mask of public virtue to deceive him.
Beneath the specious name of general good,
They wrought him to their purposes: no time
Allow'd him to deliberate. One short hour,
Another moment, and his soul had gain'd
Her natural tone of virtue.
Daniel. That great Power
Who suffers evil only to produce
Some unseen good, permits that this should be:
And He permitting, I, well pleas'd resign.
Retire, my friend: this is my second hour
Of daily pray'r. Anon we'll meet again.
Here in the open face of that bright sun
Thy fathers worshipp'd, will I offer up,
As is my rule, petitions to my God,
For thee, for me, for Solyma, for all!
Araspes. Oh, stay! what mean'st thou! sure thou hast not heard
The edict of the king? I thought but now,
Thou knew'st its purport. It expressly says,
That no petition henceforth shall be made,
For thirty days save only to the king;
Nor pray'r nor intercession shall be heard
Of any God or man, but of Darius.
Dan. And think'st thou then my reverence for the king,
Good as he is, shall tempt me to renounce
My sworn allegiance to the King of kings?
Hast thou commanded legions? strove in battle,
Defy'd the face of danger, mock'd at death
In all its frightful forms, and tremblest now?
Come learn of me; I'll teach thee to be bold,
Though sword I never drew! Fear not, Araspes,
The feeble vengeance of a mortal man,
Whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein
Is he to be accounted of? but fear
The awaken'd vengeance of the living Lord
He who can plunge the everlasting soul
In infinite perdition!
Aras. Then, O Daniel!
If thou persist to disobey the edict,
Retire and hide thee from the prying eyes
Of busy malice!
Dan. He who is asham'd
To vindicate the honour of his God,
Of him the living Lord shall be asham'd
When he shall judge the tribes!
Aras. Yet, O remember,
Oft have I heard thee say, the secret heart
Is fair devotion's temple; there the saint,
E'en on that living altar, lights the flame
Of purest sacrifice, which burns unseen,
Not unaccepted.—I remember too,
When Syrian Naaman* by Elisha's hand,
Was cleans'd from foul pollution, and his mind
Enlighten'd by the miracle, confess'd
The Almighty God of Jacob: that he deem'd it
No flagrant violation of his faith
To bend at Rimmon's shrine; nor did the seer
Forbid the rite external.
Dan. Know, Araspes,
Heav'n designs to suit our trials to our strength,
A recent convert, feeble in his faith:
Naaman, perhaps, had sunk beneath the weight
Of so severe a duty. Gracious Heav'n
Forbears to bruise the reed, or quench the flax
When feeble and expiring. But shall I,
Shall Daniel, shall the servant of the Lord,
A vet'ran in his cause—long train'd to know
And do his will—long exercis'd in wo,
Bred in captivity and born to suffer;
Shall I, from known, from certain duty shrink
To shun a threaten'd danger? O, Araspes!
Shall I, advanc'd in age, in zeal decline?
Grow careless as I reach my journey's end
And slacken in my pace, the goal in view?
Perish discretion, when it interferes
With duty! Perish the false policy
Of human wit, which would commute our safety
With God's eternal honour! Shall His law
Be set at nought, that I may live at ease?
How would the Heathen triumph, should I fall
Through coward fear! How would God's enemies
Insultingly blaspheme!
Aras. Yet think a moment.
Dan. No!—
Where evil may be *done*, 'tis right to ponder;
Where only *suffer'd* know the shortest pause
Is much too long. Had great Darius paus'd,
This ill had been prevented. But for me,
Araspes, to deliberate is to sin.
Aras. Think of thy pow'r, thy favour with Darius:
Think of thy life's importance to the tribes,
Scarce yet return'd in safety. Live! O, live!
To serve the cause of God!
Dan. God will himself
Sustain his righteous cause. He knows to raise
Fit instruments to serve him. Know, Araspes,
He does not need our crimes to help his cause,
Nor does his equitable law permit
A sinful act, from the prepost'rous plea
That good may follow it. For me, my friend,
The spacious earth holds not a bait to tempt
What would it profit me, if I should gain
Imperial Ecbatan, th' extended land
Of fruitful Media, nay, the world's wide empire,
If mine eternal soul must be the price?
Farewell, my friend! time presses. I have stol'n
Some moments from my duty to confirm

* Kings. chap v.

And strengthen thy young faith! Let us fulfil
What Heav'n enjoins, and leave to Heav'n th' event!

PART V.

Scene—The Palace.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

Phar. 'Tis done—success has crown'd our scheme, Soranus;
And Daniel falls into the deep-laid toils
Our prudence spread.
Sor. That he should fall so soon,
Astonishes e'en me! what! not a day!
What! not a single moment to defer
His rash devotions? Madly thus to rush
On certain peril quite transcends belief!
When happen'd it, Pharnaces?
Phar. On the instant:
Scarce is the deed accomplish'd. As he made
His ostentatious pray'r, e'en in the face
Of the bright God of day, all Babylon
Beheld the insult offer'd to Darius.
For, as in bold defiance of the law,
His windows were not clos'd. Our chosen bands,
Whom we had plac'd to note him, straight rush'd in,
And seiz'd him in the warmth of his blind zeal,
Ere half his pray'r was finish'd. Young Araspes,
With all the wild extravagance of grief,
Prays, weeps, and threatens. Daniel silent stands,
With patient resignation, and prepares
To follow them.—But see, the king approaches!
Sor. How 's this? deep sorrow sits upon his brow,
And stern resentment fires his angry eye!

Enter DARIUS.

Dar. O, deep-laid stratagem! O, artful wile!
To take me unprepar'd, to wound my heart,
E'en where it feels most tenderly, in friendship!
To stab my fame! to hold me up a mark
To future ages, for the perjur'd prince
Who slew the friend he lov'd! O Daniel, Daniel,
Who now shall trust Darius? Not a slave
In my wide empire, from the Indian main
To the cold Caspian, but is more at ease
Than I, his monarch! Yes! I 've done a deed
Will blot my honour with eternal stain!
Pharnaces! O, thou hoary sycophant!
Thou wily politician! thou hast snar'd
Thy unsuspecting master!
Phar. Great Darius,
Let not resentment blind thy royal eyes.
In what am I to blame? who could suspect
This obstinate resistance to the law?
Who could foresee that Daniel would perforce
Oppose the king's decree?
Dar. Thou, thou foresaw'st it!
Thou know'st his righteous soul would ne'er endure
So long an interval of pray'r. But I,
Deluded king! 'twas I should have foreseen
His steadfast piety. I should have thought
Your earnest warmth had some more secret source,
Something that touch'd you nearer than your love,
Your well-feign'd zeal for me.—I should have known
When selfish politicians, hackney'd long
In fraud and artifice, affect a glow
Of patriot fervour, or fond loyalty,
Which scorns all show of interest, that's the moment
To watch their crooked projects.—Well thou know'st
How dear I held him; how I priz'd his truth
Did I not choose him from a subject world,
Unbless'd by fortune, and by birth ungrac'd,
A captive and a Jew? Did I not love him?
Was he not rich in independent worth?
And great in native goodness? That undid him!
There, there he fell! If he had been less great,
He had been safe. Thou could'st not bear his brightness;
The lustre of his virtues quite obscur'd,
And dimm'd thy fainter merit. Rash old man!
Go, and devise some means to set me free
From this dread load of guilt! Go set at work
Thy plotting genius to redeem the life
Of venerable Daniel!
Phar. 'Tis too late.
He has offended 'gainst the new decree;
Has dar'd to make petition to his God,
Although the dreadful sentence of the act
Full well he knew. And by th' established law
Of Media, by that irrevocable,
Which he has dar'd to violate, he dies!
Dar. Impiety! presumption! monstrous law!
Irrevocable? Is there aught on earth
Deserves that name? Th' eternal laws alone
Of Oromasdes are unchangeable!
All human projects are so faintly fram'd,
So feebly plann'd, so liable to change,
So mix'd with error in their very form,
That mutable and mortal are the same.
But where is Daniel! Wherefore comes he not
To load me with reproaches? to upbraid me
With all the wrongs my barbarous haste has done him!
Where is he?
Phar. He prepares to meet his fate.
This hour he dies, for the act so decrees.
Dar. Suspend the bloody sentence. Bring him hither.
Or rather let me seek him and implore
His dying pardon, and his parting pray'r.

PART VI.

Scene—Daniel's house.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Ara. STILL let me follow thee; still let me hear
The voice of Wisdom, ere the silver cord
By death's cold hand be loosen'd.
Dan. Now I'm ready!
No grief, no woman's weakness, good Araspes;
Thou should'st rejoice my pilgrimage is o'er,
And the blest heaven of repose in view.
Ara. And must I loose thee, Daniel? must thou die?

Dan. And what is death, my friend, that I should fear it?
To die! why 'tis to triumph; 'tis to join
The great assembly of the good and just;
Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets, saints!
Oh! 'tis to join the band of holy men,
Made perfect by their sufferings! 'Tis to meet
My great progenitors! 'Tis to behold
Th' illustrious patriarchs; they with whom the Lord
Deign'd hold familiar converse. 'Tis to see
Bless'd Noah and his children, once a world!
'Tis to behold, oh, rapture to conceive!
Those we have known, and lov'd, and lost below!
Bold Azariah, and the band of brothers,
Who sought, in bloom of youth, the scorching flames!
Nor shall we see heroic men alone,
Champions who fought the fight of faith on earth;
But heavenly conquerors, angelic hosts,
Michael and his bright legions, who subdu'd
The foes of truth! To join their blest employ
Of love and praise! to the high melodies
Of choirs celestial to attune my voice,
Accordant to the golden harps of saints!
To join in blest hosannahs to their king!
Whose face to see, whose glory to behold,
Alone were heaven, though saint or seraph none
Should meet our sight, and only God were there!
This is to die! Who would not die for this?
Who would not die, that he might live for ever?

DARIUS, DANIEL, ARASPES.

Dar. Where is he? where is Daniel?—Let me see him!
Let me embrace that venerable form,
Which I have doom'd to glut the greedy maw
Of furious lions!
Dan. King Darius, hail!
Dar. O, injur'd Daniel, can I see thee thus!
Thus uncomplaining! can I bear to hear
That when the ruffian ministers of death
Stopp'd thy unfinish'd pray'r, thy pious lips
Had just invok'd a blessing on Darius,
On him who sought thy life? Thy murd'rers drop
Tears of strange pity. Look not on me thus
With mild benignity! Oh! I could bear
The voice of keen reproach, or the strong flash
Of fierce resentment; but I cannot stand
That touching silence, nor that patient eye
Of meek respect.
Dan. Thou art my master still.
Dar. I am thy murderer! I have sign'd thy death!
Dan. I know thy bent of soul is honourable:
Thou hast been gracious still! Were it not so,
I would have met the appointment of high Heaven
With humble acquiescence; but to know
Thy will concurr'd not with thy servant's fate,
Adds joy to resignation.
Dar. Here I swear
By him who sits enthron'd in yon bright sun,
Thy blood shall be aton'd! On these thy foes,
Thou shalt have ample vengeance.
Dan. Hold, O king!
Vengeance is mine, th' eternal Lord hath said;
Myself will recompense with even hand,
The sinner for the sin. The wrath of man
Works not the righteousness of God!
Dar. I had hop'd
We should have trod this busy stage together
A little longer, then have sunk to rest
In honourable age! Who now shall guide
My shatter'd bark in safety? who shall now
Direct me? O, unhappy state of kings!
'Tis well the robe of majesty is gay,
Or who would put it on? A crown! what is it?
It is to bear the miseries of a people!
To hear their murmurs, feel their discontents,
And sink beneath a load of splendid care!
To have your best success ascrib'd to Fortune,
And Fortune's failures all ascrib'd to you!
It is to sit upon a joyless height,
To every blast of changing fate expos'd!
Too high for hope! too great for happiness!
For friendship too much fear'd! To all the joys
Of social freedom, and th' endearing charm
Of lib'ral interchange of soul unknown!
Fate meant me an exception to the rest,
And though a monarch, bless'd me with a friend;
And I—have murder'd him!
Dan. My hour approaches
Hate not my mem'ry, king: protect Araspes:
Encourage Cyrus in the holy work
Of building ruin'd Solyma. Farewell!
Dar. With most religious strictness I 'll fulfil
Thy last request. Araspes shall be next
My throne and heart. Farewell!
[*They embrace.*
Hear, future kings!
Ye unborn rulers of the nation, hear!
Learn from my crime, from my misfortune learn,
Never to trust to weak or wicked hands,
That delegated pow'r which Oromasdes
Invests in monarchs for the public good.

PART VII.

Scene—The court of the palace.—The sun rising

DARIUS, ARASPES.

Dar. Oh, good Araspes! what a night of horror!
To me the dawning day brings no return
Of cheerfulness or peace! No balmy sleep
Has seal'd these eyes, no nourishment has past
These loathing lips, since Daniel's fate was sign'd!
Hear what my fruitless penitence resolves—
That thirty days my rashness had decreed
The edict's force should last, I will devote
To mourning and repentance, fasting, pray'r
And all due rites of grief. For thirty days
No pleasant sound of dulcimer or harp,
Sackbut or flute, or psaltery, shall charm
My ear, now dead to ev'ry note of joy!
Aras. My grief can know no period!
Dar. See that den!
There Daniel met the furious lion's rage!
There were the patient martyr's mangled limbs
Torn piece-meal! Never hide thy tears, Araspes;
'Tis virtuous sorrow, unalloy'd, like mine,
By guilt and fell remorse! Let us approach:

Who knows but that dread Pow'r to whom he pray'd
So often and so fervently, has heard him!
[*He goes to the mouth of the den.*
O Daniel, servant of the living God!
He whom thou hast serv'd so long, and lov'd so well,
From the devouring lions' famish'd jaws,
Can he deliver thee?
Dan. (*from the bottom of the den.*) He can—he has!
Dar. Methought I heard him speak!
Aras. O, wond'rous force
Of strong imagination! were thy voice
Loud as the trumpet's blast, it could not wake him
From that eternal sleep!
Dan. (*in the den.*) Hail, king Darius!
The God I serve has shut the lions' mouths,
To vindicate my innocence.
Dar. He speaks!
He lives!
Aras. 'Tis no illusion: 'tis the sound
Of his known voice.
Dar. Where are my servants? Haste,
Fly, swift as lightning, free him from the den;
Release him, bring him hither! break the seal
Which keeps him from me! See, Araspes! look!
See the charm'd lions!—Mark their mild demeanor:
Araspes, mark!—they have no pow'r to hurt him!
See how they hang their heads and smooth their fierceness
At his mild aspect!
Aras. Who that sees this sight,
Who that in after times shall hear this told,
Can doubt if Daniel's God be God indeed?
Dar. None, none, Araspes!
Aras. Ah, he comes, he comes!

Enter DANIEL, *followed by multitudes.*

Dan. Hail, great Darius!
Dar. Dost thou live indeed!
And live unhurt?
Aras. O, miracle of joy!
Dar. I scarce can trust my eyes! How didst thou 'scape?
Dan. That bright and glorious Being, who vouchsaf'd
Presence divine, when the three martyr'd brothers
Essay'd the caldron's flame, supported me!
E'en in the furious lions' dreadful den,
The prisoner of hope, even there I turn'd
To the strong hold, the bulwark of my strength,
Ready to hear, and mighty to redeem!
Dar. (*to Aras.*) Where is Pharnaces? Take the hoary traitor!
Take too Soranus, and the chief abettors
Of this dire edict: let not one escape.
The punishment their deep-laid hate devis'd
For holy Daniel, on their heads shall fall
With tenfold vengeance. To the lion's den
I doom his vile accusers! All their wives,
Their children too, shall share one common fate!
Take care that none escape—Go, good Araspes.
[*Araspes goes out.*
Dan. Not so, Darius!
O spare the guiltless; spare the guilty too!
Where sin is not, to punish were unjust;
And where sin is, O king, there fell remorse
Supplies the place of punishment!
Dar. No more!
My word is past! Not one request, save this,
Shalt thou e'er make in vain. Approach, my friends;
Araspes has already spread the tale,
And see what crowds advance!
Peo. Long live Darius!
Long live great Daniel too, the people's friend!
Dar. Draw near, my subjects. See this holy man! [band
Death had no pow'r to harm him. Yon fell
Of famish'd lions, soften'd at his sight,
Forgot their nature, and grew tame before him.
The mighty God protects his servants thus!
The righteous thus he rescues from the snare,
While Fraud's artificer himself shall fall
In the deep gulf his wily arts devise
To snare the innocent!
A courtier. To the same den
Araspes bears Pharnaces and his friends:
Fallen is their insolence! With prayers and tears
And all the meanness of high-crested pride,
When adverse fortune frowns, they beg for life.
Araspes will not hear. 'You heard not me,'
He cries, 'When I for Daniel's life implor'd;
His God protected him! see now if your's
Will listen to your cries!'
Dar. Now hear,
People and nations, languages and realms,
O'er whom I rule! Peace be within your walls!
That I may banish from the minds of men
The rash decree gone out; hear me resolve
To counteract its force by one more just.
In ev'ry kingdom of my wide-stretch'd realm
From fair Chaldea to the extremest bound
Of northern Media, be my edict sent,
And this my statute known. My heralds haste,
And spread my royal mandate through the land,
That all my subjects bow the ready knee
To Daniel's GOD—for HE alone is LORD.
Let all adore, and tremble at HIS name,
Who sits in glory unapproachable
Above the heavens—above the heaven of heavens!
HIS pow'r is everlasting; and HIS throne,
Founded in equity and truth, shall last
Beyond the bounded reign of time and space
Through wide eternity! With HIS right arm
HE saves, and who opposes? HE defends,
And who shall injure? In the perilous den
HE rescu'd Daniel from the lions' mouths;
HIS common deeds are wonders; all HIS works
One ever-during chain of miracles!

Enter ARASPES.

Aras. All hail, O king! Darius, live for ever!
May all thy foes be as Pharnaces is!
Dar. Araspes, speak!
Aras. O, let me spare the tale!—
'Tis full of horror! Dreadful was the sight!
The hungry lions, greedy for their prey,
Devour'd the wretched princes ere they reach'd
The bottom of the den.
Dar. Now, now confess
'Twas some superior hand restrain'd their rage,
And tam'd their furious appetites.
People. 'Tis true.

The God of Daniel is a mighty God!
He saves and He destroys.
Aras. O, friend! O, Daniel!
No wav'ring doubts can ever more disturb
My settled faith.
Dan. To God be all the glory!

REFLECTIONS OF KING HEZEKIAH

IN HIS SICKNESS.

'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die.'—*Isaiah*, xxxviii.

What, and no more?—Is this my soul, said I,
My whole of being! Must I surely die?
Be robb'd at once of health, of strength, of time,
Of youth's fair promise, and of pleasure's prime?
Shall I no more behold the face of morn,
The cheerful daylight, and the spring's return?
Must I the festive pow'r the banquet leave,
For the dull chambers of the darksome grave!
Have I consider'd what it is to die?
In native dust with kindred worms to lie;
To sleep in cheerless, cold neglect! to rot!
My body loath'd, my very name forgot!
Not one of all those parasites, who bend
The supple knee, their monarch to attend!
What, not one friend! No, not an hireling slave
Shall hail great Hezekiah in the grave.
Where 's he who falsely claim'd the name of *great*?
Whose eye was terror, and whose frown was fate?
Who aw'd an hundred nations from the throne?
See where he lies, dumb, friendless, and alone!
Which grain of dust proclaims the noble birth?
Which is the royal particle of earth?
Where are the marks, the princely ensigns where?
Which is the slave, and which great David's heir?
Alas! the beggar's ashes are not known
From his who lately sat on Israel's throne!
How stands my great account? My soul survey
The debt Eternal Justice bids thee pay!
Should I frail Memory's records strive to blot,
Will Heaven's tremendous reck'ning be forgot?
Can I, alas! the awful volume tear?
Or raze one page of the dread register?
'*Prepare thy house, thy heart in order set;*
Prepare the Judge of Heaven and earth to meet.'
So spake the warning prophet.—Awful words!
Which fearfully my troubled soul record.
Am I prepar'd? and *can* I meet my doom,
Nor shudder at the dreaded wrath to come?
Is all in order set, my house, my heart?
Does not besetting sin still claim a part?
No cherish'd error, loth to quit its place,
Obstruct within my soul the work of grace?
Did I each day for this great day prepare,
By righteous deeds, by sin-subduing pray'r?
Did I each night, each day's offence repent,
And each unholy thought and word lament?
Still have these ready hands th' afflicted fed,
And minister'd to Want her daily bread?
The cause I knew not, did I well explore?
Friend, advocate, and parent of the poor?
Did I to gratify some sudden gust
Of thoughtless appetite, some impious lust
Of pleasure or of pow'r, such sums employ
As would have flush'd pale penury with joy?
Did I in groves forbidden altars raise,
Or molten gods adore, or idols praise
Did my firm faith to Heaven still point the way?
Did charity to man my actions sway?
Did meek-ey'd Patience all my steps attend?
Did gen'rous Candour mark me for her friend?
Did I unjustly seek to build my name
On the pil'd ruins of another's fame?
Did I abhor, as hell, the insidious lie,
The low deceit, the unmanly calumny?
Did my fix'd soul the impious wit detest?
Did my firm virtue scorn th' unhallow'd jest?
The sneer profane, and the good ridicule
Of shallow Infidelity's dull school?
Did I still live as born one day to die,
And view th eternal world with constant eye?
If so I liv'd, if so I kept thy word,
In mercy view, in mercy hear me, Lord!
For oh! how strict soe'er I kept thy law,
From mercy only all my hopes I draw!
My holiest deeds *indulgence* will require;
The best but to *forgiveness* will aspire;
If thou my purest services regard,
'Twill be with pardon only, not reward!
How imperfection 's stamp'd on all below!
How sin intrudes in all we say or do!
How late in all the insolence of health,
I charm'd th' Assyrian* by my boast of wealth!
How fondly with elab'rate pomp display'd
My glitt'ring treasures! with what triumph laid
My gold and gems before his dazzled eyes,
And found a rich reward in his surprise?
O, mean of soul! can wealth elate the heart,
Which of the man himself is not a part!
O, poverty of pride! O, foul disgrace!
Disgusted Reason, blushing hides her face
Mortal and proud! strange contradicting terms!
Pride for death's victim, for the prey of worms!
Of all the wonders which th' eventful life
Of man presents! of all the mental strife
Of warring passions; all the raging fires
Of furious appetites and mad desires,
Not one so strange appears as this alone,
That man is proud of what is not his own!
How short is human life! the very breath!
Which frames my words, accelerates my death.
Of this short life how large a portion 's fled!
To what is gone I am already dead;
As dead to all my years and minutes past,
As I, to what remains, shall be at last.
Can I past miseries so far forget,
To view my vanish'd years with fond regret?

* This is an anachronism. Hezekiah did not show his treasures to the Assyrian till after his recovery from his sickness.

Can I again my worn-out fancy cheat?
Indulge fresh hope? solicit new deceit?
Of all the vanities weak man admires,
Which greatness gives, youth hopes, or pride desires,
Of these, my soul, which hast thou not enjoy'd?
With each, with all, thy sated pow'rs are cloy'd.
What can I then expect from length of days?
More wealth, more wisdom, pleasure, health, or praise?
More pleasure! hope not that, deluded king!
For when did age increase of pleasure bring?
Is health, of years prolong'd the common boast?
And dear-earn'd Fame, is it not cheaply lost?
More wisdom! that indeed were happiness;
That were a wish a king might well confess;
But when did Wisdom covet length of days?
Or seek its bliss in pleasures, wealth, or praise?
No:—Wisdom views with an indifferent eye
All finite joys, all blessings born to die.
The soul on earth is an immortal guest,
Compell'd to starve at an unreal feast;
A spark, which upward tends by nature's force;
A stream diverted from its parent source;
A drop, dissever'd from the boundless sea;
A moment parted from eternity:
A pilgrim panting for the rest to come;
An exile, anxious for his native home.
Why should I ask my forfeit life to save?
Is heaven unjust, which dooms me to the grave?
Was I with hope of endless days deceiv'd?
Or of lov'd life am I alone bereav'd?
Let all the great, the rich, the learn'd, the wise,
Let all the shades of Judah's monarchs rise,
And say, if genius, learning, empire, wealth,
Youth, beauty, virtue, strength, renown or health,
Has once revers'd th' immutable decree
On Adam pass'd of man's mortality?
What have these eyes ne'er seen the felon worm
The damask cheek devour, the finish'd form?
On the pale rose of blasted beauty feed,
And riot on the lip so lately red?
Where are our fathers? Where th' illustrious line
Of holy prophets, and of seers divine?
Live they for ever? Do they shun the grave?
Or when did Wisdom its professor save?
When did the brave escape? When did the breath
Of Eloquence charm the dull ear of Death?
When did the cunning argument avail,
The polish'd period, or the varnish'd tale;
The eye of lightning, or the soul of fire,
Which thronging thousands crowded to admire?
E'en while we praise the verse the poet dies;
And silent as his lyre great David lies.
Thou, blest Isaiah! who at God's command,
Now speak'st repentance to a guilty land,
Must die! as wise and good thou hadst not been,
As Nebat's son, who taught the land to sin!
And shall I then be spar'd? O monstrous pride!
Shall I escape when Solomon has died?
If all the worth of all the saints were vain—
Peace, peace, my troubled soul, nor dare complain!
Lord, I submit. Complete thy gracious will!
For if thou slay me, I will trust Thee still.
O be my will so swallow'd up in thine,
That I may do THY will in doing *mine*.

THE SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS:

A PASTORAL DRAMA FOR YOUNG LADIES.

——To rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe th' enliv'ning spirit, and to fix
The gen'rous purpose of the female breast.—*Thomson.*

TO MRS. GWATKIN.

DEAR MADAM,—As the following poem turns chiefly on the danger of delay or error in the important article of education, I know not to whom I can, with more propriety, dedicate it than to you, as the subject it inculcates has been one of the principal objects of your attention in your own family.

Let not the name of dedication alarm you: I am not going to offend you by making your eulogium. Panegyric is only necessary to suspicious characters: Virtue will not accept it; Delicacy will not offer it.

The friendship with which you have honoured me from my childhood, will, I flatter myself, induce you to pardon me for venturing to lay before you this public testimony of my esteem, and to assure you how much I am, dear madam,

Your obedient, and obliged humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE object of the following poem, which was written in very early youth, was an earnest wish to furnish a substitute for the improper custom, which then prevailed, of allowing plays, and

those not always of the purest kind, to be acted by young ladies in boarding schools. And it has afforded a serious satisfaction to the author to learn that this little poem, and the preceding sacred dramas, have very frequently been adopted to supply the place of those more dangerous amusements. If it may be still happily instrumental in promoting a regard to Religion and Virtue in the minds of young persons, and afford them an innocent, and perhaps not altogether unuseful, amusement, in the exercise of recitation, the end for which it was originally composed, and the author's utmost wish in its republication, will be fully answered.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY A YOUNG LADY.

In these grave scenes, and unembellish'd strains,
Where neither sly intrigue nor passion reigns;
How dare we hope an audience will approve
A drama void of wit and free from love?
Where no soft Juliet sighs, and weeps, and starts,
No fierce Roxana takes by storm your hearts;
No comic ridicule, no tragic swagger,
Not one elopement, not one bowl or dagger!
No husband wrong'd, who trusted and believ'd,
No father cheated, and no friend deceiv'd;
No libertine in glowing strains describ'd,
No lying chambermaid that rake had brib'd:
Nor give we, to reward the rover's life,
The ample portion and the beauteous wife;
Behold, to raise the manners of the age,
The frequent moral of the scenic page!
And shall we then transplant these noxious scenes
To private life? to misses in their teens?
The pompous tone, the masculine attire,
The stilts, the buskin, the dramatic fire,
Corrupt the softness of the gentler kind,
And taint the sweetness of the youthful mind.
Ungovern'd passions, jealousy and rage,
But ill become our sex, still less our age;
Whether we learn *too well* what we describe,
Or *fail* the poet's meaning to imbibe,
In either case your blame we justly raise,
In either lose, or ought to lose, your praise.
How dull, if tamely flows th' impassion'd strain!
If well—how bad to be the thing we feign;
To fix the mimic scene upon the heart,
And keep the passion when we quit the part!
Such are the perils the dramatic muse,
In youthful bosoms, threatens to infuse!
Our timid author labours to impart
A less pernicious lesson to the heart;
What though no charm of melody divine,
Smooth her round period, or adorn her line;
Though her unpolish'd page in vain aspires
To emulate the graces she admires:
Though destitute of skill, her sole pretence
But aims at simple truth and common sense;
Yet shall her honest unassuming page
Tell that its author, in a modish age,
Preferr'd plain virtue to the boast of art,
Nor fix'd one dangerous maxim on the heart.
O if, to crown the efforts, she could find
They rooted but one error from one mind:
If in the bosom of ingenuous youth
They stamp'd one useful thought, one lasting truth;
'Twould be a fairer tribute to her name,
Than loud applauses, or an empty fame.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PASTORELLA, LAURINDA, four young ladies of distinction, in search of Happiness.

URANIA, an ancient shepherdess.

SYLVIA, ELIZA, her daughters.

FLORELLA, a young shepherdess.

Scene—A Grove.

EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PASTORELLA, LAURINDA.

Cle. WELCOME, ye humble vales, ye flow'ry shades,
Ye crystal fountains, and ye silent glades!
From the gay misery of the thoughtless great,
The walks of folly, the disease of state;
From scenes where daring Guilt triumphant reigns,
Its dark suspicions and its hoard of pains;
Where Pleasure never comes without alloy,
And Art but thinly paints fallacious joy;
Where Laughter loads the day, Excess the night,
And dull Satiety succeeds Delight;
Where midnight Vices their fell orgies keep,
And guilty revels scare the phantom Sleep;
Where Dissipation wears the name of Bliss;
From these we fly in search of Happiness.
Euph. Not the tir'd pilgrim all his dangers past,
When he descries the long sought shrine at last,
E'er felt a joy so pure as this fair field,
These peaceful shades, and smiling vallies yield!
For, sure, these oaks, which old as Time appear,
Proclaim Urania's lonely dwelling near.
Past. How the description with the scene agrees!
Here lowly thickets, there aspiring trees;
The hazel copse excluding noon-day's beam,
The tufted arbor, the pellucid stream;
The blooming sweet-briar, and the hawthorn shade,

The springing cowslips, and the daisy'd mead,
The wild luxuriance of the full blown fields,
Which Spring prepares, and laughing Summer yields.
Euph. Here simple Nature strikes th' enraptur'd eye
With charms, which wealth and art but ill supply;
The genuine graces, which *without* we find,
Display the beauty of the owner's *mind.*
Lau. These embow'ring shades conceal the cell,
Where sage Urania and her daughters dwell:
Florella too, if right we've heard the tale,
With them resides—the lily of the vale.
Cle. But soft! what gentle female form appears,
Which smiles of more than mortal beauty wears?
Is it the guardian Genius of the grove?
Or some fair angel of the choirs above?

Enter FLORELLA, *who speaks.*

Whom do I see? ye beauteous virgins say
What chance conducts your steps this lonely way?
Do you pursue some favourite lambkin stray'd?
Or do yon alders court you to their shade?
Declare, fair strangers! if aright I deem,
No rustic nymphs of vulgar rank you seem.
Cle. No cooling shades allure our eager sight,
Nor lambkins lost, our searching steps invite.
Flo. Or is it, hap'ly, yonder branching vine,
Whose tendrils round our low roof cottage twine;
Whose spreading height, with purple clusters crown'd,
Attracts the gaze of ev'ry nymph around?
Have these lone regions aught that charms beside?
Yours are my shades, my flow'rs, my fleecy pride.
Euph. Florella! our united thanks receive,
Sole proof of gratitude we have to give:
And since you deign to ask, O courteous fair!
The motive of our unremitting care:
Know then, kind maid, our joint researches tend
To find that sovereign good of life, a friend;
From whom the wholesome counsel we may gain,
How our young hearts may happiness obtain.
By Fancy's mimic pencil oft portray'd,
Still have we woo'd the visionary maid:
The lovely phantom mocks our eager eyes;
And still we chase, and still we miss the prize!
Cle. Long have we search'd throughout this bounteous isle,
With constant ardour and with ceaseless toil;
The various ways of various life we've try'd;
But still the bliss we seek has been deny'd.
We've sought in vain through ev'ry diff'rent state;
The murm'ring poor, the discontented great.
If Peace and Joy in palaces reside,
Or in obscurer haunts delight to hide;
If Happiness with worldly pleasures dwell,
Or shrouds her graces in the hermit's cell:
If Wit, if Science, teach the road to bliss,
Or torpid Dulness find the joys *they* miss;
To learn this truth, we've bid a long adieu
To all the shadows blinded men pursue.
—We seek Urania; whose sagacious mind
May lead our steps this latent good to find:
Her worth we emulate; her virtues fire
Our ardent hearts to *be* what we admire:
For though with care she shuns the public eye
Yet worth like *hers*, unknown can never lie.
Lau. On such a fair and faultless mode form'd,
By Prudence guided, and by Virtue warm'd,
Perhaps Florella can direct our youth,
And point our footsteps to the paths of Truth.
Flor. Ill would it suit my unexperienc'd age,
In such important questions to engage.
Young as I am, unskilful to discern,
Nor fit to teach, who yet have much to learn,
But would you with maturer years advise,
And reap the counsel of the truly wise,
The dame in whom such worth and wisdom meet,
Dwells in the covert of yon green retreat:
All that the world calls great she once possess'd,
With wealth, with rank, her prosp'rous youth was bless'd.
In adverse fortune, now serene and gay,
'Who gave,' she said, 'had right to take away.'
Two lovely daughters bless her growing years,
And by their virtues, well repay her cares.
With them, beneath her shelt'ring wing I live,
And share the bounties she has still to give;
For Heav'n, who in its dispensations join'd
A narrow fortune to a noble mind,
Has bless'd the sage Urania with a heart
Which Wisdom's noblest treasures can impart,
In Duty's active round each day is past,
As if she thought each day might prove her last:
Her labours for devotion best prepare,
And meek Devotion smooths the brow of care.
Past. Then lead, Florella, to that humble shed,
Where Peace resides from court and cities fled!

SONG.

I.

O Happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care,
O hear our fond request!
Vouchsafe, reluctant Nymph to tell
On what sweet spot thou lov'st to dwell,
And make us truly blest.

II.

Amidst the walks of public life,
The toils of wealth, ambition's strife,
We long have sought in vain;
The crowded city's noisy din,
And all the busy haunts of men,
Afford but care and pain.

III.

Pleas'd with the soft, the soothing pow'r
Of calm Reflection's silent hour,
Sequester'd dost thou dwell!
Where Care and Tumult ne'er intrude,
Dost thou reside with Solitude,
Thy humble vot'ries tell!

IV.

O Happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care!
Let us not sue in vain!

O deign to hear our fond request,
Come take possession of our breast,
And there for ever reign.
[*They retire.*

Scene—The Grove.

URANIA, SYLVIA, ELIZA.

SYLVIA (*singing.*)

I.

Sweet Sotitude, thou placid queen
Of modest air and brow serene!
'Tis thou inspir'st the sage's themes;
The poet's visionary dreams.

II.

Parent of Virtue, nurse of Thought!
By thee were saints and patriarchs taught;
Wisdom from thee her treasure drew,
And in thy lap fair Science grew!

III.

Whate'er exalts, refines, and charms,
Invites to thought, to virtue warms;
Whate'er is perfect, fair, and good,
We owe to thee, sweet Solitude!

IV.

In these blest shades, O still maintain
Thy peaceful, unmolested reign!
Let no disorder'd thoughts intrude
On thy repose, sweet Solitude!

V.

With thee the charm of life shall last,
Although its rosy bloom be past;
Shall still endure when Time shall spread
His silver blossoms o'er my head.

VI.

No more with this vain world perplex'd,
Thou shalt prepare me for the next;
The springs of life shall gently cease,
And angels point the way to peace.

Ura. Ye tender objects of maternal love
Ye dearest joys my widow'd heart can prove;
Come taste the glories of the new-born day,
And grateful homage to its Author pay!
O! ever may this animating sight
Convey instruction while it sheds delight!
Does not that sun, whose cheering beams impart
Joy's glad emotions to the pure in heart;
Does not that vivid pow'r teach ev'ry mind
To be as warm, benevolent, and kind;
To burn with unremitted ardour still,
Like him to execute their Maker's will?
Then let us, Pow'r Supreme! thy will adore,
Invoke thy mercies, and proclaim thy pow'r.
Shalt thou these benefits in vain bestow?
Shall we forget the fountain whence they flow?
Teach us through these to lift our hearts to Thee,
And in the gift the bounteous giver see.
To view Thee as thou art, all good and wise,
Nor let thy blessings hide Thee from our eyes.
From all obstructions clear our mental sight;
Pour on our souls thy beatific light!
Teach us thy wond'rous goodness to revere,
With love to worship, and with rev'rence fear!
In the mild works of thy benignant hand,
As in the thunder of thy dread command.
In common objects we neglect thy pow'r,
While wonders shine in every plant and flow'r.
—Tell me, my first, my last, my darling care,
If you this morn have rais'd your hearts i pray'r?
Say did you rise from the sweet bed of rest,
Your God unprais'd, his holy name unblest?
Syl. Our hearts with gratitude and reverenc fraught,
By those pure precepts you have ever taught;
By your example more than precept strong
Of pray'r and praise have tun'd their matin song.
Eliz. With ever new delight, we now attend
The counsels of our fond maternal friend.

Enter FLORELLA, *with* EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PASTORELLA, LAURINDA.

Flo. (*aside to the ladies*) See how the goodly dame, with pious art,
Makes each event a lesson to the heart!
Observe the duteous list'ners how they stand:
Improvement and delight go hand in hand.
Ura. But where's Florella?
Flor. Here's the happy she,
Whom Heav'n most favour'd when it gave her thee.
Ura. But who are these, in whose attractive mien,
So sweetly blended, ev'ry grace is seen
Speak, my Florella! say the cause why here
These beauteous damsels on our plains appear?
Flor. Invited hither by Urania's fame,
To seek her friendship, to these shades they came.
Straying alone at morning's earliest dawn,
I met them wand'ring on the distant lawn.
Their courteous manners soon engag'd my love:
I've brought them here your sage advice to prove.
Ura. Tell me, ye gentle nymphs! the reason tell,
Which brings such guests to grace my lowly cell?
My pow'r of serving, though indeed but small,
Such as it is, you may command it all.
Cle. Your counsel, your advice, is all we ask,
And for Urania that 's no irksome task.
'Tis Happiness we seek: O deign to tell
Where the coy fugitive delights to dwell!
Ura. Ah, rather say where you have sought this guest,
This lovely inmate of the virtuous breast?
Declare the various methods you've essay'd
To court and win the bright celestial maid.
But first, though harsh the task, each beauteous fair
Her ruling passion must with truth declare,
From evil habits own'd, from faults confess'd,
Alone we trace the secrets of the breast.
Euph. Bred in the regal splendours of a court,
Where pleasures, dress'd in every shape, resort,
I try'd the pow'r of pomp and costly glare,
Nor e'er found room for thought, or time for pray'r:
In diff'rent follies ev'ry hour I spent;
I shunn'd Reflection, yet I sought Content.
My hours were shar'd betwixt the park and play,
And music serv'd to waste the tedious day;
Yet softest airs no more with joy I heard,
If any sweeter warbler was preferr'd;
The dance succeeded, and, succeeding, tir'd,
If some more graceful dancer were admir'd.
No sounds but flatt'ry ever sooth'd my ear:

Ungentle truths I knew not how to bear.
The anxious day induc'd the sleepless night,
And my vex'd spirit never knew delight:
Coy Pleasure mock'd me with delusive charms,
Still the thin shadow fled my clasping arms:
Or if some actual joy I seem'd to taste,
Another's pleasure laid my blessings waste:
One truth I prov'd, that lurking Envy hides
In ev'ry heart where Vanity presides,
A fairer face would rob my soul of rest,
And fix a scorpion in my wounded breast.
Or, if my elegance of form prevail'd
And haply her inferior graces fail'd:
Yet still some cause of wretchedness I found,
Some barbed shaft my shatter'd peace to wound.
Perhaps her gay attire exceeded mine—
When she was finer, how could I be fine?
Syl. Pardon my interruption, beauteous maid!
Can truth have prompted what you just have said?
What! can the poor pre-eminence of dress
Ease the pain'd heart, or give it happiness?
Or can you think your robes, though rich and fine,
Possess intrinsic value more than mine?
Ura. So close our nature is to vice allied,
Our very comforts are the source of pride;
And dress, so much corruption reigns within,
Is both the consequence and cause of sin.
Cle. Of Happiness unfound I too complain,
Sought in a diff'rent path, but sought in vain!
I sigh'd for fame, I languish'd for renown,
I would be flatter'd, prais'd, admir'd and known,
On daring wing my mountain spirit soar'd,
And Science through her boundless fields explor'd:
I scorn'd the salique laws of pedant schools,
Which chain our genius down by tasteless rules,
I long'd to burst these female bonds, which held
My sex in awe, by vanity impell'd:
To boast each various faculty of mind,
Thy graces, Pope! with Johnson's learning join'd:
Like Swift with strongly pointed ridicule,
To brand the villain, and abash the fool:
To judge with taste, with spirit to compose,
Now mount in epic, now descend to prose;
To join, like Burke, the beauteous and sublime,
Or build, with Milton's art, 'the lofty rhyme:'
Through Fancy's fields I rang'd; I strove to hit
Melmoth's chaste style, and Prior's easy wit:
Thy classic graces, Mason, to display,
And court the Muse of Elegy with Gray:
I rav'd of Shakspeare's flame and Dryden's rage,
And ev'ry charm of Otway's melting page.
I talk'd by rote the jargon of the schools,
Of critic laws, and Aristotle's rules;
Of passion, sentiment, and style, and grace,
And unities of action, time, and place.
The daily duties of my life forgot,
To study fiction, incident, and plot:
Howe'er the conduct of my life might err,
Still my dramatic plans were regular.
Ura. Who aims at ev'ry science, soon will find
The field how vast, how limited the mind!
Cle. Abstruser studies soon my fancy caught,
The poet in th' astronomer forgot:
The schoolmen's systems now my mind employ'd, [Void
Their crystal Spheres, their Atoms and their
Newton and Halley all my soul inspir'd,
And numbers less than calculations fir'd;
Descartes and Euclid, shar'd my varying breast,
And plans and problems all my soul possess'd.
Less pleas'd to sing inspiring Phœbus' ray
Than mark the flaming comet's devious way.
The pale moon dancing on the silver stream,
And the mild lustre of her trembling beam,
No more could charm my philosophic pride,
Which sought her influence on the flowing tide.
No more ideal beauties fir'd my thought,
Which only facts and demonstrations sought.
Let common eyes, I said, with transport view
The earth's bright verdure, or the heav'n's soft blue,
False is the pleasure, the delight is vain,
Colours exist but in the vulgar brain.
I now with Locke trod metaphysic soil,
Now chas'd coy Nature through the tracts of Boyle;
To win the wreath of Fame, by Science twin'd,
More than the love of science fir'd my mind.
I seized on Learning's superficial part,
And title page and index got by heart;
Some learn'd authority I still would bring
To grace my talk and prove—the plainest thing
This the chief transport I from science drew,
That all might know how much Cleora knew.
Not love, but wonder, I aspir'd to raise,
And miss'd affection, while I grasp'd at praise.
Past. To me, no joys could pomp or fame impart,
Far softer thoughts possess'd my virgin heart.
No prudent parent form'd my ductile youth,
Nor led my footsteps in the paths of truth.
Left to myself to cultivate my mind,
Pernicious novels their soft entrance find;
Their pois'nous influence led my mind astray;
I sigh'd for something, what, I could not say.
I fancy'd virtues which were never seen,
And dy'd for heroes who have never been:
I sicken'd with disgust at sober sense,
And loath'd the pleasures worth and truth dispense;
I scorn'd the manners of the world I saw;
My guide was fiction, and romance my law.
Distemper'd thoughts my wand'ring fancy fill,
Each wind a zephyr, and each brook a rill;
I found adventures in each common tale,
And talk'd and sigh'd to ev'ry passing gale;
Convers'd with echoes, woods, and shades, and bow'rs,
Cascades and grottos, fields and streams and flow'rs.
Retirement, more than crowds, had learn'd to please;
For treach'rous Leisure feeds the soft disease.
There, plastic Fancy ever moulds at will
Th' obedient image with a dang'rous skill;
The charming fiction with alluring art,
Awakes the passions, and infects the heart.
A fancy'd heroine, an ideal wife;
I loath'd the offices of real life.
These all were dull and tame, I long'd to prove
The gen'rous ardours of unequal love;
Some marvel still my wayward heart must strike,

Or prince, or peasant, each had charms alike:
Whate'er inverted nature, custom, law,
With joy I courted, and with transport saw.
In the dull walk of Virtue's quiet round,
No aliment my fever'd fancy found;
Each duty to perform observant still
But those which God and Nature bade me fill.
Eliza (*To Urania.*) O save me from the errors of deceit,
And all the dangers wealth and beauty meet.
Past. Reason perverted, Fancy on her throne,
My soul to all my sex's softness prone;
I neither spoke nor look'd as mortal ought;
To sense abandon'd, and by Folly taught:
A victim to Imagination's sway,
Which stole my health, and rest, and peace away;
Professions, void of meaning, I receiv'd,
And still I found them false—and still believ'd:
Imagin'd all who courted me, approv'd;
Who prais'd, esteem'd me; and who flatter'd, lov'd.
Fondly I hop'd (now vain those hopes appear)
Each man was faithful, and each maid sincere.
Still Disappointment mock'd the ling'ring day;
Still new-born wishes led my soul astray.
When in the rolling year no joy I find,
I trust the next, the next will sure be kind.
The next fallacious as the last appears,
And sends me on to still remoter years.
They come, they promise—but forget to give:
I live not, but I still intend to live.
At length, deceiv'd in all my schemes of bliss.
I join'd these three in search of Happiness.
Eliza. Is this the world of which we want a sight?
Are these the beings who are call'd polite?
Sylvia. If so, oh gracious Heav'n, hear Sylvia's prayer:
Preserve me still in humble virtue here!
Far from such baneful pleasures may I live,
And keep, O keep me, from the taint they give!
Lau. No love of fame my torpid bosom warms,
No Fancy soothes me, and no pleasure charms!
Yet still remote from happiness I stray,
No guiding star illumes my trackless way,
My mind, nor wit misleads nor passion goads,
But the dire rust of indolence corrodes;
This eating canker, with malignant stealth,
Destroys the vital pow'rs of moral health.
Till now, I've slept on Life's tumultuous tide,
No principle of action for my guide.
From ignorance my chief misfortunes flow;
I never wish'd to learn, or car'd to know.
With ev'ry folly slow-pac'd Time beguil'd:
In size a woman, but in soul a child.
In slothful ease my moments crept away,
And busy trifles fill'd the tedious day;
I liv'd extempore, as Fancy fir'd,
As chance directed, or caprice inspir'd:
Too indolent to think, too weak to choose,
Too soft to blame, too gentle to refuse;
My character was stamp'd from those around:
The figures they, my mind the simple ground.
Fashion, with monstrous forms, the canvass stain'd,
Till nothing of my genuine self remain'd;
My pliant soul from chance receiv'd its bent,
And neither good perform'd, nor evil meant.
From right to wrong, from vice to virtue thrown,
No character possessing of its own.
To shun fatigue I made my only law;
Yet ev'ry night my wasted spirits saw.
No plan e'er mark'd the duties of the day,
Which stole in tasteless apathy away:
No energy inform'd my languid mind
No joy the idle e'er must hope to find.
Weak indecision all my actions sway'd;
The day was lost before the choice was made.
Though more to folly than to guilt inclin'd,
A drear vacuity possess'd my mind;
Too old with infant sports to be amus'd,
Unfit for converse, and to books unus'd,
The wise avoided me, they could not hear
My senseless prattle with a patient ear.
I sought retreat, but found, with strange surprise,
Retreat is pleasant only to the wise;
The crowded world by vacant minds is sought,
Because it saves th' expense and pain of thought.
Disgusted, restless, ev'ry plan amiss,
I come with these in search of Happiness.
Urania. O happy they for whom, in early age,
Enlight'ning Knowledge spreads her letter'd page!
Teaches each headstrong passion to control.
And pours her lib'ral lesson on the soul!
Ideas grow from books their nat'ral food,
As aliment is chang'd to vital blood.
Though faithless Fortune strip her vot'ry bare,
Though Malice haunt him, and though Envy tear,
Nor Time, nor Chance, nor Want, can e'er destroy
This soul-felt solace, and this bosom joy!
Cleora. We thus united by one common fate,
Each discontented with her present state,
One common scheme pursue; resolv'd to know
If Happiness can e'er be found below.
Urania. Your candour, beauteous damsels, I approve,
Your foibles pity, and your merits love.
But ere I say the methods you must try
To gain the glorious prize for which you sigh,
Your fainting strength and spirits must be cheer'd
With a plain meal, by Temperance prepar'd.
Florella. No luxury our humble board attends,
But Love and Concord are its smiling friends.

SONG.

I.

Hail artless Simplicity beautiful maid,
In the genuine attractions of Nature array'd
Let the rich and the proud, and the gay and the vain,
Still laugh at the graces that move in thy train.

II.

No charm in thy modest allurements they find;
The pleasures they follow a sting leave behind
Can criminal passion enrapture the breast
Like Virtue, with Peace and Serenity blest?

III.

O would you Simplicity's precepts attend,
Like us, with delight at her altar you'd bend;
The pleasures she yields would with joy be em brac'd,
You'd practise from virtue and love them from taste.

IV.

The linnet enchants us the bushes among;
Though cheap the musician, yet sweet is the song;
We catch the soft warbling in air as it floats,
And with ecstacy hang on the ravishing notes.

V.

Our water is drawn from the clearest of springs,
And our food, nor disease nor satiety brings;
Our mornings are cheerful, our labours are blest,
Our ev'nings are pleasant, our nights crown'd with rest.

VI.

From our culture yon garden its ornament finds,
And we catch at the hint for improving our minds;
To live to some purpose we constantly try,
And we mark by our actions the days as they fly.

VII.

Since such are the joys that Simplicity yields,
We may well be content with our woods and our fields:
How useless to us then, ye great, were your wealth,
When without it we purchase both pleasure and health!

[*They retire into the cottage.*

Scene—A rural entertainment.

FLORELLA, EUPHELIA, CLEORA, LAURINDA, PASTORELLA.

FLORELLA (*sings.*)

I.

While Beauty and Pleasure are now in their prime,
And Folly and Fashion expect our whole time,
Ah! let not those phantoms our wishes engage;
Let us live so in youth, that we blush not in age.

II.

Though the vain and the gay may allure us awhile,
Yet let not their flatt'ry our prudence beguile;
Let us covet those charms that will never decay,
Nor listen to all that deceivers can say.

III.

'How the tints of the rose and the jasmine's perfume!
The eglantine's fragrance, the lilac's gay bloom,
Though fair and though fragrant, unheeded may lie,
For that neither is sweet when Florella is by.'

IV.

I sigh not for beauty, nor languish for wealth,
But grant me, kind Providence, virtue and health;
Then, richer than kings and as happy as they,
My days shall pass sweetly and swiftly away.

V.

When age shall steal on me, and youth is no more,
And the moralist Time shakes his glass at my door,
What charm in lost beauty or wealth should I find? [mind.
My treasure, my wealth, is a sweet peace of

VI.

That peace I'll preserve then, as pure as was giv'n,
And taste in my bosom an earnest of Heav'n;
Thus virtue and wisdom can warm the cold scene,
And sixty may flourish as gay as sixteen.

VII.

And when long I the burden of life shall have borne, [corn,
And Death with his sickle shall cut the ripe
Resign'd to my fate, without murmur or sigh,
I'll bless the kind summons, and lie down and die.

Euphe. Thus sweetly pass the hours of rural ease!
Here life is bliss, and pleasures truly please!
Past. With joy we view the dangers we have past,
Assur'd we've found felicity at last.
Flor. Esteem none happy by their outward air;
All have their portion of allotted care.
Though wisdom wears the semblance of content,
When the full heart with agony is rent,
Secludes its anguish from the public view,
And by secluding learns to conquer too:
Denied the fond indulgence to complain,
The aching heart its peace may best regain.
By love directed, and in mercy meant,
Are trials suffer'd and afflictions sent;
To stem impetuous Passion's furious tide,
To curb the insolence of prosp'rous Pride,
To wean from earth, and bid our wishes soar
To that blest clime where pain shall be no more;
Where wearied Virtue shall for refuge fly,
And ev'ry tear be wip'd from ev'ry eye.
Cleora. List'ning to you, my heart can never cease
To rev'rence Virtue, and to sigh for peace.
Flor. Know, e'en Urania, that accomplish'd fair [care,
Whose goodness makes her Heaven's peculiar
Though born to all that affluence can bestow,
Has felt the deep reverse of human wo:
Yet meek in grief, and patient in distress,
She knew the hand that wounds has pow'r to bless.
Grateful she bows, for what is left her still,
To HIM whose love dispenses good and ill;
To HIM who, while his bounty thousands fed,
Had not himself a place to lay his head;
To HIM who that he might our wealth insure,
Though rich himself consented to be poor.
Taught by his precepts, by his practice taught,
Her will submitted, and resigned her thought,
Through faith, she looks beyond this dark abode,
To scenes of glory near the throne of God

Enter URANIA, SYLVIA, ELIZA.

Ura. Since gentle nymphs! my friendship to obtain,
You've sought with eager step this peaceful plain,
My honest counsel with attention hear,
Though plain, well meant, imperfect, yet sincere;
What from maturer years alone I've known,

What time has taught me, and experience shown,
No polish'd phrase my artless speech will grace,
But unaffected Candour fill its place:
My lips shall flatt'ry's smooth deceit refuse,
And truth be all the eloquence I'll use.
Know then, that life's chief happiness and wo,
From good or evil education flow;
And hence our future dispositions rise;
The vice we practice, or the good we prize.
When pliant Nature any form receives,
That precept teaches or example gives,
The yielding mind with virtue should be grac'd,
For first impressions seldom are effac'd.
Then holy habits, then chastis'd desires,
Should regulate disorder'd Nature's fires.
If Ignorance then, her iron sway maintain;
If prejudice preside, or Passion reign,
If Vanity preserve her native sway,
If selfish tempers cloud the op'ning day,
If no kind hand impetuous Pride restrain,
But for the wholesome curb we give the rein;
The erring principle is rooted fast,
And fix'd the habit that through life may last.

Past. With heartfelt penitence we now deplore
Those squander'd hours, that time can ne'er restore.

Ura. Euphelia sighs for flatt'ry, dress, and show:
The common sources these of female wo!
In Beauty's sphere pre-eminence to find,
She slights the culture of th' immortal mind:
I would not rail at Beauty's charming pow'r,
I would but have her aim at something more;
The fairest symmetry of form or face,
From intellect receives its highest grace;
The brightest eyes ne'er dart such piercing fires,
As when a soul irradiates and inspires:
Beauty with reason needs not quite dispense,
And coral lips may sure speak common sense:
Beauty makes Virtue lovelier still appear;
Virtue makes Beauty more divinely fair!
Confirms its conquests o'er the willing mind,
And those your beauties gain, your virtues bind.
Yet would ambition's fire your bosom fill,
Its flame repress not—be ambitious still;
Let nobler views your best attention claim,
The object chang'd, the energy the same:
Those very passions which our heart invade,
If rightly pointed, blessings may be made.
Indulge the true ambition to excel
In that best art—the art of living well.
But first extirpate from your youthful breast
That rankling torment which destroys your rest:
All other faults may take a higher aim,
But hopeless Envy must be still the same.
Some other passions may be turn'd to good,
But Envy must subdue, or be subdu'd.
This fatal gangrene to our moral life,
Rejects all palliatives, and asks the knife;
Excision spar'd, it taints the vital part,
And spreads its deadly venom to the heart.

Uph. Unhappy those to bliss who seek the way,
In pow'r superior, or in splendour gay!
Inform'd by thee, no more vain man shall find
The charm of flatt'ry taint Euphelia's mind:
By thee instructed still my views shall rise,
Nor stop at any mark beneath the skies.

Urania. In fair Laurinda's uninstructed mind,
The want of culture, not of sense, we find;
Whene'er you sought the good, or shunn'd the ill,
'Twas more from temper than from principle:
Your random life to no just rules reduc'd,
'Twas chance the virtue or the vice produc'd:
The casual goodness *Impulse* has to boast,
Like morning dews, or transient show'rs is lost;
While Heav'n-taught Virtue pours her constant tide,
Like streams by living fountains still supply'd.
Be wisdom still, though late, your earnest care,
Nor waste the precious hours in vain despair:
Associate with the good, attend the sage,
And meekly listen to experienc'd age.
What, if acquirements you have fail'd to gain,
Such as the wise may want the bad attain
Yet still religion's sacred treasures lie
Inviting, open, plain to ev'ry eye;
For ev'ry age, for ev'ry genius fit,
Nor limited to science nor to wit;
Not bound by taste, to genius not confin'd,
But all may learn the truth for all design'd.
Though low the talents, and th' acquirements small,
The gift of grace divine is free to all;
She calls, solicits, courts you to be blest,
And points to mansions of eternal rest.
And when, advanc'd in years, matur'd in sense,
Think not with farther care you may dispense,
'Tis fatal to the int'rests of the soul
To stop the race before we've reach'd the goal;
For nought our higher progress can preclude
So much as thinking we're already good.
The human heart ne'er knows a state of rest:
Bad leads to worse, and better tends to best.
We either gain or lose, we sink or rise,
Nor rests our struggling Nature till she dies:
Then place the standard of perfection high;
Pursue and grasp it, e'en beyond the sky.

Lau. O that important Time could back return
Those misspent hours whose loss I deeply mourn!
Accept, just Heav'n, my penitence sincere,
My heartfelt anguish, and my fervent pray'r!

Ura. I pity Pastorella's hapless fate,
By nature gentle, gen'rous, mild, and great;
One false propension all her pow'rs confin'd,
And chain'd her finer faculties of mind;
Yet ev'ry virtue might have flourish'd there,
With early culture and maternal care.
If good we plant not, vice will fill the place,
And rankest weeds the richest soils deface.
Learn, how ungovern'd thoughts the mind pervert,
And to disease all nourishment convert.
Ah! happy she, whose wisdom learns to find
A healthful fancy and a well train'd mind!
A sick man's wildest dreams less wild are found,
Than the day-visions of a mind unsound.
Disorder'd phantasies indulg'd too much,
Like harpies, always taint whate'er they touch.
Fly soothing Solitude! fly vain Desire!
Fly such soft verse as fans the dang'rous fire!
Seek action; 'tis the scene which Virtue loves;
The vig'rous sun not only shines, but moves.

From sickly thoughts with quick abhorrence start,
And rule the fancy if you'd rule the heart:
By active goodness, by laborious schemes,
Subdue wild visions, and delusive dreams.
No earthly good a Christian's views should bound,
For ever rising should his aims be found.
Leave that fictitious good your fancy feigns
For scenes where real bliss eternal reigns:
Look to that region of immortal joys,
Where fear disturbs not, nor possession cloys;
Beyond what Fancy forms of rosy bow'rs,
Or blooming chaplets of unfading flow'rs;
Fairer than e'er imagination drew,
Or poet's warmest visions ever knew.
Press eager onward to those blissful plains
Where life eternal, joy perpetual reigns.

Past. I mourn the errors of my thoughtless youth,
And long, with thee, to tread the paths of truth.

Ura. Learning is all the bright Cleora's aim;
She seeks the loftiest pinnacle of fame;
On interdicted ground presumes to stand,
And grasps at Science with a vent'rous hand:
The privilege of man she dares invade,
And tears the chaplet from his laurell'd head.
Why found her merit on a foreign claim?
Why lose a substance to acquire a name?
Let the proud sex possess their vaunted pow'rs:
Be other triumphs, other glories ours!
The gentler charms which wait on female life,
Which grace the daughter and adorn the wife,
Be these our boast; yet these may well admit
Of various knowledge, and of blameless wit:
Of sense, resulting from a nurtur'd mind,
Of polish'd converse, and of taste refin'd:
Of that quick intuition of the best,
Which feels the graceful, and rejects the rest:
Which finds the right by shorter ways than rules
An art which Nature teaches—not the schools.
Thus conq'ring Sevigne the heart obtains,
While Dacier only admiration gains.
Know, fair aspirer, could you even hope,
To speak like Stonehouse, or to write like Pope,
To all the wonders of the poet's lyre,
Join all that taste can add, or wit inspire.
With every various pow'r of learning fraught;
The flow of style and the sublime of thought;
Yet, if the milder graces of the mind,
Graces peculiar to the sex design'd,
Good nature, patience, sweetness void of art;
If these embellished not your virgin heart,
You might be dazzling, but not truly bright;
Might glare, but not emit an useful light;
A meteor, not a star, you would appear;
For woman shines but in her proper sphere.
Accomplishments by Heav'n were sure design'd
Less to adorn than to amend the mind:
Each should contribute to this gen'ral end,
And all to virtue, as their centre, tend.
Th' acquirements, which our best esteem invite,
Should not project, but soften, mix, unite:
In glaring light not strongly be display'd,
But sweetly lost, and melted into shade.

Cleora. Confus'd with shame, to thy reproofs I bend,
Thou best adviser, and thou truest friend!
From thee I'll learn to judge and act aright,
Humility with Knowledge to unite:
The finish'd character must both combine,
The perfect woman must in either shine.

Ura. Florella shines adorn'd with every grace,
Her heart all virtue, as all charms her face:
Above the wretched, and below the great,
Kind Heav'n has fix'd her in a middle state;
The dæmon Fashion never warped her soul,
Her passions move at Piety's control;
Her eyes the movements of her heart declare,
For what she dares to be, she dares appear;
Unlectur'd in Dissimulation's school,
To smile by precept, and to blush by rule:
Her thoughts ingenuous, ever open lie,
Nor shrink from e'en lose Inspection's keenest eye,
No dark disguise about her heart is thrown;
'Tis Virtue's int'rest fully to be known;
Her nat'ral sweetness ev'ry heart obtains;
What Art and Affectation miss, she gains.
She smooths the path of my declining years,
Augments my comforts, and divides my cares.

Past. O sacred Friendship! O exalted state!
The choicest bounty of indulgent fate!

Ura. Let woman then her real good discern,
And her true int'rests of Urania learn:
As some fair violet, loveliest of the glade,
Sheds its mild fragrance on the lonely shade,
Withdraws its modest head from public sight,
Nor courts the sun, nor seeks the glare of light;
Should some rude hand profanely dare intrude,
And bear its beauties from its native wood,
Expos'd abroad its languid colours fly,
Its form decays, and all its odours die
So woman, born to dignify retreat,
Unknown to flourish, and unseen be great,
To give domestic life its sweetest charm,
With softness polish, and with virtue warm,
Fearful of Fame, unwilling to be known,
Should seek but Heaven's applauses and her own;
Hers be the task to seek the lonely cell
Where modest Want and silent Anguish dwell;
Raise the weak head, sustain the feeble knees,
Cheer the cold heart, and chase the dire disease.
The splendid deeds, which only seek a name,
Are paid their just reward in present fame;
But know, the awful all-disclosing day,
The long arrear of secret worth shall pay;
Applauding saints shall hear with fond regard.
And He, who witness'd here, shall there reward.

Euph. With added grace she pleads Religion's cause,
Who from her life her virtuous lesson draws.

Ura. In vain, ye fair! from place to place you roam,
For that true peace which must be found at home:
No change of fortune, nor of scene can give
The bliss you seek, which in the soul must live.
Then look no more abroad; in your own breast
Seek the true seat of happiness and rest.
Nor small, my friends! the vigilance I ask,
Watch well yourselves, this is the Christian's task.
The cherish'd sin by each must be assail'd,
New efforts added, where the past have fail'd:
The darling error check'd, the will subdu'd,
The heart by penitence and pray'r renew'd
Nor hope for *perfect* happiness below:

Celestial plants on earth reluctant grow.
He who our frail mortality did bear,
Though free from sin, was not exempt from care.
Cleora. Let's join to bless that Pow'r who brought us here,
Adore his goodness, and his will revere;
Assur'd, that Peace exists but in the mind,
And Piety alone that Peace can find.
Ura. In its true light this transient life regard:
This is a state of trial, not reward.
Though rough the passage, peaceful is the port,
The bliss is perfect, the probation short.
Of human wit beware the fatal pride;
An useful follower, but a dang'rous guide:
On holy Faith's aspiring pinions rise;
Assert your birth-right, and assume the skies.
Fountain of Being! teach us to devote
To Thee each purpose, action, word and thought!
Thy grace our hope, thy love our only boast,
Be all distinctions in the Christian lost!
Be this in ev'ry state our wish alone,
Almighty, Wise and Good, Thy will be done!

ODE TO CHARITY.

TO BE PERFORMED BY THE CHARACTERS OF THE PIECE.

I.

O Charity, divinely wise,
Thou meek-ey'd daughter of the skies!
From the pure fountain of eternal light,
Where fair, immutable, and ever bright,
The beatific vision shines,
Where angel with archangel joins
In choral songs to sing His praise,
Parent of Life, Ancient of Days,
Who was ere Time existed, and shall be
Through the wide round of vast Eternity;
Oh come, thy warm celestial beams impart,
Enlarge my feelings, and expand my heart!

II.

Descend from radiant realms above,
Thou effluence of that boundless love
Whence joy and peace in streams unsully'd flow,
Oh deign to make thy lov'd abode below!
Though sweeter strains adorn'd my tongue
Than saint conceiv'd or seraph sung,
And though my glowing fancy caught
Whatever Art or Nature taught,
Yet if this hard unfeeling heart of mine
Ne'er felt thy force, O Charity divine!
An empty shadow Science would be found
My knowledge ignorance, my wit a sound!

III.

Though my prophetic spirit knew
To bring futurity to view,
Without thy aid e'en this would not avail,
For tongues shall cease and prophecies shall fail.
Come then, thou sweet immortal guest,
Shed thy soft influence o'er my breast,
Bring with thee Faith, divinely bright,
And Hope, fair Harbinger of light,
To clear each mist with their pervading ray,
To fit my soul for Heav'n, and point the way,
There Perfect Happiness her sway maintains,
For there the God of Peace for ever reigns.

STORIES

FOR PERSONS OF THE MIDDLE RANKS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE Stories, which were first published, among a great number of others, in the Cheap Repository, under the signature Z, are here presented to the reader, much enlarged and improved. Such of them as are comprised in this volume being adapted to persons in a superior station to those which are contained in a former edition, and it was thought better to separate and class them accordingly. A brief account of the institution here referred to, will be given in a subsequent place.

THE HISTORY OF MR. FANTOM.

THE NEW FASHIONED PHILOSOPHER,

AND HIS MAN WILLIAM.

MR. FANTOM was a retail trader in the city of London. As he had no turn to any expensive vices, he was reckoned a sober decent man, but he was covetous and proud, selfish and conceited. As soon as he got forward in the world, his vanity began to display itself, though not in the ordinary method, that of making a figure and living away; but still he was tormented with a longing desire to draw public notice, and to distinguish himself. He felt a general sense of discontent at what he was, with a general ambition to be something which he was not; but this desire had not yet turned itself to any particular object. It was not by his money he could hope to be distinguished, for half his acquaintance had more, and a man must be rich indeed to be noted for his riches in London. Mr. Fantom's mind was a prey to his vain imaginations. He despised all those little acts of kindness and charity which every man is called to perform every day; and while he was contriving grand schemes, which lay quite out of his reach, he neglected the ordinary duties of life, which lay directly before him. Selfishness was his governing principle. He fancied he was lost in the mass of general society: and the usual means of attaching importance to insignificance occurred to him; that of getting into clubs and societies. To be connected with a party would at least make him known to that party, be it ever so low and contemptible; and this local importance it is which draws off vain minds from those scenes of general usefulness, in which, though they are of more value, they are of less distinction.

About this time he got hold of a famous little book written by the NEW PHILOSOPHER, whose pestilent doctrines have gone about seeking whom they may destroy; these doctrines found a ready entrance into Mr. Fantom's mind; a mind at once shallow and inquisitive, speculative and vain, ambitious and dissatisfied. As almost every book was new to him, he fell into the common error of those who begin to read late in life —that of thinking that what he did not know himself, was equally new to others; and he was apt to fancy that he and the author he was reading were the only two people in the world who knew any thing. This book led to the grand discovery; he had now found what his heart panted after—a way to *distinguish himself.* To start out a full grown philosopher at once, to be wise without education, to dispute without learning, and to make proselytes without argument, was a short cut to fame, which well suited his vanity and his ignorance. He rejoiced that he had been so clever as to examine for himself, pitied his friends who took things upon trust, and was resolved to assert the freedom of his own mind. To a man fond of bold novelties and daring paradoxes, solid argument would be flat, and truth would be dull, merely because it is not new. Mr. Fantom believed, not in proportion to the strength of the evidence, but to the impudence of the assertion. The trampling on holy ground with dirty shoes, the smearing the sanctuary with filth and mire, the calling prophets and apostles by the most scurrilous names was new, and dashing, and dazzling. Mr. Fantom, now being set free from the chains of slavery and superstition, was resolved to show his zeal in the usual way, by trying to free others; but it would have hurt his vanity had he known that he was the convert of a man who had written only for the vulgar, who had *invented* nothing, no, not even one idea of original wickedness; but who had stooped to rake up out of the kennel of infidelity, all the loathsome dregs and offal dirt, which politer unbelievers had thrown away as too gross and offensive for the better bred readers.

Mr. Fantom, who considered that a philoso

pher must set up with a little sort of stock in trade, now picked up all the common-place notions against Christianity, which have been answered a hundred times over: these he kept by him ready cut and dried, and brought out in all companies with a zeal which would have done honour to a better cause, but which the friends to a better cause are not so apt to discover. He soon got all the cant of the new school. He prated about *narrowness*, and *ignorance*, and *bigotry*, and *prejudice*, and *priest-craft* on the one hand; and on the other, of *public good*, the *love of mankind*, and *liberality*, and *candour*, and *toleration*, and above all, *benevolence*. Benevolence, he said, made up the whole of religion, and all the other parts of it were nothing but cant, and jargon, and hypocrisy. By benevolence he understood a gloomy and indefinite anxiety about the happiness of people with whom he was utterly disconnected, and whom Providence had put it out of his reach either to serve or injure. And by the happiness this benevolence was so anxious to promote, he meant an exemption from the power of the laws, and an emancipation from the restraints of religion, conscience, and moral obligation.

Finding, however, that he made little impression on his old club at the Cat and Bagpipes, he grew tired of their company. This club consisted of a few sober citizens, who met of an evening for a little harmless recreation after business; their object was, not to reform parliament, but their own shops; not to correct the abuses of government, but of parish officers; not to cure the excesses of administration, but of their own porters and apprentices; to talk over the news of the day without aspiring to direct the events of it. They read the papers with that anxiety which every honest man feels in the daily history of his country. But as trade, which they *did* understand, flourished, they were careful not to reprobate those public measures by which it was protected, and which they did *not* understand. In such turbulent times it was a comfort to each to feel he was a tradesman, and not a statesman; that he was not called to responsibility for a trust for which he found he had no talents, while he was at full liberty to employ the talents he really possessed, in fairly amassing a fortune, of which the laws would be the best guardian, and government the best security. Thus a legitimate self-love, regulated by prudence, and restrained by principle, produced peaceable subjects and good citizens; while in Fantom, a boundless selfishness and inordinate vanity converted a discontented trader into a turbulent politician.

There was, however, one member of the Cat and Bagpipes whose society he could not resolve to give up, though they seldom agreed, as indeed no two men in the same class and habits of life could less resemble each other. Mr. Trueman was an honest, plain, simple-hearted tradesman of the good old cut, who feared God and followed his business; he went to church twice on Sundays, and minded his shop all the week, spent frugally, gave liberally, and saved moderately. He lost, however, some ground in Mr. Fantom's esteem, because he paid his taxes, without disputing, and read his Bible without doubting.

Mr. Fantom now began to be tired of every thing in trade except the profits of it: for the more the word benevolence was in his mouth, the more did selfishness gain dominion in his heart. He, however, resolved to retire for a while into the country, and devote his time to his new plans, schemes, theories, and projects for the public good. A life of talking, and reading and writing, and disputing, and teaching, and proselyting, now struck him as the only life; so he soon set out for the country with his family; for unhappily Mr. Fantom had been the husband of a very worthy woman many years before the new philosophy had discovered that marriage was a shameful infringement on human liberty, and an abridgement of the rights of man. To this family was now added his new footman, William Wilson, whom he had taken with a good character out of a sober family. Mr. Fantom was no sooner settled than he wrote to invite Mr. Trueman to come and pay him a visit, for he would have burst if he could not have got some one to whom he might display his new knowledge; he knew that if on the one hand Trueman was no scholar, yet on the other he was no fool; and though he despised his *prejudices*, yet he thought he might be made a good decoy duck; for if he could once bring Trueman over, the whole club at the Cat and Bagpipes might be brought to follow his example; and thus he might see himself at the head of a society of his own proselytes; the supreme object of a philosopher's ambition. Trueman came accordingly. He soon found that however he might be shocked at the impious doctrines his friend maintained, yet that an important lesson might be learned even from the worst enemies of truth; namely, an ever wakeful attention to their grand object. If they set out with talking of trade or politics, of private news or public affairs, still Mr. Fantom was ever on the watch to hitch in his darling doctrines; whatever he began with, he was sure to end with a pert squib at the Bible, a vapid jest on the clergy, the miseries of superstition, and the blessings of philosophy. 'Oh!' said Trueman to himself, 'when shall I see Christians half so much in earnest? Why is it that almost all zeal is on the wrong side?'

'Well, Mr. Fantom,' said Trueman one day at breakfast, 'I am afraid you are leading but an idle sort of life here.'—'Idle, sir!' said Fantom; 'I now first begin to live to some purpose; I have indeed lost too much time, and wasted my talents on a little retail trade, in which one is of no note; one can't distinguish one's self.' 'So much the better,' said Trueman;' 'I had rather not distinguish myself, unless it was by leading a better life than my neighbours. There is nothing I should dread more than being talk'd about. I dare say now heaven is in a good measure filled with people whose names were never heard out of their own street and village. So I beg leave not to distinguish myself!' 'Yes, but one may, if it is only by signing one's name to an essay or paragraph in a newspaper,' said Fantom.—'Heaven keep John Trueman's name out of a newspaper,' interrupted he in a fright·

'for if it be there, it must either be found in the Old Bailey or the bankrupt list, unless, indeed, I were to remove shop, or sell off my old stock. Well, but Mr. Fantum, you, I suppose, are now as happy as the day is long?' 'O yes,' replied Fantom, with a gloomy sigh, which gave the lie to his words, 'perfectly happy! I wonder you do not give up all your sordid employments, and turn philosopher!' 'Sordid indeed!' said Trueman, 'do not call names, Mr. Fantom; I shall never be ashamed of my trade. What is it has made this country so great? a country whose merchants are princes? It is trade, Mr. Fantom, trade. I cannot say indeed, as well as I love business, but now and then, when I am overworked, I wish I had a little more time to look after my soul; but the fear that I should not devote the time, if I had it, to the best purpose, makes me work on, though often, when I am balancing my accounts, I tremble, lest I should neglect to balance the grand account. But still, since, like you, I am a man of no education, I am more afraid of the temptations of leisure, than of those of business, I never was bred to read more than a chapter in the Bible, or some other good book, or the magazine and newspaper; and all that I can do now, after shop is shut, is to take a walk with my children in the field besides. But if I had nothing to do from morning to night, I might be in danger of turning politician or philosopher. No, neighbour Fantom, depend upon it, that where there is no learning, next to God's grace, the best preservative of human virtue is business. As to our political societies, like the armies in the cave of Adullam, 'every man that is in distress, and every man that is in debt, and every man that is discontented, will always join themselves unto them.'

Fantom. You have narrow views, Trueman. What *can* be more delightful than to see a paper of one's own in print against tyranny and superstition, contrived with so much ingenuity, that, though the law is on the look-out for treason and blasphemy, a little change of name defeats its scrutiny. For instance; you may stigmatize *England* under the name of *Rome*, and *Christianity* under that of *Popery*. The true way is to attack whatever you have a mind to injure, under another name, and the best means to destroy the use of a thing, is to produce a few incontrovertible facts against the abuses of it. Our late travellers have inconceivably helped on the cause of the new philosophy, in their ludicrous narratives of credulity, miracles, indulgences, and processions, in popish countries, all which they ridicule under the broad and general name of Religion, Christianity, and *the Church*.' 'And are not you ashamed to defend such knavery?' said Mr. Trueman. 'Those who have a great object to accomplish,' replied Mr. Fantom, 'must not be nice about the means. But to return to yourself Trueman; in your little confined situation you can be of no use.' 'That I deny,' interrupted Trueman; 'I have filled all the parish offices with some credit. I never took a bribe at an election, no not so much as a treat; I take care of my apprentices, and do not set them a bad example by running to plays and Sadler's Wells, in the week or jaunting about in a gig all day on Sundays; for I look upon it that the country jaunt of the master on Sundays exposes his servants to more danger than their whole week's temptation in trade put together.'

Fantom. I once had the same vulgar prejudices about the church and the Sabbath, and all that antiquated stuff. But even on your own narrow principles, how can a thinking being spend his Sunday better (if he must lose one day in seven by having any Sunday at all) than by going into the country to admire the works of nature.

Trueman. I suppose you mean the works of God: for I never read in the Bible that Nature made any thing. I should rather think that she herself was made by Him, who, when he said, 'thou shalt not murder,' said also, 'thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day.' But now do you really think that all that multitude of coaches, chariots, chaises, vis-a-vis, booby-hutches, sulkies, sociables, phaetons, gigs, curricles, cabrioles, chairs, stages, pleasure carts, and horses, which crowd our roads; all those country houses within reach, to which the London friends pour in to the gorgeous Sunday feast, which the servants are kept from church to dress; all those public houses under the signs of which you read these alluring words, *an ordinary on Sundays;* I say, do you really believe that all those houses and carriages are crammed with philosophers, who go on Sunday into the country to admire the works of nature, as you call it! Indeed, from the reeling gate of some of them when they go back at night, one might take them for a certain sect called the tippling philosophers. Then in answer to your charge, that a little tradesman can do no good, it is not true; I must tell you that I belong to the Sick Man's Friend, and to the Society for relieving prisoners for small debts.

Fantom. I have no attention to spare to that business, though I would pledge myself to produce a plan by which the *national* debt might be paid off in six months; but all yours are pretty occupations.

Trueman. Then they are better suited to petty men of petty fortune. I had rather have an ounce of real good done with my own hands, and seen with my own eyes, than speculate about doing a ton in a wild way, which I know can never be brought about.

Fantom. I despise a narrow field. O for the reign of universal benevolence! I want to make all mankind good and happy.

Trueman. Dear me! sure that must be a wholesale sort of a job; had you not better try your hand at a town or a parish first!

Fantom. Sir, I have a plan in my head for relieving the miseries of the whole world. Every thing is bad as it now stands. I would alter all the laws; and do away all the religions, and put an end to all the wars in the world. I would every where redress the injustice of fortune, or what the vulgar call Providence. I would put an end to all punishments; I would not leave a single prisoner on the face of the globe. This is what I call doing things on a grand scale.

'A scale with a vengeance,' said Trueman. 'As to releasing the prisoners, however, I do

not so much like that, as it would be liberating a few rogues at the expense of all honest men; but as to the rest of your plans, if all Christian countries would be so good as to turn Christians, it might be helped on a good deal. There would be still misery enough left indeed; because God intended this world should be earth and not heaven. But, sir, among all your oblations, you must abolish human corruption before you can make the world quite as perfect as you pretend. You philosophers seem to me to be ignorant of the very first seed and principle of misery—sin, sir, sin: your system of reform is radically defective; for it does not comprehend that sinful nature from which all misery proceeds. You accuse government of defects which belong to man, to individual man, and of course to man collectively.—Among all your reforms you must reform the human heart; you are only hacking at the branches, without striking at the root. Banishing impiety out of the world, would be like striking off all the pounds from an overcharged bill; and all the troubles which would be left, would be reduced to mere shillings, pence, and farthings, as one may say.'

Fantom. Your project would rivet the chains which mine is design'd to break.

Trueman. Sir, I have no projects. Projects are in general the offspring of restlessness, vanity, and idleness. I am too busy for projects, too contented for theories, and, I hope, have too much honesty and humility for a philosopher. The utmost extent of my ambition at present is, to redress the wrongs of a parish apprentice who has been cruelly used by his master: Indeed I have another little scheme, which is to prosecute a fellow in our street who has suffered a poor wretch in a workhouse, of which he had the care, to perish through neglect, and you must assist me.

Fantom. The parish must do that. You must not apply to me for the redress of such petty grievances. I own that the wrongs of the Poles and South Americans so fill my mind, as to leave me no time to attend to the petty sorrows of workhouses and parish apprentices. It is provinces, empires, continents, that the benevolence of the philosopher embraces; every one can do a little paltry good to his next neighbour.

Trueman. Every one can, but I do not see that every one does. If they would, indeed, your business would be ready done at your hands, and your grand ocean of benevolence would be filled with the drops which private charity would throw into it. I am glad, however, you are such a friend to the prisoners, because I am just now getting a little subscription from our club, to set free our poor old friend Tom Saunders, a very honest brother tradesman, who got first into debt, and then into jail, through no fault of his own, but merely through the pressure of the times. We have each of us allowed a trifle every week towards maintaining Tom's young family since he has been in prison; but we think we shall do much more service to Saunders, and indeed in the end lighten our own expense, by paying down at once a little sum to restore him to the comforts of life, and put him in a way of maintaining his family again. We have made up the money all except five guineas I am already promised four, and you have nothing to do but give me the fifth. And so for a single guinea, without any of the trouble, the meetings, and the looking into his affairs, which we have had; which, let me tell you, is the best, and to a man of business, the dearest part of charity, you will at once have the pleasure (and it is no small one) of helping to save a worthy family from starving of redeeming an old friend from gaol, and of putting a little of your boasted benevolence into action. Realize! master Fantom: there is nothing like realizing. 'Why, hark ye, Mr. Trueman,' said Fantom, stammering, and looking very black, 'do not think I value a guinea; no sir, I despise money; it is trash; it is dirt, and beneath the regard of a wise man. It is one of the unfeeling inventions of artificial society. Sir, I could talk to you for half a day on the abuse of riches, and on my own contempt of money.'

Trueman. O pray do not give yourself the trouble; it will be an easier way by half of vindicating yourself from one, and of proving the other, just to put your hand in your pocket and give me a guinea, without saying a word about it: and then to you who value time so much, and money so little, it will cut the matter short. But come now, (for I see you will give nothing) I should be mighty glad to know what is the sort of good you do yourselves, since you always object to what is done by others. 'Sir,' said Mr. Fantom, 'the object of a true philosopher is to diffuse light and knowledge. I wish to see the whole world enlightened.'

Trueman. Amen! if you mean with the light of the Gospel. But if you mean that one religion is as good as another, and that no religion is best of all; and that we shall become wiser and better by setting aside the very means which Providence bestowed to make us wise and good: in short, if you want to make the whole world philosophers, why they had better stay as they are. But as to the true light, I wish it to reach the very lowest, and I therefore bless God for charity-schools, as instruments of diffusing it among the poor.

Fantom, who had no reason to expect that his friend was going to call upon him for a subscription on this account, ventured to praise them: saying, 'I am no enemy to these institutions. I would indeed change the object of instruction, but I would have the whole world instructed.'

Here Mrs. Fantom, who, with her daughter, had quietly sat by at their work, ventured to put in a word, a liberty she seldom took with her husband; who in his zeal to make the whole world free and happy, was too prudent to include his wife among the objects on whom he wished to confer freedom and happiness. 'Then, my dear,' said she, 'I wonder you do not let your own servants be taught a little. The maids can scarcely tell a letter, or say the Lord's prayer, and you know you will not allow them time to learn. William, too, has never been at church since we came out of town. He was at first very orderly and obedient, but now he is seldom sober of an evening; and in the morning when he should be rubbing the tables in

the parlour, he is generally lolling upon them, and reading your little manuel of the new philosophy.'—'Mrs. Fantom, said her husband angrily, 'you know that my labours for the public good leave me little time to think of my own family. I must have a great field, I like to do good to hundreds at once.'

'I am very glad of that papa,' said miss Polly; 'for then I hope you will not refuse to subscribe to all those pretty children at the Sunday-school, as you did yesterday, when the gentleman came a begging, because that is the very thing you were wishing for; there are two or three hundred to be done good at once.'

Trueman. Well, Mr. Fantom, you are a wonderful man to keep up such a stock of benevolence at so small an expense. To love mankind so dearly, and yet avoid all opportunities of doing them good; to have such a noble zeal for the millions, and to feel so little compassion for the units; to long to free empires and enlighten kingdoms; and yet deny instruction to your own village, and comfort to your own family. Surely none but a philosopher could indulge so much philanthropy, and so much frugality at the same time. But come, do assist me in a petition I am making in our poorhouse; between the old, whom I want to have better fed, and the young, whom I want to have more worked.

Fantom. Sir my mind is so engrossed with the partition of Poland, that I cannot bring it down to an object of such insignificance. I despise the man whose benevolence is swallowed up in the narrow concerns of his own family, or parish, or country.

Trueman. Well, now I have a notion that it is as well to do one's own duty, as the duty of another man; and that to do good at home, is as well as to do good abroad. For my part, I had as lieve help Tom Saunders to freedom as a Pole or a South American, though I should be very glad to help them too. But one must begin to love somewhere, and to do good somewhere; and I think it is as natural to love one's own family, and to do good in one's own neighbourhood, as to any body else. And if every man in every family, parish, and county, did the same, why then all the schemes would meet, and the end of one parish, where I was doing good, would be the beginning of another parish where somebody else was doing good; so my schemes would jut into my neighbour's; his projects would unite with those of some other local reformer; and all would fit with a sort of dovetail exactness. And what is better, all would join in furnishing a living comment on that practical precept: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.'

Fantom. Sir, a man of large views will be on the watch for great occasions to prove his benevolence.

Trueman. Yes, sir; but if they are so distant that he cannot reach them, or so vast that he cannot grasp them, he may let a thousand little, snug, kind, good actions slip through his fingers in the meanwhile: and so between the great things that he cannot do, and the little ones that he will not do, life passes and nothing will be done.

Just at this moment miss Polly Fantom (whose mother had gone out some time before) started up, let fall her work, and cried out, 'O papa, do but look what a monstrous great fire there is yonder on the common! If it were the fifth of November I should think it were a bonfire. Look how it blazes!'—'I see plain enough what it is,' said Mr. Fantom, sitting down again without the least emotion. 'It is Jenkins's cottage on fire.'—'What, poor John Jenking, who works in our garden, papa?' said the poor girl in great terror. 'Do not be frightened, child,' answered Fantom, we are safe enough; the wind blows the other way. Why did you disturb us for such a trifle, as it was so distant? Come, Mr. Trueman, sit down.'—'Sit down,' said Mr. Trueman, 'I am not a stock, sir, nor a stone, but a man; made of the same common nature with Jenkins, whose house is burning. Come along—let us fly and help him,' continued he running to the door in such haste that he forgot to take his hat, though it hung just before him—'Come Mr. Fantom—come, my little dear—I wish your mamma was here—I am sorry she went out just now—we may all do some good; every body may be of some use at a fire. Even you, miss Polly, may save some of these poor people's things in your apron, while your papa and I hand the buckets.' All this he said as he run along with the young lady in his hand; not doubting but Fantom and his whole family were following close behind him. But the present distress was neither grand enough nor far enough from home to satisfy the wide-stretched benevolence of the philosopher, who sat down within sight of the flames to work at a new pamphlet, which now swallowed up his whole soul, on universal benevolence.

His daughter, indeed, who happily was not yet a philosopher, with Mr. Trueman, followed by the maids, reached the scene of distress. William Wilson, the footman, refused to assist, glad of such an opportunity of being revenged on Jenkins, whom he called a surly fellow, for presuming to complain, because William always purloined the best fruit for himself before he set it on his master's table. Jenkins also, whose duty it was to be out of doors, had refused to leave his own work in the garden, to do Will's work in the house while he got drunk, or read the Rights of Man.

The little dwelling of Jenkins burnt very furiously. Mr. Trueman's exertions were of the greatest service. He directed the willing, and gave an example to the slothful. By living in London, he had been more used to the calamity of fire than the country people, and knew better what was to be done. In the midst of the bustle he saw one woman only who never attempted to be of the least use. She ran backwards and forward, wringing her hands, crying out in a tone of piercing agony, 'Oh, my child! my little Tommy! will no one save my Tommy?'—Any woman might have uttered the same words, but the look which explained them could only come from a mother. Trueman did not stay to ask if she were owner of the house, and mother of the child. It was his way to do all the good which could be done first, and then to ask questions. All he said was,

'Tell me which is the room?' The poor woman, now speechless through terror, could only point up to a little window in the thatch, and then sunk on the ground.

Mr. Trueman made his way through a thick smoke, and ran up the narrow staircase which the fire had not reached. He got safely to the loft, snatched up the little creature, who was sweetly sleeping in its poor hammock, and brought him down naked in his arms: and as he gave him to the half-distracted mother, he felt that her joy and gratitude would have been no bad pay for the danger he had run, even if no higher motive had set him to work. Poor Jenkins, half stupified by his misfortune, had never thought of his child; and his wife, who expected every hour to make him father to a second, had not been able to do any thing towards saving little Tommy.

Mr. Trueman now put the child into miss Fantom's apron, saying, 'Did not I tell you, my dear, that every body could be of use at a fire?' He then desired her to carry the child home, and ordered the poor woman to follow her; saying, he would return himself as soon as he had seen all safe in the cottage.

When the fire was quite out, and Mr. Trueman could be of no further use, he went back to Mr. Fantom's. The instant he opened the parlour door he eagerly cried out, 'Where is the poor woman, Mr, Fantom?' 'Not in my house, I assure you,' answered the philosopher. 'Give me leave to tell you, it was a very romantic thing to send her and her child to me: you should have provided for them at once, like a prudent man.'—'I thought I had done so,' replied Trueman, 'by sending them to the nearest and best house in the parish, as the poor woman seemed to stand in need of immediate assistance.' 'So immediate,' said Fantom, 'that I would not let her come into my house, for fear of what might happen. So I packed her off, with her child in her arms, to the workhouse; with orders to the overseers not to let her want for any thing.'

'And what right have you, Mr. Fantom,' cried Trueman in a high tone, 'to expect that the overseers will be more humane than yourself! But is it possible you can have sent that helpless creature, not only to walk, but to carry a naked child at such a time of night, to a place so distant, so ill provided, and in such a condition? I hope at least you have furnished them with clothes; for all their own little stores were burnt.' 'Not I, indeed;' said Fantom. 'What is the use of parish officers, but to look after these petty things?'

It was Mr. Trueman's way, when he began to feel very angry, not to allow himself to speak; because, he used to say, 'if I give vent to my feelings, I am sure, by some hasty word, to cut myself out work for repentance.' So without making any answer, or even changing his clothes, which were very wet and dirty from having worked so hard at the fire, he walked out again, having first inquired the road the woman had taken. At the door he met Mrs. Fantom returning from her visit. He told her his tale; which she had no sooner heard, than she kindly resolved to accompany him in search of Jenkins's wife. She had a wide common to walk over before she could reach either the workhouse or the nearest cottage. She had crawled along with her baby as far as she was able; but having met with no refreshment at Mr. Fantom's, and her strength quite failing her, she had sunk down on the middle of the common. Happily, Mr. Trueman and Mrs. Fantom came up at this very time. The former had had the precaution to bring a cordial and the latter had gone back and stuffed her pockets with old baby linen. Mr. Trueman soon procured the assistance of a labourer, who happened to pass by, to help him to carry the mother, and Mrs. Fantom carried the little shivering baby.

As soon as they were safely lodged, Mr. Trueman set off in search of poor Jenkins, who was distressed to know what was become of his wife and child; for having heard that they were seen going towards Mr. Fantom's, he despaired of any assistance from that quarter. Mr. Trueman felt no small satisfaction in uniting this poor man to his little family. There was something very moving in this meeting, and in the pious gratitude they expressed for their deliverance. They seemed to forget they had lost their all, in the joy they felt that they had not lost each other. And some disdainful great ones might have smiled to see so much rapture expressed at the safety of a child born to no inheritance but poverty. These are among the feelings with which Providence sometimes overpays the want of wealth. The good people also poured out prayers and blessings on their deliverer, who, not being a philosopher, was no more ashamed of praying with them than he had been of working for them. Mr. Trueman, while assisting at the fire, had heard that Jenkins and his wife were both very honest, and very pious people; so he told them he would not only pay for their new lodgings, but undertook to raise a little subscription among his friends at the Cat and Bagpipes towards rebuilding their cottage; and farther engaged, that if they would promise to bring up the child in the fear of God, he would stand godfather.

This exercise of Christian charity had given such a cheerful flow to Mr. Trueman's spirits, that long before he got home he had lost every trace of ill-humour.—'Well, Mr. Fantom,' said he gayly, as he opened the door, 'now do tell me how you could possibly refuse going to help me to put out the fire at poor Jenkins's?'—'Because, said Fantom, 'I was engaged, sir, in a far nobler project than putting out a fire in a little thatched cottage. Sir, I was contriving to put out a fire too; a conflagration of a far more dreadful kind—a fire, sir, in the extinction of which universal man is concerned—I was contriving a scheme to extinguish the fires of the inquisition.'—'Why, man, they don't blaze that I know of,' retorted Trueman. 'I own, that of all the abominable engines which the devil ever invented to disgrace religion and plague mankind, that inquisition was the very worst. But I do not believe popery has ventured at these diabolical tricks since the earthquake at Lisbon. so that a bucket of real water, carried to the real fire at Jenkins's cottage, would have done

more good than a wild plan to put out an imaginary flame which no longer burns. And let me tell you, sir, dreadful as that evil was, God can send his judgments on other sins besides superstition; so it behoves us to take heed of the other extreme, or we may have our earthquakes too. 'The hand of God is not shortened,' sir, 'that it cannot destroy, any more than it cannot save. In the meantime, I must repeat it; you and I are rather called upon to serve a neighbour from perishing in the flames of his house, just under our own window, than to write about the fires of the inquisition; which, if fear, or shame, or the restoration of common sense had not already put out, would have hardly received a check from such poor hands as you and I.'

'Sir,' said Fantom, 'Jenkins is an impertinent fellow; and I owe him a grudge, because he says he had rather forfeit the favour of the best master in England than work in my garden on a Sunday. And when I ordered him to read the Age of Reason, instead of going to church, he refused to work for me at all, with some impertinent hint about God and Mammon.'

'Oh, did he so?' said Mr. Trueman. 'Now I *will* stand godfather to his child, and make him a handsome present into the bargain. Indeed, Mr. Fantom, a man must be a philosopher with a vengeance, if when he sees a house on fire, he stays to consider whether the owner has offended him. Oh, Mr. Fantom, I will forgive you still, if you will produce me, out of all your philosophy, such a sentence as 'Love your enemy —do good to them that hate you—if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;' I will give up the blessed Gospel for the Age of Reason, if you will only bring me one sentiment equivalent to this.'

Next day Mr. Trueman was obliged to go to London on business; but returned soon; as the time he had allotted to spend with Mr. Fantom was not yet elapsed. He came down the sooner indeed, that he might bring a small sum of money which the gentlemen at the Cat and Bagpipes had cheerfully subscribed for Jenkins. Trueman did not forget to desire his wife to make up also a quantity of clothing for this poor family, to which he did not neglect to add a parcel of good books, which indeed always made a part of his charities; as he used to say, there was something cruel in the kindness which was anxious to relieve the bodies of men, but was negligent of their souls. He stood in person to the new born child, and observed with much pleasure, that Jenkins and his wife thought a christening, not a season for merry-making, but a solemn act of religion. And they dedicated their infant to his Maker with becoming seriousness.

Trueman left the cottage and got back to Mr. Fantom's, just as the family were going to sit down to dinner, as he had promised.

When they sat down, Mr. Fantom was not a little out of humour to see his table in some disorder. William was also rather more negligent than usual. If the company called for bread, he gave them beer, and he took away the clean plates, and gave them dirty ones. Mr. Fantom soon discovered that his servant was very drunk; he flew into a violent passion, and ordered him out of the room, charging that he should not appear in his presence in that condition. William obeyed; but having slept an hour or two, and got about half sober, he again made his appearance. His master gave him a most severe reprimand, and called him an idle, drunken, vicious fellow. 'Sir,' said William, very pertly, 'If I do get drunk now and then, I only do it for the good of my country, and in obedience to your wishes.' Mr. Fantom, thoroughly provoked, now began to scold him in words not fit to be repeated; and asked him what he meant, 'Why, sir,' said William, 'you are a philosopher you know; and I have often overheard you say to your company, that private vices are public benefits; and so I thought that getting drunk was as pleasant a way of doing good to the public as any, especially when I could oblige my master at the same time.'

'Get out of my house,' said Mr. Fantom, in a great rage. 'I do not desire to stay a moment longer,' said William, 'so pay me my wages.'—'Not I indeed,' replied the master; 'nor will I give you a character; so never let me see your face again.' William took his master at his word, and not only got out of the house, but went out of the country too as fast as possible. When they found he was really gone, they made a hue-and-cry, in order to detain him till they examined if he had left every thing in the house as he had found it. But William had got out of reach, knowing he could not stand such a scrutiny. On examination, Mr. Fantom found that all his old port was gone, and Mrs. Fantom missed three of her best new spoons. William was pursued, but without success; and Mr. Fantom was so much discomposed that he could not for the rest of the day, talk on any subject but his wine and his spoons, nor harangue on any project but that of recovering both by bringing William to justice.

Some days passed away, in which Mr. Fantom, having had time to cool, began to be ashamed that he had been betrayed into such ungoverned passion. He made the best excuse he could; said no man was perfect, and though he owned he had been too violent, yet still he hoped William would be brought to the punishment he deserved. 'In the meantime,' said Mr. Trueman, 'seeing how ill philosophy has agreed with your man, suppose you were to set about teaching your maids a little religion?' Mr. Fantom coolly replied, 'that the impertinent retort of a drunken footman could not spoil a system.'—'Your system, however, and your own behaviour,' said Trueman, 'have made that footman a scoundrel: and you are answerable for his offences.'—'Not I truly,' said Fantom; 'he has seen me do no harm; he has neither seen me cheat, gamble, nor get drunk; and I defy you to say I corrupt my servants. I am a moral man, sir.'

'Mr. Fantom,' said Trueman, 'if you were to get drunk every day, and game every night, you would, indeed, endanger your own soul, and give a dreadful example to your family; but great as those sins are, and God forbid that I should attempt to lessen them! still they are not worse, nay, they are not so bad, as the pestilent doctrines with which you infect your

house and your neighbourhood. A bad action is like a single murder. The consequence may end with the crime, to all but the perpetrator; but a wicked principle is throwing lighted gunpowder into a town; it is poisoning a river; there are no bounds, no certainty, no ends to its mischief. The ill effects of the worst action may cease in time, and the consequences of your bad example may end with your life; but souls may be brought to perdition by a wicked principle after the author of it has been dead for ages.'

Fantom. You talk like an ignoramus, who has never read the new philosophy. All this nonsense of future punishment is now done away It is *our* benevolence which makes us reject your creed; we can no more believe in a deity who permits so much evil in the present world, than one who threatens eternal punishment in the next.

Trueman. What! shall mortal man be more merciful than God? Do you pretend to be more compassionate than that gracious Father who sent his own Son into the world to die for sinners?

Fantom. You take all your notions of the Deity from the vulgar views your Bible gives you of him. 'To be sure I do,' said Trueman: 'can you tell me any way of getting a better notion of him? I do not want any of your farthing-candle philosophy in the broad sunshine of the Gospel, Mr. Fantom. My Bible tells me that 'God is love;' not merely loving, but LOVE. Now do you think a Being, whose very essence is love, would permit any misery among his children here, if it was not to be, some way or other, or some where or other, for their good? You forget, too, that in a world where there is sin, there must be misery. Then, too, I suppose, God permits this very misery partly to exercise the sufferers and partly to try the prosperous; for by trouble God corrects some and tries others. Suppose now, Tom Saunders had not been put in prison, you and I ————no, I beg pardon, *you* saved your guinea; well then, our club and I could not have shown our kindness in getting him out; nor would poor Saunders himself have had an opportunity of exercising his own patience and submission under want and imprisonment. So you see one reason why God permits misery, is that good men may have an opportunity of lessening it.' Mr. Fantom replied, 'There is no object which I have more at heart; I have, as I told you, a plan in my head of such universal benevolence as to include the happiness of all mankind.'—'Mr. Fantom, said Trueman, 'I feel that I have a general good will to all my brethren of mankind; and if I had as much money in my purse as I have love in my heart, I trust I should prove it: all I say is, that, in a station of life where I cannot do much, I am more called upon to procure the happiness of a poor neighbour, who has no one else to look to, than to form wild plans for the good of mankind, too extensive to be accomplished, and too chimerical to be put in practice. It is the height of folly for a little ignorant tradesman to distract himself with projecting schemes which require the wisdom of scholars, the experience of statesmen, and the power of kings to accomplish. I cannot free whole countries, nor reform the evils of society at large, but I *can* free an aggrieved wretch in a workhouse; I *can* relieve the distresses of one of my journeymen; and I *can* labour to reform myself and my own family.'

Some weeks after this a letter was brought to Mr. Fantom from his late servant William, who had been turned away for drunkenness, as related above, and who had also robbed his master of some wine and some spoons. Mr. Fantom, glancing his eye over the letter, said, 'It is dated from Chelmsford jail; that rascal has got into prison. I am glad of it with all my heart, it is the fittest place for such scoundrels. I hope he will be sent to Botany Bay, if not hanged.'—'O, ho! my good friend,' said Trueman, 'then I find that in abolishing all prisons you would just let one stand for the accommodation of those who would happen to rob *you*. General benevolence, I see, is compatible with particular resentments, though individual kindness is not consistent with universal philanthropy.' Mr. Fantom drily observed, that he was not fond of jokes, and proceeded to read the letter. It expressed an earnest wish that his late master would condescend to pay him one visit in his dark and doleful abode; as he wished to say a few words to him before the dreadful sentence of the law, which had already been pronounced, should be executed.

'Let us go and see the poor fellow,' said Trueman; 'it is but a morning's ride. If he is really so near his end it would be cruel to refuse him.' 'Not I, truly;' said Fantom; 'he deserves nothing at my hands but the halter he is likely to meet with. Such port is not to be had for money! and the spoons, part of my new dozen!'—'As to the wine, said Trueman, 'I am afraid you must give that up, but the only way to get any tidings of the spoons is to go and hear what he has to say; I have no doubt but he will make such a confession as may be very useful to others, which, you know, is one grand advantage of punishments; and, besides, we may afford him some little comfort.' 'As to comfort he deserves none from me,' said Fantom; 'and as to his confessions, they can be of no use to me, but as they give me a chance of getting my spoons; so I do not much care if I do take a ride with you.'

When they came to the prison, Mr. Trueman's tender heart sunk within him. He deplored the corrupt nature of man, which makes such rigorous confinement indispensably needful, not merely for the punishment of the offender, but for the safety of society. Fantom, from mere trick and habit, was just preparing a speech on benevolence, and the cruelty of imprisonment; for he had a set of sentiments collected from the new philosophy which he always kept by him. The naming a man in power brought out the ready cut and dried phrase against oppression. The idea of rank included every vice, that of poverty every virtue; and he was furnished with all the invectives against the cruelty of laws, punishments, and prisons, which the new lexicon has produced. But his mechanical benevolence was suddenly checked; the ro-

collection of his old port and his new spoons cooled his ardour, and he went on without saying a word.

When they reached the cell where the unhappy William was confined, they stopped at the door. The poor wretch had thrown himself on the ground, as well as his chains would permit. He groaned piteously; and was so swallowed up with a sense of his own miseries, that he neither heard the door open, nor saw the gentlemen. He was attempting to pray, but in an agony which made his words hardly intelligible. Thus much they could make out—'God be merciful to me a sinner, the chief of sinners!' then, suddenly attempting to start up, but prevented by his irons, he roared out, 'O God! thou canst *not* be merciful to me, for I have denied thee; I have ridiculed my Saviour who died for me; I have broken his laws; I have derided his word; I have resisted his Spirit; I have laughed at that heaven which is shut against me; I have denied the truth of those torments which await me. To-morrow! to-morrow! O for a longer space for repentance! O for a short reprieve from hell!'

Mr. Trueman wept so loud that it drew the attention of the criminal, who now lifted up his eyes, and cast on his late master a look so dreadful that Fantom wished for a moment that he had given up all hope of the spoons, rather than have exposed himself to such a scene. At length the poor wretch said, in a low voice that would have melted a heart of stone, 'O, sir, are you there? I did indeed wish to see you before my dreadful sentence is put in execution. Oh, sir! to-morrow! to-morrow! But I have a confession to make to you. This revived Mr. Fantom, who again ventured to glance a hope at the spoons. 'Sir,' said William, 'I could not die without making my confession.' 'Ay, and restitution too, I hope,' replied Fantom: 'where are my spoons?' 'Sir, they are gone with the rest of my wretched booty. But oh, sir! those spoons make so petty an article in my black account, that I hardly think of them. Murder! sir, murder is the crime for which I am justly doomed to die. Oh, sir, who can abide the anger of an offended God? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' As this was a question which even a philosopher could not answer, Mr. Fantom was going to steal off, especially as he now gave up all hope of the spoons; but William called him back: 'Stay, sir, stay, I conjure you, as you will answer it at the bar of God. You must hear the sins of which you have been the occasion. You are the cause of my being about to suffer a shameful death.—Yes, sir, you made me a drunkard, a thief, and a murderer.' 'How dare you, William,' cried Mr. Fantom, with great emotion, 'accuse me with being the cause of such horrid crimes?' 'Sir,' answered the criminal, 'from you I learned the principles which lead to those crimes. By the grace of God I should never have fallen into sins deserving of the gallows, if I had not overheard you say there was no hereafter, no judgment, no future reckoning. O, sir! there *is* a hell, dreadful, inconceivable, eternal!' Here, through the excess of anguish, the poor fellow fainted away. Mr. Fantom, who did not at all relish this scene, said to his friend, 'well, sir, we will go, if you please, for you see there is nothing to be done.'

'Sir,' replied Mr. Trueman, mournfully, 'you may go if you please, but I shall stay, for I see there is a great deal to be done.'—'What!' rejoined the other, 'do you think it possible his life can be saved.' 'No, indeed,' said Trueman; 'but I hope it possible his soul may be saved.' 'I do not understand these things,' said Fantom, making toward the door. 'Nor I neither,' said Trueman; 'but as a fellow-sinner, I am bound to do what I can for this poor man. Do you go home, Mr. Fantom, and finish your treatise on universal benevolence, and the blessed effects of philosophy; and hark ye, be sure you let the frontispiece of your book represent *William on the gibbet;* that will be what our minister calls a PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION. You know I hate theories: this is *realizing;* this is PHILOSOPHY made easy to the meanest capacity. This is the precious fruit which grows on that darling tree, so many slips of which have been transplanted from that land of liberty of which it is the native, but which, with all your digging, planting, watering, dunging, and dressing, will, I trust, never thrive in this blessed land of ours.'

Mr. Fantom sneaked off to finish his work at home; and Mr. Trueman staid to finish his in the prison. He passed the night with the wretched convict; he prayed with him and for him, and read to him the penitential psalms, and some portions of the Gospel.—But he was too humble and too prudent a man to venture out of his depth by arguments and consolations which he was not warranted to use: this he left for the clergyman—but he pressed on William the great duty of making the only amends now in his power to those whom he had led astray.—They then drew up the following paper, which Mr. Trueman got printed, and gave away at the place of execution.

The last words, confession, and dying speech of WILLIAM WILSON, *who was executed at Chelmsford for murder.*

'I was bred up in the fear of God, and lived with credit in many sober families, in which I was a faithful servant; but being tempted by a little higher wages, I left a good place to go and live with Mr. Fantom, who, however made good none of his fine promises, but proved a hard master. Full of fine words and charitable speeches in favour of the poor; but apt to oppress, overwork, and underpay them. In his service I was not allowed time to go to church. This troubled me at first, till I overheard my master say, that going to church was a superstitious prejudice, and only meant for the vulgar. Upon this I resolved to go no more; for I thought there could not be two religions, one for the master, and one for the servant. Finding my master never prayed, I too left off praying: this gave Satan great power over me, so that I from that time fell into almost every sin. I was very uneasy at first, and my conscience gave me no rest; but I was soon reconciled by overhearing my master and another gentleman say, that death was only an eternal sleep, and hell and judgment were but an invention of priests to keep the poor in order. I mention this as a

warning to all masters and mistresses to take care what they converse about while servants are waiting at table. They cannot tell how many souls they have sent to perdition by such loose talk. The crime for which I die is the natural consequence of the principles I learnt of my master. A rich man, indeed, who throws off religion, may escape the gallows, because want does not drive him to commit those crimes which lead to it; but what shall restrain a needy man, who has been taught that there is no dreadful reckoning? Honesty is but a dream without the awful sanctions of heaven and hell. Virtue is but a shadow, if it be stripped of the terrors and the promises of the Gospel. Morality is but an empty name, if it be destitute of the principle and power of Christianity. Oh, my dear fellow-servants! take warning by my sad fate; never be tempted away from a sober service for the sake of a little more wages: never venture your immortal souls in houses where God is not feared. And now hear me, O, my God, though I have blasphemed thee! forgive me, O my Saviour, though I have denied thee! O Lord most holy, O God most mighty, deliver me from the bitter pains of eternal death, and receive my soul for His sake who died for sinners.

'WILLIAM WILSON.'

Mr. Trueman would never leave this poor penitent till he was launched into eternity, but attended him with the minister in the cart. This pious clergyman never cared to say what he thought of Williams state.—When Mr. Trueman ventured to mention his hope, that though his penitence was late, yet it was sincere, and spoke of the dying thief on the cross as a ground of encouragement, the minister with a very serious look, made this answer: 'Sir, that instance is too often brought forward on occasions to which it does not apply: I do not choose to say any thing to your application of it in the present case, but I will answer you in the words of a good man speaking of the penitent thief: 'There is *one* such instance given that nobody might despair, and there is *but* one, that nobody might presume.'

Poor William was turned off just a quarter before eleven; and may the Lord have mercy on his soul!

THE TWO WEALTHY FARMERS;

OR, THE HISTORY OF MR. BRAGWELL.

IN SEVEN PARTS

PART I.—THE VISIT.

MR. BRAGWELL and Mr. Worthy happened to meet last year at Weyhill fair. They were glad to see each other, as they had but seldom met of late; Mr. Bragwell having removed some years before from Mr. Worthy's neighbourhood, to a distant village, where he had bought an estate.

Mr. Bragwell was a substantial farmer and grazier. He had risen in the world by what worldly men call a run of good fortune. He had also been a man of great industry; that is, he had paid a diligent and constant attention to his own interest. He understood business, and had a knack of turning almost every thing to his own advantage. He had that sort of sense which good men call cunning, and knaves call wisdom. He was too prudent ever to do any thing so wrong that the law could take hold of him; yet he was not over scrupulous about the morality of an action, when the prospect of enriching himself by it was very great, and the chance of hurting his character was small. The corn he sent home to his customers was not always quite so good as the samples he had produced at market; and he now and then forgot to name some capital blemish in the horses he sold at fair. He scorned to be guilty of the petty frauds of cheating in weights and measures, for he thought that was a beggarly sin; but he valued himself on his skill in making a bargain, and fancied it showed his superior knowledge of the world to take advantage of the ignorance of a dealer.

It was his constant rule to undervalue every thing he was about to buy, and to overvalue every thing he was about to sell; but as he seldom lost sight of his discretion, he avoided every thing that was very shameful; so that he was considered merely as a hard dealer, and a keen hand at a bargain. Now and then when he had been caught in pushing his own advantage too far, he contrived to get out of the scrape by turning the whole into a jest, saying it was a good take in, a rare joke, and he had only a mind to divert himself with the folly of his neighbour, who could be so easily imposed on.

Mr. Bragwell, however, in his way, set a high value on character: not indeed that he had a right sense of its worth; he did not consider reputation as desirable because it increases influence, and for that reason strengthens the hands of a good man, and enlarges his sphere of usefulness: but he made the advantage of reputation, as well as of every other good, centre in himself. Had he observed a strict attention to principle, he feared he should not have got on so fast in the world as those do who consult expediency rather than probity, while, without a certain degree of character, he knew also, that he should forfeit that confidence which put other men in his power, and would set them as much on their guard against him, as he, who thought all mankind pretty much alike, was on his guard against them.

Mr. Bragwell had one favourite maxim; namely, that a man's success in life was a sure proof of his wisdom: and that all failure and misfortune was the consequence of a man's own folly. As this opinion was first taken up by him from vanity and ignorance, so it was more

and more confirmed by his own prosperity. He saw that he himself had succeeded greatly without either money or education to begin with; and he therefore now despised every man, however excellent his character or talents might be, who had not the same success in life. His natural disposition was not particularly bad, but prosperity had hardened his heart. He made his own progress in life the rule by which the conduct of all other men was to be judged, without any allowance for their peculiar disadvantages, or the visitations of Providence. He thought, for his part, that every man of sense could command success on his undertakings, and control and dispose the events of his own life.

But though he considered those who had had less success than himself as no better than fools, yet he did not extend this opinion to Mr. Worthy, whom he looked upon not only as a good but a wise man. They had been bred up when children in the same house; but with this difference, that Worthy was the nephew of the master, and Bragwell the son of the servant.

Bragwell's father had been ploughman in the family of Mr. Worthy's uncle, a sensible man, who farmed a small estate of his own, and who having no children, bred up young Worthy as his son, instructed him in the business of husbandry, and at his death left him his estate. The father of Worthy was a pious clergyman, who lived with his brother the farmer, in order to help out a narrow income. He had bestowed much pains on the instruction of his son, and used frequently to repeat to him a saying, which he had picked up in a book written by one of the greatest men this country ever produced—That there were two things with which every man ought to be acquainted, RELIGION AND HIS OWN BUSINESS.—While he therefore took care that his son should be made an excellent farmer, he filled up his leisure hours in improving his mind: so that young Worthy had read more good books, and understood them better, than most men in his station. His reading however had been chiefly confined to husbandry and divinity, the two subjects which were of the most immediate importance to him.

The reader will see by this time that Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy were as likely to be as opposite to each other as two men could well be, who were nearly of the same age and condition, and who were neither of them without credit in the world. Bragwell indeed made far the greater figure; for he liked to *cut a dash*, as he called it. It was his delight to make the ancient gentry of the neighbourhood stare, at seeing a grazier vie with them in show, and exceed them in expense. And while it was the study of Worthy to conform to his station, and to set a good example to those about him, it was the delight of Bragwell to eclipse, in his way of life, men of larger fortune. He did not see how much his vanity raised the envy of his inferiors, the ill-will of his equals, and the contempt of his betters.

His wife was a notable stirring woman, but vain, violent, and ambitious; very ignorant, and very high-minded. She had married Bragwell before he was worth a shilling, and as she had brought him a good deal of money, she thought herself the grand cause of his rising in the world; and thence took occasion to govern him most completely. Whenever he ventured to oppose her, she took care to put him in mind that he owed every thing to her; that had it not been for her, he might still have been stumping after a plough-tail, or serving hogs in old Worthy's farm-yard; but that it was she who had made a gentleman of him. In order to set about making him a gentleman, she had begun by teazing him till he had turned away all his poor relations who worked in the farm: she next drew him off from keeping company with his old acquaintance and at last persuaded him to remove from the place where he had got his money. Poor woman! she had not sense and virtue enough to see how honourable it is for a man to raise himself in the world by fair means, and then to help forward his poor relations and friends; engaging their services by his kindness, and endeavouring to turn his own advancement in life to the best account, that of making it the instrument of assisting those who had a natural claim to his protection.

Mrs. Bragwell was an excellent mistress, according to her own notions of excellence; for no one could say she ever lost an opportunity of scolding a servant, or was ever guilty of the weakness of overlooking a fault. Towards her two daughters her behaviour was far otherwise. In them she could see nothing but perfections, but her extravagant fondness for these girls was full as much owing to pride as to affectation. She was bent on making a family, and having found out that she was too ignorant, and too much trained to the habits of getting money, ever to hope to make a figure herself, she looked to her daughters as the persons who were to raise the family of the Bragwells; and to this hope she foolishly submitted to any drudgery for their sakes, and bore every kind of impertinence from them.

The first wish of her heart was to set them above their neighbours; for she used to say, what was the use of having substance, if her daughters might not carry themselves above girls who had nothing? To do her justice, she herself would be about early and late to see that the business of the house was not neglected. She had been bred to great industry, and continued to work when it was no longer necessary, both from early habit, and the desire of heaping up money for her daughters. Yet her whole notion of gentility was, that it consisted in being rich and idle; and, though she was willing to be a drudge herself, she resolved to make her daughters gentlewomen on this principle. To be well dressed, to eat elegantly, and to do nothing, or nothing of which is of any use, was what she fancied distinguished people in genteel life. And this is too common a notion of a fine education among a certain class; they do not esteem things by their use, but by their show. They estimate the value of their children's education by the money it costs, and not by the knowledge and goodness it bestows. People of this stamp often take a pride in the expense of learning, instead of taking pleasure in the advantages of it. And the silly vanity

of letting others see that they can afford any thing, often sets parents on letting their daughters learn not only things of no use, but things which may be really hurtful in their situation; either by setting them above their proper duties, or by taking up their time in a way inconsistent with them.

Mrs. Bragwell sent her daughters to a boarding-school, where she instructed them to hold up their heads as high as any body; to have more spirit than *to be put upon* by any one; never to be pitiful about money, but rather to show that they could afford to spend with the best; to keep company with the richest and most fashionable girls, in the school, and to make no acquaintance with farmers' daughters.

They came home at the usual age of leaving school, with a large portion of vanity grafted on their native ignorance. The vanity was added, but the ignorance was not taken away. Of religion they could not possibly learn any thing, since none was taught, for at that place Christianity was considered as a part of education which belonged only to charity schools. They went to church indeed once a Sunday, yet effectually to counteract any benefit such an attendance might produce, it was the rule of the school that they should use only French prayer-books; of course, such superficial scholars as the Miss Bragwells would always be literally praying in an unknown tongue; while girls of better capacity and more industry would infallibly be picking out the nominative case, the verb, and participle of a foreign language, in the solemn act of kneeling before the Father of Spirits, 'who searcheth the heart and tryeth the reins.' During the remainder of the Sunday they learnt their worldly tasks, all except actual needle-work, which omission alone mark'd the distinction of Sunday from other days; and the governess being a French Roman Catholic, it became a doubtful point with some people, whether her zeal or her negligence in the article of religion would be most to the advantage of her pupils. Of knowledge the Miss Bragwells had got just enough to laugh at their fond parents' rustic manners and vulgar language, and just enough taste to despise and ridicule every girl who was not as vainly dressed as themselves.

The mother had been comforting herself for the heavy expense of their bringing up, by looking forward to the pleasure of seeing them become fine ladies, and the pride of marrying them above their station; and to this hope she constantly referred in all her conversations with them; assuring them that all her happiness depended on their future elevation.

Their father hoped, with far more judgment, that they would be a comfort to him both in sickness and in health. He had had no learning himself, and could write but poorly, and owed what skill he had in figures to his natural turn of business. He reasonably hoped that his daughters, after all the money he had spent on them, would now write his letters and keep his accounts. And as he was now and then laid up with a fit of the gout, he was enjoying the prospect of having two affectionate children to nurse him, as well as two skilful assistants to relieve him.

When they came home, however, he had the mortification to find, that though he had two smart showy ladies to visit him, he had neither dutiful daughters to nurse him, nor faithful stewards to keep his books, nor prudent children to manage his house. They neither soothed him by their kindness when he was sick, nor helped him by their industry when he was busy. They thought the maid might take care of him in the gout as she did before; for they fancied that nursing was a coarse and servile employment: and as to their skill in cyphering he soon found, to his cost, that though they knew how to *spend* both pounds, shillings, and pence, yet they did not know how so well to cast them up. Indeed it is to be regretted that women in general, especially in the middle class, are so little grounded in so indispensable, solid, and valuable an acquirement as arithmetic.

Mrs. Bragwell being one day very busy in preparing a great dinner for the neighbours, ventured to request her daughters to assist in making the pastry. They asked her with a scornful smile, whether she had sent them to a boarding school to learn to cook; and added, that they supposed she would expect them next to make hasty-puddings for the hay-makers. So saying, they coolly marched off to their music. When the mother found her girls were too polite to be of any use, she would take comfort in observing how her parlour was set out with their fillagree and flowers, their embroidery and cut paper. They spent the morning in bed, the noon in dressing, the evening at the harpsichord, and the night in reading novels.

With all these fine qualifications it is easy to suppose, that as they despised their sober duties, they no less despised their plain neighbours. When they could not get to a horse-race, a petty-ball, or a strolling play, with some company as idle and as smart as themselves, they were driven for amusement to the circulating library. Jack, the ploughboy, on whom they had now put a livery jacket, was employed half his time in trotting backwards and forwards with the most wretched trash the little neighbouring bookshop could furnish. The choice was often left to Jack, who could not read, but who had general orders to bring all the new things, and a great many of them.

It was a misfortune, that at the school at which they had been bred, and at some others, there was no system of education which had any immediate reference to the station of life to which the girls chiefly belonged. As persons in the middle line, for want of that acquaintance with books, and with life and manners, which the great possess, do not always see the connexion between remote consequences and their causes, the evils of a corrupt and inappropriate system of education do not strike *them* so forcibly; and provided *they can pay for it*, which is made the grand criterion between the fit and the unfit, they are too little disposed to consider the value, or rather the worthlessness, of the thing which is paid for: but literally go on to *give their money for that which is not bread.*

Their subsequent course of reading serves to establish all the errors of their education. In-

stead of such books as might help to confirm and strengthen them in all the virtues of their station, in humility, economy, meekness, contentment, self-denial, and industry; the studies now adopted are, by a graft on the old stock, made to grow on the habits acquired at school. Of those novels and plays which are so eagerly devoured by persons of this discription, there is perhaps scarce one which is not founded upon principles which would lead young women of the middle ranks to be discontented with their station. It is *rank*—it is *elegance*—it is *beauty*—it is *sentimental feelings*—it is *sensibility*—it is some needless, or some superficial, or some quality hurtful, even in that fashionable person to whom the author ascribes it, which is the ruling principle. This quality transferred into the heart and the conduct of an illiterate woman in an inferior station, becomes absurdity, becomes sinfulness.

Things were in this state in the family we are describing, or rather growing worse; for idleness and vanity are never at a stand; when these two wealthy farmers, Bragwell and Worthy, met at Weyhill fair, as was said before. After many hearty salutations had passed between them, it was agreed that Mr. Bragwell should spend the next day with his old friend, whose house was not many miles distant. Bragwell invited himself in the following manner: 'We have not had a comfortable day's chat for years,' said he, 'and as I am to look at a drove of lean beasts in your neighbourhood, I will take a bed at your house, and we will pass the evening in debating as we used to do. You know I always loved a bit of an argument, and am not reckoned to make the worst figure at our club: I had not, to be sure, such good learning as you had, because your father was a parson, and you got it for nothing: but I can bear my part pretty well for all that. When any man talks to me about his learning, I ask if it has helped him to get a good estate; if he says no, then I would not give him a rush for it; for of what use is all the learning in the world, if it does not make a man rich? But, as I was saying, I will come and see you to-morrow; but now don't let your wife put herself in a fuss for me: don't alter your own plain way: for I am not proud, I assure you, nor above my old friends; though, I thank God, I am pretty well in the world.'

To all this flourishing speech Mr. Worthy coolly answered, that certainly worldly prosperity ought never to make any man proud, since it is God who giveth strength to get riches, and without his blessing, *'tis in vain to rise up early, and to eat the bread of carefulness.*

About the middle of the next day Mr. Bragwell reached Mr. Worthy's neat and pleasant dwelling. He found every thing in it the reverse of his own. It had not so many ornaments, but it had more comforts. And when he saw his friend's good old-fashioned arm-chair in a warm corner, he gave a sigh to think how his own had been banished to make room for his daughter's piano forte. Instead of made flowers in glass cases, and tea-chests and screens too fine to be used, which he saw at home, and about which he was cautioned, and scolded as often as he came near them: his daughters watching his motions with the same anxiety as they would have watched the motions of a cat in a china shop. Instead of this, I say, he saw some neat shelves of good books for the service of the family, and a small medicine chest for the benefit of the poor.

Mrs. Worthy and her daughters had prepared a plain but neat and good dinner.—The tarts were so excellent, that Bragwell felt a secret kind of regret that his own daughters were too genteel to do any thing so very useful. Indeed he had been always unwilling to believe that any thing which was very proper and very necessary, could be so extremely vulgar and unbecoming as his daughters were always declaring it to be. And his late experience of the little comfort he found at home, inclined him now still more strongly to suspect that things were not so right there as he had been made to suppose. But it was in vain to speak; for his daughters constantly stopped his mouth by a favourite saying of theirs, which equally indicated affectation and vulgarity, that it was better to be out of the world than out of the fashion.

Soon after dinner the women went out to their several employments; and Mr. Worthy being left alone with his guest, the following discourse took place:

Bragwell. You have a couple of sober, pretty looking girls, Worthy; but I wonder they don't tiff off a little more. Why, my girls have as much fat and flour on their heads as would half maintain my reapers in suet pudding.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, in the management of my family, I don't consider what I might afford only, though that is one great point; but I consider also what is needful and becoming in a man of my station; for there are so many useful ways of laying out money, that I feel as if it were a sin to spend one unnecessary shilling.—Having had the blessing of a good education myself, I have been able to give the like advantage to my daughters. One of the best lessons I have taught them is, to know themselves; and one proof that they have learnt this lesson is, that they are not above any of the duties of their station. They read and write well, and when my eyes are bad, they keep my accounts in a very pretty manner. If I had put them to learn what you call *genteel things*, these might either have been of no use to them, and so both time and money thrown away; or they might proved worse than nothing to them by leading them into wrong notions, and wrong company. Though we do not wish them to do the laborious parts of the dairy work, yet they always assist their mother in the management of it. As to their appearance, they are every day nearly as you see them now, and on Sunday they are very neatly dressed, but it is always in a decent and modest way. There are no lappets, fringes, furbelows, and tawdry ornaments; no trains, turbans, and flounces, fluttering about my cheese and butter. And I should feel no vanity, but much mortification, if a stranger seeing farmer Worthy's daughters at church should ask who those fine ladies were.

Bragwell. Now I own I should like to have such a question asked concerning my daugh

ters. I like to make people stare and envy. It makes one feel oneself somebody. I never feel the pleasure of having handsome things so much as when I see they raise curiosity; and enjoy the envy of others as a fresh evidence of my own prosperity. But as to yourself, to be sure, you best know what you can afford; and indeed there is some difference between your daughters and the Miss Bragwells.

Worthy. For my part, before I engage in any expense, I always ask myself these two short questions; First, can I afford it?—Secondly, is it proper for me?

Bragwell. Do you so? Now I own I ask myself but one; for if I find I can afford it, I take care to make it proper for me. If I can pay for a thing, no one has a right to hinder me from having it.

Worthy. Certainly. But a man's own prudence, his love of propriety and sense of duty, ought to prevent him from doing an improper thing, as effectually as if there were somebody to hinder him.

Bragwell. Now, I think a man is a fool who is hindered from having any thing he has a mind to; unless indeed, he is in want of money to pay for it. I am no friend to debt. A poor man must want on.

Worthy. But I hope my children have not learnt to want any thing which is not proper for them. They are very industrious; they attend to business all day, and in the evening they sit down to their work and a good book. I take care that neither their reading nor conversation shall excite any desires or tastes unsuitable to their condition. They have little vanity, because the kind of knowledge they have is of too sober a sort to raise admiration; and from that vanity which attends a little smattering of frivolous accomplishments, I have secured them, by keeping them in total ignorance of all such. I think they live in the fear of God. I trust they are humble and pious, and I am sure they seem cheerful and happy. If I am sick, it is pleasant to see them dispute which shall wait upon me; for they say the maid cannot do it so tenderly as themselves.

This part of the discourse staggered Bragwell. An involuntary tear rushed into his eye. Vain as he was, he could not help feeling what a difference a religious and a worldly education made on the heart, and how much the former regulated even the natural temper. Another thing which surprised him was, that these girls living a life of domestic piety, without any public diversions, should be so very cheerful and happy; while his own daughters, who were never contradicted, and were indulged with continual amusements, were always sullen and ill-tempered. That they who were more humoured should be less grateful, and they who were more amused less happy, disturbed him much. He envied Worthy the tenderness of his children, though he would not own it, but turned it off thus:

Bragwell. But my girls are too smart to make mops of, that is the truth. Though ours is a lonely village, it is wonderful to see how soon they get the fashions. What with the discriptions in the magazines, and the pictures in the pocket-books, they have them in a twinkling and out-do their patterns all to nothing. I used to take in the Country Journal, because it was useful enough to see how oats went, the time of high water, and the price of stocks. But when my ladies came home, forsooth, I was soon whedled out of that, and forced to take a London paper, that tells a deal about the caps and feathers, and all the trumpery of the quality, and the French dress, and the French undress. When I want to know what hops are a bag, they are snatching the paper to see what violet soap is a pound. And as to the dairy, they never care how cow's milk goes, as long as they can get some stuff which they call milk of roses. Seeing them disputing violently the other day about cream and butter, I thought it a sign they were beginning to care for the farm, till I found it was cold cream for the hands, and jessamine butter for the hair.

Worthy. But do your daughters never read?

Bragwell. Read! I believe they do too. Why our Jack, the plough-boy, spends half his time in going to a shop in our market town, where they let out books to read with marble covers. And they sell paper with all manner of colours on the edges, and gim-cracks, and powder-puffs, and wash-balls, and cards without any pips, and every thing in the world that's genteel and of no use. 'Twas but the other day I met Jack with a basket full of these books; so having some time to spare, I sat down to see a little what they were about.

Worthy. Well, I hope you there found what was likely to improve your daughters, and teach them the true use of time.

Bragwell. O, as to that, you are pretty much out. I could make neither head nor tail of it; it was neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring: it was all about my lord, and sir Harry, and the captain. But I never met with such nonsensical fellows in my life. Their talk was no more like that of my old landlord, who was a lord you know, nor the captain of our fensibles, than chalk is like cheese. I was fairly taken in at first, and began to think I had got hold of a *godly* book; for there was a deal about hope and despair, and death, and heaven, and angels, and torments, and everlasting happiness. But when I got a little on, I found there was no meaning in all these words, or if any, it was a bad meaning. Eternal misery, perhaps, only meant a moment's disappointment about a bit of a letter; and everlasting happiness meant two people talking nonsense together for five minutes. In short, I never met with such a pack of lies. The people talk such wild gibberish as no folks in their sober senses ever did talk; and the things that happen to them are not like the things that ever happen to me or any of my acquaintance. They are at home one minute, and beyond sea the next: beggars to-day, and lords to-morrow; waiting maids in the morning, and dutchesses at night. Nothing happens in a natural gradual way, as it does at home; they grow rich by the stroke of a wand, and poor by the magic of a word; the disinherited orphan of this hour is the overgrown heir of the next: now a bride and bridegroom turn out to be brother and sister, and the brother and sister prove to be no

relations at all. You and I, master Worthy, have worked hard many years, and think it very well to have scraped a trifle of money together; you, a few hundreds I suppose, and I a few thousands. But one would think every man in these books had the bank of England in his 'scrutoire. Then there is another thing which I never met with in true life. We think it pretty well, you know, if one has got one thing, and another has got another. I will tell you how I mean. You are reckoned sensible, our parson is learned, the squire is rich, I am rather generous, one of your daughters is pretty, and both mine are genteel. But in these books (except here and there one, whom they make worse than Satan himself) every man and woman's child of them, are all wise, and witty, and generous, and rich, and handsome, and genteel; and all to the last degree. Nobody is middling, or good in one thing, and bad in another, like my live acquaintance; but it is all up to the skies, or down to the dirt. I had rather read Tom Hickathrift, or Jack the giant Killer, a thousand times.

Worthy. You have found out, Mr. Bragwell, that many of these books are ridiculous; I will go farther, and say, that to me they appear wicked also: and I should account the reading of them a great mischief, especially to people in middling and low life, if I only took into the account the great loss of time such reading causes, and the aversion it leaves behind for what is more serious and solid. But this, though a bad part, is not the worst. These books give false views of human life. They teach a contempt for humble and domestic duties; for industry, frugality, and retirement. Want of youth and beauty is considered in them as ridiculous. Plain people, like you and me, are objects of contempt. Parental authority is set at naught. Nay, plots and contrivances against parents and guardians, fill half the volumes. They consider love as the great business of human life, and even teach that it is impossible for this love to be regulated or restrained; and to the indulgence of this passion every duty is therefore sacrificed. A country life, with a kind mother or a sober aunt, is described as a state of intolerable misery: and one would be apt to fancy from their painting, that a good country house is a prison, and a worthy father the jailor. Vice is set off with every ornament which can make it pleasing and amiable; while virtue and piety are made ridiculous, by tacking to them something that is silly or absurd. Crimes which would be considered as hanging matter at our county assizes—at least if I were a juryman, I should bring in the whole train of heroes, *Guilty—Death*—are here made to the appearance of virtue, by being mixed with some wild flight of unnatural generosity. Those crying sins, ADULTERY, GAMING, DUELS, and SELF-MURDER, are made so familiar, and the wickedness of them is so disguised by fine words and soft descriptions, that even innocent girls get loose to their abhorrence, and talk with complacency, of *things which should not be so much as named by them.*

I should not have said so much on this mischief (continued Mr. Worthy) from which I dare say, great folks fancy people in our station are safe enough, if I do not know and lament that this corrupt reading is now got down even among some of the lowest class. And it is an evil which is spreading every day. Poor industrious girls, who get their bread by the needle or the loom, spend half the night in listening to these books. Thus the labour of one girl is lost, and the minds of the rest are corrupted; for though their hands are employed in honest industry, which might help to preserve them from a life of sin, yet their hearts are at the very time polluted by scenes and descriptions which are too likely to plunge them into it: and when their vain weak heads compare the soft and delicious lives of the heroines in the book, with their own mean garb and hard labour, the effect is obvious; and I think I do not go too far when I say, that the vain and showy manner in which young women, who have to work for their bread, have taken to dress themselves, added to the poison they draw from these books, contribute together to bring them to destruction, more than almost any other cause. Now tell me, do not you think these wild books will hurt your daughters?

Bragwell. Why I do think they are grown full of schemes, and contrivances and whispers, that's the truth on't. Every thing is a secret. They always seem to be on the look-out for something, and when nothing comes on't, then they are sulky and disappointed. They will keep company with their equals: they despise trade and farming; and I own *I'm for the stuff.* I should not like them to marry any but a man of substance, if he was ever so smart. Now they will hardly sit down with a substantial country dealer. But if they hear of a recruiting party in our market-town, on goes the finery—off they are. Some flimsy excuse is patched up. They want something at the book-shop or the milliner's; because I suppose there is a chance for some Jack-a-napes of an ensign may be there buying sticking-plaster. In short, I do grow a little uneasy; for I should not like to see all I have saved thrown away on a knapsack.

So saying, they both rose and walked out to view the farm. Mr. Bragwell affected greatly to admire the good order of every thing he saw; but never forgot to compare it with something larger, and handsomer, or better of his own. It was easy to see that *self* was his standard of perfection in every thing. All he himself possessed gained some increased value in his eyes from being his; and in surveying the property of his friend, he derived food for his vanity, from things which seemed least likely to raise it. Every appearance of comfort, of success of merit, in any thing which belonged to Mr. Worthy led him to speak of some superior advantage of his own of the same kind: and it was clear that the chief part of the satisfaction he felt in walking over the farm of his friend, was caused by thinking how much larger his own was.

Mr. Worthy, who felt a kindness for him, which all his vanity could not cure, was always on the watch how to turn their talk on some useful point. And whenever people resolve to go into company with this view, it is commonly their own fault, if some opportunity of turning it to account does not offer.

He saw Bragwell was intoxicated with pride, and undone by success; and that his family was in the high road to ruin through mere prosperity. He thought that if some means could be found to open his eyes on his own character, to which he was now totally blind, it might be of the utmost service to him. The more Mr. Worthy reflected, the more he wished to undertake this kind office. He was not sure that Mr. Bragwell would bear it, but he was very sure it was his duty to attempt it. As Mr. Worthy was very humble himself, he had great patience and forbearance with the faults of others. He felt no pride at having escaped the errors into which they had fallen, for he knew who it was had *made him to differ*. He remembered that God had given him many advantages; a pious father and a religious education: this made him humble under a sense of his own sins, and charitable towards the sins of others, who had not the same privileges.

Just as he was going to try to enter into a very serious conversation with his guest, he was stopped by the appearance of his daughter, who told them supper was ready.—This interruption obliges me to break off also, and I shall reserve what follows to the next month, when I promise to give my readers the second part of this history.

PART II.

A CONVERSATION.

Soon after supper Mrs. Worthy left the room with her daughters, at her husband's desire; for it was his intention to speak more plainly to Bragwell than was likely to be agreeable to him to hear before others. The two farmers being seated at their little table, each in a handsome old-fashioned great chair, Bragwell began.

'It is a great comfort neighbour Worthy, at a certain time of life to be got above the world: my notion is, that a man should labour hard the first part of his days, that he may then sit down and enjoy himself the remainder. Now, though I hate boasting, yet as you are my oldest friend, I am about to open my heart to you. Let me tell you then I reckon I have worked as hard as any man in my time, and that I now begin to think I have a right to indulge a little. I have got my money with character, and I mean to spend it with credit. I pay every one his own, I set a good example, I keep to my church, I serve God, I honour the king, and I obey the laws of the land.'

'This is doing a great deal indeed,' replied Mr. Worthy: 'but,' added he, 'I doubt that more goes to the making up all these duties than men are commonly aware of. Suppose then that you and I talk the matter over coolly; we have the evening before us.—What if we sit down together as two friends and examine one another.'

Bragwell, who loved argument, and who was not a little vain both of his sense and his morality, accepted the challenge, and gave his word that he would take in good part any thing that should be said to him.—Worthy was about to proceed, when Bragwell interrupted him for a moment, by saying—'But stop, friend, before we begin I wish you would remember that we have had a long walk, and I want a little refreshment; have you no liquor that is stronger than this cider? I am afraid it will give me a fit of the gout.'

Mr. Worthy immediately produced a bottle of wine, and another of spirits; saying, that though he drank neither spirits nor even wine himself, yet his wife always kept a little of each as a provision in case of sickness or accidents.

Farmer Bragwell preferred the brandy, and began to taste it. 'Why,' said he, 'this is no better than English; I always use foreign myself.'—'I bought this for foreign,' said Mr. Worthy.—'No, no, it is English spirits I assure you; but I can put you into a way to get foreign nearly as cheap as English.' Mr. Worthy replied that he thought that was impossible.

Bragwell. O no; there are ways and means—a word to the wise—there is an acquaintance of mine that lives upon the south coast—you are a particular friend and I will get you half-a-dozen gallons for a trifle.

Worthy. Not if it be smuggled, Mr. Bragwell, though I should get it for sixpence a bottle.—'Ask no questions,' said the other, 'I never say any thing to any one, and who is the wiser?'—'And so this is your way of obeying the laws of the land,' said Mr. Worthy—'here is a fine specimen of your morality.'

Bragwell. Come, come, don't make a fuss about trifles. If *every one* did it indeed it would be another thing; but as to *my* getting a little good brandy cheap, why that can't hurt the revenue much.

Worthy. Pray Mr. Bragwell what should you think of a man who would dip his hand into a bag and take out a few guineas?

Bragwell. Think? why I think that he should be hanged to be sure.

Worthy. But suppose that bag stood in the king's treasury?

Bragwell. In the king's treasury! worse and worse! What, rob the king's treasury! Well, I hope if any one has done it, the robber will be taken up and executed; for I suppose we shall all be taxed to pay the damage.

Worthy. Very true. If one man takes money out of the treasury, others must be obliged to pay the more into it. But what think you if the fellow should be found to have stopped some money *in its way* to the treasury, instead of taking it out of the bag after it got there?

Bragwell. Guilty, Mr. Worthy; it is all the same, in my opinion. If I were judge I would hang him without benefit of clergy.

Worthy. Hark ye, Mr. Bragwell, he that deals in smuggled brandy is the man who takes to himself the king's money in its way to the treasury, and he as much robs the government as if he dipt his hands into a bag of guineas in the treasury chamber. It comes to the same thing exactly. Here Bragwell seemed a little offended, and exclaimed—'What, Mr. Worthy! do you pretend to say I am not an honest man because I like to get my brandy as cheap as I can? and because I like to save a shilling to my family? Sir, I repeat it; I do my duty to God

and my neighbour. I say the Lord's prayer most days, I go to church on Sundays, I repeat my creed, and keep the ten commandments; and though I now and then get a little brandy cheap, yet upon the whole, I will venture to say, I do as much as can be expected of any man, and more than the generality.'

Worthy. Come then since you say you keep the commandments, you cannot be offended if I ask you whether you understand them.

Bragwell. To be sure I do. I dare say I do: look'ye, Mr. Worthy, I don't pretend to much reading, I was not bred to it as you were. If my father had been a parson, I fancy I should have made as good a figure as some other folks, but I hope good sense and *a good heart* may teach a man his duty without much scholarship.

Worthy. To come to the point; let us now go through the ten commandments, and let us take along with us those explanations of them which our Saviour gave us in his sermon on the mount.

Bragwell. Sermon on the mount! why the ten commandments are in the 20th chapter of Exodus. Come, come, Mr. Worthy, I know where to find the commandments as well as you do; for it happens that I am church-warden, and I can see from the altar-piece where the ten commandments are, without your telling me, for my pew directly faces it.

Worthy. But I advise you to read the sermon on the mount, that you may see the full meaning of them.

Bragwell. What! do you want to make me believe there are two ways of keeping the commandments?

Worthy. No; but there may be two ways of understanding them.

Bragwell. Well, I am not afraid to be put to the proof; I defy any man to say I do not keep at least all the four first that are on the left side of the altar-piece.

Worthy. If you can prove that, I shall be more ready to believe you observe those of the other table; for he who does his duty to God, will be likely to do his duty to his neighbour also.

Bragwell. What! do you think that I serve two Gods? Do you think then that I make graven images, and worship stocks or stones? Do you take me for a papist or an idolater?

Worthy. Don't triumph quite so soon, master Bragwell. Pray is there nothing in the world you prefer to God, and thus make an idol of? Do you not love your money, or your lands, or your crops, or your cattle, or your own will, or your own way, rather better than you love God? Do you never think of these with more pleasure than you think of him, and follow them more eagerly than your religious duty?

Bragwell. O! there's nothing about that in the 20th chapter of Exodus.

Worthy. But Jesus Christ has said, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' Now it is certainly a man's duty to love his father and his mother; nay, it would be wicked not to love them, and yet we must not love even these more than our Creator and our Saviour. Well, I think on this principle, your heart pleads guilty to the breach of the first and second commandments; let us proceed to the third.

Bragwell. That is about swearing, is it not?

Mr. Worthy, who had observed Bragwell guilty of much profaneness in using the name of his Maker, (though all such offensive words have been avoided in writing this history) now told him that he had been waiting the whole day for an opportunity to reprove him for his frequent breach of the third commandment.

'Good L—d! I break the third commandment!' said Bragwell; 'no indeed, hardly ever, I once used to swear a little to be sure, but I vow I never do it now, except now and then when I happen to be in a passion: aud in such a case, why, good G—d, you know the sin is with those who provoke me, and not with me; but, upon my soul, I don't think I have sworn an oath these three months, no not I, faith, as I hope to be saved.'

Worthy. And yet you have broken this holy law not less than five or six times in the last speech you have made.

Bragwell. Lord bless me! Sure you mistake. Good heavens, Mr. Worthy, I call G—d to witness, I have neither cursed nor swore since I have been in the house.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, this is the way in which many who call themselves very good sort of people deceive themselves. What! is it no profanation of the name of your Maker to use it lightly, irreverently and familiarly as you have done? Our Saviour has not only told us not to swear by the immediate name of God, but he has said, 'swear not at all, neither by heaven nor by the earth,' and in order to hinder our inventing any other irreligious exclamations or expressions, he has even added, 'but let your communications be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than this simple affirmation and denial cometh of evil.' Nay more, so greatly do I reverence that high and holy name, that I think even some good people have it too frequently in their mouths; and that they might convey the idea without the word.

Bragwell. Well, well, I must take a little more care, I believe. I vow to heaven I did not know there had been so much harm in it; but my daughters seldom speak without using some of these words, and yet they wanted to make me believe the other day that it was monstrous vulgar to swear.

Worthy. Women, even gentlewomen, who ought to correct this evil habit in their fathers, and husbands, and children, are too apt to encourage it by their own practice. And indeed they betray the profaneness of their own minds also by it; for none who venerate the holy name of God, can either profane it in this manner themselves, or hear others do so without being exceedingly pained at it.

Bragwell. Well, since you are so hard upon me, I believe I must e'en give up this point—so let us pass on to the next, and here I tread upon sure ground; for as sharp as you are upon me, you can't accuse me of being a Sabbath breaker, since I go to church every Sunday of my life, unless on some very extraordinary occasion.

Worthy. For those occasions the Gospel allows, by saying, 'the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' Our own

sickness. or attending on the sickness of others, are lawful impediments.

Bragwell. Yes, and I am now and then obliged to look at a drove of beasts, or to go a journey, or take some medicine, or perhaps some friend may call upon me, or it may be very cold, or very hot, or very rainy.

Worthy. Poor excuses! Mr. Bragwell. Do you call these lawful impediments? I am afraid they will not pass for such on the day of judgment. But how is the rest of your Sunday spent?

Bragwell. O why, I assure you I often go to church in the afternoon also, and even if I am ever so sleepy.

Worthy. And so you finish your nap at church, I suppose.

Bragwell. Why as to that, to be sure we do contrive to have something a little nicer than common for dinner on a Sunday: in consequence of which one eats, you know a little more than ordinary; and having nothing to do on that day, has more leisure to take a cheerful glass; and all these things will make one a little heavy you know.

Worthy. And don't you take a little ride in the morning, and look at your sheep when the weather is good; and so fill your mind just before you go to church with thoughts of them; and when the weather is bad, don't you settle an account? or write a few letters of business after church?

Bragwell. I can't say but I do; but that is nothing to any body, as long as I set a good example by keeping to my church.

Worthy. And how do you pass your Sunday evenings?

Bragwell. My wife and daughters go a visiting Sunday afternoons. My daughters are glad to get out at any rate; and as to my wife, she says that being ready dressed, it is a pity to lose the opportunity: besides, it saves her time on a weak day; so then you see I have it all my own way, and when I have got rid of the ladies, who are ready to faint at the smell of tobacco, I can venture to smoke a pipe, and drink a sober glass of punch with half a dozen friends.

Worthy. Which punch being made of smuggled brandy, and drunk on the Lord's-day, and very vain, as well as profane and worldly company, you are enabled to break both the law of God, and that of your country at a stroke: and I suppose when you are got together, you speak of your cattle, or of your crops, after which perhaps you talk over a few of your neighbours' faults, and then you brag a little of your own wealth or your own achievements.

Bragwell. Why you seem to know us so well, that any one would think you had been sitting behind the curtain; and yet you are a little mistaken too; for I think we have hardly said a word for several of our last Sundays on any thing but politics.

Worthy. And do you find that you much improve your Christian charity by that subject?

Bragwell. Why to be sure we do quarrel till we are very near fighting, that is the worst on't.

Worthy. And then you call names, and swear a little I suppose.

Bragwell. Why when one is contradicted and put in a passion you know, and when people, especially if they are one's inferiors, won't adopt all one's opinions, flesh and blood can't bear it.

Worthy. And when all your friends are gone home, what becomes of the rest of the evening?

Bragwell. That is just as it happens, sometimes I read the newspaper; and as one is generally most tired on the days one does nothing, I go to bed earlier on Sundays than on other days, that I may be more fit to get up to my business the next morning.

Worthy. So you shorten Sunday as much as you can, by cutting off a bit at both ends, I suppose; for I take it for granted, you lie a little later in the morning.

Bragwell. Come, come, we shan't get through the whole ten to-night, if you stand snubbing one at this rate. You may pass over the fifth; for my father and mother have been dead ever since I was a boy, so I am clear of that scrape.

Worthy. There are, however, many relative duties included in that commandment; unkindness to all kindred is forbidden.

Bragwell. O, if you mean my turning off my nephew Tom, the ploughboy, you must not blame me for that, it was all my wife's fault. He was as good a lad as ever lived to be sure, and my own brother's son; but my wife could not bear that a boy in a carter's frock should be about the house, calling her aunt. We quarrelled like dog and cat about it; and when he was turned away she and I did not speak for a week.

Worthy. Which was a fresh breach of the commandment; a worthy nephew turned out of doors, and a wife not spoken to for a week, are no very convincing proofs of your observance of the fifth commandment.

Bragwell. Well, I long to come to the sixth, for you don't think I commit murder I hope.

Worthy. I am not sure of that.

Bragwell. Murder! what, I kill any body?

Worthy. Why, the laws of the land, indeed, and the disgrace attending it, are almost enough to keep any man from actual murder; let me ask, however, do you never give way to unjust anger, and passion, and revenge? as for instance, do you never feel your resentment kindle against some of the politicians who contradict you on a Sunday night? and do you never push your animosity against somebody that has affronted you, further than the occasion can justify?

Bragwell. Hark'ee, Mr. Worthy, I am a man of substance, and no man shall offend me without my being even with him. So as to injuring a man, if he affronts me first, there's nothing but good reason in that.

Worthy. Very well! only bear in mind that you wilfully break this commandment, whether you abuse your servant, are angry at your wife, watch for a moment to revenge an injury on your neighbour, or even wreak your passion on a harmless beast; for you have then the seeds of murder working in your breast; and if there were no law, no gibbet, to check you, and no fear of disgrace neither, I am not sure where you would stop.

Bragwell. Why, Mr. Worthy, you have a strange way of explaining the commandments;

so you set me down for a murderer, merely because I bear hatred to a man who has done me a hurt, and am glad to do him a like injury in my turn.—I am sure I should want spirit if I did not.

Worthy. I go by the Scripture rule, which says, 'he that hateth his brother is a murderer; and again, 'pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' Besides, Mr. Bragwell, you made it a part of your boast that you said the Lord's prayer every day, wherein you pray to God to forgive you your trespasses as you forgive them that trespass against you.—If therefore you do not forgive them that trespass against you, in that case you daily pray that your own trespasses may never be forgiven.—Now own the truth; did you last night lie down in a spirit of forgiveness and charity with the whole world!

Bragwell. Yes, I am in charity with the whole world in general; because the greater part of it has never done me any harm. But I won't forgive old Giles, who broke down my new hedge yesterday for firing.—Giles who used to be so honest!

Worthy. And yet you expect that God will forgive you who have broken down his sacred laws, and have so often robbed him of his right—you have robbed him of the honour due unto his name—you have robbed him of his holy day by doing your own work, and finding your own pleasure in it—you have robbed his poor, particularly in the instance of Giles, by withholding from them, as overseer, such assistance as should prevent their being driven to the sin of stealing.

Bragwell. Why, you are now charging me with other men's sins as well as my own.

Worthy. Perhaps the sins which we cause other men to commit, through injustice, inconsideration, and evil example, may dreadfully swell the sum of our responsibility in the great day of account.

Bragwell. Well, come let us make haste and get through these commandments. The next is, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' Thank God, neither I nor my family can be said to break the seventh commandment.

Worthy. Here again, remember how Christ himself hath said, 'whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.' These are no far-fetched expressions of mine, Mr. Bragwell, they are the words of Jesus Christ. I hope you will not charge him with having carried things too far; for if you do, you charge him with being mistaken in the religion he taught; and this can only be accounted for, by supposing him an impostor.

Bragwell. Why, upon my word, Mr. Worthy, I don't like these sayings of his which you quote upon me so often, and that is the truth of it, and I can't say I feel much disposed to believe them.

Worthy. I hope you believe in Jesus Christ. I hope you believe that creed of your's, which you also boasted of repeating so regularly.

Bragwell. Well, well, I'll believe any thing you say, rather than stand quarrelling with you.

Worthy. I hope then, you will allow, that since it is adultery to look at a woman with even an irregular thought, it follows from the same rule, that all immodest dress in your daughters, or indecent jests and double meanings in yourself; all loose songs or novels; and all diversions also which have a like dangerous tendency, are forbidden by the seventh commandment; for it is most plain from what Christ has said, that it takes in not only the act, but the inclination, the desire, the indulged imagination; the act is only the last and highest degree of any sin; the topmost round, as it were, of a ladder, to which all the lower rounds are only as so many steps and stages.

Bragwell. Strict indeed! Mr. Worthy; but let us go on to the next; you won't pretend to say *I steal*; Mr. Bragwell, I trust, was never known to rob on the highway, to break open his neighbour's house, or to use false weights or measures.

Worthy. No, nor have you ever been under any temptation to do it, and yet there are a thousand ways of breaking the eighth commandment besides actual stealing. For instance do you never hide the faults of the goods you sell, and heighten the faults of those you buy? Do you never take advantage of an ignorant dealer, and ask more for a thing than it is worth? Do you never turn the distressed circumstances of a man who has something to sell, to your own unfair benefit; and thus act as unjustly by him as if you had stolen? Do you never cut off a shilling from a workman's wages, under the pretence which your conscience can't justify? Do you never pass off an unsound horse for a sound one? Do you never conceal the real rent of your estate from the overseers, and thereby rob the poor-rates of their legal due?

Bragwell. Pooh! these things are done every day. I shan't go to set up for being better than my neighbours in these sort of things; these little matters will pass muster—I don't set up for a reformer—If I am as good as the rest of my neighbours, no man can call me to account, I am not worse, I trust, and don't pretend to be better.

Worthy. You must be tried hereafter at the bar of God, and not by a jury of your fellow creatures; and the Scriptures are given us, in order to show by what rule we shall be judged. How many or how few do as you do, is quite aside from the question; Jesus Christ has even told us to strive to enter in the *strait* gate; so that we ought rather to take fright, from our being like the common run of people, than to take comfort from our being so.

Bragwell. Come, I don't like all this close work—it makes a man feel I don't know how—I don't find myself so happy as I did—I don't like this fishing in troubled waters—I'm as merry as the day is long when I let these things alone.—I'm glad we are got to the ninth. But I suppose I shall be lugged in there too, head and shoulders. Any one now who did not know me, would really think I was a great sinner, by your way of putting things: I don't bear false witness however.

Worthy. You mean, I suppose, you would not swear away any man's life falsely before a magistrate, but do you take equal care not to

slander or backbite him? Do you never represent a good action of a man you have quarrelled with, as if it were a bad one? or do you never make a bad one worse than it is, by your manner of telling it? Even when you invent no false circumstances, do you never give such a colour to those you relate, as to leave a false impression on the mind of the hearers? Do you never twist a story so as to make it tell a little better for yourself, and a little worse for your neighbour, than truth and justice warrant?

Bragwell. Why, as to that matter, all this is only natural.

Worthy. Ay, much too natural to be right, I doubt. Well, now we are got to the last of the commandments.

Bragwell. Yes, I have run the gauntlet finely through them all; you will bring me in guilty here, I suppose, for the pleasure of going through with it; for you condemn without judge or jury, master Worthy.

Worthy. The culprit, I think has hitherto pleaded guilty to the evidence brought against him. The tenth commandment, however, goes to the root and principle of evil, it dives to the bottom of things; this command checks the first rising of sin in the heart; teaches us to strangle it in the birth, as it were, before it breaks out in those acts which are forbidden: as, for instance, every man covets before he proceeds to steal; nay, many covet, knowing they can do it with impunity, who dare not steal, lest they should suffer for it.

Bragwell. Why, look'ee, Mr. Worthy, I don't understand these new fashioned explanations; one should not have a grain of sheer goodness left, if every thing one does is to be fritted away at this rate. I am not, I own, quite so good as I thought, but if what you say were true, I should be so miserable, I should not know what to do with myself.—Why, I tell you, all the world may be said to break the commandments at this rate.

Worthy. Very true. All the world, and I myself also, are but too apt to break them, if not in the letter, at least in the spirit of them. Why then all the world are (as the Scripture expresses it) 'guilty before God.' And if guilty, they should own they are guilty, and not stand up and justify themselves, as you do, Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Well, according to my notion, I am a very honest man, and honesty is the sum and substance of all religion, say I.

Worthy. All truth, honesty, justice, order, and obedience grow out of the Christian religion. The true Christian acts, at all times, and on all occasions, from the pure and spiritual principle of love to God and Christ.—On this principle, he is upright in his dealings, true to his word, kind to the poor, helpful to the oppressed. In short, if he truly loves God, he *must* do justice, and *can't help* loving mercy. Christianity is a uniform consistent thing. It does not allow us to make up for the breach of one part of God's law, by our strictness in observing another. There is no sponge in one duty, that can wipe out the spot of another sin.

Bragwell. Well, but at this rate, I should be always puzzling and blundering, and should never know for certain whether I was right or not; whereas I am now quite satisfied with myself, and have no doubts to torment me.

Worthy. One way of knowing whether we really desire to obey the whole law of God is this; when we find we have as great a regard to that part of it, the breach of which does not touch our own interest, as to that part which does. For instance, a man robs me; I am in a violent passion with him, and when it is said to me, doest thou well to be angry? I answer, I do well. *Thou shalt not steal* is a law of God, and this fellow has broken that law. Ay, but says conscience, 'tis *thy own property* which is in question. He has broken *thy* hedge, he has stolen *thy* sheep, he has taken *thy* purse.—Art thou therefore sure whether it is his violation of thy property, or of God's law which provokes thee? I will put a second case: I hear another swear most grievously—or I meet him coming drunk out of an ale-house; or I find him singing a loose, profane song. If I am not as much grieved for this blasphemer, or this drunkard, as I was for this robber; if I do not take the same pains to bring him to a sense of his sin, which I did to bring the robber to justice, 'how dwelleth the love of God in me?' Is it not clear that I value my own sheep more than God's commandments? That I prize my purse more than I love my Maker? In short, whenever I find out that I am more jealous for my own property than for God's law; more careful about my own reputation than *his* honour, I always suspect I am got upon wrong ground, and that even my right actions are not proceeding from a right principle.

Bragwell. Why, what in the world would you have me do? It would distract me, if I must run up every little action to its spring, in this manner.

Worthy. You must confess that your sins *are* sins.—You must not merely call them sins, while you see no guilt in them; but you must confess them so as to hate and detest them; so as to be habitually humbled under the sense of them; so as to trust for salvation not in your freedom from them, but in the mercy of a Saviour; and so as to make it the chief business of your life to contend against them, and in the main to forsake them. And remember, that if you seek for a deceitful gayety, rather than a well grounded cheerfulness; if you prefer a false security to final safety, and now go away to your cattle and your farm, and dismiss the subject from your thoughts, lest it should make you uneasy, I am not sure that this simple discourse may not appear against you at the day of account, as a fresh proof that you 'loved darkness rather than light,' and so increase your condemnation.

Mr. Bragwell was more affected than he cared to own. He went to bed with less spirits and more humility than usual. He did not, however, care to let Mr. Worthy see the impression which it had made upon him; but at parting next morning, he shook him by the hand more cordially than usual, and made him promise to return his visit in a short time.

What befel Mr. Bragwell and his family on

his going home may, perhaps, make the subject of a future part of this history.

PART III.

THE VISIT RETURNED.

Mr. Bragwell, when he returned home from his visit to Mr. Worthy, as recorded in the second part of this history, found that he was not quite so happy as he had formerly been. The discourses of Mr. Worthy had broken in not a little on his comfort. And he began to suspect that he was not so completely in the right as his vanity had led him to believe. He seemed also to feel less satisfaction in the idle gentility of his own daughters, since he had been witness to the simplicity, modesty, and usefulness of those of Mr. Worthy. And he could not help seeing that the vulgar violence of his wife did not produce so much family happiness at home, as the humble piety and quiet diligence of Mrs. Worthy produced in the house of his friend.

Happy would it have been for Mr. Bragwell, if he had followed up those new convictions of his own mind, which would have led him to struggle against the power of evil principles in himself, and to have controlled the force of evil habits in his family. But his convictions were just strong enough to make him uneasy under his errors, without driving him to reform them. The slight impression soon wore off, and he fell back into his old practices. Still his esteem for Mr. Worthy was not at all abated by the plain dealing of that honest friend. It is true, he dreaded his piercing eye: he felt that his example held out a constant reproof to himself. Yet such is the force of early affection and rooted reverence, that he longed to see him at his house. This desire, indeed, as is commonly the case, was made up of mixed motives. He wished for the pleasure of his friend's company; he longed for that favourite triumph of a vulgar mind, an opportunity of showing him his riches; and he thought it would raise his credit in the world to have a man of Mr. Worthy's character at his house.

Mr. Bragwell, it is true, still went on with the same eagerness in gaining money, and the same ostentation in spending it. But though he was as covetous as ever, he was not quite so sure that it was right to be so. While he was actually engaged abroad indeed, in transactions with his dealers, he was not very scrupulous about the means by which he *got* his money; and while he was indulging in festivity with his friends at home, he was easy enough as to the manner in which he *spent* it. But a man can neither be making bargains, nor making feasts always; there must be some intervals between these two great objects for which worldly men may be said to live; and in some of these intervals the most worldly form, perhaps, some random plans of amendment. And though many a one may say in the fulness of enjoyment, 'soul take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;' yet hardly any man, perhaps, allows himself to say, even in the most secret moments, I will *never* retire from business—I will *never* repent—I will *never* think of death—Eternity shall *never* come into my thoughts. The most that such a one probably ventures to say is, I need not repent *yet*; I will continue such a sin a little longer; it will be time enough to think on the next world when I am no longer fit for the business or the pleasures of this.

Such was the case with Bragwell. He set up in his mind a general distant sort of resolution, that *some years hence*, when he should be a *few years older*, a *few* thousands richer; when a few more of his *present schemes should be completed*, he would then think of altering his course of life. He would then certainly set about spending a religious old age; he would reform some practices in his dealings, or, perhaps, quit business entirely; he would think about reading good books, and when he had completed such a purchase, he would even begin to give something to the poor; but at present he really had little to spare for charity. The very reason why he should have given more was just the cause he assigned for not giving at all, namely the *hardness of the times*. The true grand source of charity, self-denial, never come into his head. *Spend less* that you may *save* more, he would have thought a shrewd maxim enough. But *spend less* that you may *spare more*, never entered into his book of Proverbs.

At length the time came when Mr. Worthy had promised to return his visit. It was indeed a little hastened by notice that Mr. Bragwell would have in the course of the week, a piece of land to sell by auction; and though Mr. Worthy believed the price was likely to be above his pocket, yet he knew it was an occasion which would be likely to bring the principal farmers of that neighbourhood together, some of whom he wanted to meet. And it was on this occasion that Mr. Bragwell prided himself, that he should show his neighbours so sensible a man as his dear friend Mr. Worthy.

Worthy arrived at his friend's house on the Saturday, time enough to see the house, and garden, and grounds of Mr. Bragwell by daylight. He saw with pleasure (for he had a warm and generous heart) those evident signs of his friend's prosperity; but as he was a man of sober mind, and was a most exact dealer in truth, he never allowed his tongue the license of immodest commendation, which he used to say either savoured of flattery or envy. Indeed he never rated mere worldly things so highly as to bestow upon them undue praise. His calm approbation somewhat disappointed the vanity of Mr. Bragwell, who could not help secretly suspecting that his friend, as good a man as he was, was not quite free from envy. He felt, however, very much inclined to forgive this jealousy, which he feared the sight of his ample property, and handsome habitation must naturally awaken in the mind of a man whose own possessions were so inferior. He practised the usual trick of ordinary and vulgar minds, that of pretending himself to find some fault with those things which were particularly deserving praise, when he found Worthy disposed to pass them over in silence.

When they came in to supper, he affected to

talk of the comforts of Mr. Worthy's *little* parlour, by way of calling his attention to his own large one. He repeated the word *snug*, as applied to every thing at Mr. Worthy's, with the plain design to make comparisons favourable to his own more ample domains. He contrived, as he passed by his chair, by a seeming accident, to push open the door of a large beaufet in the parlour, in which all the finery was most ostentatiously set out to view. He protested with a look of satisfaction which belied his words, that for his part he did not care a farthing for all this trumpery: and then smiling and rubbing his hands, added, with an air of no small importance, what a good thing it is though, for people of substance, that the tax on plate is taken off. You are a happy man, Mr. Worthy; you do not feel these things; tax or no tax, it is all the same to you. He took care during this speech, by a cast of his eye to direct Mr. Worthy's attention to a great profusion of the brightest cups, salvers, and tankards, and other shining ornaments, which crowded the beaufet. Mr. Worthy gravely answered Mr. Bragwell, it was indeed a tax which could not affect so plain a man as myself: but as it fell on a mere luxury, and therefore could not hurt the poor, I was always sorry that it could not be made productive enough to be continued. A man in my middling situation, who is contented with a good glass of beer, poured from a handsome earthen mug, the glass, the mug, and the beer, all of English manufacture, will be but little disturbed at taxes on plate or on wine; but he will regret, as I do, that many of these taxes are so much evaded, that new taxes are continually brought on to make up the deficiencies of the old.

During supper the young ladies sat in disdainful silence, not deigning to bestow the smallest civility on so plain a man as Mr. Worthy. They left the room with their mamma as soon as possible, being impatient to get away to ridicule their father's old-fashioned friend at full liberty.

The Dance; or, the Christmas Merry-making; exemplifying the effects of modern education in a farm house.

As soon as they were gone, Mr. Worthy asked Bragwell how his family comforts stood, and how his daughters, who, he said, were really fine young women, went on. O, as to that, replied Bragwell, pretty much like other men's handsome daughters, I suppose, that is, worse and worse. I really begin to apprehend that their fantastical notions have gained such a head, that after all the money I have scraped together, I shall never get them well married.

Betsey has just lost as good an offer as any girl could desire; young Wilson, an honest substantial grazier as any in the country. He not only knows every thing proper for his station, but is pleasing in his behaviour, and a pretty scholar into the bargain; he reads history-books and voyages of a winter's evening, to his infirm father, instead of going to the card-assembly in our town; he neither likes drinking nor sporting, and is a sort of a favourite with our parson; because he takes in the weekly numbers of a fine Bible with cuts, and subscribes to the Sunday-school, and makes a fuss about helping the poor; and sets up soup-shops, and sells bacon at an underprice, and gives odd bits of ground to his labourers to help them in these dear times, as they call them; but I think they are good times for *us*, Mr. Worthy.

Well, for all this, Betsey only despised him, and laughed at him; but as he is both handsome, and rich, I thought she might come round at last; and so I invited him to come and stay a day or two at Christmas, when we have always a little sort of merry-making here. But it would not do. He scorned to talk that palavering stuff which she has been used to in the marble-covered books I told you of. He told her, indeed, that it would be the happiness of his heart to live with her; which I own I thought was as much as could be expected of any man But Miss had no notion of marrying any one who was only desirous of living with her. No, no, forsooth, her lover must declare himself ready to die for her, which honest Wilson was not such a fool as to offer to do. In the afternoon, however, he got a little into her favour by making out a rebus or two in the Lady's Diary; and she condescended to say, she did not think Mr. Wilson had been so good a scholar; but he soon spoilt all again. We had a little dance in the evening. The young man, though he had not much taste for those sort of gambols, yet thought he could foot it a little in the old fashioned way. So he asked Betsey to be his partner. But when he asked what dance they should call, Miss drew up her head, and in a strange gibberish, said she should dance nothing but a *Menuet de la Cour*, and ordered him to call it. Wilson stared, and honestly told her she must call it herself; for he could neither spell nor pronounce such outlandish words, nor assist in such an outlandish performance. I burst out a laughing, and told him, I supposed it something like questions and commands; and if so, that was much merrier than dancing. Seeing her partner standing stock still, and not knowing how to get out of the scrape, the girl began by herself, and fell to swimming, and sinking, and capering, and flourishing, and posturing, for all the world just like the man on the slack rope at our fair. But seeing Wilson standing like a stuck pig, and we all laughing at her, she resolved to wreak her malice upon him; so, with a look of rage and disdain, she advised him to go down country bumpkin, with the dairy maid, who would make a much fitter partner, as well as wife, for him, than she could do.

I am quite of your mind, Miss, said he, with more spirit than I thought was in him; you may make a good partner for a dance, but you would make a sad one to go through life with. I will take my leave of you, Miss, with this short story. I had lately a pretty large concern in hay-jobbing, which took me to London. I waited a good while in the Hay-Market for my dealer, and, to pass away the time, I stepped into a sort of foreign singing play-house there, where I was grieved to the heart to see young women painted and dizened out, and capering away just as you have been doing. I thought it bad enough in them, and wondered the qua-

lity could be entertained with such indecent mummery. But little did I think to meet with the same paint, finery, and posturing tricks in a farm house. I will never marry a woman who despises me, nor the station in which I should place her, and so I take my leave.—Poor girl, how she *was* provoked! to be publicly refused, and turned off, as it were, by a grazier! But it was of use to some of the other girls, who have not held up their heads quite so high since, nor painted quite so red, but have condescended to speak to their equals.

But how I run on! I forget it is Saturday night, and that I ought to be paying my workmen, who are all waiting for me without.

Saturday Night; or the Workmen's Wages.

As soon as Mr. Bragwell had done paying his men, Mr. Worthy, who was always ready to extract something useful from accidental circumstances, said to him, I have made it a habit, and I hope not an unprofitable one, of trying to turn to some moral use, not only all the events of daily life, but all the employments of it too. And though it occurs so often, I hardly know one that sets me thinking more seriously than the ordinary business you have been discharging.—Ay, said Bragwell, it sets me thinking too, and seriously, as you say, when I observe how much the price of wages is increased.—Yes, yes, you are ready enough to think of that, said Worthy, but you say not a word of how much the value of your land is increased, and that the more you pay, the more you can afford to pay. But the thoughts I spoke of are quite of another cast.

When I call in my labourers, on a Saturday night, to pay them, it often brings to my mind the great and general day of account, when I, and you, and all of us, shall be called to our grand and awful reckoning, when we shall go to receive *our* wages, master and servants, farmer and labourer. When I see that one of my men has failed of the wages he should have received, because he has been idling at a fair; another has lost a day by a drinking-bout, a third confesses that, though he had task-work, and might have earned still more, yet he has been careless, and has not his full pay to receive; this, I say, sometimes sets me on thinking whether I also have made the most of my time. And when I come to pay even the more diligent, who have worked all the week, when I reflect that even these have done no more than it was their duty to do, I cannot help saying to myself, night is come, Saturday night is come. No repentance, or diligence on the part of these poor men can now make a bad week's work good. This week has gone into eternity. To-morrow is the season of rest; working time is over. 'There is no knowledge nor device in the grave.' My life also will soon be swallowed up in eternity; soon the space allotted me for diligence, for labour, will be over. Soon will the grand question be asked, 'What hast thou done?—Give an account of thy stewardship. Didst thou use thy working days to the end for which they were given?' With some such thoughts I commonly go to bed, and they help to quicken me to a keener diligence for the next week.

Some account of a Sunday in Mr. Bragwell's family.

Mr. Worthy had been for so many years used to the sober ways of his own well-ordered family, that he greatly disliked to pass a Sunday in any house of which Religion was not the governing principle. Indeed, he commonly ordered his affairs, and regulated his journies with an eye to this object. To pass a Sunday in an irreligious family, said he, is always unpleasant, often unsafe.—I seldom find I can do them any good, and they may perhaps do me some harm. At least, I am giving a sanction to their manner of passing it, if I pass it in the same manner. If I reprove them, I subject myself to the charge of singularity, and of being righteous over-much; if I do *not* reprove them, I confirm and strengthen them in evil. And whether I reprove them or not, I certainly partake of their guilt, if I spend it as they do.

He had, however, so strong a desire to be useful to Mr. Bragwell, that he at length determined to break through his common practice, and pass the Sunday at his house. Mr. Worthy was surprised to find that though the church bell was going, the breakfast was not ready, and expressed his wonder how this could be the case in so industrious a family. Bragwell made some awkward excuses. He said his wife worked her servants so hard all the week, that even she, as notable as she was, a little relaxed from the strictness of her demands on Sunday mornings; and he owned that in a general way, no one was up early enough for church. He confessed that his wife commonly spent the morning in making puddings, pies, syllabubs, and cakes, to last through the week; as Sunday was the only leisure time she and her maids had. Mr. Worthy soon saw an uncommon bustle in the house. All hands were busy. It was nothing but baking, and boiling, and stewing, and frying, and roasting, and running, and scolding, and eating. The boy was kept from church to clean the plate, the man to gather the fruit, the mistress to make the cheesecakes, the maids to dress the dinner, and the young ladies to dress themselves.

The truth was, Mrs. Bragwell, who had heard much of the order and good management of Mr. Worthy's family, but who looked down with disdain upon them as far less rich than herself, was resolved to indulge her vanity on the present occasion. She was determined to be even with Mrs. Worthy, in whose praises Bragwell had been so loud, and felt no small pleasure in the hope of making her guest uneasy, in comparing her with his own wife, when he should be struck dumb with the display both of her skill and her wealth. Mr. Worthy was indeed struck to behold as large a dinner as he had been used to see at a justice's meeting. He, whose frugal and pious wife had accustomed him only to such a plain Sunday's dinner as could be dressed without keeping any one from church, when he surveyed the loaded table of his friend, instead of feeling that envy which the grand preparations were meant to raise,

felt nothing but disgust at the vanity of his friend's wife, mixed with much thankfulness for the piety and simplicity of his own.

After having made the dinner wait a long time, the miss Bragwells marched in, dressed as if they were going to the assize-ball; they looked very scornfully at having been so hurried; though they had been dressing ever since they got up, and their fond father, when he saw them so fine, forgave all their impertinence, and cast an eye of triumph on Mr. Worthy, who felt he had never loved his own humble daughters so well as at that moment.

In the afternoon, the whole party went to church. To do them justice, it was indeed their common practice once a day, when the weather was good, and the road was neither dusty nor dirty, when the minister did not begin too early, when the young ladies had not been disappointed of their bonnets on the Saturday night, and when they had no smart company in the house, who rather wished to stay at home. When this last was the case, which, to say the truth, happened pretty often, it was thought a piece of good manners to conform to the humour of the guests. Mr. Bragwell had this day forborne to ask any of his usual company; well knowing that their vain and worldly conversation would only serve to draw on him some new reprimand from his friend.

Mrs. Bragwell and her daughters picked up, as usual, a good deal of acquaintance at church. Many compliments passed, and much of the news of the week was retailed before the service began. They waited with impatience for the reading the lessons as a licensed season for whispering, and the subject begun during the lessons, was finished while they were singing the psalms. The young ladies made an appointment for the afternoon with a friend in the next pew, while their mamma took the opportunity of inquiring aloud, the character of a dairy maid, which she observed with a compliment to her own good management, would save time on a week-day.

Mr. Worthy, who found himself quite in a new world, returned home with his friend alone. In the evening he ventured to ask Bragwell, if he did not, on a Sunday night, at least, make it a custom to read and pray with his family. Bragwell told him, he was sorry to say he had no family at home, else he should like to do it for the sake of example. But as his servants worked hard all the week, his wife was of opinion that they should then have a little holiday. Mr. Worthy pressed it home upon him, whether the utter neglect of his servants' principles was not likely to make a heavy article in his final account: and asked him if he did not believe that the too general liberty of meeting together, jaunting, and diverting themselves, on Sunday evenings, was not often found to produce the worst effects on the morals of servants and the good order of families? I put it to your conscience, said he, Mr. Bragwell, whether Sunday, which was meant as a blessing and a benefit, is not, as it is commonly kept, turned into the most mischievous part of the week, by the selfish kindness of masters, who, not daring to set their servants about any public work, allot them that day to follow their own devices, that they themselves may with more rigour refuse them a little indulgence, and a reasonable holiday, in the working part of the week, which a good servant has now and then a fair right to expect. Those masters who will give them half, or all the Lord's day, will not spare them a single hour of a working day. *Their* work *must* be done; God's work may be let alone.

Mr. Bragwell owned that Sunday had produced many mischiefs in his own family. That the young men and maids, having no eye upon them, frequently went to improper places with other servants, turned adrift like themselves. That in these parties the poor girls were too frequently led astray, and the men got to public houses and fives-playing. But it was none of his business to watch them. His family only did as others do; indeed it was his wife's concern; and she was so good a manager on other days, that she would not spare them an hour to visit a sick father or mother, it would be hard, she said, if they might not have Sunday afternoon to themselves, and she could not blame them for making the most of it. Indeed, she was so indulgent in this particular, that she often excused the men from going to church, that they might serve the beasts, and the maids, that they might get the milking done before the holiday part of the evening came on. She would not indeed hear of any competition between doing *her* work and taking their pleasure; but when the difference lay between their going to church and taking their pleasure, he *must* say that for his wife, she always inclined to the good-natured side of the question. She is strict enough in keeping them sober, because drunkenness is a costly sin; and to do her justice she does not care how little they sin at her expense.

Well, said Mr. Worthy, I always like to examine both sides fairly. and to see the different effects of opposite practices; now, which plan produces the greatest share of comfort to the master, and of profit to the servants in the long run? Your servants, 'tis likely, are very much attached to you; and very fond of living where they get their own way in so great a point.

O, as to that, replied Bragwell, you are quite out. My house is a scene of discord, mutiny, and discontent. And though there is not a better manager in England than my wife, yet she is always changing her servants; so that every quarter-day is a sort of jail delivery at my house; and when they go off, as they often do, at a moment's warning, to own the truth, I often give them money privately, that they may not carry my wife before the justice to get their wages.

I see, said Mr. Worthy, that all your worldly compliances do not procure you even worldly happiness. As to my own family, I take care to let them see that their pleasure is bound up with their duty, and that what they may call my strictness, has nothing in view but their safety and happiness. By this means I commonly gain their love, as well as secure their obedience. I know, that with all my care, I am liable to be disappointed, 'from the corruption that is in the world through sin.' But when

ever this happens, so far from encouraging me in remissness, it only serves to quicken my zeal. If by God's blessing, my servant turns out a good Christian, I have been a humble instrument in his hand of saving a soul committed to my charge.

Mrs. Bragwell came home, but brought only one of her daughters with her, the other, she said, had given them the slip, and was gone with a young friend, and would not return for a day or two. Mr. Bragwell was greatly displeased; as he knew that young friend had but a slight character, and kept bad acquaintances. Mrs. Bragwell came in, all hurry and bustle, saying, if her family did not go to bed with the lamb on Sundays, when they had nothing to do, how could they rise with the lark on Mondays, when so much was to be done.

Mr. Worthy had this night much matter for reflection. We need not, said he, go into the great world to look for dissipation and vanity. We can find both in a farm house. 'As for me and my house,' continued he, 'we will serve the Lord' every day, but especially on Sunday. 'It is the day which the Lord hath made; hath made for himself; we will rejoice in it,' and consider the religious use of it, not only as a duty, but as a privilege.

The next morning Mr. Bragwell and his friend set out early for the Golden Lion. What passed on this little journey, my readers shall hear soon.

PART IV.

The subject of prayer discussed in a morning's ride.

It was mentioned in the last part of this history, that the chief reason which had drawn Mr. Worthy to visit his friend just at the present time was, that Mr. Bragwell had a small estate to sell by auction. Mr. Worthy, though he did not think he should be a bidder, wished to be present, as he had business to settle with one or two persons who were expected at the Golden Lion, on that day, and he had put off his visit till he had seen the sale advertised in the county paper.

Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy set out early on the Monday morning, on their way to the Golden Lion, a small inn in a neighbouring market town. As they had time before them, they had agreed to ride slowly that they might converse on some useful subject, but here, as usual, they had two opinions about the same thing. Mr. Bragwell's notion of an useful subject was, something by which money was to be got, and a good bargain struck. Mr. Worthy was no less a man of business than his friend. His schemes were wise, and his calculations just; his reputation for integrity and good sense made him the common judge and umpire in his neighbour's affairs, while no one paid a more exact attention to every transaction of his own. But the business of getting money was not with him the first, much less was it the whole concern of the day. He sought in the *first place*, 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' Every morning when he rose, he remembered that he had a Maker to worship as well as a family to maintain. Religion, however, never made him neglect business, though it sometimes led him to postpone it. He used to say, no man had any reason to expect God's blessing through the day, who did not ask it in the morning; nor was he likely to spend the day in the fear of God, who did not begin it with his worship. But he had not the less sense, spirit, and activity, when he was among men abroad, because he had first served God at home.

As these two farmers rode along, Mr. Worthy took occasion, from the fineness of the day, and the beauty of the country through which they passed, to turn the discourse to the goodness of God, and our infinite obligations to him. He knew that the transition from thanksgiving to prayer would be natural and easy; and he therefore, sliding by degrees into that important subject, observed, that secret prayer was a duty of universal obligation, which every man had it in his power to fulfil, and which he seriously believed was the ground-work of all religious practice, and of all devout affections.

Mr. Bragwell felt conscious that he was very negligent and irregular in the performance of this duty; indeed, he considered it as a mere ceremony, or at least, as a duty which might give way to the slightest temptation of drowsiness at night, or business in the morning. As he knew he did not live in the conscientious performance of this practice, he tried to ward off the subject, knowing what a home way his friend had of putting things. After some evasion, he at last said, he certainly thought private prayer a good custom, especially for people who have time; and that those who were sick, or old, or out of business, could not do better; but that for his part, he believed much of these sort of things was not expected from men in active life.

Worthy. I should think, Mr. Bragwell, that those who are most exposed to temptations stand most in need of prayer; now there are few, methinks, who are more exposed to temptation than men in business; for those must be in most danger, at least from the world, who have most to do with it. And if this be true, ought we not to prepare ourselves in the closet for the trials of the market, the field, and the shop? It is but putting on our armour before we go out to battle.

Bragwell. For my part, I think example is the whole of religion, and if the master of a family is orderly, and regular, and goes to church, he does every thing which can be required of him, and no one has a right to call him to an account for any thing more.

Worthy. Give me leave to say, Mr. Bragwell, that highly as I rate a good example, still I must set a good principle above it. I know I must keep good order indeed, for the sake of others; but I must keep a good conscience for my own sake. To God I owe secret piety, I must therefore pray to him in private.—To my family I owe a Christian example, and for that, among other reasons, I must not fail to go to church.

Bragwell. You are talking, Mr. Worthy, as if I were an enemy to religion. Sir, I am no

heathen. Sir, I am a Christian; I belong to the church; I go to church; I always drink prosperity to the church. You yourself, as strict as you are, in never missing it twice a day, are not a warmer friend to the church than I am.

Worthy. That is to say, you know its inestimable value as a political institution; but you do not seem to know that a man may be very irreligious under the best religious institutions; and that even the most excellent only furnishes the *means* of being religious, and is no more religion itself than brick and mortar are prayers and thanksgivings. I shall never think, however high their profession, and even however regular their attendance, that those men truly respect the church, who bring home little of that religion which is taught in it into their own families or their own hearts; or, who make the whole of Christianity to consist in a mere formal attendance there. Excuse me Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Mr. Worthy, I am persuaded that religion is quite a proper thing for the poor; and I don't think that the multitude can ever be kept in order without it; and I am a sort of a politician you know. We *must* have bits, and bridles, and restraints for the vulgar.

Worthy. Your opinion is very just, as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough, since, it does not go to the root of the evil; for while you value yourself on the soundness of this principle as a politician, I wish you also to see the reason of it as a Christian; depend upon it, if religion be good for the community at large, it is equally good for every family; and what is right for a family is equally right for each individual in it. You have therefore yourself brought the most unanswerable argument why you ought to be religious yourself, by asking how we shall keep others in order without religion. For, believe me, Mr. Bragwell, there is no particular clause to except *you* in the Gospel. There are no exceptions there in favour of any one class of men. The same restraints which are necessary for the people at large, are equally necessary for men of every order, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, learned and ignorant. If Jesus Christ died for no one particular rank, class, or community, then there is no one rank, class, or community, exempt from the obedience to his laws enjoined by the Gospel. May I ask you, Mr. Bragwell, what is your reason for going to church?

Bragwell. Sir, I am shocked at your question. How can I avoid doing a thing so customary and so creditable? Not go to church, indeed! What do you take me for, Mr. Worthy? I am afraid you suspect me to be a papist, or a heathen, or of some religion or other that is not Christian.

Worthy. If a foreigner were to hear how violently one set of Christians in this country often speak against another, how earnest would he suppose us all to be in religious matters: and how astonished to discover that many a man has perhaps little other proof to give of the sincerity of his own religion, except the violence with which he hates the religion of another party. It is not *irreligion* which such men hate; but the religion of the man, or the party, whom we are set against: now hatred is certainly no part of the religion of the Gospel. Well, you have told me why you go to church; now pray tell me, why do you confess there on your bended knees, every Sunday, that 'you have erred and strayed from God's ways?'—'that there is no health in you?—'that you have done what you ought not to do?—and that you are a miserable sinner?'

Bragwell. Because it is in the Common Prayer Book, to be sure; a book which I have heard you yourself say was written by wise and good men; the glory of Christianity, the pillars of the protestant church.

Worthy. But have you no other reason?

Bragwell. No, I can't say I have.

Worthy. When you repeat that excellent form of confession, do you really feel that you *are* a miserable sinner?

Bragwell. No, I can't say I do. But that is no objection to my repeating it: because it may suit the cause of many who are so. I suppose the good doctors who drew it up, intended that part for wicked people only, such as drunkards, and thieves, and murderers; for I imagine they could not well contrive to make the same prayer quite suit an honest man and a rogue; and so I suppose they thought it better to make a good man repeat a prayer which suited a rogue, than to make a rogue repeat a prayer which suited a good man; and you know it is so customary for every body to repeat the general confession, that it can't hurt the credit of the most respectable persons, though every respectable person must know they have no particular concern in it; as they are not sinners.

Worthy. Depend upon it, Mr. Bragwell, those good doctors you speak of, were not quite of your opinion; they really thought that what you call honest men were grievous sinners in a certain sense, and that the best of us stand in need of making that humble confession. Mr. Bragwell do you believe in the fall of Adam?

Bragwell. To be sure I do, and a sad thing for Adam it was; why, it is in the Bible, is it not? It is one of the prettiest chapters in Genesis. Don't *you* believe Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. Yes, truly I do. But I don't believe it *merely* because I read it in Genesis; though I know, indeed, that I am bound to believe every part of the word of God. But I have still an additional reason for believing in the fall of the first man.

Bragwell. Have you, indeed? Now, I can't guess what that can be.

Worthy. Why, my own observation of what is within myself teaches me to believe it. It is not only the third chapter of Genesis which convinces me of the truth of the fall, but also the sinful inclinations which I find in my own heart corresponding with it. This is one of those leading truths of Christianity of which I can never doubt a moment: first because it is abundantly expressed or implied in Scripture; and next, because the consciousness of the evil nature, I carry about with me confirms the doctrine beyond all doubt. Besides, is it not said in Scripture, that by one man sin entered into the world, and that 'all we, like lost sheep, have gone astray;'—'that by one man's disobedience

many were made sinners;'—and so again in twenty more places that I could tell you of.

Bragwell. Well; I never thought of this. But is not this a very melancholy sort of doctrine, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. It is melancholy, indeed, if we stop here. But while we are deploring this sad truth, let us take comfort from another, that 'as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

Bragwell. Yes; I remember I thought those very fine words, when I heard them said over my poor father's grave. But as it was in the burial of the dead, I did not think of taking it to myself; for I was then young and hearty, and in little danger of dying, and I have been so busy ever since, that I have hardly had time to think of it.

Worthy. And yet the service pronounced at the burial of all who die, is a solemn admonition to all who live. It is there said, as indeed the Scripture says also, 'I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever *believeth in me* shall never die, but I will raise him up at the last day.' Now do you think you *believe in Christ*, Mr. Bragwell?

Bragwell. To be sure I do; why you are always fancying me an atheist.

Worthy. In order to believe in Christ, we must believe first in our own guilt and our own unworthiness; and when we do this we shall see the use of a Saviour, and not till then.

Bragwell. Why, all this is a new way of talking. I can't say I ever meddled with such subjects before in my life. But now, what do you advise a man to do upon your plan of religion?

Worthy. Why all this leads me back to the ground from which we set out, I mean the duty of prayer; for if we believe that we have an evil nature within us, and that we stand in need of God's grace to help us, and a Saviour to redeem us, we shall be led of course to pray for what we so much need; and without this conviction we shall not be led to pray.

Bragwell. Well, but don't you think, Mr. Worthy, that you good folks who make so much of prayer, have lower notions than we have of the wisdom of the Almighty? You think he wants to be informed of the thing you tell him; whereas, I take it for granted that he knows them already, and that, being so good as he is, he will give me every thing he sees fit to give me, without my asking it.

Worthy. God, indeed, who knows all things, knows what we want before we ask him; but still has he not said that, 'with prayer and supplication we must make known our requests unto him?' Prayer is the way in which God hath said that his favour must be sought. It is the channel through which he has declared it his sovereign will and pleasure that his blessings should be conveyed to us. What ascends up in prayer descends to us again in blessings. It is like the rain which just now fell, and which had been drawn up from the ground in vapours to the clouds before it descended from them to the earth in that refreshing shower. Besides prayer has a good effect on our minds; it tends to excite a right disposition towards God in us, and to keep up a constant sense of our dependence. But above all, it is the way to get the good things we want. 'Ask,' says the Scripture, 'and ye shall receive.'

Bragwell. Now, that is the very thing which I was going to deny: for the truth is, men do not always get what they ask; I believe if I could get a good crop for asking it, I would pray oftener than I do.

Worthy. Sometimes, Mr. Bragwell, men 'ask and receive not, because they ask amiss;'—'they ask that they may consume it on their lusts.'—They ask worldly blessings, perhaps, when they should ask spiritual ones. Now, the latter, which are the good things I spoke of, are always granted to those who pray to God for them, though the former are not. I have observed in the case of some worldly things I have sought for, that the grant of my prayer would have caused the misery of my life; so that God equally consults our good in what he withholds, and in what he bestows.

Bragwell. And yet you continue to pray on I suppose?

Worthy. Certainly; but then I try to mend as to the object of my prayers. I pray for God's blessing and favour, which is better than riches.

Bragwell. You seem very earnest on this subject.

Worthy. To cut the matter short; I ask then, whether prayer is not positively commanded in the Gospel. When this is the case, we can never dispute about the necessity or the duty of a thing, as we may when there is no such command. Here, however, let me just add also, that a man's prayers may be turned into no small use in the way of discovering to him whatever is amiss in his life.

Bragwell. How so, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. Why, suppose now, you were to try yourself by turning into the shape of a prayer every practice in which you allow yourself. For instance, let the prayer in the morning be a sort of preparation for the deeds of the day, and the prayer at night a sort of retrospection of those deeds. You, Mr. Bragwell, I suspect, are a little inclined to covetousness; excuse me, sir. Now, suppose after you have been during a whole day a little too eager to get rich; suppose, I say, you were to try how it would sound to beg of God at night on your knees, to give you still more money, though you have already so much that you know not what to do with it. Suppose you were to pray in the morning, 'O Lord, give me more riches, though those I have are a snare and a temptation to me;' and ask him in the same solemn manner to bless all the grasping means you intend to make use of in the day, to add to your substance?

Bragwell, Mr. Worthy, I have no patience with you for thinking I could be so wicked.

Worthy. Yet to make such a covetous prayer as this is hardly more wicked, or more absurd, than to lead the life of the covetous, by sinning up to the spirit of that very prayer which you would not have the courage to put into words. Still further observe how it would sound to confess your sins, und pray against them all, except one favourite sin. 'Lord, do thou enable me to forsake all my sins, except the love of

money;'—'in this one thing pardon thy servant.'—Or, 'Do thou enable me to forgive all who have injured me, except old Giles.' This you will object against, as a wicked prayer; but if wicked in prayer, it must be wicked in practice. It is even more shocking to make it the language of the heart, or of the life, than of the lips. And yet, because you have been used to see people act thus, and have not been used to hear them pray thus, you are shocked at the one, and not shocked at the other.

Bragwell. Shocked, indeed! Why, at this rate, you would teach one to hate one's self.

Worthy. Hear me out, Mr. Bragwell; you turned your good nephew, Tom Broad, out of doors, you know; you owned to me it was an act of injustice. Now, suppose on the morning of your doing so you had begged of God, in a solemn act of prayer, to prosper the deed of cruelty and oppression, which you intended to commit that day. I see you are shocked at the thought of such a prayer. Well, then, would not hearty prayer have kept you from committing that wicked action? In short, what a life must that be, no act of which you dare beg God to prosper and bless? If once you can bring yourself to believe that it is your bounden duty to pray for God's blessing on your day's work, you will certainly grow careful about passing such a day as you may safely ask his blessing upon. The remark may be carried to sports, diversions, company. A man, who once takes up the serious use of prayer, will soon find himself obliged to abstain from such diversions, occupations, and societies, as he cannot reasonably desire that God will bless to him; and thus he will see himself compelled to leave off either the practice or the prayer. Now, Mr. Bragwell, I need not ask you which of the two he that is a real Christian will give up, sinning or praying.

Mr. Bragwell began to feel that he had not the best of the argument, and was afraid he was making no great figure in the eyes of his friend. Luckily, however, he was relieved from the difficulty into which the necessity of making some answer must have brought him, by finding they were come to the end of their little journey: and he never beheld the Bunch of Grapes, which decorated the sign of the Golden Lion, with more real satisfaction.

I refer my readers for the transactions at the Golden Lion, and for the sad adventures which afterwards befel Mr. Bragwell's family, to the fifth part of the History of the Two Wealthy Farmers.

PART V.

THE GOLDEN LION.

Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy alighted at the Golden Lion. It was market-day: the inn, the yard, the town was all alive.—Bragwell was quite in his element. Money, company, and good cheer always set his spirits afloat. He felt himself the principal man in the scene. He had three great objects in view; the sale of his land; the letting Mr. Worthy see how much he was looked up to by so many substantial people, and the showing these people what a wise man his most intimate friend, Mr. Worthy was. It was his way to try to borrow a little credit from every person, and every thing he was connected with, and by that credit to advance his interest and increase his wealth.

The farmers met in a large room; and while they were transacting their various concerns, those whose pursuits were the same, naturally herded together. The tanners were drawn to one corner, by the common interest which they took in bark and hides. A useful debate was carrying on at another little table, whether the practice of *sowing* wheat or of *planting* it were most profitable. Another set were disputing whether horses or oxen were best for ploughs. Those who were concerned in canals, sought the company of other canallers; while some, who were interested in the new bill for inclosures, wisely looked out for such as knew most about waste lands.

Mr. Worthy was pleased with all these subjects, and picked up something useful on each. It was a saying of his, that most men understood some one thing, and that he who was wise would try to learn from every man something on the subject he best knew; but Mr. Worthy made a further use of the whole. What a pity is it, said he, that Christians are not so desirous to turn their time to good account as men of business are! When shall we see religious persons as anxious to derive profit from the experience of others as these farmers? When shall we see them as eager to turn their time to good account? While I approve these men for not being *slothful in business*, let me improve the hint, by being also *fervent in spirit*.

Showing how much wiser the children of this generation are than the children of Light.

When the hurry was a little over, Mr. Bragwell took a turn on the bowling-green. Mr. Worthy followed him, to ask why the sale of the estate was not brought forward. Let the auctioneer proceed to business, said he; the company will be glad to get home by daylight. I speak mostly with a view to others; for I do not think of being a purchaser myself. I know it, said Bragwell, or I would not be such a fool as to let the cat out of the bag. But is it really possible (proceeded he, with a smile of contempt) that you should think I will sell my estate before dinner? Mr. Worthy, you are a clever man at books, and such things; and perhaps can make out an account on paper in a handsomer manner than I can. But I never found much was to be got by fine writing. As to figures, I can carry enough of them in my head to add, divide, and multiply more money than your learning will ever give you the fingering of. You may beat me at a book, but you are a very child at a bargain. Sell my land before dinner indeed!

Mr. Worthy was puzzled to guess how a man was to show more wisdom by selling a piece of ground at one hour than another, and desired an explanation. Bragwell felt rather more contempt for his understanding than he had ever done before. Look'ee, Mr. Worthy, said he, I do not think that knowledge is of any use to a

man, unless he has sense enough to turn it to account. Men are my books, Mr. Worthy; and it is by reading, spelling, and putting them together to good purpose, that I have got up in the world. I shall give you a proof of this to-day. These farmers are most of them come to the Lion with a view of purchasing this bit of land of mine, if they should like the bargain. Now, as you know a thing can't be any great bargain both to the buyer and the seller too, to them and to me, it becomes me as a man of sense, who has the good of his family at heart, to secure the bargain to myself. I would not cheat any man, sir, but I think it fair enough to turn his weakness to my own advantage; there is no law against that, you know; and this is the use of one man's having more sense than another. So, whenever I have a piece of land to sell, I always give a handsome dinner, with plenty of punch and strong beer. We fill up the morning with other business; and I carefully keep back my talk about the purchase till we have dined. At dinner we have, of course, a slice of politics. This puts most of us into a passion, and you know anger is thirsty. Besides, 'Church and King' naturally brings on a good many other toasts. Now, as I am master of the feast, you know it would be shabby in me to save my liquor; so I push about the glass one way, and the tankard the other, till all my company are as merry as kings. Every man is delighted to see what a fine hearty fellow he has to deal with, and Mr. Bragwell receives a thousand compliments. By this time they have gained as much in good humour as they have lost in sober judgment, and this is the proper moment for setting the auctioneer to work, and this I commonly do to such good purpose, that I go home with my purse a score or two pounds heavier than if they had not been warmed by their dinner. In the morning men are cool and suspicious, and have all their wits about them; but a cheerful glass cures all distrust. And, what is lucky, I add to my credit as well as my pocket, and get more praise for my dinner than blame for my bargain.

Mr. Worthy was struck with the absurd vanity which could tempt a man to own himself guilty of an unfair action for the sake of showing his wisdom. He was beginning to express his disapprobation, when they were told dinner was on table. They went in, and were soon seated. All was mirth and good cheer. Every body agreed that no one gave such hearty dinners as Mr. Bragwell. Nothing was pitiful where he was master of the feast. Bragwell, who looked with pleasure on the excellent dinner before him, and enjoyed the good account to which he should turn it, heard their praises with delight, and cast an eye on Worthy, as much as to say who is the wise man now. Having a mind, for his own credit, to make his friend talk, he turned to him, saying, Mr. Worthy, I believe no people in the world enjoy life more than men of our class. We have money and power, we live on the fat of the land, and have as good a right to gentility as the best.

As to gentility, Mr. Bragwell, replied Worthy, I am not sure that this is among the wisest of our pretensions. But I will say, that our's is a creditable and respectable business. In ancient times, farming was the employment of princes and patriarchs; and, now-a-days, an honest, humane, sensible, English yeoman, I will be bold to say, is not only a very useful, but an honourable character. But then, he must not merely think of *enjoying life* as you call it, but he must think of living up to the great ends for which he was sent into the world. A wealthy farmer not only has it in his power to live well, but to do much good. He is not only the father of his own family, but his workmen, his dependants, and the poor at large, especially in these hard times. He has it in his power to raise into credit all the parish offices which have fallen into disrepute by getting into bad hands; and he can convert, what have been falsely thought mean offices, into very important ones, by his just and Christian like manner of filling them. An upright juryman, a conscientious constable, a humane overseer, an independent elector, an active superintendent of a work-house, a just arbitrator in public disputes, a kind counsellor in private troubles; such an one, I say, fills up a station in society no less necessary, and, as far as it reaches, scarcely less important than that of a magistrate, a sheriff of a county, or even a member of parliament. That can never be a slight or degrading office, on which the happiness of a whole parish may depend.

Bragwell, who thought the good sense of his friend reflected credit on himself, encouraged Worthy to go on, but he did it in his own vain way. Ay, very true, Mr. Worthy, said he, you are right; a leading man in our class ought to be looked up to as an example, as you say; in order to which, he should do things handsomely and liberally, and not grudge himself, or his friends, any thing; casting an eye of complacency on the good dinner he had provided. True, replied Mr. Worthy, he should be an example of simplicity, sobriety, and plainness of manners. But he will do well, added he, not to affect a frothy gentility, which will sit but clumsily upon him. If he has money, let him spend prudently, lay up moderately for his children, and give liberally to the poor. But let him rather seek to dignify his own station by his virtues, than to get above it by his vanity. If he acts thus, then, as long as his country lasts, a farmer of England will be looked upon as one of its most valuable members; nay more, by this conduct, he may contribute to make England last the longer. The riches of the farmer, corn and cattle, are the true riches of a nation; but let him remember, that though corn and cattle *enrich* a country, nothing but justice, integrity, and religion, can *preserve* it.

Here one of the company, who was known to be a man of loose principles, and who seldom went to public worship, said he had no objection to religion, and was always ready to testify his regard to it by drinking church and king. On this Mr. Worthy remarked, that he was afraid that too many contented themselves with making this toast include the whole of their religion, if not of their loyalty. It is with real sorrow, continued he, that I am compelled to observe, that though there are numberless honourable instances to the contrary, yet I have

seen more contempt and neglect of Christianity in men of our calling, than in almost any other. They too frequently hate the rector on account of his tithes, to which he has as good a right as they have to their farms, and the curate on account of his poverty; but the truth is, religion itself is often the concealed object of their dislike. I know too many, who, while they affect a violent outward zeal for the church, merely because they conceive its security to be somehow connected with their own political advantages, yet prove the hollowness of their attachment, by showing little regard to its ministers, and less to its ordinances.

Young Wilson, the worthy grazier, whom Miss Bragwell turned off because he did not understand French dances, thanked Mr. Worthy for what he had said, and hoped he should be the better for it as long as he lived, and desired his leave to be better acquainted. Most of the others declared they had never heard a finer speech, and then, as is usual, proceeded to show the good effect it had on them, by loose conversation, hard drinking, and whatever could counteract all that Worthy had been saying.

Mr. Worthy was much concerned to hear Mr. Bragwell, after dinner, whisper to the waiter, to put less and less water into every fresh bowl of punch. This was his old way; if the time they had to sit was long, then the punch was to be weaker, as he saw no good in wasting money to make it stronger than the time required. But if time pressed, then the strength was to be increased in due proportion, as a small quantity must then intoxicate them as much in a short time as would be required of a greater quantity had the time been longer. This was one of Mr. Bragwell's nice calculations; and this was the sort of skill on which he so much valued himself.

At length the guests were properly primed for business; just in that convenient stage of intoxication which makes men warm and rash, yet keeps short of that absolute drunkenness, which disqualifies for business, the auctioneer set to work. All were bidders, and, if possible, all would have been purchasers; so happily had the feast and the punch operated. They bid on with a still increasing spirit, till they got so much above the value of the land, that Bragwell with a wink and a whisper, said: Who would sell his land fasting? Eh! Worthy? At length the estate was knocked down, at a price very far above its worth.

As soon as it was sold, Bragwell again said softly to Worthy, Five from fifty and there remain forty-five. The dinner and drink won't cost me five pounds, and I have got fifty more than the land was worth. Spend a shilling to gain a pound! This is what I call practical arithmetic, Mr. Worthy.

Mr. Worthy was glad to get out of this scene; and seeing that his friend was quite sober, he resolved as they rode home, to deal plainly with him. Bragwell had found out, among his calculations, that there were some sins which could only be committed, by a prudent man, one at a time. For instance, he knew that a man could not well get rich and get drunk at the same moment; so that he used to practice one first, and the other after; but he had found out that some vices made very good company together; thus, while he had watched himself in drinking, lest he should become as unfit to sell as his guests were to buy, he had indulged, without measure, in the good dinner he had provided. Mr. Worthy, I say, seeing him able to bear reason, rubuked him for this day's proceedings with some severity. Bragwell bore his reproofs with that sort of patience which arises from an opinion of one's own wisdom, accompanied by a recent flush of prosperity. He behaved with that gay good humour, which grows out of united vanity and good fortune. You are too squeamish, Mr. Worthy, said he, I have done nothing discreditable. These men came with their eyes open. There is no compulsion used. They are free to bid or to let it alone. I make them welcome, and I shall not be thought a bit the worse of by them to-morrow, when they are sober. Others do it besides me, and I shall never be ashamed of any thing as long as I have custom on my side.

Worthy. I am sorry, Mr. Bragwell, to hear you support such practices by such arguments. There is not, perhaps, a more dangerous snare to the souls of men than is to be found in that word CUSTOM. It is a word invented to reconcile corruption with credit, and sin with safety. But no custom, no fashion, no combination of men, to set up a false standard can ever make a wrong action right. That a thing is often done, is so far from a proof of its being right, that it is the very reason which will set a thinking man to inquire if it be not really wrong, lest he should be following, 'a multitude to do evil.' Right is right, though only one man in a thousand pursues it; and wrong will be forever wrong, though it be the allowed practice of the other nine hundred and ninety-nine. If this shameful custom be really common, which I can hardly believe, that is a fresh reason why a conscientious man should set his face against it. And I must go so far as to say (you will excuse me Mr. Bragwell) that I see no great difference, in the eye of conscience, whatever there may be in the eye of the law, between your making a man first lose his reason, and then getting fifty guineas out of his pocket, *because* he has lost it, and your picking the fifty guineas out of his pocket, if you had met him dead drunk in his way home to-night. Nay, he who meets a man already drunk and robs him, commits but one sin; while he who makes him drunk first that he may rob him afterwards, commits two.

Bragwell gravely replied: Mr. Worthy, while I have the practice of people of credit to support me, and the law of the land to protect me, I see no reason to be ashamed of any thing I do. Mr. Bragwell, answered Worthy, a truly honest man is not always looking sharp about him, to see how far custom and the law will bear him out; if he be honest on principle, he will consult the law of his conscience, and if he be a Christian, he will consult the written law of God. We never deceive ourselves more than when we overreach others. You would not allow that you had robbed your neighbour for the world, yet you are not ashamed to own you have outwitted him. I have read this great truth in the

works of a heathen, Mr. Bragwell, that the chief misery of man arises from his not knowing how to make right calculations.

Bragwell. Sir, the remark does not belong to me. I have not made an error of a farthing. Look at the account, sir—right to the smallest fraction.

Worthy. Sir, I am talking of final accounts; spiritual calculations; arithmetic in the long run. Now, in this, your real Christian is the only true calculator: he has found out that we shall be richer in the end, by denying, than by indulging ourselves. He knows that when the balance comes to be struck, when profit and loss shall be summed up, and the final account adjusted, that whatever ease, prosperity, and delight we had in this world, yet if we have lost our souls in the end, we cannot reckon that we have made a good bargain. We cannot pretend that a few items of present pleasure make any great figure, set over against the sum total of eternal misery. So you see it is only for want of a good head at calculation that men prefer time to eternity, pleasure to holiness, earth to heaven. You see if we get our neighbour's money at the price of our own integrity; hurt his good name, but destroy our own souls; raise our outward character, but wound our inward conscience; when we come to the last reckoning, we shall find that we were only knaves in the second instance, but fools in the first. In short, we shall find that whatever other wisdom we possessed, we were utterly ignorant of the skill of true calculation.

Notwithstanding this rebuff, Mr. Bragwell got home in high spirits, for no arguments could hinder him from feeling that he had the fifty guineas in his purse.

There is to a worldly man something so irresistible in the actual possession of present, and visible, and palpable pleasure, that he considers it as a proof of his wisdom to set them in decided opposition to the invisible realities of eternity.

As soon as Bragwell came in, he gayly threw the money he had received on the table, and desired his wife to lock it up. Instead of receiving it with her usual satisfaction, she burst into a violent fit of passion, and threw it back to him. You may keep your cash yourself, said she. It is all over—we want no more money. You are a ruined man! A wicked creature, scraping and working as we have done for her!—Bragwell trembled, but durst not ask what he dreaded to hear. His wife spared him the trouble, by crying out as soon as her rage permitted: The girl is ruined; Polly is gone off! Poor Bragwell's heart sunk within him; he grew sick and giddy, and as his wife's rage swallowed up her grief, so, in his grief, he almost forgot his anger. The purse fell from his hand, and he cast a look of anguish upon it, finding, for the first time that money could not relieve his misery.

Mr. Worthy, who, though much concerned, was less discomposed, now called to mind, that the young lady had not returned with her mother and sister the night before: he begged Mrs. Bragwell to explain this sad story. She, instead of soothing her husband, fell to reproaching him. It is all your fault, said she; you were a fool for your pains.—If I had had my way the girls would never have kept company with any but men of substance, and then they could not have been ruined. Mrs. Bragwell, said Worthy, if she has chosen a bad man, it would be still a misfortune, even though he had been rich. O, that would alter the case, said she, a *fat sorrow is better than a lean one.* But to marry a beggar! there is no sin like that. Here Miss Betsey, who stood sullenly by, put in a word, and said, her sister, however, had not disgraced herself by having married a farmer or a tradesman; she had, at least, made choice of a gentleman. What marriage! what gentleman! cried the afflicted father. Tell me the worst! He was now informed that his darling daughter was gone off with a strolling player, who had been acting in the neighbouring villages lately.—Miss Betsey again put in, saying, he was no stroller, but a gentleman in disguise, who only acted for his own diversion. Does he so, said the now furious Bragwell, then he shall be transported for mine.

At this moment a letter was brought him from his new son-in-law, who desired his leave to wait upon him, and implore his forgiveness. He owned he had been shopman to a haberdasher; but thinking his person and talents ought not to be thrown away upon trade, and being also a little behind hand, he had taken to the stage with a view of making his fortune: that he had married Miss Bragwell entirely for love, and was sorry to mention so paltry a thing as money, which he despised, but that his wants were pressing: his landlord, to whom he was in debt, having been so vulgar as to threaten to send him to prison. He ended with saying: 'I have been obliged to shock your daughter's delicacy, by confessing my unlucky real name: I believe I owe part of my success with her, to my having assumed that of Augustus Frederick Theodosius. She is inconsolable at this confession, which, as you are now my father, I must also make to you, and subscribe myself, with many blushes, by the vulgar name of your dutiful son,

TIMOTHY INCLE.'

'O!' cried the afflicted father, as he tore the letter in a rage, 'Miss Bragwell married to a strolling actor! How shall I bear it?'—'Why, I would not bear it at all,' cried the enraged mother; 'I would never see her; I would never forgive her; I would let her starve at the corner of the barn, while that rascal, with all those pagan, popish names, was ranting away at the other.'—'Nay,' said Miss Betsey, 'if he is only a shopman, and if his name be really Timothy Incle, I would never forgive her neither. But who would have thought it by his looks, and by his *monstrous genteel* behaviour? no, he never can have so vulgar a name.'

'Come, come,' said Mr. Worthy, 'were he really an honest haberdasher, I should think there was no other harm done, except the disobedience of the thing. Mr. Bragwell, this is no time to blame you, or hardly to reason with you. I feel for you sincerely. I ought not, perhaps, just at present, to reproach you for the mistaken manner in which you have bred up

your daughters, as your error has brought its punishment along with it. You now see, because you now feel, the evil of a false education. It has ruined your daughter; your whole plan unavoidably led to some such end. The large sums you spent to qualify them, as you thought, for a high station, only served to make them despise their own, and could do them nothing but harm, while your habits of life properly confined them to company of a lower class. While they were better drest than the daughters of the first gentry, they were worse taught as to real knowledge, than the daughters of your ploughmen. Their vanity has been raised by excessive finery, and kept alive by excessive flattery. Every evil temper has been fostered by indulgence. Their pride has never been controlled; their self-will has never been subdued; their idleness has laid them open to every temptation, and their abundance has enabled them to gratify every desire; their time, that precious talent, has been entirely wasted. Every thing they have been taught to do is of no use, while they are utterly unacquainted with all which they ought to have known. I deplore Miss Polly's false step. That she should have married a runaway shopman, turned stroller, I truly lament. But for what better husband was she qualified? For the wife of a farmer she was too idle: for the wife of a tradesman she was too expensive: for the wife of a gentleman she was too ignorant. You, yourself, was most to blame. You expected her to act wisely, though you never taught her that *fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom.* I owe it to you, as a friend, and to myself as a Christian, to declare, that your practices in the common transactions of life, as well as your present misfortune, are almost the natural consequences of those false principles which I protested against when you were at my house.*

Mrs. Bragwell attempted several times to interrupt Mr. Worthy, but her husband would not permit it. He felt the force of all his friend said, and encouraged him to proceed. Mr. Worthy thus went on: 'It grieves me to say how much your own indiscretion has contributed even to bring on your present misfortune. You gave your countenance to this very company of strollers, though you knew they were acting in defiance to the laws of the land, to say no worse. They go from town to town, and from barn to barn, stripping the poor of their money, the young of their innocence, and all of their time. Do you remember with how much pride you told me that you had bespoke *The Bold Stroke for a Wife*, for the benefit of this very Mr. Frederic Theodosius? To this pernicious ribaldry you not only carried your own family, but wasted I know not how much money in treating your workmen's wives and children, in these hard times too when they have scarcely bread to eat, or a shoe on their feet: and all this only that you might have the absurd pleasure of seeing those flattering words, *By desire of Mr. Bragwell*, stuck up in print at the public house, on the blacksmith's shed, at the turnpike-gate, and on the barn-door.'

* See Part II.

Mr. Bragwell acknowledged that his friend's rebuke was too just, and he looked so very contrite as to raise the pity of Mr. Worthy, who, in a mild voice, thus went on: 'What I have said is not so much to reproach you with the ruin of one daughter, as from a desire to save the other. Let Miss Betsey go home with me. I do not undertake to be her jailer, but I will be her friend. She will find in my daughters kind companions, and in my wife a prudent guide. I know she will dislike us at first, but I do not despair in time of convincing her that a sober, humble, useful, pious life, is as necessary to make us happy on earth, as it is to fit us for heaven.'

Poor Miss Betsey, though she declared it would be *frightful dull* and *monstrous vulgar* and *dismal melancholy*, yet was she so terrified at the discontent and grumbling which she would have to endure at home, that she sullenly consented. She had none of that filial tenderness which led her to wish to stay and sooth and comfort her afflicted father. All she thought about was to get out of the way of her mother's ill humour, and to carry so much finery with her as to fill the Miss Worthys with envy and respect. Poor girl! she did not know that envy was a feeling they never indulged; and that fine clothes were the last thing to draw their respect.

Mr. Worthy took her home next day. When they reached his house they found there young Wilson, Miss Betsey's old admirer. She was much pleased at this, and resolved to treat him well. But her good or ill treatment now signified but little. This young grazier reverenced Mr. Worthy's character, and ever since he had met him at the Lion, had been thinking what a happiness it would be to marry a young woman bred up by such a father. He had heard much of the modesty and discretion of both the daughters, but his inclination now determined him in favour of the elder.

Mr. Worthy, who knew him to be a young man of good sense and sound principles, allowed him to become a visitor at his house, but deferred his consent to the marriage till he knew him more thoroughly. Mr. Wilson, from what he saw of the domestic piety of this family, improved daily, both in the knowledge and practice of religion; and Mr. Worthy soon formed him into a most valuable character. During this time Miss Bragwell's hopes had revived; but though she appeared in a new dress almost every day she had the mortification of being beheld with great indifference by one whom she had always secretly liked. Mr. Wilson married before her face a girl who was greatly her inferior in fortune, person, and appearance; but who was humble, frugal, meek and pious. Miss Bragwell now strongly felt the truth of what Mr. Wilson had once told her, that a woman may make an excellent partner for a dance who would make a very bad companion for life.

Hitherto Mr. Bragwell and his daughters had only learnt to regret their folly and vanity, as it had produced them mortification in this life whether they were ever brought to a more serious sense of their errors may be seen in a future part of this history.

PART VI.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

Mr. Bragwell was so much afflicted at the disgraceful marriage of his daughter, who ran off with Timothy Incle, the strolling player, that he never fully recovered his spirits. His cheerfulness, which had arisen from an high opinion of himself, had been confirmed by a constant flow of uninterrupted success; and that is a sort of cheerfulness which is very liable to be impaired, because it lies at the mercy of every accident and cross event in life. But though his pride was now disappointed, his misfortunes had not taught him any humility, because he had not discovered that they were caused by his own fault; nor had he acquired any patience or submission because he had not learnt that all afflictions come from the hand of God, to awaken us to a deep sense of our sins, and to draw off our hearts from the perishing vanities of this life. Besides, Mr. Bragwell was one of those people, who, even if they would be thought to bear with tolerable submission such trials as appear to be sent more immediately from Providence, yet think they have a sort of right to rebel at every misfortune which befals them through the fault of a fellow-creature; as if our fellow-creatures were not the agents and instruments by which Providence often sees fit to try or to punish us.

In answer to his heavy complaints, Mr. Worthy wrote him a letter, in which he expatiated on the injustice of our impatience, and on the folly of our vindicating ourselves from guilt in the distinctions we make between those trials which seem to come more immediately from God, and those which proceed directly from the faults of our fellow-creatures. 'Sickness, losses, and death, we think,' continued he, 'we dare not openly rebel against; while we fancy we are quite justified in giving a loose to our violence when we suffer by the hand of the oppressor, the unkindness of the friend, or the disobedience of the child. But this is one of the delusions of our blinded hearts. Ingratitude, unkindness, calumny, are permitted to assail us by the same power who cuts off 'the desire of our eyes at a stroke.' The friend who betrays us, and the daughter who deceives us, are instruments for our chastisement, sent by the same purifying hand who orders a fit of sickness to weaken our bodies, or a storm to destroy our crop, or a fire to burn down our house. And we must look for the same remedy in the one case as in the other; I mean prayer and a deep submission to the will of God. We must leave off looking at second causes, and look more at Him who sets them in action. We must try to find out the meaning of the Providence; and hardly dare pray to be delivered from it till it has accomplished in us the end for which it was sent.'

His imprudent daughter, Bragwell would not be brought to see or forgive, nor was the degrading name of Mrs. Incle ever allowed to be pronounced in his hearing. He had loved her with an excessive and undue affection; and while she gratified his vanity by her beauty and finery, he deemed her faults of little consequence; but when she disappointed his ambition by a disgraceful marriage, all his natural affection only served to increase his resentment. Yet, though he regretted her crime less than his own mortification, he never ceased in secret to lament her loss. She soon found out she was undone; and wrote in a strain of bitter repentance to ask him for forgiveness. She owned that her husband, whom she had supposed to be a man of fashion in disguise, was a low person in distressed circumstances. She implored that her father, though he refused to give her husband that fortune for which alone it was now too plain he had married her, would at least allow her some subsistence; for that Mr. Incle was much in debt, and she feared in danger of a jail.

The father's heart was half melted at this account, and his affection was for a time awakened. But Mrs. Bragwell opposed his sending her any assistance. She always made it a point of duty never to forgive; for she said it only encouraged those who had done wrong once to do worse next time. For her part she had never yet been guilty of so mean and pitiful a weakness as to forgive any one; for to pardon an injury always showed either want of spirit to feel it, or want of power to resent it. She was resolved she would never squander the money for which she had worked early and late, on a baggage who had thrown herself away on a beggar, while she had a daughter single, who might yet raise her family by a great match. I am sorry to say that Mrs. Bragwell's anger was not owing to the undutifulness of the daughter, or the worthlessness of the husband; poverty was in her eyes the grand crime. The doctrine of forgiveness, as a religious principle, made no more a part of Mr. Bragwell's system than of his wife's; but in natural feeling, particularly for this offending daughter, he much exceeded her.

In a few months the youngest Miss Bragwell desired leave to return home from Mr. Worthy's. She had, indeed, only consented to go thither as a less evil of the two, than staying in her father's house after her sister's elopement. But the sobriety and simplicity of Mr. Worthy's family were irksome to her. Habits of vanity and idleness were become so rooted in her mind, that any degree of restraint was a burthen; and though she was outwardly civil, it was easy to see that she longed to get away. She resolved, however, to profit by her sister's faults; and made her parents easy by assuring them she never would throw herself away on a *man who was worth nothing*. Encouraged by these promises, which her parents thought included the whole sum and substance of human wisdom, and which was all they said they could in reason expect, her father allowed her to come home.

Mr. Worthy, who accompanied her, found Mr. Bragwell gloomy and dejected. As his house was no longer a scene of vanity and festivity, Mr. Bragwell tried to make himself and his friend believe that he was grown religious; whereas he was only become discontented. As he had always fancied that piety was a melancholy, gloomy thing, and as he felt his own

mind really gloomy, he was willing to think that he was growing pious. He had, indeed, gone more constantly to church, and had taken less pleasure in feasting and cards, and now and then read a chapter in the Bible; but all this was because his spirits were low, and not because his heart was changed. The outward actions were more regular, but the inward man was the same. The forms of religion were resorted to as a painful duty: but this only added to his misery, while he was utterly ignorant of its spirit and its power. He still, however, reserved religion as a loathsome medicine, to which he feared he must have recourse at last, and of which he even now considered every abstinence from pleasure, or every exercise of piety, as a bitter dose. His health also was impaired, so that his friend found him in a pitiable state, neither able to receive pleasure from the world, which he so dearly loved, nor from religion which he so greatly feared. He expected to have been much commended by Worthy for the change in his way of life; but Worthy, who saw that the alteration was only owing to the loss of animal spirits, and to the casual absence of temptation, was cautious of flattering him too much. 'I thought Mr. Worthy,' said he, 'to have received more comfort from you. I was told too, that religion was full of comfort, but I do not much find it.'—'You were told the truth,' replied Worthy; 'religion is full of comfort, but you must first be brought into a state fit to receive it before it can become so; you must be brought to a deep and humbling sense of sin. To give you comfort while you are puffed up with high thoughts of yourself, would be to give you a strong cordial in a high fever. Religion keeps back her cordials till the patient is lowered and emptied: emptied of self, Mr. Bragwell. If you had a wound, it must be examined and cleansed, ay, and probed too, before it would be safe to put on a healing plaster. Curing it to the outward eye, while it was corrupt at bottom, would only bring on a mortification, and you would be a dead man, while you trusted that the plaster was curing you. You must be, indeed, a Christian before you can be entitled to the comforts of Christianity.'

'I am a Christian,' said Mr. Bragwell; 'many of my friends are Christians, but I do not see it has done us much good.'—'Christianity itself,' answered Worthy, 'cannot make us good, unless it be applied to our hearts. Christian privileges will not make us Christians, unless we make use of them. On that shelf I see stands your medicine. The doctor orders you take it. *Have* you taken it?'—'Yes,' replied Bragwell. 'Are you the better for it?' said Worthy. 'I think I am,' he replied. 'But,' added Mr. Worthy, 'are you the better because the doctor has ordered it merely, or because you have also taken it?'—'What a foolish question,' cried Bragwell; 'Why to be sure the doctor might be the best doctor, and his physic the best physic in the world; but if it stood for ever on the shelf, I could not expect to be cured by it. My doctor is not a mountebank. He does not pretend to cure by a charm. The physic is good, and as it suits my case, though it is bitter, I take it.'

'You have now,' said Mr. Worthy, 'explained undesignedly the reason why religion does so little good in the world. It is not a mountebank; it does not work by a charm; but it offers to cure your worst corruptions by wholesome, though sometimes bitter prescriptions. But you will not take them; you will not apply to God with the same earnest desire to be healed with which you apply to your doctor; you will not confess your sins to one as honestly as you tell your symptoms to the other, nor read your Bible with the same faith and submission with which you take your medicine. In reading it, however, you must take care not to apply to yourself the comforts which are not suited to your case. You must, by the grace of God, be brought into a condition to be entitled to the promises, before you can expect the comfort of them. Conviction is not conversion; that worldly discontent, which is the effect of worldly disappointment, is not that *godly sorrow which worketh repentance*. Besides, while you have been pursuing all the gratifications of the world, do not complain that you have not all the comforts of religion too. Could you live in the full enjoyment of both, the *Bible would not be true*.'

Bragwell. Well, sir, but I do a good action sometimes; and God, who knows he did not make us perfect, will accept it, and for the sake of my good actions will forgive my faults.

Worthy. Depend upon it God will never for give your sins for the sake of your virtues There is no commutation tax there. But he will forgive them on your sincere repentance, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Goodness is not a single act to be done; so that a man can say, I have achieved it, and the thing is over; but it is a habit that is to be constantly maintained; it is a continual struggle with the opposite vice. No man must reckon himself good for any thing he has already done; though he may consider it as an evidence that he is in the right way, if he feels a constant disposition to resist every evil temper. But every Christian grace will always find work enough; and he must not fancy that because he has conquered once, his virtue may now sit down and take a holyday.

Bragwell. But I thought we Christians, need not be watchful against sin; because Christ, as you so often tell me, died for sinners.

Worthy. Do not deceive yourself: the evangelical doctrines, while they so highly exalt a Saviour do not diminish the heinousness of sin, they rather magnify it. Do not comfort yourself by extenuation or mitigation of sin; but by repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not by diminishing or denying your debt; but by confessing it, by owning you have nothing to pay, that forgiveness is to be hoped.

Bragwell. I don't understand you. You want to have me as good as a saint, and as penitent as a sinner at the same time.

Worthy. I expect of every real Christian, that is, every real penitent, that he should labour to get his heart and life impressed with the stamp of the Gospel. I expect to see him aiming at a conformity in spirit and in practice to the will of God in Jesus Christ. I expect to see him gradually attaining towards an entire change

from his natural self. When I see a man at constant war with those several pursuits and tempers which are with peculiar propriety termed *worldly*, it is a plain proof to me that the change must have passed on him which the gospel emphatically terms becoming 'a new man.'

Bragwell. I hope then I am altered enough to please you. I am sure affliction has made such a change in me, that my best friends hardly know me to be the same man.

Worthy. That is not the change I mean. 'Tis true, from a merry man you are become a gloomy man; but that is because you have been disappointed in your schemes: the principle remains unaltered. A great match for your single daughter would at once restore all the spirits you have lost by the imprudence of your married one. The change the Gospel requires is of quite another cast: it is having 'a new heart and a right spirit;'—it is being 'God's workmanship;'—it is being 'created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works;'—it is becoming 'new creatures;'—it is 'old things being done away, and all things made new;'—it is by so 'learning the truth as it is in Jesus—to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;'—it is by 'partaking of the divine nature.' Pray observe, Mr. Bragwell, these are not my words, nor words picked out of any fanatical book; they are the words of that Gospel you profess to believe; it is not a new doctrine, it is as old as our religion itself. Though I cannot but observe, that men are more reluctant in believing, more averse to adopting this doctrine than almost any other: and indeed I do not wonder at it; for there is perhaps no one which so attacks corruption in its strong holds; no one which so thoroughly prohibits a lazy Christian from uniting a life of sinful indulgence with an outward profession of piety.

Bragwell now seemed resolved to set about the matter in earnest; but he resolved in his own strength: he never thought of applying for assistance to the Fountain of Wisdom; to Him who giveth might to them who have no strength. Unluckily, the very day Mr. Worthy took leave, there happened to be a grand ball at the next town, on account of the assizes. An assize-ball, courteous reader! is a scene to which gentlemen and ladies periodically resort to celebrate the crimes and calamities of their fellow-creatures, by dancing and music, and to divert themselves with feasting and drinking, while unhappy wretches are receiving sentence of death.

To this ball Miss Bragwell went, dressed out with a double portion of finery, pouring out on her head, in addition to her own ornaments, the whole band-box of feathers, beads, and flowers, her sister had left behind her. While she was at the ball her father formed many plans of religious reformation; he talked of lessening his business, that he might have more leisure for devotion; though not *just now*, while the markets were so high; and then he began to think of sending a handsome subscription to the Infirmary; though, on second thoughts he concluded he need not be in a *hurry*, but might as well leave it in his will; though to *give*, and *repent*, and *reform*, were three things he was bent upon. But when his daughter came home at night so happy and so fine! and telling how she had danced with squire Squeeze, the great corn contractor, and how many fine things he had said to her, Mr. Bragwell felt the old spirit of the world return in its full force. A marriage with Mr. Dashall Squeeze, the contractor, was beyond his hopes; for Mr. Squeeze was supposed from a very low beginning to have got rich during the war.

As for Mr. Squeeze, he had picked up as much of the history of his partner between the dances as he desired; he was convinced there would be no money wanting; for Miss Bragwell, who was now looked on as an only child, must needs be a great fortune, and Mr. Squeeze was too much used to advantageous contracts to let this slip. As he was gaudily dressed, and possessed all the arts of vulgar flattery, Miss Bragwell eagerly caught at his proposal to wait on her father next day. Squeeze was quite a man after Bragwell's own heart, a genius at getting money, a fine dashing fellow at spending it. He told his wife that this was the very sort of man for his daughter; for he got money like a Jew and spent it like a prince; but whether it was fairly got, or wisely spent, he was too much a man of the world to inquire. Mrs. Bragwell was not so run away with by appearances, but that she desired her husband to be careful, and make himself quite sure it was the right Mr. Squeeze, and no impostor. But being assured by her husband that Betsey would certainly keep her carriage, she never gave herself one thought with what sort of a man she was to ride in it. To have one of her daughters drive in her own coach, filled up all her ideas of human happiness, and drove the other daughter quite out of her head. The marriage was celebrated with great splendour, and Mr. and Mrs. Squeeze set off for London, where they had taken a house.

Mr. Bragwell now tried to forget that he had any other daughter; and if some thoughts of the resolutions he had made of entering on a more religious course would sometimes force themselves upon him, they were put off, like the repentance of Felix, *to a more convenient season;* and finding he was likely to have a grandchild, he became more worldly and more ambitious than ever; thinking this a just pretence for adding house to house, and field to field. And there is no stratagem by which men more fatally deceive themselves, than when they make even unborn children a pretence for that rapine, or that hoarding, of which their own covetousness is the true motive. Whenever he ventured to write to Mr. Worthy about the wealth, the gayety, and the grandeur of Mr. and Mrs. Squeeze, that faithful friend honestly reminded him of the vanity and uncertainty of worldly greatness, and the error he had been guilty of in marrying his daughter before he had taken time to inquire into the real character of the man, saying, that he could not help foreboding that the happiness of a match made at a ball might have an untimely end.

Notwithstanding Mr. Bragwell had paid down a larger fortune than was prudent, for fear Mr.

Squeeze should fly off, yet he was surprised to receive very soon a pressing letter from him, desiring him to advance a considerable sum, as he had the offer of an advantageous purchase, which he must lose for want of money. Bragwell was staggered, and refused to comply; but his wife told him he must not be shabby to such a gentleman as squire Squeeze; for that she heard on all sides such accounts of their grandeur, their feasts, their carriages, and their liveries, that she and her husband ought even to deny themselves comforts to oblige such a generous son, who did all this in honour of their daughter; besides, if he did not send the money soon, they might be obliged to lay down their coach, and then she should never be able to show her face again. At length Mr. Bragwell lent him the money on his bond; he knew Squeeze's income was large; for he had carefully inquired into this particular, and for the rest he took his word. Mrs. Squeeze also got great presents from her mother, by representing to her how expensively they were forced to live to keep up their credit, and what honour she was conferring on the family of the Bragwells, by spending their money in such grand company. Among many other letters she wrote her the following:

'TO MRS. BRAGWELL.

'You can't imagine, dear mother, how charmingly we live.—I lie a-bed almost all day, and am up all night; but it is never dark for all that, for we burn such numbers of candles all at once, that the sun would be of no use at all in London. Then I am so happy! for we are never quiet a moment, Sundays or working-days; nay, I should not know which was which, only that we have most pleasure on a Sunday; because it is the only day on which people have nothing to do but to divert themselves. Then the great folks are all so kind, and so good; they have not a bit of pride, for they will come and eat and drink, and win my money, just as if I was their equal; and if I have got but a cold, they are so very unhappy that they send to know how I do; and though I suppose they cant rest till the footman has told them, yet they are so polite, that if I have been dying they seem to have forgotten it the next time we meet, and not to know but they have seen me the day before. Oh! they are true friends; and for ever smiling, and so fond of one another, that they like to meet and enjoy one another's company by hundreds, and always think the more the merrier. I shall never be tired of such a delightful life.

'Your dutiful daughter,

'BETSEY SQUEEZE.'

The style of her letters, however, altered in a few months. She owned that though things went on gayer and grander than ever, yet she hardly ever saw her husband, except her house was full of company and cards, or dancing was going on; that he was often so busy abroad he could not come home all night; that he always borrowed the money her mother sent her when he was going out on this nightly business; and that the last time she had asked *him* for money he cursed and swore, and bid her apply to the old farmer and his rib, who were made of money. This letter Mrs. Bragwell concealed from her husband.

At length, on some change in public affairs, Mr. Squeeze, who had made an overcharge of some thousand pounds in one article, lost his contract; he was found to owe a large debt to government, and his accounts must be made up immediately. This was impossible; he had not only spent his large income, without making any provision for his family, but had contracted heavy debts by gaming and other vices. His creditors poured in upon him. He wrote to Bragwell to borrow another sum; but without hinting at the loss of his contract. These repeated demands made Bragwell so uneasy, that instead of sending him the money, he resolved to go himself secretly to London, and judge by his own eyes how things were going on, as his mind strangely misgave him. He got to Mr. Squeeze's house about eleven at night, and knocked gently, concluding that they must needs be gone to bed. But what was his astonishment to find the hall was full of men; he pushed through in spite of them, though to his great surprise they insisted on knowing his name, saying they must carry it to their lady. This affronted him: he refused, saying, 'It is not because I am ashamed of my name, it will pass for thousands in any market in the west of England. Is this your London manners, not to let a man of my credit in without knowing his name indeed!' What was his amazement to see every room as full of card-tables and of fine gentlemen and ladies as it would hold. All was so light, and so gay, and so festive and so grand, that he reproached himself for his suspicions, thought nothing too good for them, and resolved secretly to give Squeeze another five hundred pounds to help to keep up so much grandeur and happiness. At length seeing a footman he knew, he asked him where were his master and mistress, for he could not pick them out among the company; or rather his ideas were so confused with the splendour of the scene, that he did not know whether they were there or not. The man said, that his master had just sent for his lady up stairs, and he believed that he was not well. Mr. Bragwell said he would go up himself and look for his daughter, as he could not speak so freely to her before all that company.

He went up, knocked at the chamber door, and its not being opened, made him push it with some violence. He heard a bustling noise within, and again made a fruitless attempt to open the door. At this the noise increased, and Mr. Bragwell was struck to the heart at the sound of a pistol from within. He now kicked so violently against the door that it burst open, when the first sight he saw was his daughter falling to the ground in a fit, and Mr. Squeeze dying by a shot from a pistol which was dropping out of his hand. Mr. Bragwell was not the only person whom the sound of the pistol had alarmed. The servants, the company, all heard it, and all ran up to this scene of horror. Those who had the best of the game took care to bring up their tricks in their hands, having had the prudence to leave the very few who could be trusted, to

watch the stakes, while those who had a prospect of losing profited by the confusion, and threw up their cards. All was dismay and terror. Some ran for a surgeon, others examined the dying man; some removed Mrs. Squeeze to her bed, while poor Bragwell could neither see nor hear, nor do any thing, One of the company took up a letter which lay open upon the table, and was addressed to him; they read it, hoping it might explain the horrid mystery. It was as follows:

'TO MR. BRAGWELL.

'Sir—Fetch home your daughter; I have ruined her, myself, and the child to which she every hour expects to be a mother. I have lost my contract. My debts are immense. You refuse me money; I must die then; but I will die like a man of spirit. They wait to take me to prison; I have two executions in my house; but I have ten card-tables in it. I would die as I have lived. I invited all this company, and have drunk hard since dinner to get primed for the dreadful deed. My wife refuses to write to you for another thousand, and she must take the consequences. *Vanity* has been my ruin; it has caused all my crimes. Whoever is resolved to live beyond his income is liable to every sin. He can never say to himself, Thus far shalt thou go and no farther. Vanity led me to commit acts of rapine, that I might live in splendour; vanity makes me commit self-murder, because I will not live in poverty. The new philosophy says, that death is an eternal sleep; but the new philosophy lies. Do you take heed; it is too late for me: the dreadful gulf yawns to swallow me; I plunge into perdition: there is no repentance in the grave, no hope in hell.

Your's, &c.

'DASHALL SQUEEZE.'

The dead body was removed, and Mr. Bragwell remaining almost without speech or motion, the company began to think of retiring, much out of humour at having their party so disagreeably broken up: they comforted themselves, however, that it was *so early* (for it was now scarcely twelve) they could finish their evening at another party or two; so completely do habits of *pleasure*, as it is called, harden the heart, and steel it not only against virtuous impressions, but against natural feelings! Now it was, that those who had nightly rioted at the expense of these wretched people, were the first to abuse them. Not an offer of assistance was made to this poor forlorn woman; not a word of kindness or of pity; nothing but censure was now heard. 'Why must these upstarts ape people of quality?' though as long as these upstarts could feast them, their vulgarity and their bad character had never been produced against them. 'As long as thou dost well unto thyself, men shall speak good of thee.' One guest who, unluckily, had no other house to go to, coolly said, as he walked off, 'Squeeze might as well have put off shooting himself till the morning. It was monstrously provoking that he could not wait an hour or two.'

As every thing in the house was seized, Mr. Bragwell prevailed on his miserable daughter, weak as she was, next morning to set out with him to the country. His acquaintance with polite life was short, but he had seen a great deal in a little time. They had a slow and sad journey. In about a week, Mrs. Squeeze lay-in of a dead child; she herself languished a few days, and then died; and the afflicted parents saw the two darling objects of their ambition, for whose sakes they had made *too much haste to be rich*, carried to the land where all things are forgotten. Mrs. Bragwell's grief, like her other passions, was extravagant; and poor Bragwell's sorrow was rendered so bitter by self-reproach, that he would quite have sunk under it, had he not thought of his old expedient in distress, that of sending for Mr. Worthy to comfort him.

It was Mr. Worthy's way, to warn people of those misfortunes which he saw their faults must needs bring on them; but not to reproach or desert them when the misfortunes came. He had never been near Bragwell, during the short but flourishing reign of the Squeezes: for he knew that prosperity made the ears deaf and the heart hard to counsel; but as soon as he heard his friend was in trouble, he set out to go to him. Bragwell burst into a violent fit of tears when he saw him, and when he could speak, said, 'This trial is more than I can bear.' Mr. Worthy kindly took him by the hand, and when he was a little composed, said, 'I will tell you a short story—There was in ancient times a famous man who was a slave. His master, who was very good to him, one day gave him a bitter melon, and bade him eat it: he ate it up without one word of complaint.—"How was it possible," said the master, "for you to eat so very nauseous and disagreeable a fruit?"—The slave replied, "My good master, I have received so many favours from your bounty, that it is no wonder if I should once in my life eat one bitter melon from your hands."—This generous answer so struck the master, that the history says he gave him his liberty. With such submissive sentiments, my friend, should man receive his portion of sufferings from God, from whom he receives so many blessings. You in particular have received "much good at the hand of God, shall you not receive evil also?" '

'O! Mr. Worthy!' said Bragwell, this blow is too heavy for me, I cannot survive this shock: I do not desire it, I only wish to die.'—'We are very apt to talk most of dying when we are least fit for it,' said Worthy. 'This is not the language of that submission which makes us prepare for death; but of that despair which makes us out of humour with life. O! Mr. Bragwell! you are indeed disappointed of the grand ends which made life so delightful to you; but till your heart is humbled, till you are brought to a serious conviction of sin, till you are brought to see what is the true end of life, you can have no hope in death. You think you have no business on earth, because those for whose sake you too eagerly heaped up riches are no more. But is there not under the canopy of heaven some afflicted being whom you may yet relieve, some modest merit which you may bring forward some helpless creature you may save by your advice, some perishing Christian you may sus-

tain by your wealth? When you have no sins of your own to repent of, no mercies of God to be thankful for, no miseries of others to relieve, then, and not till then, I consent you should sink down in despair, and call on death to relieve you.'

Mr. Worthy attended his afflicted friend to the funeral of his unhappy daughter and her babe. The solemn service, the committing his late gay and beautiful daughter to darkness, to worms, and to corruption;—the sight of the dead infant, for whose sake he had resumed all his schemes of vanity and covetousness, when he thought he had got the better of them;—the melancholy conviction that all human prosperity ends in *ashes to ashes, and dust to dust*, has brought down Mr. Bragwell's self-sufficient and haughty soul into something of that humble frame in which Mr. Worthy had wished to see it. As soon as they returned home, he was beginning to seize the favourable moment for fixing these serious impressions, when they were unseasonably interrupted by the parish officer, who came to ask Mr. Bragwell what he was to do with a poor dying woman who was travelling the country with her child, and was taken in a fit under the church-yard wall? 'At first they thought she was dead,' said the man, 'but finding she still breathed, they have carried her into the workhouse till she could give some account of herself.'

Mr. Bragwell was impatient at the interruption, which was indeed unseasonable, and told the man that he was at that time too much overcome by sorrow to attend to business, but he would give him an answer to-morrow. 'But, my friend,' said Mr. Worthy, 'the poor woman may die to-night; your mind is indeed not in a frame for worldly business; but there is no sorrow too great to forbid our attending the calls of duty. An act of Christian charity will not disturb, but improve the seriousness of your spirit; and though you cannot dry your own tears, God may in great mercy permit you to dry those of another. This may be one of those occasions for which I told you life was worth keeping. Do let us see this woman.'—Bragwell was not in a state either to consent or refuse, and his friend drew him to the workhouse, about the door of which stood a crowd of people. 'She is not dead,' said one, 'she moves her head.'—'But she wants air,' said all of them, while they all, according to custom, pushed so close upon her that it was impossible she could get any. A fine boy of two or three years old stood by her, crying, 'Mammy is dead, mammy is starved.' Mr. Worthy made up to the poor woman, holding his friend by the arm: in order to give her air he untied a large black bonnet which hid her face, when Mr. Bragwell, at that moment casting his eyes on her saw in this poor stranger the face of his own runaway daughter, Mrs. Incle. He groaned, but could not speak; and as he was turning away to conceal his anguish, the little boy fondly caught hold of his hand, lisping out,—'O stay and give mammy some bread!' His heart yearned towards the child; he grasped his little hand in his, while he sorrowfully said to Mr. Worthy, 'It is too much, send away the people. It is my dear naughty child; '*my punishment is greater than I can bear.*'' Mr. Worthy desired the people to go and leave the stranger to them; but by this time she was no stranger to any of them. Pale and meagre as was her face, and poor and shabby as was her dress, the proud and flaunting Miss Polly Bragwell was easily known by every one present. They went away, but with the mean revenge of little minds, they paid themselves by abuse, for all the airs and insolence they had once endured from her.—'Pride must have a fall,' said one. 'I remember when she was too good to speak to a poor body,' said another. 'Where are her flounces and furbelows now? It is come home to her at last: her child looks as if he would be glad of the worst bit she formerly denied us.'

In the mean time Mr. Bragwell had sunk into an old wicker chair which stood behind, and groaned out, 'Lord, forgive my hard heart! Lord, subdue my proud heart, *create a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me.*' This was perhaps the first words of genuine prayer he had ever offered up in his whole life. Worthy overheard it, and in his heart rejoiced; but this was not a time for talking, but doing. He asked Bragwell what was to be done with the unfortunate woman, who now seemed to recover fast, but she did not see them, for they were behind. She embraced her boy, and faintly said, 'My child what shall we do? *I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.*' This was a joyful sound to Mr. Worthy, who was inclined to hope that her heart might be as much changed for the better as her circumstances were altered for the worse; and he valued the goods of fortune so little, and contrition of soul so much, that he began to think the change on the whole might be a happy one. The boy then sprung from his mother, and ran to Bragwell, saying, 'Do be good to mammy.' Mrs. Incle looking round, now perceived her father; she fell at his feet, saying, 'O forgive your guilty child, and save your innocent one from starving!'—Bragwell sunk down by her, and prayed God to forgive both her and himself in terms of genuine sorrow. To hear words of real penitence and heart-felt prayer from this once high-minded father and vain daughter, was music to Worthy's ears, who thought this moment of outward misery was the only joyful one he had ever spent in the Bragwell family.

He was resolved not to interfere, but to let the father's own feelings work out the way into which he was to act.

Bragwell said nothing, but slowly led to his own house, holding the little boy by the hand, and pointing to Worthy to assist the feeble steps of his daughter, who once more entered her father's doors; but the dread of seeing her mother quite overpowered her.—Mrs. Bragwell's heart was not changed, but sorrow had weakened her powers of resistance; and she rather suffered her daughter to come in, than gave her a kind reception. She was more astonished than pleased; and even in this trying moment, was more disgusted with the little boy's mean clothes, than delighted with his rosy face. As

soon as she was a little recovered, Mr. Bragwell desired his daughter to tell him how she happened to be at that place at that time.

In a weak voice she began; 'My tale, sir, is short, but mournful.'—Now, I am very sorry that my readers must wait for this short, but mournful tale, a little longer.

PART VII.

MRS. INCLE'S STORY.

'I LEFT your house dear father,' said Mrs. Incle, 'with a heart full of vain triumph. I had no doubt but my husband was a great man, who put on that disguise to obtain my hand. Judge then what I felt to find that he was a needy impostor, who wanted my money, but did not care for me. This discovery, though it mortified, did not humble me. I had neither affection to bear with the man who had deceived me, nor religion to improve by the disappointment. I have found that change of circumstances does not change the heart, till God is pleased to do it. My misfortune only taught me to rebel more against him. I thought God unjust; I accused my father, I was envious of my sister, I hated my husband; but never once did I blame myself.

'My husband picked up a wretched subsistence by joining himself to any low scheme of idle pleasure that was going on. He would follow a mountebank, carry a dice-box, or fiddle at a fair. He was always taunting me for that gentility on which I so much valued myself.—'If I had married a poor working girl,' said he, she could now have got her bread; but a fine lady without money is a disgrace to herself, a burthen to her husband, and a plague to society.' Every trial which affection might have made lighter, we doubled by animosity: at length my husband was detected in using false dice; he fought with his accuser, both were seized by a press-gang, and sent to sea. I was now left to the wide world; and miserable as I had thought myself before, I soon found there were higher degrees of misery. I was near my time, without bread for myself, or hope for my child. I set out on foot in search of the village where I had heard my husband say his friends lived. It was a severe trial to my proud heart to stoop to those low people; but hunger is not delicate, and I was near perishing. My husband's parents received me kindly, saying, that though they had nothing but what they earned by their labour, yet I was welcome to share their hard fare; for they trusted that God who sent mouths would send meat also.—They gave me a small room in their cottage, and furnished me with many necessaries, which they denied themselves.'

'O! my child!' interrupted Bragwell, 'every word cuts me to the heart. These poor people gladly gave thee of their little, while thy rich parents left thee to starve.'

'How shall I own,' continued Mrs. Incle, 'that all this goodness could not soften my heart; for God had not yet touched it. I received all their kindness as a favour done to them; and thought them sufficiently rewarded for their attentions by the rank and merit of their daughter-in-law. When my father brought me home any little dainty which he could pick up, and my mother kindly dressed it for me, I would not condescend to eat it with them, but devoured it sullenly in my little garret alone; suffering them to fetch and carry every thing I wanted. As my haughty behaviour was not likely to gain their affection, it was plain they did not love me: and as I had no notion that there were any motives to good actions but fondness, or self-interest, I was puzzled to know what could make them so kind to me; for of the powerful and constraining law of Christian charity I was quite ignorant. To cheat the weary hours, I looked about for some books, and found, among a few others of the same cast, 'Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.' But all those sort of books were addressed to *sinners;* now as I knew I was not a sinner, I threw them away in disgust. Indeed they were ill suited to a taste formed by plays and novels, to which reading I chiefly trace my ruin; for, vain as I was, I should never have been guilty of so wild a step as to run away, had not my heart been tainted and my imagination inflamed by those pernicious books.

'At length my little George was born. This added to the burthen I had brought on this poor family, but it did not diminish their kindness; and we continued to share their scanty fare without any upbraiding on their part, or any gratitude on mine. Even this poor baby did not soften my heart; I wept over him, indeed, day and night, but they were tears of despair; I was always idle, and wasted those hours in sinful murmurs at his fate, which I should have employed in trying to maintain him. Hardship, grief, and impatience, at length brought on a fever. Death seemed now at hand, and I felt a gloomy satisfaction in the thought of being rid of my miseries, to which I fear was added a sullen joy, to think that you, sir, and my mother, would be plagued to hear of my death when it would be too late; and in this your grief I anticipated a gloomy sort of revenge. But it pleased my merciful God not to let me thus perish in my sins. My poor mother-in-law sent for a good clergyman, who pointed out the danger of dying in that hard and unconverted state so forcibly, that I shuddered to find on what a dreadful precipice I stood. He prayed with me, and for me so earnestly, that at length God, who is sometimes pleased to magnify his own glory in awakening those who are dead in trespasses and sins, was pleased of his free grace, to open my blind eyes, and soften my stony heart. I saw myself a sinner, and prayed to be delivered from the wrath of God, in comparison of which the poverty and disgrace I now suffered appeared as nothing. To a soul convinced of sin, the news of a Redeemer was a joyful sound. Instead of reproaching Providence, or blaming my parents, or abusing my husband, I now learnt to condemn myself, to adore that God who had not cut me off in my ignorance, to pray for pardon for the past, and grace for the time to come. I now desired to submit to penury and

hunger, so that I might but live in the fear of God in this world, and enjoy his favour in the next. I now learnt to compare my present light sufferings, the consequence of my own sin, with those bitter sufferings of my Saviour, which he endured for my sake, and I was ashamed of murmuring. But self-ignorance, conceit, and vanity were so rooted in me, that my progress was very gradual, and I had the sorrow to feel how much the power of long bad habits keeps down the growth of religion in the heart, even after the principle itself has begun to take root. I was so ignorant of divine things, that I hardly knew words to frame a prayer; but when I got acquainted with the Psalms, I there learnt how to pour out the fulness of my heart, while in the Gospel I rejoiced to see what great things God had done for my soul.

'I now took down once more from the shelf 'Doddridge's Rise and Progress;' and oh! with what new eyes did I read it! I now saw clearly, that not only the thief and the drunkard, the murderer and the adulterer are sinners, for that I knew before; but I found that the unbeliever, the selfish, the proud, the worldly-minded, all, in short, who live without God in the world, are sinners. I did not now apply the reproofs I met with to my husband, or my father; or other people, as I used to do; but brought them home to myself. In this book I traced, with strong emotions and close self-application, the sinner through all his course; his first awakening, his convictions, repentance, joys, sorrows, backsliding, and recovery, despondency, and delight, to a triumphant death-bed; and God was pleased to make it a chief instrument in bringing me to himself. 'Here it is,' continued Mrs. Incle, untying her little bundle, and taking out a book; 'accept it, my dear father, and I will pray that God may bless it to you, as He has done to me.

'When I was able to come down, I passed my time with these good old people, and soon won their affection. I was surprised to find they had very good sense, which I never had thought poor people could have; but, indeed, worldly persons do not know how much religion, while it mends the heart, enlightens the understanding also. I now regretted the evenings I had wasted in my solitary garret, when I might have passed them in reading the Bible with these good folks. This was their refreshing cordial after a weary day, which sweetened the pains of want and age. I one day expressed my surprise that my unfortunate husband, the son of such pious parents, should have turned out so ill: the poor old man said with tears, 'I fear we have been guilty of the sin of Eli; our love was of the wrong sort. Alas! like him, *we honoured our son more than God*, and God has smitten us for it. We showed him by our example, what was right; but through a false indulgence, we did not correct him for what was wrong. We were blind to his faults. He was a handsome boy, with sprightly parts: we took too much delight in these outward things. He soon got above our management, and became vain, idle, and extravagant; and when we sought to restrain him, it was then too late. We bumbled ourselves before God; but he was pleased to make our sin become its own punishment. Timothy grew worse and worse, till he was forced to abscond for a misdemeanour; after which we never saw him, but have often heard of him changing from one idle way of life to another; *unstable as water*, he has been a footman, a soldier, a shopman, a gambler, and a strolling actor. With deep sorrow we trace back his vices to our ungoverned fondness; that lively and sharp wit, by which he has been able to carry on such a variety of wild schemes, might, if we had used him to bear reproof in his youth, have enabled him to have done great service for God and his country. But our flattery made him wise in his own conceit; and there is more hope of a fool than of him. We indulged our own vanity, and have destroyed his soul.'

Here Mr. Worthy stopped Mrs. Inele, saying, that whenever he heard it lamented that the children of pious parents often turned out so ill, he could not help thinking that there must be frequently something of this sort of error in the bringing them up: he knew, indeed, some instances to the contrary, in which the best means had failed; but he believed, that from Eli the priest, to Incle the labourer, much more than half the failures of this sort might be traced to some mistake, or vanity, or bad judgment, or sinful indulgence in the parents.

'I now looked about,' continued Mrs. Incle, 'in order to see in what I could assist my poor mother; regretting more heartily than she did, that I knew no one thing that was of any use. I was so desirous of humbling myself before God and her, that I offered even to try to wash.'—'You wash!' exclaimed Bragwell, starting up with great emotion, 'Heaven forbid, that with such a fortune and education, Miss Bragwell should be seen at a washing-tub.' This vain father, who could bear to hear of her distresses and her sins, could not bear to hear of her washing. Mr. Worthy stopped him, saying, 'As to her fortune, you know you refused to give her any; and as to her education, you see it had not taught her how to do any thing better. I am sorry you do not see in this instance, the beauty of Christian humility. For my own part, I set a greater value on such an active proof of it, than on a whole volume of professions.'—Mr. Bragwell did not quite understand this, and Mrs. Incle went on. 'What to do to get a penny I knew not. Making of filagree, or fringe, or card-purses, or cutting out paper, or dancing and singing was of no use in our village. The shopkeeper, indeed, would have taken me, if I had known any thing of accounts; and the clergyman could have got me a nursery-maid's place, if I could have done good plain-work. I made some awkward attempts to learn to spin and knit, when my mother's wheel or knitting lay by, but I spoiled both through my ignorance. At last I luckily thought upon the fine netting I used to make for my trimmings, and it struck me that I might turn this to some little account. I procured some twine, and worked early and late to make nets for fishermen, and cabbage-nets. I was so plessed that I had at last found an opportunity to show my good will by this mean work, that I regretted my little George was not big enough to contribute

his share to our support, by travelling about to sell my nets.'

'Cabbage-nets!' exclaimed Bragwell; 'there is no bearing this.—Cabbage-nets! My grandson hawk cabbage-nets! How could you think of such a scandalous thing?' 'Sir,' said Mrs. Incle mildly, 'I am now convinced that nothing is scandalous which is not wicked. Besides, we were in want; and necessity, as well as piety, would have reconciled me to this mean trade.' Mr. Bragwell groaned, and bade her go on.

'In the mean time my little George grew a fine boy; and I adored the goodness of God, who in the sweetness of maternal love, had given me a reward for many sufferings. Instead of indulging a gloomy distrust about the fate of this child, I now resigned him to the will of God. Instead of lamenting because he was not likely to be rich, I was resolved to bring him up with such notions as might make him contented to be poor. I thought if I could subdue all vanity and selfishness in him, I should make him a happier man than if I had thousands to bestow on him; and I trusted that I should be rewarded for every painful act of self-denial, by the future virtue and happiness of my child. Can you believe it, my dear father, my days now passed not unhappily; I worked hard all day, and that alone is a source of happiness beyond what the idle can guess. After my child was asleep at night, I read a chapter in the Bible to my parents, whose eyes now began to fail them. We then thanked God over our frugal supper of potatoes, and talked over the holy men of old, the saints, and the martyrs, who would have thought our homely fare a luxury. We compared our peace, and liberty, and safety, with their bonds, and imprisonment, and tortures; and should have been ashamed of a murmur. We then joined in prayer, in which my absent parents and my husband were never forgotten, and went to rest in charity with the whole world, and at peace in our own souls.'

'Oh! my forgiving child!' interrupted Mr. Bragwell, sobbing; 'and didst thou really pray for thy unnatural father? and didst thou lay thee down in rest and peace? Then, let me tell thee, thou wast better off than thy mother and I were.—But no more of this; go on.'

'Whether my father-in-law had worked beyond his strength, in order to support me and my child, I know not, but he was taken dangerously ill. While he lay in this state, he received an account that my husband was dead in the West-Indies of the yellow fever, which has carried off such numbers of our countrymen: we all wept together, and prayed that his awful death might quicken us in preparing for our own. This shock, joined to the fatigue of nursing her sick husband, soon brought my poor mother to death's door. I nursed them both, and felt a satisfaction in giving them all I had to bestow, my attendance, my tears, and my prayers. I, who was once so nice and so proud, so disdainful in the midst of plenty, and so impatient under the smallest inconvenience, was now enabled to glorify God by my activity and by my submission. Though the sorrows of my heart were enlarged, I cast my burthen on Him who cares for the weary and heavy laden. After having watched by these poor people the whole night, I sat down to breakfast on my dry crust and coarse dish of tea, without a murmur: my greatest grief was, lest I should bring away the infection to my dear boy; for the fever was now become putrid. I prayed to know what it was my duty to do between my dying parents and my helpless child. To take care of the sick and aged, seemed to be my first duty; so I offered up my child to Him who is the father of the fatherless, and he in mercy spared him to me.

'The cheerful piety with which these good people breathed their last, proved to me, that the temper of mind with which the pious poor commonly meet death, is the grand compensation made them by Providence for all the hardships of their inferior condition. If they have had few joys and comforts in life already, and have still fewer hopes in store, is not all fully made up to them by their being enabled to leave this world with stronger desires of heaven, and without those bitter regrets after the good things of this life, which add to the dying tortures of the worldly rich? To the forlorn and destitute, death is not so terrible as it is to him who *sits at ease in his possessions*, and who fears that this night his soul shall be required of him.'

Mr. Bragwell felt this remark more deeply than his daughter meant he should. He wept, and bade her proceed.

'I followed my departed parents to the same grave, and wept over them, but not as one who had no hope. They had neither houses nor lands to leave me, but they left me their Bible, their blessing, and their example, of which I humbly trust I shall feel the benefits when all the riches of this world shall have an end. Their few effects, consisting of some poor household goods, and some working-tools, hardly sufficed to pay their funeral expenses. I was soon attacked with the same fever, and saw myself, as I thought, dying the second time; my danger was the same, but my views were changed. I now saw eternity in a more awful light than I had done before, when I wickedly thought death might be gloomily called upon as a refuge from every common trouble. Though I had still reason to be humble on account of my sin, yet, by the grace of God, I saw death stripped of his sting and robbed of his terrors, *through him who loved me, and gave himself for me;* and in the extremity of pain, *my soul rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

'I recovered, however, and was chiefly supported by the kind clergyman's charity. When I felt myself nourished and cheered by a little tea or broth, which he daily sent me from his own slender provision, my heart smote me, to think how I had daily sat down at home to a plentiful dinner, without any sense of thankfulness for my own abundance, or without inquiring whether my poor sick neighbours were starving: and I sorrowfully remembered, that what my poor sister and I used to waste through daintiness, would now have comfortably fed myself and child. Believe me, my dear mother, a labouring man who has been brought low by a fever, might often be restored to his work some weeks sooner, if on his recovery he was nou-

rished and strengthened by a good bit from a farmer's table. Less than is often thrown to a favourite spaniel would suffice; so that the expense would be almost nothing to the giver, while to the receiver it would bring health, and strength, and comfort, and recruited life. And it is with regret I must observe, that young women in our station are less attentive to the comforts of the poor, less active in visiting the cottages of the sick, less desirous of instructing the young, and working for the aged, than many ladies of higher rank. The multitude of opportunities of this sort which we neglect, among the families of our father's distressed tenants and workmen, will I fear, one day appear against us.

'By the time I was tolerably recovered, I was forced to leave the house. I had no human prospect of subsistence. I humbly asked of God to direct my steps, and to give me entire obedience to his will. I then cast my eye mournfully on my child; and though prayer had relieved my heart of a load which without it would have been intolerable, my tears flowed fast, while I cried out in the bitterness of my soul, *How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger.* This text appeared a kind of answer to my prayer, and gave me courage to make one more attempt to soften you in my favour. I resolved to set out directly to find you, to confess my disobedience, and to beg a scanty pittance, with which I and my child might be meanly supported in some distant country, where we should not, by our presence, disgrace our more happy relations. We set out and travelled as fast as my weak health and poor George's little feet and ragged shoes would permit. I brought a little bundle of such work and necessaries as I had left, by selling which we subsisted on the road.'—'I hope,' interrupted Bragwell, 'there were no cabbage-nets in it?'—'At least,' said her mother, 'I hope you did not sell them near home?'—'No; I had none left, said Mrs. Incle, 'or I should have done it. I got many a lift in a wagon for my child and my bundle, which was a great relief to me, as I should have had both to carry. And here I cannot help saying, I wish drivers would not be too hard in their demands, if they help a poor sick traveller on a mile or two, it proves a great relief to weary bodies and naked feet; and such little cheap charities may be considered as *the cup of cold water*, which, if given on right grounds, *shall not lose its reward.*' Here Bragwell sighed to think that when mounted on his fine bay mare, or driving his neat chaise, it had never once crossed his mind that the poor way-worn foot traveller was not equally at his ease, nor had it ever occurred to him that shoes were a necessary accommodation. Those who want nothing are apt to forget how many there are who want every thing. Mrs. Incle went on: 'I got to this village about seven this evening; and while I sat on the church yard wall to rest and meditate how I should make myself known at home, I saw a funeral; I inquired whose it was, and learnt it was my sister's. This was too much for me, and I sank down in a fit, and knew nothing that happened to me from that moment, till I found myself in the workhouse with my father and Mr. Worthy.'

Here Mrs. Incle stopped. Grief, shame, pride, and remorse, had quite overcome Mr. Bragwell. He wept like a child, and said he hoped his daughter would pray for him; for that he was not in a condition to pray for himself, though he found nothing else could give him any comfort. His deep dejection brought on a fit of sickness. 'O! said he, I now begin to feel an expression in the sacrament which I used to repeat without thinking it had any meaning, the *remembrance of my sins is grievous, the burthen of them is intolerable.* O! it is awful to think what a sinner a man may be, and yet retain a decent character! How many thousands are in my condition, taking to themselves all the credit of their prosperity, instead of giving God the glory! heaping up riches to their hurt, instead of dealing their bread to the hungry! O! let those who hear of the Bragwell family, never say that *vanity is a little sin.* In *me* it has been the fruitful parent of a thousand sins—selfishness, hardness of heart, forgetfulness of God. In one of my sons, vanity was the cause of rapine, injustice extravagance, ruin, self-murder. Both my daughters were undone by vanity, though it only wore the more harmless shape of dress, idleness, and dissipation. The husband of my daughter Incle it destroyed, by leading him to live above his station, and to despise labour. Vanity ensnared the souls even of his pious parents, for while it led them to wish their son in a better condition, it led them to allow such indulgences as were unfit for his own. O! you who hear of us, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; resist high thoughts; let every imagination be brought into obedience to the Son of God. If you set a value on finery look into that grave; behold the mouldering body of my Betsey, who now says to *Corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.* Look to the bloody and brainless head of her husband. O, Mr. Worthy, how does Providence mock at human foresight! I have been greedy of gain, that the son of Mr. Squeeze might be a great man; he is dead; while the child of Timothy Incle, whom I had doomed to beggary, will be my heir. Mr. Worthy, to you I commit this boy's education; teach him to value his immortal soul more, and the good things of this life less than I have done. Bring him up in the fear of God, and in the government of his passions. Teach him that unbelief and pride are at the root of all sin. I have found this to my cost. I trusted in my riches; I said, "to-morrow shall be as this day and more abundant." I did not remember that *for all these things God would bring me to judgment.* I am not sure that I believed in a judgment: I am not sure that I believed in a God.'

Bragwell at length grew better, but he never recovered his spirits. The conduct of Mrs. Incle through life was that of an humble Christian. She sold all her sister's finery which her father had given her, and gave the money to the poor; saying, 'It did not become one who professed penitence to return to the gayeties of life.' Mr. Bragwell did not oppose this; not that he had fully acquired a just notion of the self-denying

spirit of religion, but having a head not very clear at making distinctions, he was never able, after the sight of Squeeze's mangled body, to think of gayety and grandeur, without thinking at the same time of a pistol and bloody brains; for, at his first introduction into gay life had presented him with all these objects at one view, he never afterwards could separate them in his mind. He even kept his fine beaufet of plate always shut; because it brought to his mind the grand unpaid-for sideboard that he had seen laid out for Mr. Squeeze's supper, to the remembrance of which he could not help tacking the idea of debts, prisons, executions, and self-murder.

Mr. Bragwell's heart had been so buried in the love of the world, and evil habits had become so rooted in him, that the progress he made in religion was very slow; yet he earnestly prayed and struggled against sin and vanity; and when his unfeeling wife declared she could not love the boy unless he was called by their name instead of Incle, Mr. Bragwell would never consent, saying he stood in need of every help against pride. He also got the letter which Squeeze wrote just before he shot himself, framed and glazed; this he hung up in his chamber, and made it a rule to go and read it as often as he found his heart disposed to VANITY.

'TIS ALL FOR THE BEST.*

'IT IS all for the best,' said Mrs. Simpson, whenever any misfortune befel her. She had got such a habit of vindicating Providence, that instead of weeping and wailing under the most trying dispensations, her chief care was to convince herself and others, that however great might be her sufferings, and however little they could be accounted for at present, yet that the Judge of all the earth could not but do right. Instead of trying to clear herself from any possible blame that might attach to her under those misfortunes which, to speak after the manner of men, she might seem not to have *deserved*, she was always the first to justify Him who had inflicted it. It was not that she superstitiously converted every visitation into a *punishment:* she entertained more correct ideas of that God who overrules all events. She knew that some calamities were sent to exercise her faith, others to purify her heart; some to chastise her rebellious will, and all to remind her that this 'was not her rest;' that this world was not the scene, for the full and final display of retributive justice. The honour of God was dearer to her than her own credit, and her chief desire was to turn all events to his glory.

Though Mrs. Simpson was the daughter of a clergyman, and the widow of a genteel tradesman, she had been reduced by a succession of misfortunes, to accept of a room in an alms-house. Instead of repining at the change; instead of dwelling on her former gentility and saying, 'how handsomely she had lived once; and how hard it was to be reduced; and she little thought ever to end her days in an alms-house;' which is the common language of those who were never so well off before; she was thankful that such an asylum was provided for want and age; and blessed God that it was to the Christian dispensation alone that such pious institutions owed their birth.

One fine evening, as she was sitting reading her Bible on the little bench shaded with honeysuckles, just before her door, who should come and sit down by her but Mrs. Betty, who had formerly been lady's maid at the nobleman's house in the village of which Mrs. Simpson's father had been minister.—Betty, after a life of vanity, was, by a train of misfortunes, brought to this very alms-house; and though she had taken no care by frugality and prudence to avoid it, she thought it a hardship and disgrace, instead of being thankful, as she ought to have been, for such a retreat. At first she did not know Mrs. Simpson; her large bonnet, cloak, and brown stuff gown (for she always made her appearance conform to her circumstances) being very different from the dress she had been used to wear when Mrs. Betty has seen her dining at the great house; and time and sorrow had much altered her countenance. But when Mrs. Simpson kindly addressed her as an old acquaintance, she screamed with surprise—'What! you, madam?' cried she: 'you in an alms-house, living on charity: 'you, who used to be so charitable yourself, that you never suffered any distress in the parish which you could prevent?' 'That may be one reason, Betty,' replied Mrs. Simpson, 'why Providence has provided this refuge for my old age.—And my heart overflows with gratitude when I look back on his goodness. 'No such great goodness, methinks,' said Betty; 'why you were born and bred a lady, and are now reduced to live in an alms-house. 'Betty, I was born and bred a sinner, undeserving of the mercies I have received.' 'No such great mercies,' said Betty. 'Why, I heard you had been turned out of doors; that your husband had broke; and that you had been in danger of starving, though I did not know what was become of you. 'It is all true, Betty, glory be to God! it is all true.'

'Well,' said Betty, 'you are an odd sort of a gentlewoman. If from a prosperous condition I had been made a bankrupt, a widow, and a beggar, I should have thought it no such mighty matter to be thankful for: but there is no accounting for taste. The neighbours used to say that all your troubles must needs be a judgment upon you; but I who knew how good you were,

* A profligate wit of a neighbouring country having attempted to turn this doctrine into ridicule, under the same title here assumed, it occurred to the author that it might not be altogether useless to illustrate the same doctrine on Christian principles.

thought it very hard you should suffer so much; but now I see you reduced to an alms-house, I beg your pardon, madam, but I am afraid the neighbours were in the right, and that so many misfortunes could never have happened to you without you had committed a great many sins to deserve them; for I always thought that God is so just that he punishes us for all our bad actions, and rewards us for all our good ones.' 'So he does, Betty; but he does it in his own way, and at his own time, and not according to our notions of good and evil; for his ways are not as our ways.—God, indeed, punishes the bad, and rewards the good; but he does not do it fully and finally in this world. Indeed he does not set such a value on outward things as to make riches, and rank, and beauty, and health, the reward of piety; that would be acting like weak and erring men, and not like a just and holy God. Our belief in a future state of rewards and punishments is not always so strong as it ought to be, even now; but how totally would our faith fail, if we regularly saw every thing made even in this world. We shall lose nothing by having pay-day put off. The longest voyages make the best returns. So far am I from thinking that God is less just, and future happiness less certain, because I see the wicked sometimes prosper, and the righteous suffer in this world, that I am rather led to believe that God is more just and heaven more certain: for, in the first place, God will not put off his favourite children with so poor a lot as the good things of this world; and next, seeing that the best men here below do not often attain to the best things; why it only serves to strengthen my belief that they are not the best things in His eye; and He has most assuredly reserved for those that love Him such 'good things as eye has not seen nor ear heard.' God, by keeping man in Paradise while he was innocent, and turning him into this world as soon as he had sinned, gave a plain proof that he never intended the world, even in its happiest state, as a place of reward. My father gave me good principles and useful knowledge; and while he taught me by a habit of constant employment, to be, if I may so say, independent of the world; yet he led me to a constant sense of dependence on God.' 'I do not see, however,' interrupted Mrs. Betty, 'that your religion has been of any use to you. It has been so far from preserving you from trouble, that I think you have had more than the usual share.'

'No,' said Mrs. Simpson; 'nor did Christianity ever pretend to exempt its followers from trouble; this is no part of the promise. Nay, the contrary is rather stipulated; 'in the world ye shall have tribulation.'—But if it has not taught me to escape sorrow, I humbly hope it has taught me how to bear it. If it has taught me not to feel, it has taught me not to murmur. I will tell you a little of my story. As my father could save little or nothing for me, he was very desirous of seeing me married to a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, who expressed a regard for me. But while he was anxiously engaged in bringing this about, my good father died.'

'How very unlucky!' interrupted Betty.

'No, Betty,' replied Mrs. Simpson, 'it was very providential; this man, though he maintained a decent character, had a good fortune, and lived soberly, yet he would not have made me happy.' 'Why what could you want more of a man?' said Betty. 'Religion,' returned Mrs. Simpson. 'As my father made a creditable appearance, and was very charitable; and as I was an only child, this gentleman concluded that he could give me a considerable fortune; for he did not know that all the poor in his parish are the children of every pious clergyman. Finding I had little or nothing left me, he withdrew his attentions.' 'What a sad thing!' cried Betty. 'No, it was all for the best; Providence overruled his covetousness for my good. I could not have been happy with a man whose soul was set on the perishable things of this world; nor did I esteem him, though I laboured to submit my own inclinations to those of my kind father. The very circumstance of being left pennyless produced the direct contrary effect on Mr. Simpson: he was a sensible young man, engaged in a prosperous business: we had long highly valued each other; but while my father lived, he thought me above his hopes We were married; I found him an amiable, industrious, good-tempered man; he respected religion and religious people; but with excellent dispositions, I had the grief to find him less pious than I had hoped. He was ambitious, and a little too much immersed in worldly schemes; and though I knew it was all done for my sake, yet that did not blind me so far as to make me think it right. He attached himself so eagerly to business, that he thought every hour lost in which he was not doing something that would tend to raise me to what he called my proper rank. The more prosperous he grew the less religious he became; and I began to find that one might be unhappy with a husband one tenderly loved. One day as he was standing on some steps to reach down a parcel of goods he fell from the top and broke his leg in two places.'

'What a dreadful misfortune!' said Mrs. Betty.—'What a signal blessing!' said Mrs. Simpson. 'Here I am sure I had reason to say all was for the best; from that very hour in which my outward troubles began, I date the beginning of my happiness. Severe suffering, a near prospect of death, absence from the world, silence, reflection, and above all, the divine blessings on the prayers and scriptures I read to him, were the means used by our merciful Father to turn my husband's heart.—During this confinement he was awakened to a deep sense of his own sinfulness, of the vanity of all this world has to bestow, and of his great need of a Saviour. It was many months before he could leave his bed; during this time his business was neglected. His principal clerk took advantage of his absence to receive large sums of money in his name, and absconded. On hearing of this great loss, our creditors came faster upon us than we could answer their demands; they grew more impatient as we were less able to satisfy them; one misfortune followed another; till at length Mr. Simpson became a bankrupt.'

'What an evil!' exclaimed Mrs. Betty. 'Yet

it led in the end to much good,' resumed Mrs. Simpson. 'We were forced to leave the town in which we had lived with so much credit and comfort, and to betake ourselves to a mean lodging in a neighbouring village, till my husband's strength should be recruited, and till we could have time to look about us and see what was to be done. The first night we got to this poor dwelling, my husband felt very sorrowful, not for his own sake, but that he had brought so much poverty on me, whom he had so dearly loved: I on the contrary, was unusually cheerful: for the blessed change in his mind had more than reconciled me to the sad change in his circumstances. I was contented to live with him in a poor cottage for a few years on earth, if it might contribute to our spending a blessed eternity together in heaven. I said to him, 'Instead of lamenting that we are now reduced to want all the comforts of life, I have sometimes been almost ashamed to live in the full enjoyments of them, when I have reflected that my Saviour not only chose to deny himself all these enjoyments, but even to live a life of hardship for my sake; not one of his numerous miracles tended to his own comfort; and though we read at different times that he both hungered and thirsted, yet it was not for his own gratification that he once changed water into wine; and I have often been struck with the near position of that chapter in which this miracle is recorded, to that in which he thirsted for a draught of water at the well in Samaria.* It was for others, not himself, that even the humble sustenance of barley bread was multiplied. See here, we have a bed left us; I had, indeed, nothing but straw to stuff it with, but the Saviour of the world, 'had not where to lay his head.' My husband smiled through his tears, and we sat down to supper; It consisted of a roll and a bit of cheese which I had brought with me, and we ate it thankfully. Seeing Mr. Simpson beginning to relapse into distrust, the following conversation as nearly as I can remember, took place between us. He began by remarking, that it was a mysterious Providence that he had been less prosperous since he had been less attached to the world, and that his endeavours had not been followed by that success which usually attends industry. I took the liberty to reply: 'Your heavenly Father sees on which side your danger lies, and is mercifully bringing you, by these disappointments, to trust less in the world and more in himself. My dear Mr. Simpson,' added I, 'we trust every body but God. As children we obey our parents implicitly, because we are taught to believe all is for our good which they command or forbid. If we undertake a voyage, we trust entirely to the skill and conduct of the pilot; we never torment ourselves in thinking he will carry us east, when he has promised to carry us west. If a dear and tried friend makes us a promise, we depend on him for the performance, and do not wound his feelings by our suspicions. When you used to go your annual journey to London, in the mail coach, you confided yourself to the care of the coachman, that he would carry you where he had engaged to do so; you were not anxiously watching him, and distrusting and inquiring at every turning. When the doctor sends home your medicine, don't you so fully trust in his ability and good will, that you swallow it down in full confidence? You never think of inquiring what are the ingredients, why they are mixed in that particular way, why there is more of one and less of another, and why they are bitter instead of sweet! If one dose does not cure you, he orders another, and changes the medicine when he sees the first does you no good, or that by long use the same medicine has lost its effect; if the weaker fails he prescribes a stronger: you swallow all, you submit to all, never questioning the skill or the kindness of the physician. God is the only being whom we do not trust, though He is the only one who is fully competent, both in will and power, to fulfil all his promises; and who has solemnly and repeatedly pledged himself to fulfil them in those Scriptures which we receive as his revealed will.'

'Mr. Simpson thanked me for my little sermon, as he called it; but said at the same time, that what made my exhortations produce a powerful effect on his mind was, the patient cheerfulness with which he was pleased to say I bore my share in our misfortunes. A submissive behaviour, he said, was the best practical illustration of a real faith. When he had thanked God for our supper, we prayed together; after which we read the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. When my husband had finished it, he said, 'Surely if God's chief favourites have been martyrs, is not that a sufficient proof that this world is not a place of happiness, no earthly prosperity the reward of virtue. Shall we after reading this chapter, complain of our petty trials? Shall we not rather be thankful that our affliction is so light?'

'Next day Mr. Simpson walked out in search of some employment, by which we might be supported. He got a recommendation to Mr. Thomas, an opulent farmer and factor, who had large concerns, and wanted a skilful person to assist him in keeping his accounts. This we thought a fortunate circumstance; for we found that the salary would serve to procure us at least all the necessaries of life. The farmer was so pleased with Mr. Simpson's quickness, regularity, and good sense, that he offered us, of his own accord, a little neat cottage of his own, which then happened to be vacant, and told us we should live rent free, and promised to be a friend to us.'—'All *does* seem for the best now, indeed;' interrupted Mrs. Betty.—'We shall see,' said Mrs. Simpson, and thus went on.

'I now became very easy and very happy; and was cheerfully employed in putting our few things in order, and making every thing look to the best advantage. My husband, who wrote all the day for his employer, in the evening assisted me in doing up our little garden. This was a source of much pleasure to us; we both loved a garden, and we were not only contented but cheerful. Our employer had been absent some weeks on his annual journey. He came home on a Saturday night, and the next morning sent for Mr. Simpson to come and settle his accounts, which were got behind-hand by his

* See John, chap. ii.—and John, chap. iv.

long absence. We were just going to church, and Mr. Simpson sent back word, that he would call and speak to him on his way home. A second message followed, ordering him to come to the farmer's directly: he agreed that he would walk round that way, and that my husband should call and excuse his attendance.

'The farmer more ignorant and worse educated than his ploughman, with all that pride and haughtiness which the possession of wealth, without knowledge or religion is apt to give, rudely asked my husband what he meant by sending him word that he would not come to him till the next day; and insisted that he should stay and settle the accounts then.—'Sir,' said my husband, in a very respectful manner, 'I am on my road to church, and I am afraid shall be too late.'—'Are you so,' said the farmer! 'Do you know who sent for you? You may, however, go to church, if you will, so you make haste back; and, d'ye hear, you may leave your accounts with me, as I conclude you have brought them with you; I will look them over by the time you return, and then you and I can do all I want to have done to-day in about a couple of hours, and I will give you home some letters to copy for me in the evening.'—'Sir,' answered my husband, 'I dare not obey you; it is Sunday.'—'And so you refuse to settle my accounts only because it is Sunday.' 'Sir,' replied Mr. Simpson, 'if you would give me a handful of silver and gold I dare not break the commandment of my God.'—'Well,' said the farmer, 'but this is not breaking the commandment; I don't order you to drive my cattle, or to work in my garden, or to do any thing which you might fancy would be a bad example,'—'Sir,' replied my husband, 'the example indeed goes a great way, but it is not the first object. The deed is wrong in itself.'—'Well, but I shall not keep you from church; and when you have been there, there is no harm in doing a little business, or taking a little pleasure the rest of the day.'—'Sir,' answered my husband, 'the commandment does not say, thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath *morning*, but the Sabbath *day*.' 'Get out of my house, you puritanical rascal, and out of my cottage too,' said the farmer; 'for if you refuse to do my work, I am not bound to keep my engagement with you; as you will not obey me as a master, I shall not pay you as a servant.'—'Sir,' said Mr. Simpson, 'I would gladly obey you, but I have a master in heaven whom I dare not disobey.'—'Then let him find employment for you,' said the enraged farmer; 'for I fancy you will get but poor employment on earth with these scrupulous notions, and so send home my papers, directly, and pack off out the parish.'—'Out of your cottage,' said my husband, 'I certainly will; but as to the parish, I hope I may remain in that, if I can find employment.'—'I will make it too hot to hold you,' replied the farmer, 'so you had better troop off bag and baggage: for I am overseer, and as you are sickly, it is my duty not to let any vagabonds stay in the parish who are likely to become chargeable.'

'By the time my husband returned home, for he found it too late to go to church, I had got our little dinner ready; it was a better one than we had for a long while been accustomed to see, and I was unusually cheerful at this improvement in our circumstances. I saw his eyes full of tears, and oh! with what pain did he bring himself to tell me that it was the last dinner we must ever eat in this house. I took his hand with a smile, and only said, 'The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'—'Notwithstanding this sudden stroke of injustice,' said my husband, 'this is still a happy country. Our employer, it is true, may turn us out at a moment's notice, because it is his own, but he has no further power over us; he cannot confine or punish us. His riches, it is true, give him power to insult, but not to oppress us. The same laws to which the affluent resort, protect *us* also. And as to our being driven out from a cottage, how many persons of the highest rank have lately been driven out from their palaces and castles; persons too, born in a station which he never enjoyed, and used to all the indulgences of that rank and wealth we never knew, are at this moment wandering over the face of the earth, without a house or without bread; exiles and beggars; while we, blessed be God, are in our own native land; we have still our liberty, our limbs, the protection of just and equal laws, our churches, our Bibles, and our Sabbaths.'

'This happy state of my husband's mind hushed my sorrows, and I never once murmured; nay, I sat down to dinner with a degree of cheerfulness, endeavouring to cast all our care on 'Him that careth for us.' We had begged to stay till the next morning, as Sunday was not the day on which we liked to remove; but we were ordered not to sleep another night in that house; so as we had little to carry, we marched off in the evening to the poor lodging we had before occupied. The thought that my husband had cheerfully renounced his little all for conscience sake, gave an unspeakable serenity to my mind; and I felt thankful that though cast down we were not forsaken: nay, I felt a lively gratitude to God, that while I doubted not he would accept this little sacrifice, as it was heartily made for his sake, he had graciously forborne to call us to greater trials.'

'And so you were turned adrift once more? Well, ma'am, saving your presence, I hope you won't be such a fool as to say all was for the best now.'—'Yes, Betty: He who does all things well, now made his kind Providence more manifest than ever. That very night, while we were sweetly sleeping in our poor lodging, the pretty cottage, out of which we were so unkindly driven, was burned to the ground by a flash of lightning which caught the thatch, and so completely consumed the whole little building that had it not been for the merciful Providence who thus overruled the cruelty of the farmer for the preservation of our lives, we must have been burned to ashes with the house. 'It was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes.'—'O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for all the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!'

'I will not tell you all the trials and afflic-

tions which befel us afterwards. I would also spare my heart the sad story of my husband's death.'—'Well, that was another blessing too, I suppose,' said Betty.—'Oh, it was the severest trial ever sent me!' replied Mrs. Simpson, a few tears quietly stealing down her face. 'I almost sunk under it. Nothing but the abundant grace of God could have carried me through such a visitation; and yet I now feel it to be the greatest mercy I ever experienced; he was my idol; no trouble ever came near my heart while he was with me. I got more credit than I deserved for my patience under trials, which were easily borne while he who shared and lightened them was spared to me. I had indeed prayed and struggled to be weaned from this world, but still my affection for him tied me down to the earth with a strong cord: and though I did earnestly try to keep my eyes fixed on the eternal world, yet I viewed it with too feeble a faith; I viewed it at too great a distance. I found it difficult to realize it—I had deceived myself. I had fancied that I bore my troubles so well from the pure love of God, but I have since found that my love for my husband had too great a share in reconciling me to every difficulty which I underwent for him. I lost him, the charm was broken, the cord which tied me down to earth was cut, this world had nothing left to engage me. Heaven had now no rival in my heart. Though my love of God had always been sincere, yet I found there wanted this blow to make it perfect. But though all that had made life pleasant to me was gone, I did not sink as those who have no hope. I prayed that I might still, in this trying conflict, be enabled to adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour.

'After many more hardships, I was at length so happy as to get an asylum in this alms-house. Here my cares are at an end, but not my duties.'—'Now you are wrong again, interrupted Mrs. Betty, 'your duty is now to take care of yourself: for I am sure you have nothing to spare.'—'There *you* are mistaken again,' said Mrs. Simpson. 'People are so apt to fancy that money is all in all, that all the other gifts of providence are overlooked as things of no value. I have here a great deal of leisure; a good part of this I devote to the wants of those who are more distressed than myself. I work a little for the old, and I instruct the young. My eyes are good; this enables me to read the Bible either to those whose sight is decayed, or who were never taught to read. I have tolerable health; so that I am able occasionally to sit up with the sick; in the intervals of nursing, I can pray with them. In my younger days I thought it not much to sit up late for my pleasure; shall I now think much of sitting up now and then to watch by a dying bed? My Saviour waked and watched for me in the garden and on the mount; and shall I do nothing for his suffering members? It is only by keeping his sufferings in view that we can truly practise charity to others, or exercise self-denial to ourselves.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Betty, 'I think if I had lived in such genteel life as you have done, I could never be reconciled to an alms-house; and I am afraid I should never forgive any of those who were the cause of sending me there, particularly that farmer Thomas who turned you out of doors.'

'Betty,' said Mrs. Simpson, 'I not only forgive him heartily, but I remember him in my prayers, as one of those instruments with which it has pleased God to work for my good. Oh! never put off forgiveness to a dying bed! When people come to die, we often see how the conscience is troubled with sins, of which before they hardly felt the existence. How ready are they to make restitution of ill-gotten gain; and this perhaps for two reasons; from a feeling conviction that it can be of no use to them where they are going, as well as from a near view of their own responsibility. We also hear from the most hardened, of death-bed forgiveness of enemies. Even malefactors at Tyburn forgive. But why must we wait for a dying bed to do what ought to be done now? Believe me, that scene will be so full of terror and amazement to the soul, that we had not need load it with unnecessary business.'

Just as Mrs. Simpson was saying these words, a letter was brought her from the minister of the parish where the farmer lived, by whom Mr. Simpson had been turned out of his cottage. The letter was as follows:—

'Madam—I write to tell you that your old oppressor, Mr. Thomas, is dead. I attended him in his last moments. O, may my latter end never be like his! I shall not soon forget his despair at the approach of death. His riches, which had been his sole joy, now doubled his sorrows; for he was going where they could be of no use to him; and he found too late that he had laid up no treasure in heaven. He felt great concern at his past life, but for nothing more than his unkindness to Mr. Simpson. He charged me to find you out, and let you know that by his will he bequeathed you five hundred pounds as some compensation. He died in great agonies; declaring with his last breath, that if he could live his life over again, he would serve God, and strictly observe the Sabbath.

'Yours, &c.

'J. Johnson.'

Mrs. Betty, who had listened attentively to the letter, jumped up, clapped her hands, and cried out, 'Now all *is for* the best, and I shall see you a lady once more.'—'I am, indeed, thankful for this money,' said Mrs. Simpson, 'and am glad that riches were not sent me till I had learned, as I humbly hope, to make a right use of them. But come, let us go in, for I am very cold, and find I have sat too long in the night air.'

Betty was now ready enough to acknowledge the hand of Providence in this prosperous event, though she was blind to it when the dispensation was more dark. Next morning she went early to visit Mrs. Simpson, but not seeing her below, she went up stairs, where, to her great sorrow, she found her confined to her bed by a fever, caught the night before by sitting so late on the bench reading the letter and talking it over. Betty was now more ready to cry out against Providence than ever. 'What! to catch

a fever while you were reading that very letter which told you about your good fortune; which would have enabled you to live like a lady as you are. I never will believe this is for the best; to be deprived of life just as you were beginning to enjoy it!'

'Betty,' said Mrs. Simpson, 'we must learn not to rate health nor life itself too highly. There is little in life, for its own sake, to be so fond of. As a good archbishop used to say, 'tis but the same thing over again, or probably worse: so many more nights and days, summers and winters; a repetition of the same pleasures, but with less relish for them; a return of the same or greater pains, but with less strength, and perhaps less patience to bear them.'—'Well,' replied Betty, 'I did think that Providence was at last giving you your reward.'—'Reward!' cried Mrs. Simpson. 'O, no! my merciful Father will not put me off with so poor a portion as wealth; I feel I shall die.'—'It is very hard, indeed,' said Betty, 'so good as you are, to be taken off just as your prosperity was beginning.—'You think I am good just now,' said Mrs. Simpson, 'because I am prosperous. Success is no sure mark of God's favour; at this rate, you, who judge by outward things, would have thought Herod a better man than John the Baptist; and if I may be allowed to say so, you, on your principles, that the sufferer is the sinner, would have believed Pontius Pilate higher in God's favour, than the Saviour whom he condemned to die, for your sins and mine.'

In a few days Mrs. Betty found that her new friend was dying, and though she was struck at her resignation, she could not forbear murmuring that so good a woman should be taken away at the very instant which she came into possession of so much money. 'Betty,' said Mrs. Simpson in a feeble voice, 'I believe you love me dearly, you would do any thing to cure me; yet you do not love me so well as God loves me, though *you* would raise me up, and He is putting a period to my life. He has never sent me a single stroke which was not absolutely necessary for me. You, if you could restore me, might be laying me open to some temptation from which God, by removing, will deliver me. Your kindness in making this world so smooth for me, I might for ever have deplored in a world of misery. God's grace in afflicting me, will hereafter be the subject of my praises in a world of blessedness. Betty,' added the dying woman, 'do you really think that I am going to a place of rest and joy eternal?'—'To be sure I do,' said Betty.—'Do you firmly believe that I am going to the assembly of the first-born; to the spirits of just men made perfect, to God the judge of all; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant?'—'I am sure you are,' said Betty.—'And yet,' resumed she, 'you would detain me from all this happiness; and you think my merciful Father is using me unkindly by removing me from a world of sin, and sorrow, and temptation, to such joys as have not entered into the heart of man to conceive; while it would have better suited your notions of reward to defer my entrance into the blessedness of heaven, that I might have enjoyed a legacy of a few hundred pounds! Believe my dying words—ALL IS FOR THE BEST.'

Mrs. Simpson expired soon after, in a frame of mind which convinced her new friend, that 'God's ways are not as our ways.'

A CURE FOR MELANCHOLY.*

SHOWING THE WAY TO DO MUCH GOOD WITH LITTLE MONEY.

MRS. JONES was the widow of a great merchant. She was liberal to the poor, as far as giving them money went; but as she was too much taken up with the world, she did not spare so much of her time and thoughts about doing good as she ought; so that her money was often ill bestowed. In the late troubles, Mr. Jones, who had lived in an expensive manner, failed; and he took his misfortunes so much to heart, that he fell sick and died. Mrs. Jones retired, on a very narrow income, to the small village of Weston, where she seldom went out, except to church. Though a pious woman, she was too apt to indulge her sorrow; and though she did not neglect to read and pray, yet she gave up a great part of her time to melancholy thoughts, and grew quite inactive. She well knew how sinful it would be for her to seek a remedy for her grief in worldly pleasures, which is a way many people take to cure afflictions; but she was not aware how wrong it was to weep away that time which might have been better spent in drying the tears of others.

It was happy for her, that Mr. Simpson, the vicar of Weston, was a pious man. One Sunday he happened to preach on the good Samaritan. It was a charity sermon, and there was a collection at the door. He called on Mrs. Jones after church, and found her in tears. She told him she had been much moved by his discourse, and she wept because she had so little to give to the plate, for though she felt very keenly for the poor in these dear times, yet she could not assist them. 'Indeed, sir,' added she, 'I never so much regretted the loss of my fortune as this afternoon, when you bade us *go and do likewise*.'—'You do not,' replied Mr. Simpson, 'enter into the spirit of our Saviour's parable, if you think you cannot *go and do likewise* without being rich. In the case of the Samaritan, you may observe, that charity was bestowed more by kindness, and care, and medicine, than by money. You, madam, were as much concerned in the duties inculcated in my sermon as sir John with his great estate; and, to speak plainly, I have been sometimes surprised that you should not put yourself in the way of being more useful.'

* This was first printed under the title of THE COTTAGE COOK.

'Sir,' said Mrs. Jones, 'I am grown shy of the poor since I have nothing to give them.' 'Nothing! madam?' replied the clergyman: 'Do you call your time, your talents, your kind offices, nothing? Doing good does not so much depend on the riches as on the heart and the will. The servant who improved his two talents was equally commended by his Lord with him who had ten: and it was not poverty, but selfish indolence, which drew down so severe a condemnation on him who had only one. It is by our conformity to Christ, that we must prove ourselves Christians. You, madam, are not called upon to work miracles, nor to preach the Gospel, yet you may in your measure and degree, resemble your Saviour *by going about and doing good.* A plain Christian, who has sense and leisure, by his pious exertions and prudent zeal, may, in a subordinate way, be helping on the cause of religion, as well as of charity, and greatly promote, by his exertions and example, the labours of the parish minister. The generality, it is true, have but an under part to act; but to all God assigns some part, and he will require of all whose lot is not very laborious, that they not only *work out their own salvation*, but that they promote the cause of religion, and the comfort and salvation of others.

To those who would undervalue works of mercy as evidences of piety, I would suggest a serious attention to the solemn appeal which the Saviour of the world makes, in that awful representation of the day of judgment, contained in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, both to those who have neglected, and to those who have performed such works; performed them, I mean, on right principles. With what a gracious condescension does he promise to accept the smallest kindness done to his suffering members for his sake. You, madam, I will venture to say, might do more good than the richest man in the parish could do by merely giving his money. Instead of sitting here, brooding over your misfortunes, which are past remedy, bestir yourself to find out ways of doing much good with little money; or even without any money at all. You have lately studied economy for yourself; instruct your poor neighbours in that important art. They want it almost as much as they want money. You have influence with the few rich persons in the parish; exert that influence. Betty, my house-keeper, shall assist you in any thing in which she can be useful. Try this for one year, and if you then tell me that you should have better shown your love to God and man, and been a happier woman, had you continued gloomy and inactive, I shall be much surprised, and shall consent to your resuming your present way of life.'

The sermon and this discourse together made so deep an impression on Mrs. Jones, that she formed a new plan of life, and set about it at once, as every body does who is in earnest. Her chief aim was the happiness of her poor neighbours in the next world; but she was also very desirous to promote their present comfort: and indeed the kindness she showed to their bodily wants gave her such an access to their houses and hearts, as made them better disposed to receive religious counsel and instruction.—Mrs. Jones was much respected by all the rich persons in Weston, who had known her in her prosperity. Sir John was thoughtless, lavish, and indolent. The Squire was over frugal, but active, sober, and not ill-natured. Sir John loved pleasure, the squire loved money. Sir John was one of those popular sort of people who get much praise, and yet do little good; who subscribe with equal readiness to a cricket match or a charity school; who take it for granted that the poor are to be indulged with bell-ringing and bonfires, and to be made drunk at Christmas; this Sir John called being kind to them; but he thought it was folly to teach them, and madness to think of reforming them. He was, however, always ready to give his guinea; but I question whether he would have given up his hunting and his gaming to have cured every grievance in the land. He had that sort of constitutional good nature which, if he had lived much within sight of misery, would have led him to be liberal: but he had that selfish love of ease, which prompted him to give to undeserving objects, rather than be at the pains to search out the deserving. He neither discriminated between the degrees of distress, nor the characters of the distressed.—His idea of charity was, that a rich man should occasionally give a little of his superfluous wealth to the first object that occurred; but he had no conception that it was his duty so to husband his wealth, and limit his expenses, as to supply a regular fund for established charity. And the utmost stretch of his benevolence never led him to suspect that he was called to abridge himself in the most idle article of indulgence, for a purpose foreign to his own personal enjoyment. On the other hand, the squire would assist Mrs. Jones in any of her plans if it cost him nothing; so she showed her good sense by never asking sir John for advice, or the squire for subscriptions, and by this prudence gained the full support of both.

Mrs. Jones resolved to spend two or three days in a week in getting acquainted with the state of the parish, and she took care never to walk out without a few little good books in her pocket to give away. This, though a cheap, is a most important act of charity: it has its various uses; it furnishes the poor with religious knowledge, which they have so few ways of obtaining; it counteracts the wicked designs of those who have taught us at least one lesson, by their zeal in the dispersion of *wicked* books—I mean the lesson of vigilance and activity; and it is the best introduction for any useful conversation which the giver of the book may wish to introduce.

She found that among the numerous wants she met with, no small share was owing to bad management, or to imposition: she was struck with the small size of the loaves.—Wheat was now not very dear, and she was sure a good deal of blame rested with the baker. She sent for a shilling loaf to the next great town, where the mayor often sent to the bakers' shops to see that the bread was proper weight. She weighed her town loaf against her country loaf, and found the latter two pounds lighter than it ought to be. This was not the sort of grievance to carry to sir John; but luckily the squire was also a ma-

gistrate, and it was quite in his way: for though he would not give, yet he would counsel, calculate, contrive, reprimand, and punish. He told her he could remedy the evil if some one would lodge an information against the baker; but that there was no act of justice which he found it so difficult to accomplish.

The Informer.

She dropped in on the blacksmith. He was at dinner. She inquired if his bread was good. 'Ay, good enough, mistress; for you see it is as white as your cap, if we had but more of it. Here's a sixpenny loaf; you might take it for a penny roll!' He then heartily cursed Crib the baker, and said he ought to be hanged. Mrs. Jones now told him what she had done; how she had detected the fraud, and assured him the evil should be redressed on the morrow, provided he would appear and inform. 'I inform,' said he, with a shocking oath, 'hang an informer! I scorn the office.'—'You are nice in the wrong place,' replied Mrs. Jones; 'for you don't scorn to abuse the baker, nor to be in a passion, nor to swear, though you scorn to redress a public injury, and to increase your children's bread. Let me tell you, there is nothing in which you ignorant people mistake more than in your notions about *informers*. Informing is a lawful way of obtaining redress; and though it is a mischievous and a hateful thing to go to a justice about every trifling matter, yet laying an information on important occasions, without malice, or bitterness of any kind, is what no honest man ought to be ashamed of. The shame is to commit the offence, not to inform against it. I, for my part, should perhaps do right, if I not only informed against Crib, for making light bread, but against you, for swearing at him.'

'Well, but madam,' said the smith, a little softened, 'don't you think it a sin and a shame to turn informer?' 'So far from it, that when a man's motives are good,' said Mrs. Jones, 'and in clear cases as the present, I think it a duty and a virtue. If it is right that there should be laws, it must be right that they should be put in execution; but how can this be, if people will not inform the magistrates when they see the laws broken! I hope I shall always be afraid to be an offender against the laws, but not to be an informer in support of them.—*An informer by trade* is commonly a knave. A rash, malicious, or passionate informer is a firebrand; but honest and prudent informers are almost as useful members of society as the judges of the land. If you continue in your present mind on this subject, do not you think that you will be answerable for the crimes you might have prevented by informing, and thus become a sort of accomplice of the villains who commit them.

'Well, madam,' said the smith, 'I now see plainly enough that there is no shame in turning informer when my cause is good.'—'And your *motive right*; always mind that, said Mrs. Jones. Next day the smith attended, Crib was fined in the usual penalty, his light bread was taken from him and given to the poor. The justices resolved henceforward to inspect the bakers in their district; and all of them, except Crib, and such as Crib, were glad of it; for honesty never dreads a trial. Thus had Mrs. Jones the comfort of seeing how useful people may be without expense; for if she could have given the poor fifty pounds, she would not have done them so great, or so lasting a benefit, as she did them in seeing their loaves restored to their lawful weight: and the true light in which she had put the business of *informing* was of no small use, in giving the neighbourhood right views on that subject.

There were two shops in the parish; but Mrs. Sparks, at the Cross, had not half so much custom as Wills, at the Sugarloaf, though she sold her goods a penny in a shilling cheaper, and all agreed that they were much better. Mrs. Jones asked Mrs. Sparks the reason. 'Madam,' said the shopkeeper, 'Mr. Wills will give longer trust. Besides this, his wife keeps shop on a Sunday morning while I am at church. Mrs. Jones now reminded Mr. Simpson to read the king's proclamation against vice and immorality next Sunday at church; and prevailed on the squire to fine any one who should keep open shop on a Sunday. This he readily undertook: for while sir John thought it *good-natured* to connive at breaking the laws, the squire fell into the other extreme, of thinking that the zealous enforcing of penal statutes would stand in the stead of all religious restraints. Mrs. Jones proceeded to put the people in mind that a shopkeeper who would sell on a Sunday, would be more likely to cheat them all the week, than one who went to church.

She also laboured hard to convince them how much they would lessen their distress, if they would contrive to deal with Mrs. Sparks for ready money, rather than with Wills on long credit; those who listened to her found their circumstances far more comfortable at the year's end, while the rest tempted, like some of their betters, by the pleasure of putting off the evil day of payment, like them; at last found themselves plunged in debt and distress. She took care to make a good use of such instances in her conversation with the poor, and, by perseverance, she at length brought them so much to her way of thinking, that Wills found it to be his interest to alter his plan, and sell his goods on as good terms, and as short credit, as Mrs. Sparks sold hers. This completed Mrs. Jones's success; and she had the satisfaction of having put a stop to three or four great evils in the parish of Weston, without spending a shilling in doing it.

Patty Smart and Jenny Rose were thought to be the two best managers in the parish. They both told Mrs. Jones, that the poor would get the coarse pieces of meat cheaper, if the gentle folks did not buy them for soups and gravy. Mrs. Jones thought there was reason in this: so away she went to sir John, the squire, the surgeon, the attorney, and the steward, the only persons in the parish who could afford to buy these costly things. She told them, that if they would all be so good as to buy only prime pieces, which they could very well afford, the coarse and cheap joints would come more within the reach of the poor. Most of the gentry readily consented. Sir John cared not what his meat cost him, but told Mrs. Jones, in his gay way, that he would eat any thing, or give any thing, so that she would not tease him with long stories

about the poor. The squire said he should prefer vegetable soups, because they were cheaper, and the doctor preferred them because they were wholesomer. The steward chose to imitate the squire; and the attorney found it would be quite ungenteel to stand out. So gravy soups became very unfashionable in the parish of Weston; and I am sure if rich people did but think a little on this subject, they would become as unfashionable in many other places.

When wheat grew cheaper, Mrs. Jones was earnest with the poor woman to bake large brown loaves at home, instead of buying small white ones at the shop. Mrs. Betty had told her, that baking at home would be one step towards restoring the good old management. Only Betty Smart and Jenny Rose baked at home in the whole parish; and who lived so well as they did? Yet the general objection seemed reasonable. They could not bake without yeast, which often could not be had, as no one brewed except the great folks and the public houses. Mrs. Jones found, however, that Patty and Jenny contrived to brew as well as to bake. She sent for these women; knowing that from them she could get truth and reason. 'How comes it,' said she to them, 'that you two are the only poor women in the parish who can afford to brew a small cask of beer? Your husbands have no better wages than other men.'—'True, madam,' said Patty, 'but they never set foot in a public house. I will tell you the truth. When I first married, our John went to the Checquers every night, and I had my tea and fresh butter twice a-day at home. This slop, which consumed a deal of sugar, began to *rake* my stomach sadly, as I had neither meat nor milk: at last (I am ashamed to own it) I began to take a drop of gin to quiet the pain, till in time I looked for my gin as regularly as for my tea. At last the gin, the ale-house, and the tea began to make us both sick and poor, and I had like to have died with my first child. Parson Simpson then talked so finely to us on the subject of improper indulgences, that we resolved, by the grace of God, to turn over a new leaf, and I promised John, if he would give up the Checquers, I would break the gin bottle, and never drink tea in the afternoon, except on Sundays, when he was at home to drink it with me. We have kept our word, and both our eating and drinking, our health and our consciences are better for it. Though meat is sadly dear, we can buy two pounds of fresh meat for less than one pound of fresh butter, and it gives five times the nourishment. And dear as malt is, I contrive to keep a drop of drink in the house for John, and John will make me drink half a pint with him every evening, and a pint a-day when I am a nurse.

Public Houses.

As one good deed, as well as one bad one, brings on another, this conversation set Mrs. Jones on inquiring why so many ale-houses were allowed. She did not choose to talk to sir John on this subject, who would only have said, 'let them enjoy themselves, poor fellows: if they get drunk now and then, they work hard.' But those who have this false good-nature forget, that while the man is *enjoying himself*, as it is called, his wife and children are ragged and starving. True Christian good-nature never indulges one at the cost of many, but is kind to all. The squire, who was a friend to order, took up the matter. He consulted Mr. Simpson. 'The Lion,' said he, 'is necessary. It stands by the road-side; travellers must have a resting place. As to the Checquers and the Bell, they do no good but much harm.' Mr. Simpson had before made many attempts to get the Checquers put down; but, unluckily, it was sir John's own house, and kept by his late butler. Not that sir John valued the rent; but he had a false kindness, which made him support the cause of an old servant, though he knew he was a bad man, and kept a disorderly house. The squire, however, now took away the license from the Bell. And a fray happening soon after at the Chequers (which was near the church) in time of Divine service, sir John was obliged to suffer the house to be put down as a nuisance. You would not believe how many poor families were able to brew a little cask, when the temptation of those ale-houses was taken out of their way. Mrs. Jones, in her evening walks, had the pleasure to see many an honest man drinking his wholesome cup of beer by his own fire-side, his rosy children playing about his knees, his clean cheerful wife singing her youngest baby to sleep, rocking the cradle with her foot, while with her hands she was making a dumpling for her kind husband's supper. Some few, I am sorry to say, though I don't chuse to name names, still preferred getting drunk once a week at the Lion, and drinking water at other times.—Thus Mrs. Jones, by a little exertion and perseverance, added to the temporal comforts of a whole parish, and diminished its immorality and extravagance in the same proportion.

The good women being now supplied with yeast from each other's brewings, would have baked; but two difficulties still remained. Many of them had no ovens; for since the new bad management had crept in, many cottages have been built without this convenience. Fuel also was scarce at Weston. Mrs. Jones advised the building a large parish oven. Sir John subscribed to be rid of her importunity, and the squire, because he thought every improvement in economy would reduce the poor's rate. It was soon accomplished: and to this oven, at a certain hour, three times a week, the elder children carried their loaves which their mothers had made at home, and paid a half-penny, or a penny according to their size, for the baking.

Mrs. Jones found that no poor women in Weston could buy a little milk, as the farmers' wives did not care to rob their dairies. This was a great distress, especially when the children were sick. So Mrs. Jones advised Mrs. Sparks, at the Cross, to keep a couple of cows, and sell out the milk by halfpenny worths. She did so, and found, that though this plan gave her some additional trouble, she got full as much by it as if she had made cheese and butter. She also sold rice at a cheap rate; so that, with the help of the milk and the public oven, a fine rice pudding was to be had for a trifle.

Charity Schools for Servants.

The girls' school, in the parish, was fallen into neglect; for though many would be subscribers, yet no one would look after it. I wish this was the case at Weston only: many schools have come to nothing, and many parishes are quite destitute of schools, because too many gentry neglect to make it a part of the duty of their grown up daughters to inspect the instruction of the poor. It was not in Mr. Simpson's way to see if girls were taught to work. The best clergyman cannot do every thing. This is ladies business. Mrs. Jones consulted her counsellors, Mrs. Betty, and they went every Friday to the school, where they invited mothers, as well as daughters, to come, and learn to cut out to the best advantage. Mrs. Jones had not been bred to these things; but by means of Mrs. Cowper's excellent cuttingout-book; she soon became mistress of the whole art. She not only had the girls taught to make and mend, but to wash and iron too. She also allowed the mother or eldest daughter of every family to come once a week, and learn how to dress *one cheap dish.* One Friday, which was cooking day, who should pass by but the squire, with his gun and dogs. He looked into the school for the first time. 'Well, madam,' said he, 'what good are you doing here? What are your girls learning and earning? Where are your manufactures? Where is your spinning and your carding?'—'Sir,' said she, 'this is a small parish, and you know ours is not a manufacturing country; so that when these girls are women, they will not be much employed in spinning. We must, in the kind of good we attempt to do, consult the local genius of the place: I do not think it will answer to introduce spinning, for instance, in a country where it is quite new. However, we teach them a little of it, and still more of knitting, that they may be able to get up a small piece of household linen once a year, and provide the family with the stockings, by employing the odds and ends of their time in these ways. But there is another manufacture, which I am carrying on, and I know of none within my own reach which is so valuable.'—'What can that be?' said the squire.—'*To make good wives for working men,*' said she. 'Is not mine an excellent staple commodity? I am teaching these girls the arts of industry and good management. It is little encouragement to an honest man to work hard all the week, if his wages are wasted by a slattern at home. Most of these girls will probably become wives to the poor, or servants to the rich; to such the common arts of life are of great value: now, as there is little opportunity for learning these at the school house, I intend to propose that such gentry as have sober servants, shall allow one of these girls to come and work in their families one day in a week, when the house-keeper, the cook, the house-maid, or the laundry-maid, shall be required to instruct them in their several departments. This I conceive to be the best way of training good servants. They should serve this kind of regular apprenticeship to various sorts of labour. Girls who come out of charity-schools, where they have been employed in knitting, sewing, and reading, are not sufficiently prepared for hard and laborious employments. I do not in general approve of teaching charity children to write for the same reason. I confine within very strict limits my plan of educating the poor. A thorough knowledge of religion, and of some of those coarser arts of life by which the community may be best benefitted, includes the whole stock of instruction, which, unless in very extraordinary cases, I would wish to bestow.'

'What have you got on the fire, madam?' said the squire; 'for your pot really smells as savoury as if Sir John's French cook had filled it.' 'Sir,' replied Mrs. Jones, 'I have lately got acquainted with Mrs. White, who has given us an account of her cheap dishes, and nice cookery, in one of the cheap Repository little books.* Mrs. Betty and I have made all her dishes, and very good they are; and we have got several others of our own. Every Friday we come here and dress one. These good women see how it is done, and learn to dress it at their own houses. I take home part for my own dinner, and what is left I give to each in turn. I hope I have opened their eyes on a sad mistake they had got into, *that we think any thing is good enough for the poor.* Now, I do *not* think any thing good enough for the poor which is not clean, wholesome, and palatable, and what I myself would not cheerfully eat, if my circumstances required it.'

'Pray, Mrs. Betty,' said the squire, 'oblige me with a basin of your soup.' The squire found it so good after his walk, that he was almost sorry he had promised to buy no more legs of beef, and declared, that not one sheep's head should ever go to his kennel again. He begged his cook might have the receipt, and Mrs. Jones wrote it out for her. She has also been so obliging as to favour me with a copy of all her receipts. And as I hate all monopoly, and see no reason why such cheap, nourishing, and savoury dishes should be confined to the parish of Weston, I print them, that all other parishes may have the same advantage. Not only the poor, but all persons with small incomes may be glad of them.

'Well, madam,' said Mr. Simpson, who came in soon after, 'which is best, to sit down and cry over our misfortunes, or to bestir ourselves to do our duty to the world?' 'Sir,' replied Mrs. Jones, 'I thank you for the useful lesson you have given me. You have taught me that an excessive indulgence of sorrow, is not piety, but selfishness; that the best remedy for our own afflictions is to lessen the afflictions of others, and thus evidence our submission to the will of God, who, perhaps, sent these very trials to abate our own self-love, and to stimulate our exertions for the good of others. You have taught me that our time and talents are to be employed with zeal in God's service, if we wish for his favour here or hereafter; and that one great employment of those talents which he requires, is the promotion of the present, and much more the future happiness of

* See the Way to Plenty, for a number of cheap receipts.

all around us.—You have taught me that much good may be done with little money; and that the heart, the head, and the hands are of some use, as well as the purse. I have also learned another lesson, which I hope not to forget, that Providence, in sending these extraordinary seasons of scarcity and distress, which we have lately twice experienced, has been pleased to overrule these trying events to the general good; for it has not only excited the rich to an increased liberality, as to actual contribution, but it has led them to get more acquainted with the local wants of their poorer brethren, and to interest themselves in their comfort; it has led to improved modes of economy, and to a more feeling kind of beneficence. Above all, without abating any thing of a just subordination, it has brought the affluent to a nearer knowledge of the persons and characters of their indigent neighbours; it has literally brought 'the rich and poor to meet together;' and this I look upon to be one of the essential advantages attending Sunday schools also, where they are carried on upon true principles, and are sanctioned by the visits as well as supported by the contributions of the wealthy.'

May all who read this account of Mrs. Jones, and who are under the same circumstances, *go and do likewise!*

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

I PROMISED, in the *Cure for Melancholy*, to give some account of the manner in which Mrs. Jones set up her school. She did not much fear being able to raise the money; but money is of little use, unless some persons of sense and piety can be found to direct these institutions. Not that I would discourage those who set them up, even in the most ordinary manner, and from mere views of worldly policy. It is something gained to rescue children from idling away their Sabbath in the fields or the streets. It is no small thing to keep them from those to which a day of leisure tempts the idle and the ignorant. It is something for them to be taught to read; it is much to be taught to read the Bible, and much, indeed, to be carried regularly to church. But all this is not enough. To bring these institutions to answer their highest end, can only be effected by God's blessing on the best directed means, the choice of able teachers, and a diligent attention in some pious gentry to visit and inspect the schools.

On Recommendations.

Mrs. Jones had one talent that eminently qualified her to do good, namely, judgment; this, even in the gay part of her life, had kept her from many mistakes; but though she had sometimes been deceived herself, she was very careful not to deceive others, by recommending people to fill any office for which they were unfit, either through selfishness or false kindness. She used to say there is always some one appropriate quality which every person must possess, in order to fit them for any particular employment—'Even in this quality,' said she to Mr. Simpson the clergyman, 'I do not expect perfection; but if they are destitute of this, whatever good qualities they may possess besides, though they may do for some other employment, they will not do for this. If I want a pair of shoes, I go to a shoemaker; I do not go to a man of another trade, however ingenious he may be, to ask him if he cannot *contrive* to make me a pair of shoes. When I lived in London, I learned to be much on my guard as to recommendations. I found people often wanted to impose on me some one who was a burthen to themselves.—Once, I remember, when I undertook to get a matron for an hospital, half my acquaintance had some one to offer me. Mrs. Gibson sent me an old cook, whom she herself had discharged for wasting her own provisions, yet she had the conscience to recommend this woman to take care of the provisions of a large community. Mrs. Grey sent me a discarded housekeeper, whose constitution had been ruined by sitting up with Mrs. Grey's gouty husband; but who she yet thought might do well enough to undergo the fatigue of taking care of an hundred poor sick people. A third friend sent me a woman who had no merit but that of being very poor, and it would be charity to provide for her. The truth is, the lady was obliged to allow her a small pension till she could get her off her own hands, by turning her on those of others.'

'It is very true, madam,' said Mr. Simpson, 'the right way is always to prefer the good of the many to the good of one; if, indeed, it can be called doing good to any one to place them in a station in which they must feel unhappy, by not knowing how to discharge the duties of it. I will tell you how I manage. If the persons recommended are objects of charity, I privately subscribe to their wants; I pity and help them, but I never promote them to a station for which they are unfit, as I should by so doing hurt a whole community to help a distressed individual.'

Thus Mrs. Jones resolved that the first step towards setting up her school should be to provide a suitable mistress. The vestry were so earnest in recommending one woman, that she thought it worth looking into. On inquiry, she found it was a scheme to take a large family off the parish; they never considered that a very ignorant woman, with a family of young children, was, of all others, the most unfit for a school; all they considered was, that the profits of the school might enable her to live without parish pay. Mrs. Jones refused another, though she could read well, and was decent in her conduct, because she used to send her children to the shop on Sundays. And she objected to a third, a very sensible woman, because she was suspected of making an outward profession of religion a cloak for immoral conduct. Mrs. Jones knew she must not be too nice neither; she knew she must put up with many faults at

last. 'I knew,' said she to Mr. Simpson, 'the imperfection of every thing that is human. As the mistress will have much to bear with from the children, so I expect to have something to bear with in the mistress; and she and I must submit to our respective trials, by thinking how much God has to bear with in us all. But there are certain qualities which are indispensable in certain situations. There are, in particular, three things which a school-mistress must not be without, *good sense*, *activity*, and *piety*. Without the first she will mislead others; without the second she will neglect them; and without the third, though she may civilize, yet she will never christianize them.'

Mr. Simpson said, 'he really knew but of one person in the parish who was fully likely to answer her purpose: this,' continued he, 'is no other than my housekeeper, Mrs. Betty Crew. It will indeed be a great loss to me to part from her; and to her it will be a far more fatiguing life than that which she at present leads. But ought I to put my own personal comfort, or ought Betty to put her own ease and quiet, in competition with the good of above an hundred children? This will appear still more important, if we consider the good done by these institutions, not as *fruit*, but *seed;* if we take into the account how many yet unborn may become Christians, in consequence of our making these children Christians: for how can we calculate the number which may be hereafter trained for Heaven, by those very children we are going to teach, when they themselves shall become parents, and you and I are dead and forgotten? To be sure, by parting from Betty, my pease-soup will not be quite so well flavoured, nor my linen so neatly got up; but the day is fast approaching, when all this will signify but little; but it will not signify little whether one hundred immortal souls were the better for my making this petty sacrifice. Mrs. Crew is a real Christian, has excellent sense, and had a good education from my mother. She has also had a little sort of preparatory training for the business; for when the poor children come to the parsonage for broth on a Saturday evening, she is used to appoint them all to come at the same time; and after she has filled their pitchers, she ranges them round her in the garden, and examines them in their catechism. She is just and fair in dealing out the broth and beef, not making my favour to the parents depend on the skill of their children: but her own old caps and ribands, and cast-off clothes, are bestowed as little rewards on the best scholars. So that taking the time she spends in working for them, and the things she gives them, there is many a lady who does not exceed Mrs. Crew in acts of charity. This I mention to confirm your notion, that it is not necessary to be rich in order to do good; a religious upper servant has great opportunities of this sort, if the master is disposed to encourage her.'

My readers, I trust, need not be informed, that this is that very Mrs. Betty Crew who assisted Mrs. Jones in teaching poor women to cut out linen and dress cheap dishes, as related in the *Cure for Melancholy*. Mrs. Jones, in the following week, got together as many of the mothers as she could, and spoke to them as follows:

Mrs. Jones's Exhortation.

'My good women, on Sunday next I propose to open a school for the instruction of your children. Those among you, who know what it is to be able to read your Bible, will, I doubt not, rejoice that the same blessing is held out to your children. You who are *not* able yourselves to read what your Saviour has done and suffered for you, ought to be doubly anxious that your children should reap a blessing which you have lost. Would not that mother be thought an unnatural monster who should stand by and snatch out of her child's mouth the bread which a kind friend has just put into it? But such a mother would be merciful, compared with her who should rob her children of the opportunity of learning to read the word of God when it is held out to them. Remember, that if you slight the present offer, or if, after having sent your children a few times you should afterwards keep them at home under vain pretences, you will have to answer for it at the day of judgment. Let not your poor children, *then*, have cause to say, 'My fond mother was my worst enemy. I might have been bred up in the fear of the Lord, and she opposed it for the sake of giving me a little paltry pleasure.—For an idle holiday, I am now brought to the gates of hell!' My dear women, which of you could bear to see your darling child condemned to everlasting destruction?—Which of you could bear to hear him accuse you as the cause of it? Is there any mother here present, who will venture to say—'I will doom the child I bore to sin and hell, rather than put them or myself to a little present pain, by curtailing their evil inclinations! I will let them spend the Sabbath in ignorance and idleness, instead of rescuing them from vanity and sin, by sending them to school!' If there are any such here present, let that mother who values her child's pleasure more than his soul, now walk away, while I set down in my list the names of all those who wish to bring their young ones up in the way that leads to eternal life, instead of indulging them in the pleasures of sin, which are but for a moment.'

When Mrs. Jones had done speaking, most of the women thanked her for her good advice, and hoped that God would give them grace to follow it; promising to send their children constantly. Others, who were not so well-disposed, were yet afraid to refuse, after the sin of so doing had been so plainly set before them. The worst of the women had kept away from this meeting, resolving to set their faces against the school. Most of those also who were present, as soon as they got home, set about providing their children with what little decent apparel they could raise. Many a willing mother lent her tall daughter her hat, best cap, and white handkerchief; and many a grateful father spared his linen waistcoat and bettermost hat, to induce his grown up son to attend; for it is a rule with which Mrs. Jones began, that she would not receive the younger children out of any family who did not send their elder ones. Too many made excuses that their shoes were old,

or their hat worn out. But Mrs. Jones told them not to bring any excuse to her which they could not bring to the day of judgment; and among those excuses she would hardly admit any except accidents, sickness or attendance on sick parents or young children.

Subscriptions.

Mrs. Jones, who had secured large subscriptions from the gentry, was desirous of getting the help and countenance of the farmers and trades-people, whose duty and interest she thought it was to support a plan calculated to improve the virtue and happiness of the parish. Most of them subscribed, and promised to see that their workmen sent their children. She met with little opposition till she called on farmer Hoskins. She told him, as he was the richest farmer in the parish, she came to him for a handsome subscription. 'Subscription!' said he, 'it is nothing but subscriptions, I think;' a man, had need be made of money,'—'Farmer,' said Mrs. Jones, 'God has blessed you with abundant prosperity, and he expects you should be liberal in proportion to your great ability.'—'I do not know what you mean by blessing,' said he: 'I have been up early and late, lived hard while I had little, and now when I thought I had got forward in the world, what with tithes taxes, and subscriptions, it all goes, I think.'—'Mr. Hoskins,' said Mrs. Jones, 'as to tithes and taxes, you well know that the richer you are the more you pay; so that your murmurs are a proof of your wealth. This is but an ungrateful return for all your blessings.'—'You are again at your blessings,' said the farmer; 'but let every one work as hard as I have done, and I dare say he will do as well. It is to my own industry I own what I have. My crops have been good, because I minded my ploughing and sowing.' 'O, farmer!' cried Mrs. Jones, 'you forget whose suns and showers make your crops to grow, and who it is that giveth strength to get riches. But I do not come to preach, but to beg.'

'Well, madam, what is the subscription now? Flannel or French? or weavers, or Swiss, or a new church, or large bread, or cheap rice? or what other new whim-wham for getting the money out of one's pocket?'—'I am going to establish a Sunday-school, farmer; and I come to you as one of the principal inhabitants of the parish, hoping your example will spur on the rest to give.'—'Why, then, said the farmer, 'as one of the principal inhabitants of the parish, I will give nothing; hoping it will spur on the rest to refuse. Of all the foolish inventions, and new fangled devices to ruin the country, that of teaching the poor to read is the very worst.'—'And I, farmer, think that to teach good principles to the lower classes, is the most likely way to save the country. Now, in order to this, we must teach them to read.'—'Not with my consent, nor my money,' said the farmer; 'for I know it always does more harm than good.'—'So it may,' said Mrs. Jones, 'if you only teach them to read, and then turn them adrift to find out books for themselves.* There is a proneness in the heart to evil, which it is our duty to oppose, and which I see you are promoting. Only look round your own kitchen; I am ashamed to see it hung round with loose songs and ballads. I grant, indeed, it would be better for young men and maids, and even your daughters, not to be able to read at all, than to read such stuff as this. But if, when they ask for bread, you will give them a stone, nay worse, a serpent, your's is the blame.' Then taking up a penny book which had a very loose title, she went on.—'I do not wonder, if you, who read such books as these, think it safer that people should not read at all.' The farmer grinned, and said, 'it is hard if a man of my substance may not divert himself; when a bit of fun costs only a penny, and a man can spare that penny, there is no harm done. When it is very hot, or very wet, and I come in to rest, and have drunk my mug of cider, I like to take up a bit of a jest-book, or a comical story, to make me laugh.'

'O, Mr. Hoskins!' replied Mrs. Jones, 'when you come in to rest from a burning sun or shower, do you never think of Him whose sun it is that is ripening your corn? or whose shower is filling the ear, or causing the grass to grow? I could tell you of some books which would strengthen such thoughts, whereas such as you read only serve to put them out of your head.'

Mrs. Jones having taken pains to let Mr. Hoskins know, that all the genteel and wealthy people had subscribed, he at last said, 'why as to the matter of that, I do not value a crown; only I think it might be better bestowed; and I am afraid my own workmen will fly in my face if once they are made scholars; and that they will think themselves too good to work.'—'Now you talk soberly, and give your reasons,' said Mrs. Jones; 'weak as they are, they deserve an answer. Do you think that either man, woman, or child, ever did his duty the worse, only because he knew it the better?' 'No, perhaps not.'—'Now, the whole extent of learning which we intend to give the poor, is only to enable them to read the Bible; a book which brings to us the glad tidings of salvation, in which every duty is explained, every doctrine brought into practice, and the highest truths made level to the meanest understanding. The knowledge of that book, and its practical influence on the heart, is the best security you can have, both for the industry and obedience of your servants. Now, can you think any man will be the worse servant for being a good Christian?'—'Perhaps not.'—'Are not the duties of children, of servants, and the poor, individually and expressly set forth in the Bible?'—'Yes.'—'Do you think any duties are likely to be well performed from any human motives, such as fear or prudence, as from those religious motives which are backed with the sanction of rewards and punish-

* It was this consideration chiefly, which stimulated the conductors of the Cheap Repository to send forth that variety of little books so peculiarly suited to the young. They considered that by means of Sunday schools, multitudes were now taught to read, who would be exposed to be corrupted by all the ribaldry and profaneness of loose songs, vicious stories, and especially by the new influx of corruption arising from jacobinical and atheistical pamphlets, and that it was a bounden duty to counteract such temptations.

ments, of heaven or hell? Even upon your own principles of worldly policy, do you think a poor man is not less likely to steal a sheep or a horse, who was taught when a boy that it was a sin, that it was breaking a commandment, to rob a hen-roost, or an orchard, than one who has been bred in ignorance of God's law? Will your property be secured so effectually by the stocks on the green, as by teaching the boys in the school, that *for all these things God will bring them into judgment?* Is a poor fellow who can read his Bible, so likely to sleep or to drink away his few hours of leisure, as one who *cannot* read? He may, and he often does, make a bad use of his reading; but I doubt he would have been as bad without it: and the hours spent in learning to read will always have been among the most harmless ones of his life.'

'Well, madam,' said the farmer, 'if you do not think that religion will spoil my young servants, I do not care if you do put me down for half a guinea. What has farmer Dobson given?'—'Half a guinea,' said Mrs. Jones.—'Well,' cried the farmer, 'it shall never be said I do not give more than he, who is only a renter. Dobson half a guinea! Why he wears his coat as threadbare as a labourer.'—'Perhaps,' replied Mrs. Jones, 'that is one reason why he gives so much.'—'Well, put me down a guinea,' cried the farmer; 'as scarce as guineas are just now, I'll never be put upon the same footing with Dobson neither.'—'Yes, and you must exert yourself besides, in insisting that your workmen send their children, and often look into the school yourself, to see if they are there, and reward or discourage them accordingly,' added Mrs. Jones. 'The most zealous teachers will flag in their exertions, if they are not animated and supported by the wealthy; and your poor youth will soon despise religious instruction as a thing forced upon them, as a hardship added to their other hardships, if it be not made pleasant by the encouraging presence, kind words, and little gratuities, from their betters.'

Here Mrs. Jones took her leave; the farmer insisted on waiting on her to the door. When they got into the yard, they spied Mr. Simpson, who was standing near a group of females, consisting of the farmer's two young daughters, and a couple of rosy dairy maids, an old blind fiddler, and a woman who led him. The woman had laid a basket on the ground, out of which she was dealing some songs to the girls, who were kneeling round it, and eagerly picking out such whose title suited their tastes. On seeing the clergyman come up, the fiddler's companion, (for I am sorry to say she was not his wife) pushed some of the songs to the bottom of the basket, turned round to the company, and, in a whining tone, asked if they would please to buy a godly book. Mr. Simpson saw through the hypocrisy at once, and instead of making any answer, took out of one of the girl's hands a song which the woman had not been able to snatch away. He was shocked and grieved to see that these young girls were about to read, to sing, and to learn by heart such ribaldry as he was ashamed even to cast his eyes on. He turned about to the girl, and gravely, but mildly said, 'Young woman, what do you think should be done to a person who should be found carrying a box of poison round the country, and leaving a little to every house? The girls agreed that such a person ought to be hanged. 'That he should,' said the farmer, 'if I was upon the jury, and quartered too.' The fiddler and his woman were of the same opinion, declaring, *they* would do no such a wicked thing for the world, for if they were poor they were honest. Mr. Simpson, turning to the other girl, said, 'Which is of most value, the soul or the body?'—'The soul, sir,' said the girl.—'Why so?' said he.—'Because, sir, I have heard you say in the pulpit, the soul is to last for ever.'—'Then,' cried Mr. Simpson, in a stern voice, turning to the fiddler's woman, 'are you not ashamed to sell poison for that part which is to last forever? poison for the soul?' 'Poison?' said the terrified girl, throwing down the book, and shuddering as people do who are afraid they have touched something infectious. 'Poison!' echoed the farmer's daughters, recollecting with horror the ratsbane which Lion, the old house-dog, had got at the day before, and after eating which she had seen him drop down dead in convulsions. 'Yes,' said Mr. Simpson to the woman, 'I do again repeat, the souls of these innocent girls will be poisoned, and may be eternally ruined by this vile trash which you carry about.'

'I now see,' said Mrs. Jones to the farmer, 'the reason why you think learning to read does more harm than good. It is indeed far better that they should never know how to tell a letter, unless you keep such trash as this out of their way, and provide them with what is good, or at least what is harmless. Still this is not the fault of reading, but the abuse of it. Wine is still a good cordial, though it is too often abused to the purpose of drunkenness.'

The farmer said that neither of his maids could read their horn-book, though he owned he often heard them singing that song which the parson thought so bad, but for his part it made them as merry as a nightingale.

'Yes,' said Mrs. Jones, 'as a proof that it is not merely being able to read which does the mischief, I have often heard, as I have been crossing a hay-field, young girls singing such indecent ribaldry as has driven me out of the field, though I well knew they could not read a line of what they were singing, but had caught it from others. So you see you may as well say the memory is a wicked talent because some people misapply it, as to say that reading is dangerous because some folks abuse it.

While they were talking, the fiddler and his woman were trying to steal away unobserved, but Mr. Simpson stopped them, and sternly said, 'Woman, I shall have some farther talk with you. I am a magistrate, as well as a minister, and if I know it, I will no more allow a wicked book to be sold in my parish than a dose of poison.' The girls threw away all their songs, thanked Mr. Simpson, begged Mrs. Jones would take them into her school after they had done milking in the evenings, that they might learn to read only what was proper. They promised they would never more deal with any but sober, honest hawkers, such as sell good little

books, Christmas carols, and harmless songs, and desired the fiddler's woman never to call there again.

This little incident afterwards confirmed Mrs. Joncs in a plan she had before some thoughts of putting in practice. This was, after her school had been established a few months, to invite all the well-disposed grown-up youth of the parish to meet her at the school an hour or two on a Sunday evening, after the necessary business of the dairy, and of serving the cattle was over. Both Mrs. Jones and her agent had the talent of making this time pass so agreeably, by their manner of explaining Scripture, and of impressing the heart by serious and affectionate discourse, that in a short time the evening school was nearly filled with a second company, after the younger ones were dismissed. In time, not only the servants, but the sons and daughters of the most substantial people in the parish attended. At length many of the parents, pleased with the improvement so visible in the young people, got a habit of dropping in, that they might learn how to instruct their own families. And it was observed that as the school filled, not only the fives-court and public house were thinned, but even Sunday gossipping and tea-visiting declined. Even farmer Hoskins, who was at first very angry with his maids for leaving off those *merry* songs (as he called them) was so pleased by the manner in which the psalms were sung at the school, that he promised Mrs. Jones to make her a present of half a sheep towards her first May-day feast. Of this feast some account shall be given hereafter; and the reader may expect some further account of the Sunday school in the history of Hester Wilmot.*

*For a continuation of the Sunday School, see the story of Hester Wilmot, in two parts, in this edition. It was thought proper to separate them in this collection: as the two preceding numbers rather tend to enforce the duties of the higher and middle class, and the two subsequent ones those of the poor.

THE PILGRIMS.

AN ALLEGORY.

Methought I was once upon a time travelling through a certain land which was very full of people; but, what was rather odd, not one of all this multitude was at home; they were all bound to a far distant country. Though it was permitted by the lord of the land that these pilgrims might associate together for their present mutual comfort and convenience; and each was not only allowed, but commanded, to do the others all the services he could upon their journey, yet it was decreed, that every individual traveller must enter the far country singly. There was a great gulf at the end of the journey, which every one must pass alone, and at his own risk, and the friendship of the whole united world could be of no use in shooting that gulf. The exact time when each was to pass was not known to any; this the lord always kept a close secret out of kindness, yet still they were as sure that the time must come, and that at no very great distance, as if they had been informed of the very moment. Now, as they knew they were always liable to be called away at an hour's notice, one would have thought they would have been chiefly employed in packing up, and preparing, and getting every thing in order. But this was so far from being the case, that it was almost the only thing which they did not think about

Now, I only appeal to you, my readers, if any of you are setting out upon a little common journey, if it is only to London or York, is not all your leisure time employed in settling your business at home, and packing up every little necessary for your expedition? And does not the fear of neglecting any thing you ought to remember, or may have occasion for, haunt your mind, and sometimes even intrude upon you unseasonably? And when you are actually on your journey, especially if you have never been to that place before, or are likely to remain there, don't you begin to think a little about the pleasures and the employments of the place, and to wish to know a little what sort of a city London or York is? Don't you wonder what is doing there, and are you not anxious to know whether you are properly qualified for the business, or the company you expect to be engaged in? Do you never look at the map, or consult Brooke's Gazetteer? And don't you try to pick up from your fellow-passengers in the stage coach any little information you can get? And though you may be obliged, out of civility, to converse with them on common subjects, yet do not your secret thoughts still run upon London or York, its business, or its pleasures? And above all, if you are likely to set out early, are you not afraid of over-sleeping, and does not that fear keep you upon the watch, so that you are commonly up and ready before the porter comes to summon you? Reader! if this be your case, how surprised will you be to hear that the travellers to the *far country* have not half your prudence, though embarked on a journey of infinitely more importance, bound to a land where nothing can be sent after them, in which, when they are once settled, all errors are irretrievable.

I observed that these pilgrims, instead of being upon the watch, lest they should be ordered off unprepared; instead of laying up any provision, or even making memorandums of what they would be likely to want at the end of their journey, spent most of their time in crowds, either in the way of traffic or diversion. At first, when I saw them so much engaged in conversing with each other, I thought it a good sign, and listened attentively to their talk, not doubting but the chief turn of it would be about the climate, or

treasures, or society, they should probably meet with in the *far country*. I supposed they might be also discussing about the best and safest road to it, and that each was availing himself of the knowledge of his neighbour, on a subject of equal importance to all. I listened to every party, but in scarcely any did I hear one word about the land to which they were bound, though it was their home, the place where their whole interest, expectation, and inheritance lay; to which also great part of their friends were gone before, and whither they were sure all the rest would follow.—Instead of this, their whole talk was about the business, or the pleasures, or the fashions of the strange but bewitching country which they were merely passing through, and in which they had not one foot of land which they were sure of calling their own for the next quarter of an hour. What little estate they had was *personal*, and not real, and that was a mortgaged, life-hold tenement of clay, not properly their own, but only lent to them on a short uncertain lease, of which three-score years and ten was considered as the longest period, and very few indeed lived in it to the end of the term; for this was always at the *will of the lord*, part of whose prerogative it was, that he could take away the lease at pleasure, knock down the stoutest tenement at a single blow, and turn out the poor shivering, helpless inhabitant naked, to that *far country* for which he had made no provision. Sometimes, in order to quicken the pilgrim in his preparation, the lord would break down the tenement by slow degrees; sometimes he would let it tumble by its own natural decay; for it was only built to last a certain term, it would often grow so uncomfortable by increasing dilapidations even before the ordinary lease was out, that the lodging was hardly worth keeping, though the tenant could seldom be persuaded to think so, but fondly clung to it to the last.—First the thatch on the top of the tenement changed colour, then it fell off and left the roof bare; then the grinders ceased because they were few; then the windows became so darkened that the owner could scarcely see through them; then one prop fell away, then another, then the uprights became bent, and the whole fabric trembled and tottered, with every other symptom of a falling house. But what was remarkable, the more uncomfortable the house became, and the less prospect there was of staying in it, the more preposterously fond did the tenant grow of his precarious habitation.

On some occasions the lord ordered his messengers, of which he has a great variety, to batter, injure, deface, and almost demolish the frail building, even while it seemed new and strong; this was what the landlord called *giving warning;* but many a tenant would not take warning, and so fond of staying where he was, even under all these inconveniences, that at last he was cast out by ejectment, not being prevailed on to leave his dwelling in a proper manner, though one would have thought the fear of being turned out would have whetted his diligence in preparing for *a better and more enduring inheritance*. For though the people were only tenants at will in these crazy tenements, yet, through the goodness of the same lord, they were assured that he never turned them out of these habitations before he had on his part provided for them a better, so that there was not such a landlord in the world; and though their present dwelling was but frail, being only slightly run up to serve the occasion, yet they might hold their future possession by a most certain tenure, the *word of the lord himself*. This word was entered in a covenant, or title-deed, consisting of many sheets, and because a great many good things were given away in this deed, a book was made of which every soul might get a copy.

This indeed had not always been the case; because, till a few ages back, there had been a sort of monopoly in the case, and 'the wise and prudent;' that is, the cunning and fraudful, had hid these things from 'the babes and sucklings;' that is, from the low and ignorant, and many frauds had been practised, and the poor had been cheated of their right; so that not being allowed to read and judge for themselves, they had been sadly imposed upon; but all these tricks had been put an end to more than two hundred years when I passed through the country, and the meanest man who could read might then have a copy; so that he might see himself what he had to trust to; and even those who could not read, might hear it read once or twice every week, at least, without pay, by learned and holy men, whose business it was. But it surprised me to see how few comparatively made use of these vast advantages. Of those who had a copy, many laid it carelessly by, expressed a *general* belief in the truth of the title deed, a *general* satisfaction that they should come in for a share of the inheritance, a *general* good opinion of the lord whose word it was, and a *general* disposition to take his promise upon trust; always, however, intending, at a *convenient season*, to inquire farther into the matter; but this convenient season seldom came; and this neglect of theirs was construed by their lord into a forfeiture of the inheritance.

At the end of this country lay the vast gulf mentioned before; it was shadowed over by a broad and thick cloud, which prevented the pilgrims from seeing in a distinct manner what was doing behind it, yet such beams of brightness now and then darted through the cloud, as enabled those who used a telescope, provided for that purpose, to see *the substance of things hoped for;* but it was not every one who could make use of this telescope; no eye indeed was *naturally* disposed to it; but an earnest desire of getting a glimpse of the invisible realities, gave such a strength and steadiness to the eye which used the telescope, as enabled it to discern many things which could not be seen by the natural sight.—Above the cloud was this inscription: *The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Of these last things many glorious descriptions had been given; but as those splendors were at a distance, and as the pilgrims in general did not care to use the telescope, these distant glories made little impression.

The glorious inheritance which lay beyond the cloud, was called, *The things above*, while a multitude of trifling objects, which appeared contemptibly small when looked at through the

telescope, were called *the things below*. Now, as we know it is nearness which gives size and bulk to any object, it was not wonderful that these ill-judging pilgrims were more struck with these baubles and trifles, which, by laying close at hand, were visible and tempting to the naked eye, and which made up the sum of *the things below*, than with the remote glories of *the things above;* but this was chiefly owing to their not making use of the telescope, through which, if you examined thoroughly *the things below*, they seemed to shrink almost down to nothing, which was indeed their real size; while *the things above* appeared the more beautiful and vast, the more the telescope was used. But the surprising part of the story was this; not that the pilgrims were captivated at first sight with *the things below*, for that was natural enough; but that when they had tried them all over and over, and found themselves deceived and disappointed in almost every one of them, it did not at all lessen their fondness, and they grasped at them again with the same eagerness as before. There were some gay fruits which looked alluring, but on being opened, instead of a kernel, they were found to contain rottenness; and those which seemed the fullest, often proved on trial to be quite hollow and empty. Those which were most tempting to the eye, were often found to be wormwood to the taste, or poison to the stomach, and many flowers that seemed most bright and gay had a worm gnawing at the root; and it was observable that on the finest and brightest of them was seen, when looked at through the telescope, the word *vanity* inscribed in large characters.

Among the chief attractions of *the things below* were certain little lumps of yellow clay, on which almost every eye and every heart was fixed. When I saw the variety of uses to which this clay could be converted, and the respect which was shown to those who could scrape together the greatest number of pieces, I did not much wonder at the general desire to pick up some of them; but when I beheld the anxiety, the wakefulness, the competitions, the contrivances, the tricks, the frauds, the scuffling, the pushing, the turmoiling, the kicking, the shoving, the cheating, the circumvention, the envy, the malignity, which was excited by a desire to possess this article; when I saw the general scramble among those who had little to get much, and of those who had much to get more, then I could not help applying to these people a proverb in use among us, *that gold may be bought too dear.*

Though I saw that there were various sorts of baubles which engaged the hearts of different travellers, such as an ell of red or blue ribbon, for which some were content to forfeit their future inheritance, committing the sin of Esau, without his temptation of hunger; yet the yellow clay I found was the grand object for which most hands were scrambling, and most souls were risked. One thing was extraordinary, that the nearer these people were to being turned out of their tenement, the fonder they grew of these pieces of clay; so that I naturally concluded they meant to take the clay with them to the *far country*, to assist them in their establishment in it; but I soon learnt this clay was not current there, the lord having farther declared to these pilgrims that as *they had brought nothing into this world, they could carry nothing away.*

I inquired of the different people who were raising the various heaps of clay, some of a larger, some of a smaller size, why they discovered such unremitting anxiety, and for whom? Some, whose piles were immense, told me they were heaping up for their children; this I thought very right, till, on casting my eyes around, I observed many of the children of these very people had large heaps of their own. Others told me it was for their grand-children; but on inquiry I found these were not yet born, and in many cases there was little chance that they ever would. The truth, on a close examination, proved to be, that the true genuine heapers really heaped for themselves; that it was in fact neither for friend nor child, but to gratify an inordinate appetite of their own. Nor was I much surprised after this to see these yellow hoards at length *canker, and the rust of them become a witness against the hoarders, and eat their flesh as it were fire.*

Many, however, who had set out with a high heap of their father's raising, before they had got one third of their journey, had scarcely a single piece left. As I was wondering what had caused these enormous piles to vanish in so short a time, I spied scattered up and down the country all sorts of odd inventions, for some or other of which the vain possessors of the great heaps of clay had truckled and bartered them away in fewer hours than their ancestors had spent years in getting them together. O what a strange unaccountable medley it was! and what was ridiculous enough, I observed that the greatest quantity of the clay was always exchanged for things that were of no use that I could discover, owing I suppose to my ignorance of the manners of the country.

In one place I saw large heaps exhausted, in order to set two idle pampered horses a running; but the worst part of the joke was, the horses did not run to fetch or carry any thing, of course were of no kind of use, but merely to let the gazers see which could run fastest. Now, this gift of swiftness, exercised to no useful purpose, was only one out of many instances, I observed, of talents employed to no end. In another place I saw whole piles of the clay spent to maintain long ranges of buildings full of dogs, on provisions which would have nicely fattened some thousands of pilgrims, who sadly wanted fattening, and whose ragged tenements were out at elbows, for want of a little help to repair them. Some of the piles were regularly pulled down once in seven years, in order to corrupt certain needy pilgrims to belie their consciences, by doing that for a bribe which they were bound to do from principle. Others were spent in playing with white stiff bits of paper, painted over with red and black spots, in which I thought there must be some conjuring, because the very touch of these painted pasteboards made the heaps fly from one to another, and back again to the same, in a way that natural causes could not account for. There was another proof that there must be some magic in this business which was that if a pasteboard with red spots

fell into a hand which wanted a black one, the person changed colour, his eyes flashed fire, and he discovered other symptoms of madness, which showed there was some witchcraft in the case. These clean little pasteboards as harmless as they looked, had the wonderful power of pulling down the highest piles in less time than all the other causes put together. I observed that many small piles were given in exchange for an enchanted liquor which when the purchaser had drunk to a little excess, he lost power of managing the rest of his heap without losing the love of it; and thus the excess of indulgence, by making him a beggar, deprived him of that very gratification on which his heart was set.

Now I find it was the opinion of sober pilgrims, that either hoarding the clay, or trucking it for any such purposes as the above, was thought exactly the same offence in the eyes of the lord; and it was expected that when they should come under his more immediate jurisdiction in the *far country*, the penalty annexed to hoarding and squandering would be nearly the same.—While I examined the countenances of the owners of the heaps, I observed that those who I well knew never intended to make any use at all of their heap, were far more terrified at the thought of losing it, or of being torn from it, than those were who were employing it in the most useful manner. Those who best knew what to do with it, set their hearts least upon it, and were always most willing to leave it. But such riddles were common in this odd country. It was indeed a very land of paradoxes.

Now I wondered why these pilgrims, who were naturally made erect with an eye formed to look up to *the things above*, yet had their eyes almost constantly bent in the other direction, riveted to the earth, and fastened *on things below*, just like those animals who walk on all four. I was told they had not always been subject to this weakness of sight, and proneness to earth: that they had originally been upright and beautiful, having been created after the image of the lord, who was himself the perfection of beauty; that he had, at first, placed them in a far superior situation, which he had given them in perpetuity; but that their first ancestors fell from it through pride and carelessness; that upon this the freehold was taken away, they lost their original strength, brightness, and beauty, and were driven out into this strange country, where, however, they had every opportunity given them of recovering their original health, and the lord's favour and likeness; for they were become so disfigured, and were grown so unlike him, that you would hardly believe they were his own children, though, in some, the resemblance was become again visible.

The lord, however, was so merciful, that, instead of giving them up to the dreadful consequences of their own folly, as he might have done without any impeachment of his justice, he gave them immediate comfort, and promised them that, in due time, his own son should come down and restore them to the future inheritance which he should purchase for them. And now it was, that in order to keep up their spirits, after they had lost their estate through the folly of their ancestors, that he began to give them a part of their former title deed. He continued to send them portions of it from time to time by different faithful servants, whom, however, these ungrateful people generally used ill, and some of whom they murdered. But for all this, the lord was so very forgiving, that he at length sent these mutineers a proclamation of full and free pardon by his son. This son, though they used him in a more cruel manner than they had done any of his servants, yet after having *finished the work his father gave him to do*, went back into the *far country* to prepare a place for all them who believe in him; and there he still lives; begging and pleading for those unkind people, whom he still loves and forgives, and will restore to the purchased inheritance on the easy terms of their being heartily sorry for what they have done, thoroughly desirous of pardon, and convinced that *he is able and willing to save to the utmost all them that come unto him.*

I saw, indeed, that many old offenders appeared to be sorry for what they had done; that is, they did not like to be punished for it. They were willing enough to be delivered from the penalty of their guilt, but they did not heartily wish to be delivered from the power of it. Many declared, in the most public manner, once every week, that they were sorry they had done amiss: *that they had erred and strayed like lost sheep*, but it was not enough to *declare* their sorrow, ever so often, if they gave no other sign of their penitence. For there was so little truth in them, that the lord required other proofs of their sincerity beside their own word, for they often lied with their lips and dissembled with their tongue. But those who professed to be penitents must give some outward proof of it. They were neither allowed to raise heaps of clay, by circumventing their neighbours, or to keep great piles lying by them useless; nor must they barter them for any of those idle vanities which reduced the heaps on a sudden: for I found that among the grand articles of future reckoning, the use they had made of the heaps would be a principal one.

I was sorry to observe many of the fairer part of these pilgrims spend too much of their heaps in adorning and beautifying their tenements of clay, in painting, white-washing, and enamelling them. All those tricks, however, did not preserve them from decay; and when they grew old, they even looked worse for all this cost and varnish. Some, however, acted a more sensible part, and spent no more upon their mouldering tenements than just to keep them whole and clean, and in good repair, which is what every tenant ought to do; and I observed that those who were most moderate in the care of their own tenements, were most attentive to repair and warm the ragged tenements of others. But none did this with much zeal or acceptance, but those who had acquired a habit of overlooking *the things below*, and who also, by the constant use of the telescope had got their natural weak and dim sight so strengthened, as to be able to discern pretty distinctly the nature of the *things above*. The habit of fixing their eyes on these glories made all the shining trifles, which compose the mass of *things below*, at last appear in

their own diminutive littleness. For it was in this case particularly true, that things are only big or little by comparison; and there was no other way of making the *things below*, appear as small as they really were, but by comparing them, by means of the telescope, with the *things above*. But I observed that the false judgment of the pilgrims ever kept pace with their wrong practices; for those who kept their eyes fastened on the *things below*, were reckoned wise in their generation, while the few who looked forward to the future glories, were accounted by the bustlers, or heapers, to be either fools or mad.

Most of these pilgrims went on in adorning their tenements, adding to their heaps, grasping the *things below* as if they would never let them go, shutting their eyes, instead of using their telescope, and neglecting their title deed, as if it was the parchment of another man's estate, and not of their own; till one after another each felt his tenement tumbling about his ears.—Oh! then what a busy, bustling, anxious, terrifying, distracting moment was that! What a deal of business was to be done, and what a strange time was this to do it in! Now, to see the confusion and dismay occasioned by having left every thing to the last minute. First, some one was sent for to make over the yellow heaps, to another, which the heaper now found would be of no use to himself in shooting the gulf; a transfer which ought to have been made while the tenement was sound. Then there was a consultation between two or three masons at once perhaps, to try to patch up the walls, and strengthen the props, and stop the decays of the tumbling tenement; but not till the masons were forced to declare it was past repairing (a truth they were rather too apt to keep back) did the tenant seriously think it was time to pack up, prepare and begone. Then what sending for the wise men who professed to explain the title deed! And oh! what remorse that they had neglected to examine it till their senses were too confused for so weighty a business! What reproaches, or what exhortations to others, to look better after their own affairs than they had done! Even to the wisest of the inhabitants the falling of their tenements was a solemn thing; solemn, but not surprising; they had long been packing up and preparing; they praised their lord's goodness that they had been suffered to stay so long; many acknowledged the mercy of their frequent warnings, and confessed that those very dilapidations which had made the house uncomfortable had been a blessing, as it had set them on diligent preparation for their future inheritance; had made them more earnest in examining their title to it, and had set them on such a frequent application to the telescope, that *the things above* had seemed every day to approach nearer and nearer, and the *things below* to recede and vanish in proportion. These desired not to be *unclothed but to be clothed upon, for they knew that if their tabernacle was dissolved, they had an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*'

THE VALLEY OF TEARS

A VISION.

OR, BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURTHENS.

Once upon a time methought I set out upon a long journey, and the place through which I travelled appeared to be a dark valley, which was called the Valley of Tears. It had obtained this name, not only on account of the many sorrowful adventures which poor passengers commonly meet with in their journey through it; but also because most of these travellers entered it weeping and crying, and left it in very great pain and anguish. This vast valley was full of people of all colours, ages, sizes and descriptions. But whether white, or black, or tawny, all were travelling the same road; or rather they were taking different little paths which all led to the same common end.

Now it was remarkable, that notwithstanding the different complexions, ages, and tempers of this vast variety of people, yet all resembled each other in this one respect, that each had a burthen on his back which he was destined to carry through the toil and heat of the day, until he should arrive, by a longer or shorter course, at his journey's end. These burthens would in general have made the pilgrimage quite intolerable, had not the lord of the valley, out of his great compassion for these poor pilgrims, provided, among other things, the following means for their relief:

In their full view over the entrance of the valley, there were written, in great letters of gold, the following words:

Bear ye one another's burthens.

Now I saw in my vision that many of the travellers hurried on without stopping to read this inscription, and others, though they had once read it, yet paid little or no attention to it. A third sort thought it very good advice for other people, but very seldom applied it to themselves. They uniformly desired to avail themselves of the assistance which by this injunction others were bound to offer them, but seldom considered that the obligation was mutual, and that reciprocal wants and reciprocal services formed the strong cord in the bond of charity. In short, I saw that too many of these people were of opinion that they had burthens enough of their own, and that there was therefore no occasion to take upon them those of others; so each tried to make his own load as light, and his own journey as pleasant as he could, without so much as once casting a thought on a poor overloaded neigh-

bour. Here, however, I have to make a rather singular remark, by which I shall plainly show the folly of these selfish people. It was so ordered and contrived by the lord of this valley, that if any one stretched out his hand to lighten a neighbour's burthen, in fact he never failed to find that he at that moment also lightened his own. Besides the benefit of helping each other, was as mutual as the obligation. If a man helped his neighbour, it commonly happened that some other neighbour came by-and-by and helped him in his turn; for there was no such thing as what we called *independence* in the whole valley. Not one of all these travellers, however stout and strong, could move on comfortably without assistance, for so the lord of the valley, whose laws were all of them kind and good, had expressly ordained.

I stood still to watch the progress of these poor way-faring people, who moved slowly on, like so many ticket-porters, with burthens of various kinds on their backs; of which some were heavier, and some were lighter, but from a burthen of one kind or other, not one traveller was entirely free. There might be some difference in the degree, and some distinction in the nature, but exemption there was none.

The Widow.

A sorrowful widow, oppressed with the burthen of grief for the loss of an affectionate husband, moved heavily on; and would have been bowed down by her heavy load, had not the surviving children with great alacrity stepped forward and supported her. Their kindness after a while, so much lightened the load which threatened at first to be intolerable, that she even went on her way with cheerfulness, and more than repaid their help, by applying the strength she derived from it to their future assistance.

The Husband.

I next saw a poor old man tottering under a burthen so heavy, that I expected him every moment to sink under it. I peeped into his pack, and saw it was made up of many sad articles; there were poverty, oppression, sickness, debt, and, what made by far the heaviest part, undutiful children. I was wondering how it was that he got on even so well as he did, till I spied his wife, a kind, meek, christian woman, who was doing her utmost to assist him. She quietly got behind, gently laid her shoulder to the burthen, and carried a much larger portion of it than appeared to me when I was at a distance. It was not the smallest part of the benefit that she was anxious to conceal it. She not only sustained him by her strength, but cheered him by her counsels. She told him, that 'through much tribulation we must enter into rest;' that 'he that overcometh shall inherit all things.' In short, she so supported his fainting spirit, that he was enabled to 'run with patience the race which was set before him.,

The Kind Neighbour.

An infirm blind woman was creeping forward with a very heavy burthen, in which were packed sickness and want, with numberless other of those raw materials, out of which human misery is worked up. She was so weak that she could not have got on at all, had it not been for the kind assistance of another woman almost as poor as herself; who, though she had no light burthen of her own, cheerfully lent an helping hand to a fellow traveller who was still more heavily laden. This friend had indeed little or nothing to give, but the very voice of kindness is soothing to the weary. And I remarked in many other cases, that it was not so much the degree of the help afforded, as the manner of helping that lightened the burthens. Some had a coarse, rough, clumsy way of assisting a neighbour, which, though in fact it might be of real use, yet seemed, by galling the traveller, to add to the load it was intended to lighten; while I observed in others that so cheap a kindness as a mild word, or even an affectionate look made a poor burthened wretch move on cheerily.—The bare feeling that some human being cared for him, seemed to lighten the load.—But to return to this kind neighbour. She had a little old book in her hand, the covers of which were torn out by much use. When she saw the blind woman ready to faint, she would read her a few words out of this book, such as the following—'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'—'Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.'—'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'—For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' These quickened the pace, and sustained the spirits of the blind traveller: and the kind neighbour by thus directing the attention of the poor sufferer to the blessings of a better world, helped to enable her to sustain the afflictions of this, more effectually than if she had had gold and silver to bestow on her.

The Clergyman.

A pious minister, sinking under the weight of a distressed parish, whose worldly wants he was totally unable to bear, was suddenly relieved by a charitable widow, who came up and took all the sick and hungry on her own shoulders as her part of the load. The burthen of the parish thus divided became tolerable. The minister being no longer bowed down by the temporal distresses of his people, applied himself cheerfully to his own part of the weight. And it was pleasant to see how those two persons, neither of them very strong, or rich, or healthy, by thus kindly uniting together, were enabled to bear the weight of a whole parish; though singly, either of them must have sunk under the attempt. And I remember one great grief I felt during my whole journey was, that I did not see more of this union and concurring kindness, more of this acting in concert, by which all the burthens might have been so easily divided. It troubled me to observe, that of all the laws of the valley there was not one more frequently broken than *the law of kindness.*

The Negroes.

I now spied a swarm of poor black men, women, and children, a multitude which no man

could number; these groaned and toiled, and sweated, and bled under far heavier loads than I have yet seen. But for a while no man helped them; at length a few white travellers were touched with the sorrowful sighing of those millions, and very heartily did they put their hands to the burthens; but their number was not quite equal to the work they had undertaken. I perceived, however, that they never lost sight of those poor heavy-laden wretches; though often repulsed, they returned again to the charge; though discomfited, they renewed the effort, and some even pledged themselves to an annual attempt till the project was accomplished; and as the number of these generous helpers increased every year, I felt a comfortable hope, that before all the blacks got out of the valley, the whites would fairly divide the burthen, and the loads would be effectually lightened.

Among the travellers, I had occasion to remark, that those who most kicked and struggled under their burthens, only made them so much the heavier, for their shoulders became extremely galled by those vain and ineffectual struggles. The load, if borne patiently, would in the end have turned even to the advantage of the bearers, for so the lord of the valley had kindly decreed; but as to these grumblers, they had all the smart, and none of the benefit; they had the present suffering without the future reward. But the thing which made all these burthens seem so very heavy was, that in every one without exception, there was a certain *inner packet*, which most of the travellers took pains to conceal, and kept carefully wrapped up; and while they were forward enough to complain of the other part of their burthens, few said a word about this, though in truth it was the pressing weight of this *secret packet* which served to render the general burthen so intolerable. In spite of all their caution, I contrived to get a peep at it. I found in each that this packet had the same label; the word SIN was written on all as a general title, and in ink so black, that they could not wash it out. I observed that most of them took no small pains to hide the writing; but I was surprised to see that they did not try to get rid of the load but the label. If any kind friend who assisted these people in bearing their burthens, did but so much as hint at the *secret packet*, or advise them to get rid of it, they took fire at once, and commonly denied they had any such article in their portmanteau; and it was those whose *secret packet* swelled to the most enormous size, who most stoutly denied they had any.

I saw with pleasure, however, that some who had long laboured heartily to get rid of this inward packet, at length found it much diminished, and the more this packet shrunk in size, the lighter was the other part of their burthen also. I observed, moreover, that though the label, always remained in some degree indelible, yet that those who were earnest to get rid of the load, found that the original traces of the label grew fainter also; it was never quite obliterated in any, though in some cases it seemed nearly effaced.

Then methought, all at once, I heard a voice, as it had been the voice of an angel, crying out and saying, 'Ye unhappy pilgrims, why are ye troubled about the burthen which ye are doomed to bear through this valley of tears? Know ye not, that as soon as ye shall have escaped out of this valley the whole burthen shall drop off, provided ye neglect not to remove that inward weight, that secret load of SIN which principally oppresses you? Study then the whole will of the lord of this valley. Learn from him how this heavy part of your burthens may now be lessened, and how at last it shall be removed for ever. Be comforted. Faith and hope may cheer you even in this valley. The passage, though it seems long to weary travellers, is comparatively short; for beyond there is a land of everlasting rest, where ye shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, where ye shall be led by living fountains of waters, and all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes.'

THE STRAIT GATE AND THE BROAD WAY

AN ALLEGORY.

Now I had a second vision of what was passing in the Valley of Tears. Methought I saw again the same kind of travellers whom I had seen in the former part, and they were wandering at large through the same vast wilderness. At first setting out on his journey, each traveller had a small lamp so fixed in his bosom that it seemed to make a part of himself; but as this natural light did not prove to be sufficient to direct them in the right way, the king of the country, in pity to their wanderings and blindness, out of his gracious condescension, promised to give these poor wayfaring people an additional supply of light from his own royal treasury. But as he did not choose to lavish his favours where there seemed no disposition to receive them, he would not bestow any of his oil on such as did not think it worth asking for 'Ask and ye shall have,' was the universal rule he had laid down for them. But though they knew the condition of the obligation, many were prevented from asking through pride and vanity, for they thought they had light enough already, preferring the feeble glimmerings of their own lamp, to all the offered light from the king's treasury. Yet it was observed of those who rejected it, as thinking they had enough, that hardly any acted up to what even their own natural light showed them. Others were deterred from asking, because they were told that this light not only pointed out the dangers and difficulties of the road, but by a certain reflecting power, it turned inward on themselves, and revealed to them ugly sights in their own hearts, to which they rather chose to be blind; for those travellers were of that preposterous number,

who 'chose darkness rather than light,' and for the old obvious reason, 'because their deeds were evil.' Now, it was remarkable that these two properties were inseparable, and that the lamp would be of little outward use, except to those who used it as an internal reflector. A threat and a promise also never failed to accompany the offer of this light from the king; a promise that to those who improved what they had, more should be given; and a threat, that from those who did not use it wisely, should be taken away even what they had.

I observed that when the road was very dangerous; when terrors, and difficultics, and death beset the fervent traveller; then, on their faithful importunity, the king voluntarily gave large and bountiful supplies of light, such as in common seasons never could have been expected: always proportioning the quantity given to the necessity of the case; 'as their day was, such was their light and strength.'

Though many chose to depend entirely on their own original lamp, yet it was observed that this light was apt to go out if left to itself. It was easily blown out by those violent gusts which were perpetually howling through the wilderness; and indeed it was the natural tendency of that unwholesome atmosphere to extinguish it, just as you have seen a candle go out when exposed to the vapours and foul air of a damp room. It was a melancholy sight to see multitudes of travellers heedlessly pacing on, boasting they had light enough of their own, and despising the offer of more. But what astonished me most of all was, to see many, and some of them too accounted men of first rate wit, actually busy in blowing out their own light, because while any spark of it remained, it only served to torment them, and point out things which they did not wish to see. And having once blown out their own light, they were not easy till they had blown out that of their neighbours also; so that a good part of the wilderness seemed to exhibit a sort of universal *blindman's buff*, each endeavoring to catch his neighbour, while his own voluntary blindness exposed him to be caught himself; so that each was actually falling into the snare he was laying for another, till at length, as selfishness is the natural consequence of blindness, 'catch he that catch can,' became the general motto of the wilderness.

Now I saw in my vision, that there were some others who were busy in strewing the most gaudy flowers over the numerous bogs, and precipices, and pitfalls with which the wilderness abounded; and thus making danger and death look so gay, that poor thoughtless creatures seemed to delight in their own destruction. Those pitfalls did not appear deep or dangerous to the eye, because over them were raised gay edifices with alluring names. These were filled with singing men and singing women, and with dancing, and feasting, and gaming, and drinking, and jollity, and madness. But though the scenery was gay, the footing was unsound. The floors were full of holes, through which the unthinking merry-makers were continually sinking. Some tumbled through in the middle of a song; more at the end of a feast; and though there was many a cup of intoxication wreathed round with flowers, yet there was always poison at the bottom. But what most surprised me was that though no day past over their heads in which some of the most merry-makers did not drop through, yet their loss made little impression on those who were left. Nay, instead of being awakened to more circumspection, and self-denial by the continual dropping off of those about them, several of them seemed to borrow from thence an argument of a direct contrary tendency, and the very shortness of time was only urged as a reason to use it more sedulously for the indulgence in sensual delights. 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' 'Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they are withered.' With these and a thousand other such little inscriptions, the gay garlands of the wilderness were decorated. Some admired poets were set to work to set the most corrupt sentiments to the most harmonious tunes; these were sung without scruple, chiefly indeed by the looser sons of riot, but not seldom also by the more orderly daughters of sobriety, who were not ashamed to sing to the sound of instruments, sentiments so corrupt and immoral, that they would have blushed to speak or read them: but the music seemed to sanctify the corruption, especially such as was connected with love or drinking.

Now I observed that all the travellers who had so much as a spark of life left, seemed every now and then, as they moved onwards, to cast an eye, though with very different degrees of attention, towards the *Happy Land*, which they were told lay at the end of their journey; but as they could not see very far forward, and as they knew there was a *dark and shadowy valley* which must needs be crossed before they could attain to the *Happy Land*, they tried to turn their attention from it as much as they could. The truth is, they were not sufficiently apt to consult a map and a road-book which the King had given them, and which pointed out the path to the *Happy Land* so clearly, that the 'wayfaring men, though simple, could not err.' This map also defined very correctly the boundaries of the *Happy Land* from the *Land of Misery*, both of which lay on the other side of the dark and shadowy valley; but so many beacons and light-houses were erected, so many clear and explicit directions furnished for avoiding the one country and attaining the other, that it was not the king's fault, if even one single traveller got wrong. But I am inclined to think that, in spite of the map and the road-book, and the King's word, and his offers of assistance to get them thither, that the travellers in general did not heartily and truly believe, after all, that there was any such country as the *Happy Land;* or at least the paltry and transient pleasures of the wilderness so besotted them, the thoughts of the dark and shadowy valley so frightened them, that they thought they should be more comfortable by banishing all thought and forecast, and driving the subject quite out of their heads.

Now, I also saw in my dream, that there were two roads through the wilderness, one of which every traveller must needs take. The first was narrow, and difficult, and rough, but it was infallibly safe. It did not admit the traveller to stray either to the right hand or to the left, yet

it was far from being destitute of real comforts or sober pleasures. The other was a *broad* and *tempting way*, abounding with luxurious fruits and gaudy flowers, to tempt the eye and please the appetite. To forget this *dark valley*, through which every traveller was well assured he must one day pass, seemed the object of general desire. To this grand end, all that human ingenuity could invent was industriously set to work. The travellers read, and they wrote, and they painted, and they sung, and they danced, and they drank as they went along, not so much because they all cared for these things, or had any real joy in them, as because this restless activity served to divert their attention from ever being fixed on the *dark and shadowy valley*.

The king, who knew the thoughtless tempers of the travellers, and how apt they were to forget their journey's end, had thought of a thousand little kind attentions to warn them of their dangers: and as we sometimes see in our gardens written on a board in great letters, BEWARE OF SPRING GUNS—MAN TRAPS ARE SET HERE; so had this king caused to be written and stuck up before the eyes of the travellers, several little notices and cautions; such as, 'Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.—'Take heed, lest ye also perish.'—'Wo to them that rise up early to drink wine.'—'The pleasures of sin are but for a season,' &c. Such were the notices directed to the *broad-way* travellers; but they were so busily engaged in plucking the flowers, sometimes before they were blown, and in devouring the fruits often before they were ripe, and in loading themselves with *yellow clay*, under the weight of which millions perished, that they had no time so much as to look at the king's directions. Many went wrong because they preferred a merry journey to a safe one, and because they were terrified by certain notices chiefly intended for the *narrow-way* travellers; such as, 'ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice:' but had these foolish people allowed themselves time or patience to read to the end, which they seldom would do, they would have seen these comfortable words added, 'But your sorrow shall be turned into joy;' also, 'your joy no man taketh from you;' and, 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.'

Now, I also saw in my dream, that many travellers who had a strong dread of ending at the *Land of Misery* walked up to the *Strait Gate*, hoping that though the entrance was narrow, yet if they could once get in, the road would widen; but what was their grief, when on looking more closely they saw written on the inside, 'Narrow is the way;' this made them take fright; they compared the inscriptions with which the whole way was lined, such as, 'Be ye not conformed to this world; deny yourselves, take up your cross,' with all the tempting pleasures of the wilderness. Some indeed recollected the fine descriptions they had read of the *Happy Land*, the *Golden City*, and the *Rivers of Pleasure*, and they sighed: but then those joys were distant, and from the faintness of their light, they soon got to think that what was remote might be uncertain, and while the present good increased in bulk the distant good receded, diminished, disappeared. Their faith failed; they would trust no farther than they could see; they drew back and got into the *Broad Way*, taking a common but sad refuge in the number, the fashion, and the gayety of their companions. When these faint-hearted people, who yet had set out well, turned back, their light was quite put out, and then they became worse than those who had made no attempt to get in. 'For it is impossible, that is, it is next to impossible, for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance.'

A few honest humble travellers not naturally stronger than the rest, but strengthened by their trust in the king's word, came up, by the light of their lamps, and meekly entered in at the *Strait Gate*. As they advanced farther they felt less heavy, and though the way did not in reality grow wider, yet they grew reconciled to the narrowness of it, especially when they saw the walls here and there studded with certain jewels called *promises*, such as: 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved;' and 'my grace is sufficient for you.' Some, when they were almost ready to faint, were encouraged by seeing that many niches in the *Narrow Way* were filled with statues and pictures of saints and martyrs, who had borne their testimony at the stake, that the *Narrow Way* was the safe way; and these travellers, instead of sinking at the sight of the painted wheel and gibbet, the sword and furnace, were animated with these words written under them, 'Those that wear white robes, came out of great tribulation,' and 'be ye followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.'

In the mean time there came a great multitude of travellers all from Laodicea; this was the largest party I had yet seen; these were *neither hot nor cold;* they would not give up future hope, and they could not endure present pain. So they contrived to deceive themselves, by fancying that though they resolved to keep the *Happy Land* in view, yet there must needs be many different ways which lead to it, no doubt all equally sure, without all being equally rough; so they set on foot certain little contrivances to attain the end without using the means, and softened down the spirit of the king's directions to fit them to their own practice. Sometimes they would split a direction in two, and only use that half which suited them. For instance when they met with the following rule on the way-post, 'Trust in the Lord and be doing good,' they would take the first half, and make themselves easy with a general sort of trust, that through the mercy of the king all would go well with them, though they themselves did nothing. And on the other hand, many made sure that a few good works of their own would do their business, and carry them safely to the *Happy Land*, though they did *not* trust in the Lord, nor place any faith in his word. So they took the second half of the spliced direction. Thus some perished by a lazy faith, and others by a working pride.

A large party of Pharisees now appeared, who had so neglected their lamp that they did not see their way at all, though they fancied them-

selves to be full of light; they kept up appearances so well as to delude others, and most effectually to delude themselves, with a notion that they might be found in the right way at last. In this dreadful delusion they went on to the end, and till they were finally plunged in the dark valley, never discovered the horrors which awaited them on the dismal shore. It was remarkable that while these Pharisees were often boasting how bright their light burnt, in order to get the praise of men, the humble travellers, whose steady light showed their good works to others, refused all commendation, and the brighter their light shined before men, so much the more they insisted that they ought to glorify not themselves, but their Father which is in heaven.

I now set myself to observe what was the particular let, molestation and hindrance which obstructed particular travellers in their endeavours to enter in at the *Strait Gate*. I remarked a huge portly man who seemed desirous of getting in, but he carried about him such a vast provision of bags full of gold, and had on so many rich garments, which stuffed him out so wide, that though he pushed and squeezed, like one who had really a mind to get in, yet he could not possibly do so. Then I heard a voice crying, 'Wo to him who loadeth himself with thick clay.' The poor man felt something was wrong, and even went so far as to change some of his more cumbersome vanities into others which seemed less bulky, but still he and his pack were much too wide for the gate. He would not however give up the matter so easily, but began to throw away a little of the coarser part of his baggage, but still I remarked that he threw away none of the vanities which lay near his heart. He tried again, but it would not do; still his dimensions were too large. He now looked up and read these words, 'How hardly shall those who have riches enter into the kingdom of God.' The poor man sighed to find that it was impossible to enjoy his fill of both worlds, and 'went away sorrowing.' If he ever afterwards cast a thought towards the *Happy Land*, it was only to regret that the road which led to it was too narrow to admit any but the meagre children of want, who were not so encumbered by wealth as to be too big for the passage. Had he read on, he would have seen that 'with God all things are possible.'

Another advanced with much confidence of success, for having little worldly riches or honours, the gate did not seem so strait to him. He got to the threshold triumphantly, and seemed to look back with disdain on all that he was quitting. He soon found, however, that he was so bloated with pride, and stuffed out with self-sufficiency, that he could not get in. Nay, he was in a worse way than the rich man just named; for *he* had been willing to throw away some of his outward luggage, whereas this man refused to part with a grain of that vanity and self-applause which made him too large for the way. The sense of his own worth so swelled him out that he stuck fast in the gateway, and could neither get in nor out. Finding now that he must cut off all those big thoughts of himself, if he wished to be reduced to such a size as to pass the gate, he gave up all thoughts of it. He scorned that humility and self-denial which might have shrunk him down to the proper dimensions; the more he insisted on his own qualifications for entrance, the more impossible it became to enter, for the bigger he grew. Finding that he must become quite another manner of man before he could hope to get in, he gave up the desire; and I now saw that though when he set his face towards the *Happy Land* he could not get an inch forward, yet the instant he made a motion to turn back into the world, his speed became rapid enough, and he got back into the *Broad Way* much sooner than he got out of it.

Many, who for a time were brought down from their usual bulk by some affliction, seemed to get in with ease. They now thought all their difficulties over, for having been surfeited with the world during their late disappointment, they turned their backs upon it willingly enough, and fancied they were tired of it. A fit of sickness, perhaps, which is very apt to *reduce*, had for a time brought their bodies into subjection, so that they were enabled just to get in at the gateway; but as soon as health and spirits returned, the way grew narrower and narrower to them; and they could not get on, but turned short, and got back into the world. I saw many attempt to enter who were stopped short by a large burthen of *worldly cares;* others by a load of *idolatrous attachments;* but I observed that nothing proved a more complete bar than that vast *bundle of prejudices* with which multitudes were loaded. —Other were fatally obstructed by loads of *bad habits* which they would not lay down, though they knew it prevented their entrance.

Some few, however, of most descriptions, who had kept their *light* alive by craving constant supplies from the king's treasury, got through at last by a strength which they felt not to be their own. One poor man, who carried the largest bundle of bad habits I had seen, could not get on a step; he never ceased, however, to implore for light enough to see where his misery lay; he threw down one of his bundles, then another, but all to little purpose; still he could not stir. At last *striving as if in agony* (which is the true way of entering) he threw down the the heaviest article in his pack; this was *selfishness:* the poor fellow felt relieved at once, his light burned brightly, and the rest of his pack was as nothing.

Then I heard a great noise as of carpenters at work. I looked what this might be, and saw many sturdy travellers, who finding they were too bulky to get through, took it into their heads not to reduce themselves, but to widen the gate; they hacked on this side, and hewed on that; but all their hacking and hewing, and hammering was to no purpose, they got their labour for their pains. It would have been possible for them to have reduced themselves, had they attempted it, but to widen the narrow way was impossible.

What grieved me most was to observe that many who had got on successfully a good way, now stopped to rest and to admire their own progress. While they were thus valuing themselves on their attainments, their light diminished. While these were boasting how far they had

left others behind who had set out much earlier, some slower travellers whose beginning had not been so promising, but who had walked meekly and circumspectly, now outstripped them.—These last walked not as though they had already attained; but this one thing they did, forgetting the things which were behind, they pushed forward to the mark, for the prize of their high calling. These, though naturally weak, yet *by laying aside every weight, finished the race that was before them.* Those who had kept their 'light burning,' who were not 'wise in their own conceit,' who 'laid their help on one that is mighty,' who had chosen to suffer affliction rather than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season,' came at length to the *Happy Land.*—They had indeed the *Dark and Shadowy Valley* to cross, but even there they found a *rod and a staff* to comfort them. Their light instead of being put out by the damps of the Valley and of the Shadow of Death, often burnt with added brightness. Some indeed suffered the terrors of a short eclipse; but even then their light, like that of a dark lantern, was not put out; it was only turned for a while from him who carried it, and even these often finished their course with joy.—But be that as it might, the instant they reached the *Happy Land*, all tears were wiped from their eyes, and the king himself came forth and welcomed them into his presence, and put a crown upon their heads, with these words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy lord.'

PARLEY, THE PORTER.

AN ALLEGORY:

Showing how robbers without can never get into a house, unless there are traitors within.

THERE was once a certain nobleman who had a house or castle situated in the midst of a great wilderness, but inclosed in a garden. Now there was a band of robbers in the wilderness who had a great mind to plunder and destroy the castle, but they had not succeeded in their endeavours, because the master had given strict orders to '*watch without ceasing.*' To quicken their vigilance he used to tell them that their care would soon have an end; that though the nights they had to watch were dark and stormy, yet they were but few; the period of resistance was short, that of rest would be eternal.

The robbers, however, attacked the castle in various ways. They tried at every avenue, watched to take advantage of every careless moment; looked for an open door or a neglected window. But though they often made the bolts shake and the windows rattle, they could never greatly hurt the house, much less get into it. Do you know the reason? it was because the servants were never off their guard. They heard the noises plain enough, and used to be not a little frightened, for they were aware both of the strength and perseverance of their enemies. But what seemed rather odd to some of these servants, the lord used to tell them, that while they continued to be afraid they would be safe; and it passed into a sort of proverb in that family 'Happy is he that feareth always.' Some of the servants, however, thought this a contradiction.

One day, when the master was going from home, he called his servants all together, and spoke to them as follows: 'I will not repeat to you the directions I have so often given you; they are all written down in THE BOOK OF LAWS, of which every one of you has a copy. Remember, it is a very short time that you are to remain in this castle; you will soon remove to my more settled habitation, to a more durable house, not made with hands. As that house is never exposed to any attack, so it never stands in need of any repair; for that country is never infested by any sons of violence. Here you are servants; there you will be princes. But mark my words, and you will find the same in THE BOOK OF MY LAWS, whether you will ever attain to *that* house, will depend on the manner in which you defend yourselves in *this.* A stout vigilance for a short time will secure your certain happiness for ever. But every thing depends on your present exertions. Don't complain and take advantage of my absence, and call me a hard master, and grumble that you are placed in the midst of an howling wilderness without peace or security. Say not, that you are exposed to temptations without any power to resist them. You have some difficulties, it is true, but you have many helps and many comforts to make this house tolerable, even before you get to the other. Your's is not a hard service; and if it were, 'the time is short.' You have arms if you will use them, and doors if you will bar them, and strength if you will use it. I would defy all the attacks of the robbers without, if I could depend on the fidelity of the people within. If the thieves ever get in and destroy the house, it must be by the connivance of one of the family. *For it is a standing law of this castle, that mere outward attack can never destroy it, if there be no consenting traitor within.* You will stand or fall as you will observe this rule. If you are finally happy, it will be by my grace and favour; if you are ruined, it will be your own fault.'

When the nobleman had done speaking, every servant repeated his assurance of attachment and firm allegiance to his master. But among them all, not one was so vehement and loud in his professions as old Parley the porter. Parley, indeed, it was well known, was always talking, which exposed him to no small danger; for as he was the foremost to promise, so he was the slackest to perform: and, to speak the truth, though he was a civil spoken fellow, his lord was more afraid of him, with all his professions, than he was of the rest who protested less. He knew that Parley was vain, credulous, and self-suffi

cient; and he always apprehended more danger from Parley's impertinence, curiosity, and love of novelty, than even from the stronger vices of some of his other servants. The rest indeed, seldom got into any scrape, of which Parley was not the cause in some shape or other.

I am sorry to be obliged to confess, that though Parley was allowed every refreshment, and all the needful rest which the nature of his place permitted, yet he thought it very hard to be forced to be so constantly on duty. 'Nothing but watching,' said Parley. 'I have, to be sure, many pleasures, and meat sufficient; and plenty of chat, in virtue of my office, and I pick up a good deal of news of the comers and goers by day, but it is hard that at night I must watch as narrowly as a house-dog, and yet let in no company without orders; only because there is said to be a few straggling *robbers* here in the wilderness, with whom my master does not care to let us be acquainted. He pretends to make us vigilant through fear of the robbers, but I suspect it is only to make us mope alone. A merry companion and a mug of beer would make the night pass cheerily.' Parley, however, kept all these thoughts to himself, or uttered them only when no one heard, for talk he must. He began to listen to the nightly whistling of the robbers under the windows with rather less alarm than formerly, and was sometimes so tired of watching, that he thought it was even better to run the risk of being robbed once, than to live always in the fear of robbers.

There was certain bounds in which the lord allowed his servants to walk and divert themselves at all proper seasons. A pleasant garden surrounded the castle, and a thick hedge separated this garden from the wilderness, which was infested by the robbers; in this garden they were permitted to amuse themselves. The master advised them always to keep within these bounds. 'While you observe this rule,' said he, 'you will be safe and well; and you will consult your own safety and happiness, as well as show your love to me, by not venturing over to the extremity of your bounds; he who goes as far as he dares, always shows a wish to go farther than he ought, and commonly does so.'

It was remarkable, that the nearer these servants kept to the castle, and the farther from the *hedge*, the more ugly the wilderness appeared. And the nearer they approached the forbidden bounds, their own home appeared more dull, and the wilderness more delightful. And this the master knew when he gave his orders; for he never either did or said any thing without a good reason. And when his servants sometimes desired an explanation of the reason, he used to tell them they would understand it when they came to *the other house*; for it was one of the pleasures of that house, that it would explain all the mysteries of this, and any little obscurities in the master's conduct would be then made quite plain.

Parley was the first who promised to keep clear of the *hedge*, and yet was often seen looking as near as he durst. One day he ventured close up to the hedge, put two or three stones one on another, and tried to peep over. He saw one of the robbers strolling as near as he could be on the forbidden side. This man's name was Mr. Flatterwell, a smooth civil man, 'whose words were softer than butter, having war in his heart.' He made several low bows to Parley.

Now, Parley knew so little of the world, that he actually concluded all robbers must have an ugly look which should frighten you at once, and coarse brutal manners which would at first sight show they were enemies. He thought, like a poor ignorant fellow as he was, that this mild specious person could never be one of the band. Flatterwell accosted Parley with the utmost civility, which put him quite off his guard; for Parley had no notion that he could be an enemy who was so soft and civil. For an open foe he would have been prepared. Parley, however, after a little discourse drew this conclusion, that either Mr. Flatterwell could not be one of the gang, or that if he was, the robbers themselves could not be such monsters as his master had described, and therefore it was a folly to be afraid of them.

Flatterwell began, like a true adept in his art, by lulling all Parley's suspicions asleep; and instead of openly abusing his master, which would have opened Parley's eyes at once, he pretended rather to commend him in a general way, as a person who meant well himself, but was too apt to suspect others. To this Parley assented. The other then ventured to hint by degrees, that though the nobleman might be a good master in the main, yet he must say he was a little strict, and a little stingy, and not a little censorious. That he was blamed by the *gentlemen of the wilderness* for shutting his house against good company, and his servants were laughed at by people of spirit for submitting to the gloomy life of the castle, and the insipid pleasures of the garden, instead of ranging in the wilderness at large.

'It is true enough,' said Parley, who was generally of the opinion of the person he was talking with, 'My master *is* rather harsh and close. But to own the truth, all the barring, and locking, and bolting, is to keep out a set of gentlemen, who he assures us are *robbers*, and who are waiting for an opportunity to destroy us. I hope no offence, sir, but by your livery I suspect you, sir, are one of the gang he is so much afraid of.'

Flatterwell. Afraid of me? Impossible dear Mr. Parley. You see, I do not look like an enemy. I am unarmed; what harm can a plain man like me do?

Parley. Why, that is true enough. Yet my master says, if we were to let you into the house, we should be ruined soul and body.

Flatterwell. I am sorry Mr. Parley to hear so sensible a man as you are so deceived. This is mere prejudice. He knows we are cheerful entertaining people, foes to gloom and superstition, and therefore he is so morose he will not let you get acquainted with us.

Parley. Well; he says you are a band of thieves, gamblers, murderers, drunkards, and atheists.

Flatterwell. Don't believe him; the worst we should do, perhaps, is, we might drink a friendly glass with you to your master's health

or play an innocent game of cards just to keep you awake, or sing a cheerful song with the maids; now is there any harm in all this?

Parley. Not the least in the world. And I begin to think there is not a word of truth in all my master says.

Flatterwell. The more you know us, the more you will like us. But I wish there was not this ugly hedge between us. I have a great deal to say, and I am afraid of being overheard.

Parley was now just going to give a spring over the hedge, but checked himself, saying, 'I dare not come on your side, there are people about, and every thing is carried to my master.' Flatterwell saw by this that his new friend was kept on his own side of the hedge by fear rather than by principle, and from that moment he made sure of him. 'Dear Mr. Parley,' said he, 'if you will allow me the honour of a little conversation with you, I will call under the window of your lodge this evening. I have something to tell you greatly to your advantage. I admire you exceedingly. I long for your friendship; our whole brotherhood is ambitious of being known to so amiable a person.'—'O dear,' said Parley, 'I shall be afraid of talking to you at night. It is so against my master's orders. But did you say you had something to tell me to my advantage?'

Flatterwell. Yes, I can point out to you how you may be a richer, a merrier, and a happier man. If you will admit me to-night under the window, I will convince you that it is prejudice and not wisdom, which makes your master bar his door against us; I will convince you that the mischief of a *robber*, as your master scurrilously calls us, is only in the name; that we are your true friends, and only mean to promote your happiness.

'Don't say *we*,' said Parley, 'pray come alone; I would not see the rest of the gang for the world; but I think there can be no great harm in talking to *you* through the bars, if you come alone; but I am determined not to let you in. Yet I can't say but I wish to know what you can tell me so much to my advantage; indeed, if it is for my good I ought to know it.'

Flatterwell. (*going out, turns back.*) Dear Mr. Parley, there is one thing I had forgotten. I cannot get over the hedge at night without assistance. You know there is a secret in the nature of that hedge; you in the house may get over it into the wilderness of your own accord, but we cannot get to your side by our own strength. You must look about to see where the hedge is thinnest, and then set to work to clear away here and there a little bough for me, it won't be missed; and if there is but the smallest hole made on your side, those on ours can get through; otherwise we do but labour in vain. To this Parley made some objection, through the fear of being seen. Flatterwell replied, that the smallest hole from within would be sufficient, for he could then work his own way. 'Well,' said Parley, 'I will consider of it. To be sure I shall even then be equally safe in the castle, as I shall have all the bolts, bars, and locks between us, so it will make but little difference.'

'Certainly not,' said Flatterwell, who knew it would make all the difference in the world. So they parted with mutual protestations of regard. Parley went home charmed with his new friend. His eyes were now clearly opened as to his master's prejudices against the *robbers*, and he was convinced there was more in the name than in the thing. 'But,' said he, 'though Mr. Flatterwell is certainly an agreeable companion, he may not be so safe an inmate. There can, however, be no harm in talking at a distance, and I certainly won't let him in.'

Parley, in the course of the day, did not forget his promise to thin the hedge of separation a little. At first he only tore off a handful of leaves, then a little sprig, then he broke away a bough or two. It was observable, the larger the breach became, the worse he began to think of his master, and the better of himself. Every peep he took through the broken hedge increased his desire to get out into the wilderness, and made the thoughts of the castle more irksome to him.

He was continually repeating to himself, 'I wonder what Mr. Flatterwell can have to say so much to my advantage? I see he does not wish to hurt my master, he only wishes to serve me.' As the hour of meeting, however, drew near, the master's orders now and then came across Parley's thoughts. So to divert them, he took up THE BOOK. He happened to open it at these words: 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' For a moment his heart failed him. 'If this admonition should be sent on purpose?' said he; 'but no, 'tis a bugbear. My master told me that if I went to the bounds I should get over the hedge. Now I went to the utmost limits, and did *not* get over.' Here conscience put in; 'Yes, but it was because you were watched.'—'I am sure,' continued Parley, 'one may always stop where one will, and this is only a trick of my master's to spoil sport. So I will even hear what Mr. Flatterwell has to say so much to my advantage. I am not obliged to follow his counsels, but there can be no harm in hearing them.'

Flatterwell prevailed on the rest of the robbers to make no public attack on the castle that night. 'My brethren,' said he, 'you now and then fail in your schemes, because you are for violent beginnings, while my smoothing insinuating measures hardly ever miss. You come blustering and roaring, and frighten people, and set them on their guard. You inspire them with terror of *you*, while my whole scheme is to make them think well of *themselves*, and ill of their master. If I once get them to entertain hard thoughts of him, and high thoughts of themselves, my business is done, and they fall plump into my snares. So let this delicate affair alone to me: Parley is a softly fellow; he must not be frightened, but cajoled. He is the very sort of a man to succeed with; and worth a hundred of your sturdy sensible fellows. With them we want strong arguments and strong temptations; but with such fellows as Parley, in whom vanity and sensuality are the leading qualities (as, let me tell you, is the case with far the greater part) flattery and a promise of ease and pleasure, will do more than your

whole battle array. If you will let me manage, I will get you all into the castle before midnight.'

At night the castle was barricadoed as usual, and no one had observed the hole which Parley had made in the hedge. This oversight arose that night from the servants' neglecting one of the master's standing orders—to make a nightly examination of the state of things. The neglect did not proceed so much from wilful disobedience, as from having passed the evening in sloth and diversion, which often amounts to nearly the same in its consequences.

As all was very cheerful within, so all was very quiet without. And before they went to bed, some of the servants observed to the rest, that as they heard no robbers that night, they thought they might now begin to remit something of their diligence in bolting and barring: that all this fastening and locking was very troublesome, and they hoped the danger was now pretty well over. It was rather remarkable, that they never made these sort of observations, but after an evening of some excess, and when they had neglected their *private business with their master*. All, however, except Parley, went quietly to bed, and seemed to feel uncommon security.

Parley crept down to his lodge. He had half a mind to go to bed too. Yet he was not willing to disappoint Mr. Flatterwell. So civil a gentleman! To be sure he might have had bad designs. Yet what right had he to suspect any body who made such professions, and who was so very civil? 'Besides, it is something for my advantage,' added Parley. 'I will not open the door, that is certain; but as he is to come alone, he can do me no harm through the bars of the windows: and he will think I am a coward if I don't keep my word. No, I will let him see that I am not afraid of my own strength; I will show him I can go what length I please, and stop short *when* I please.' Had Flatterwell heard this boastful speech, he would have been quite sure of his man.

About eleven, Parley heard the signal agreed upon. It was so gentle as to cause little alarm. So much the worse. Flatterwell never frightened any one, and therefore seldom failed of any one. Parley stole softly down, planted himself at his little window, opened the casement, and spied his new friend. It was pale starlight. Parley was a little frightened; for he thought he perceived one or two persons behind Flatterwell; but the other assured him it was only his own shadow, which his fears had magnified into a company. 'Though I assure you,' said he, 'I have not a friend but what is as harmless as myself.'

They now entered into serious discourse, in which Flatterwell showed himself a deep politician. He skilfully mixed up in his conversation a proper proportion of praise on the pleasures of the wilderness, of compliments to Parley, of ridicule on his master, and of abusive sneers on the BOOK in which the master's laws were written. Against this last he had always a particular spite, for he considered it as the grand instrument by which the lord maintained his servants in their allegiance; and when they could once be brought to sneer at the BOOK there was an end of submission to the lord Parley had not penetration enough to see his drift. 'As to the BOOK, Mr. Flatterwell,' said he, 'I do not know whether it be true or false. I rather neglect than disbelieve it. I am forced, indeed, to hear it read once a week, but I never look into it myself, if I can help it.'—'Excellent,' said Flatterwell to himself, 'that is just the same thing. This is safe ground for me. For whether a man does not believe in the BOOK, or does not attend to it, it comes pretty much to the same, and I generally get him at last.'

'Why cannot we be a little nearer, Mr. Parley,' said Flatterwell; 'I am afraid of being overheard by some of your master's spies. The window from which you speak is so high; I wish you would come down to the door.'—'Well,' said Parley, 'I see no great harm in that. There is a little wicket in the door through which we may converse with more ease and equal safety. The same fastenings will be still between us.' So down he went, but not without a degree of fear and trembling.

The little wicket being now opened, and Flatterwell standing close on the outside of the door, they conversed with great ease. 'Mr. Parley,' said Flatterwell, 'I should not have pressed you so much to admit me into the castle, but out of pure disinterested regard to your own happiness. I shall get nothing by it, but I cannot bear to think that a person so wise and amiable should be shut up in this gloomy dungeon, under a hard master, and a slave to the unreasonable tyranny of his BOOK OF LAWS. If you admit me, you need have no more waking, no more watching.' Here Parley involuntarily slipped back the bolt of the door. 'To convince you of my true love,' continued Flatterwell, 'I have brought a bottle of the most delicious wine that grows in the wilderness. You shall taste it, but you must put a glass through the wicket to receive it, for it is a singular property in this wine, that we of the wilderness cannot succeed in conveying it to you of the castle, without you hold out a vessel to receive it.'—'O here is a glass,' said Parley, holding out a large goblet, which he always kept ready to be filled by any chance-comer. The other immediately poured into the capacious goblet a large draught of that delicious intoxicating liquor, with which the family of the Flatterwells have for near six thousand years gained the hearts, and destroyed the souls of all the inhabitants of the castle, whenever they have been able to prevail on them to hold out a hand to receive it. This the wise master of the castle well knew would be the case, for he knew what was in men; he knew their propensity to receive the delicious poison of the Flatterwells; and it was for this reason that he gave them THE BOOK of his laws, and planted the hedge and invented the bolts, and doubled the lock.

As soon as poor Parley had swallowed the fatal draught, it acted like enchantment. He at once lost all power of resistance. He had no sense of fear left. He despised his own safety, forgot his master, lost all sight of the house in the other country, and reached out for another draught as eagerly as Flatterwell held out the

bottle to administer it. 'What a fool, have I been,' said Parley, 'to deny myself so long!'—'Will you now let me in?' said Flatterwell. 'Ay, that I will,' said the deluded Parley. Though the train was now increased to near a hundred robbers, yet so intoxicated was Parley, that he did not see one of them except his new friend. Parley eagerly pulled down the bars, drew back the bolts and forced open the locks; thinking he could never let in his friend soon enough. He had, however, just presence of mind to say, 'My dear friend, I hope you are alone.' Flatterwell swore he was—Parley opened the door—in rushed, not Flatterwell only, but the whole banditti, who always lurked behind in his train. The moment they had got sure possession, Flatterwell changed his soft tone, and cried in a voice of thunder, 'Down with the castle—kill, burn, and destroy.'

Rapine, murder, and conflagration, by turns took place. Parley was the very first whom they attacked. He was overpowered with wounds. As he fell he cried out, 'O my master, I die a victim to my unbelief in thee, and to my own vanity and imprudence. O that the guardians of all other castles would hear me with my dying breath repeat my master's admonition, that *all attacks from without will not destroy unless there is some confederate within.* O that the keepers of all other castles would learn from my ruin, that he who parleys with temptation is already undone. That he who allows himself to go to the very bounds will soon jump over the hedge; that he who talks out of the window with the enemy, will soon open the door to him; that he who holds out his hand for the cup of sinful flattery, loses all power of resisting; that when he opens the door to one sin, all the rest fly in upon him, and the man perishes as I now do.'

TALES

FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE.

Religion is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature, and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue.—*Burke on the French Revolution.*

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THESE AND THE PRECEDING TALES.

To improve the habits, and raise the principles of the common people, at a time when their dangers and temptations, moral and political, were multiplied beyond the example of any former period, was the motive which impelled the author of these volumes to devise and prosecute the institution of the Cheap Repository. This plan was established with an humble wish not only to counteract vice and profligacy on the one hand, but error, discontent, and false religion on the other. And as an appetite for reading had, from a variety of causes, been increased among the inferior ranks in this country, it was judged expedient, at this critical period, to supply such wholesome aliment as might give a new direction to their taste, and abate their relish for those corrupt and inflammatory publications which the consequences of the French Revolution have been so fatally pouring in upon us.

The success of the plan exceeded the most sanguine expectations of its projector. Above two millions of the tracts were sold within the first year, besides very large numbers in Ireland; and they continue to be very extensively circulated, in their original form of single tracts, by Evans, in Long-lane, West Smithfield, Hatchard in Piccadilly, and Hazard in Bath, as well as in three bound volumes, sold by Rivington, Hatchard, and all other booksellers.

As these stories, though *principally*, are not calculated *exclusively* for the middle and lower classes of society, the author has, at the desire of her friends, selected those which were written by herself, and presented them to the public in this collection of her works, in an enlarged and improved form.

THE SHEPHERD OF SALISBURY PLAIN.

Mr. Johnson, a very worthy charitable gentleman, was travelling some time ago across one of those vast plains which are well known in Wiltshire. It was a fine summer's evening, and he rode slowly that he might have leisure to admire God in the works of his creation. For this gentleman was of opinion, that a walk or a ride was as proper a time as any to think about good things; for which reason, on such occasions, he seldom thought so much about his money, or his trade, or public news, as at other times, that he might with more ease and satis

faction enjoy the pious thought which the wonderful works of the great Maker of heaven and earth are intended to raise in the mind.

As this serene contemplation of the visible heavens insensibly lifted up his mind from the works of God in nature, to the same God as he is seen in Revelation, it occurred to him that this very connexion was clearly intimated by the Royal Prophet in the nineteenth Psalm.—That most beautiful description of the greatness and power of God exhibited in the former part, plainly seeming intended to introduce, illustrate, and unfold the operations of the word and Spirit of God on the heart in the latter. And he began to run a parallel in his own mind between the effects of that highly poetical and glowing picture of the material sun in searching and warming the earth, in the first six verses, and the spiritual operation attributed to the 'law of God,' which fills up the remaining part of the Psalm. And he persuaded himself that the divine Spirit which dictated this fine hymn, had left it as a kind of general intimation to what use we were to convert our admiration of created things; namely, that we might be led by a sight of them to raise our views from the kingdom of nature to that of grace, and that the contemplation of God in his works might draw us to contemplate him in his word.

In the midst of these reflections, Mr. Johnson's attention was all of a sudden called off by the barking of a shepherd's dog, and looking up he spied one of those little huts, which are here and there to be seen on those great downs; and near it was the shepherd himself busily employed with his dog in collecting together his vast flock of sheep. As he drew nearer, he perceived him to be a clean, well-looking, poor man, near fifty years of age. His coat, though at first it had probably been of one dark colour, had been in a long course of years so often patched with different sorts of cloth, that it was now become hard to say which had been the original colour. But this, while it gave a plain proof of the shepherd's poverty, equally proved the exceeding neatness, industry and good management of his wife. His stockings no less proved her good house-wifery, for they were entirely covered with darns of different coloured worsted, but had not a hole in them; and his shirt, though nearly as coarse as the sails of a ship, was as white as the drifted snow, and was neatly mended where time had either made a rent, or worn it thin. This furnishes a rule of judging, by which one shall seldom be deceived. If I meet with a labourer, hedging, ditching, or mending the highways, with his stockings and shirt tight and whole, however mean and bad his other garments are, I have seldom failed, on visiting his cottage, to find that also clean and well ordered, and his wife notable, and worthy of encouragement. Whereas a poor woman, who will be lying a-bed, or gossiping with her neighbours when she ought to be fitting out her husband in a cleanly manner, will seldom be found to be very good in other respects.

This was not the case with our shepherd: and Mr. Johnson was not more struck with the decency of his mean and frugal dress, than with his open honest countenance, which bore strong marks of health, cheerfulness, and spirit.

Mr. Johnson, who was on a journey, and somewhat fearful from the appearance of the sky, that rain was at no great distance, accosted the shepherd with asking what sort of weather he thought it would be on the morrow. 'It will be such weather as pleases me,' answered the shepherd. Though the answer was delivered in the mildest and most civil tone that could be imagined, the gentleman thought the words themselves rather rude and surly, and asked him how that could be. 'Because,' replied the shepherd, 'it will be such weather as shall please God, and whatever pleases him always pleases me.'

Mr. Johnson, who delighted in good men and good things, was very well satisfied with his reply. For he justly thought that though a hypocrite may easily contrive to appear better than he really is to a stranger; and that no one should be too soon trusted, merely for having a few good words in his mouth; yet as he knew that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; he always accustomed himself to judge favorably of those who had a serious deportment and solid manner of speaking. It looks as if it proceeded from a good habit, said he, and though I may now and then be deceived by it, yet it has not often happened to me to be so. Whereas if a man accosts me with an idle, dissolute, vulgar, indecent, or profane expression, I have never been deceived in him, but have generally on inquiry found his character to be as bad as his language gave me room to expect.

He entered into conversation with the shepherd in the following manner: 'Your's is a troublesome life, honest friend,' said he. 'To be sure, sir,' replied the shepherd, ''tis not a very lazy life; but 'tis not near so toilsome as that which my GREAT MASTER led for my sake; and he had every state and condition of life at his choice, and *chose* a hard one; while I only submit to the lot that is appointed to me.' 'You are exposed to great cold and heat,' said the gentleman: 'True, sir,' said the shepherd; 'but then I am not exposed to great temptations; and so throwing one thing against another, God is pleased to contrive to make things more equal than we poor, ignorant, short-sighted creatures, are apt to think. David was happier when he kept his father's sheep on such a plain as this, and employed in singing some of his own Psalms perhaps, than ever he was when he became king of Israel and Judah. And I dare say we should never have had some of the most beautiful texts in all those fine Psalms, if he had not been a shepherd, which enabled him to make so many fine comparisons and similitudes, as one may say, from country life, flocks of sheep, hills, and vallies, fields of corn, and fountains of water.'

'You think then,' said the gentleman, 'that a laborious life is a happy one.' 'I do, sir; and more so especially, as it exposes a man to fewer sins. If king Saul had continued a poor laborious man to the end of his days, he might have lived happy and honest, and died a natural death in his bed at last, which you know, sir was

more than he did. But I speak with reverence, for it was divine Providence overruled all that, you know sir, and I do not presume to make comparisons.—Besides, sir, my employment has been particularly honoured—Moses was a shepherd in the plains of Midian. It was to "shepherds keeping their flocks by night," that the angels appeared in Bethlehem, to tell the best news, the gladdest tidings, that ever were revealed to poor sinful men; often and often has the thought warmed my poor heart in the coldest night, and filled me with more joy and thankfulness than the best supper could have done.'

Here the shepherd stopped, for he began to feel that he had made too free, and talked too long. But Mr. Johnson was so well pleased with what he said, and with the cheerful contented manner in which he said it, that he desired him to go on freely, for that it was a pleasure to him to meet with a plain man, who, without any kind of learning but what he had got from the Bible, was able to talk so well on a subject in which all men, high and low, rich and poor, are equally concerned.

'Indeed I am afraid I make too bold, sir, for it better becomes me to listen to such a gentleman as you seem to be, than to talk in my poor way: but as I was saying, sir, I wonder all working men do not derive as great joy and delight as I do from thinking how God has honoured poverty! Oh! sir, what great, or rich, or mighty men have had such honour put on them, or their condition, as shepherds, tent-makers, fishermen, and carpenters have had? Besides, it seems as if God honoured industry also. The way of duty is not only the way of safety, but it is remarkable how many in the exercise of the common duties of their calling, humbly and rightly performed, as we may suppose, have found honours, preferment, and blessing: while it does not occur to me that the whole sacred volume presents a single instance of a like blessing conferred on idleness. Rebekah, Rachel, and Jethro's daughters, were diligently employed in the lowest occupations of a country life, when Providence, by means of those very occupations, raised them up husbands so famous in history, as Isaac, Jacob, and the prophet Moses. The shepherds were neither playing nor sleeping, but "watching their flocks," when they received the news of a Saviour's birth: and the woman of Samaria, by the laborious office of drawing water, was brought to the knowledge of Him who gave her to drink of "living water."

'My honest friend,' said the gentleman, 'I perceive you are well acquainted with scripture.'—'Yes, sir, pretty well, blessed be God! through his mercy I learned to read when I was a little boy; though reading was not so common when I was a child, as I am told, through the goodness of Providence and the generosity of the rich, it is likely to become now-a-days. I believe there is no day for the last thirty years that I have not peeped at my Bible. If we can't find time to read a chapter, I defy any man to say he can't find time to read a verse: and a single text, sir, well followed, and put in practice every day, would make no bad figure at the year's end; three hundred and sixty-five texts, without the loss of a moment's time, would make a pretty stock, a little golden treasury, as one may say, from new-year's day to new-year's day; and if children were brought up to it, they would come to look for their text as naturally as they do for their breakfast. No labouring man, 'tis true, has so much leisure as a shepherd, for while the flock is feeding I am obliged to be still, and at such times I can now and then tap a shoe for my children or myself, which is a great saving to us, and while I am doing that I repeat a chapter or a psalm, which makes the time pass pleasantly in this wild solitary place. I can say the best part of the New Testament by heart; I believe I should not say the best part, for every part is good, but I mean the greatest part. I have led but a lonely life, and have often had but little to eat, but my Bible, has been meat, drink, and company to me, as I may say, and when want and trouble have come upon me, I don't know what I should have done indeed, sir, if I had not had the promises of this book for my stay and support.'

'You have had great difficulties then?' said Mr. Johnson. 'Why, as to that, sir, not more than neighbours' fare; I have but little cause to complain, and much to be thankful; but I have had some little struggles, as I will leave you to judge. I have a wife and eight children, whom I bred up in that little cottage which you see under the hill, about half a mile off.' 'What, that with the smoke coming out of the chimney?' said the gentleman. 'O no, sir,' replied the shepherd, smiling, 'we have seldom smoke in the evening, for we have little to cook, and firing is very dear in these parts. 'Tis that cottage which you see on the left hand of the church, near that little tuft of hawthorns.'—'What, that hovel with only one room above and below, with scarcely any chimney? how is it possible that you can live there with such a family?' 'O it is very possible, and very certain too,' cried the shepherd. 'How many better men have been worse lodged! how many good Christians have perished in prisons and dungeons, in comparison of which my cottage is a palace! The house is very well, sir; and if the rain did not sometimes beat down upon us through the thatch when we are a-bed, I should not desire a better; for I have health, peace, and liberty, and no man maketh me afraid.'

'Well, I will certainly call on you before it be long; but how can you contrive to lodge so many children?' 'We do the best we can, sir. My poor wife is a very sickly woman; or we should always have done tolerably well. There are no gentry in the parish, so that she has not met with any great assistance in her sickness. The good curate of the parish, who lives in that pretty parsonage in the valley, is very willing, but not very able to assist us on these trying occasions, for he has little enough for himself, and a large family into the bargain. Yet he does what he can, and more than many other men do, and more than he can well afford. Besides that, his prayers and good advice we are always sure of, and we are truly thankful for that, for a man must give, you know, sir, according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not.'

'I am afraid,' said Mr. Johnson, 'that your difficulties may sometimes lead you to repine.'

'No, sir,' replied the shepherd, 'it pleases God to give me two ways of bearing up under them. I pray that they may be either removed or sanctified to me. Besides, if my road be right I am contented though it be rough and uneven. I do not so much stagger at hardships in the right way, as I dread a false security, and a hollow peace, while I may be walking in a more smoth, but less safe way. Besides, sir, I strengthen my faith by recollecting what the best men have suffered, and my hope, with the view of the shortness of all suffering. It is a good hint, sir, of the vanity of all earthly possessions, that though the whole Land of Promise was his, yet the first bit of ground which Abraham, the father of the faithful, got possession of, in the land of Canaan, was a *grave*.

'Are you in any distress at present?' said Mr. Johnson. 'No, sir, thank God,' replied the shepherd. 'I get my shilling a-day, and most of my children will soon be able to earn something; for we have only three under five years old.'—'Only!' said the gentleman, 'that is a heavy burden.'—'Not at all; God fits the back to it. Though my wife is not able to do any out-of-door work, yet she breeds up our children to such habits of industry, that our little maids, before they are six years old, can first get a half-penny, and then a penny a day by knitting. The boys, who are too little to do hard work, get a trifle by keeping the birds off the corn; for this the farmers will give them a penny or two pence, and now and then a bit of bread and cheese into the bargain. When the season of crow-keeping is over, then they glean or pick stones; any thing is better than idleness, sir, and if they did not get a farthing by it, I would make them do it just the same, for the sake of giving them early habits of labour.

'So you see, sir, I am not so badly off as many are; nay, if it were not that it costs me so much in 'pothecary's stuff for my poor wife, I should reckon myself well off, nay I do reckon myself well off; for blessed be God, he has granted her life to my prayers, and I would work myself to a 'natomy, and live on one meal a day, to add any comfort to her valuable life; indeed I have often done the last, and thought it no great matter neither.'

While they were in this part of the discourse, a fine plump cherry-cheek little girl ran up out breath, with a smile on her young happy face, and without taking any notice of the gentleman, cried out with great joy—'Look here, father, only see how much I have got!' Mr. Johnson was much struck with her simplicity, but puzzled to know what was the occasion of this great joy. On looking at her he perceived a small quantity of coarse wool, some of which had found its way through the holes of her clean, but scanty and ragged woollen apron. The father said, 'this has been a successful day indeed, Molly, but don't you see the gentleman?' Molly now made a curtesy down to the very ground; while Mr. Johnson inquired into the cause of mutual satisfaction which both father and daughter had expressed, at the unusual good fortune of the day

'Sir,' said the shepherd, 'poverty is a great sharpener of the wits—My wife and I cannot endure to see our children (poor as they are,) without shoes and stockings, not only on account of the pinching cold which cramps their poor little limbs, but because it degrades and debases them; and poor people who have but little regard to appearances, will seldom be found to have any great regard for honesty and goodness; I don't say this is always the case; but I am sure it is so too often. Now shoes and stockings being very dear, we could never afford to get them without a little contrivance. I must show you how I manage about the shoes when you condescend to call at our cottage, sir; as to stockings, this is one way we take to help to get them. My young ones, who are too little to do much work, sometimes wander at odd hours over the hills for the chance of finding what little wool the sheep may drop when they rub themselves, as they are apt to do against the bushes.* These scattered bits of wool the children pick out of the brambles, which I see have torn sad holes in Molly's apron to-day; they carry this wool home, and when they have got a pretty parcel together, their mother cards it; for she can sit and card in the chimney corner, when she is not able to wash or work about house. The biggest girl then spins it; it does very well for us without dying, for poor people must not stand for the colour of their stockings. After this our little boys knit it for themselves, while they are employed in keeping cows in the fields, and after they get home at night. As for the knitting which the girls and their mother do, that is chiefly for sale, which helps to pay our rent.'

Mr. Johnson lifted up his eyes in silent astonishment, at the shifts which honest poverty can make rather than beg or steal; and was surprised to think how many ways of subsisting there are, which those who live at their ease little suspect. He secretly resolved to be more attentive to his own petty expenses than he had hitherto been; and to be more watchful that nothing was wasted in his family.

But to return to the shepherd. Mr. Johnson told him that as he must needs be at his friend's house, who lived many miles off, that night, he could not as he wished to do, make a visit to his cottage at present. 'But I will certainly do it,' said he, 'on my return, for I long to see your wife and her nice little family, and to be an eye-witness of her neatness and good management. The poor man's tears started into his eyes on hearing the commendation bestowed on his wife; and wiping them off with the sleeve of his coat; for he was not worth a handkerchief in the world, he said—'Oh, sir, you just now, I am afraid called me an humble man, but indeed I am a very proud one.'—'Proud!' exclaimed Mr. Johnson, 'I hope not—Pride is a great sin, and as the poor are liable to it as well as the rich, so good a man as you seem to be, ought to guard against it.'—'Sir,' said he, 'you are right, but I am not proud of myself, God knows I have nothing to be proud of. I am a poor sinner, but

* This piece of frugal industry is not imaginary, but a real fact, as is the character of the shepherd, and his uncommon knowledge of the Scriptures.

indeed, sir, I am proud of my wife: she is not only the most tidy, notable woman on the plain, but she is the kindest wife and mother, and the most contented, thankful Christian that I know. Last year I thought I should have lost her in a violent fit of the rheumatism, caught by going to work too soon after her lying-in, I fear; for 'tis but a bleak coldish place, as you may see, sir, in winter, and sometimes the snow lies so long under the hill, that I can hardly make myself a path to get out and buy a few necessaries in the next village; and we are afraid to send out the children, for fear they should be lost when the snow is deep. So, as I was saying, the poor soul was very bad indeed, and for several weeks lost the use of all her limbs except her hands; a merciful Providence spared her the use of these, so that when she could not turn in her bed, she could contrive to patch a rag or two for her family. She was always saying, had it not been for the great goodness of God, she might have had her hands lame as well as her feet, or the palsy instead of the rheumatism, and then she could have done nothing—but, nobody had so many mercies as she had.

'I will not tell you what we suffered during that bitter weather, sir, but my wife's faith and patience during that trying time, were as good a lesson to me as any sermon I could hear, and yet Mr. Jenkins gave us very comfortable ones too, that helped to keep up my spirits.'

'I fear, shepherd,' said Mr. Johnson, 'you have found this to be but a bad world.'

'Yes, sir,' replied the shepherd, 'but it is governed by a good God. And though my trials have now and then been sharp, why then, sir, as the saying is, if the pain be violent, it is seldom lasting, and if it be but moderate, why then we can bear it the longer, and when it is quite taken away, ease is the more precious, and gratitude is quickened by the remembrance; thus every way, and in every case, I can always find out a reason for vindicating Providence.'

'But,' said Mr. Johnson, 'how do you do to support yourself under the pressure of actual want. Is not hunger a great weakener of your faith?'

'Sir,' replied the shepherd, 'I endeavour to live upon the promises. You who abound in the good things of this world are apt to set too high a value on them. Suppose, sir, the king, seeing me at hard work, were to say to me, that, if I would patiently work on till Christmas, a fine palace and a great estate should be the reward of my labours. Do you think, sir, that a little hunger, or a little wet, would make me flinch, when I was sure that a few months would put me in possession! Should I not say to myself frequently—cheer up, shepherd, 'tis but till Christmas! now is there not much less difference between this supposed day and Christmas, when I should take possession of the estate and palace, than there is between time and eternity, when I am sure of entering on a kingdom not made with hands? There is some comparison between a moment and a thousand years, because a thousand years are made up of moments, all time being made up of the same sort of stuff, as I may say; while there is no sort of comparison between the longest portion of time and eternity. You know, sir, there is no way of measuring two things, one of which has length and breadth, which shows it must have an end somewhere, and another thing, which being eternal, is without end and without measure.'

'But,' said Mr. Johnson, 'is not the fear of death sometimes too strong for your faith?'

'Blessed be God, sir,' replied the shepherd, 'the dark passage through the valley of the shadow of death, is made safe by the power of Him who conquered death. I know, indeed, we shall go as naked out of this world as we came into it, but an humble penitent will not be found naked in the other world, sir. My Bible tells me of garments of praise, and robes of righteousness. And is it not a support, sir, under any of the petty difficulties and distresses here, to be assured by the word of Him who cannot lie, that those who were in white robes came out of tribulation? But, sir, I beg your pardon for being so talkative. Indeed you great folks can hardly imagine how it raises and cheers a poor man's heart, when such as you condescend to talk familiarly to him on religious subjects. It seems to be a practical comment on that text which says, *the rich and the poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all.* And so far from creating disrespect, sir, and that nonsensical wicked notion about equality, it rather prevents it. But to turn to my wife. One Sunday afternoon when she was at the worst, as I was coming out of church, for I went one part of the day, and my eldest daughter the other, so my poor wife was never left alone; as I was coming out of church, I say, Mr. Jenkins, the minister, called out to me and asked me how my wife did, saying he had been kept from coming to see her by the deep fall of snow, and indeed from the parsonage-house to my hovel it was quite impassable. I gave him all the particulars he asked, and I am afraid a good many more, for my heart was quite full. He kindly gave me a shilling, and said he would certainly try to pick out his way and come and see her in a day or two.

'While he was talking to me a plain farmer-looking gentleman in boots, who stood by, listened to all I said, but seemed to take no notice. It was Mr. Jenkin's wife's father, who was come to pass the Christmas-holidays at the parsonage-house. I had always heard him spoken of as a plain frugal man, who lived close himself, but was remarked to give away more than any of his show-away neighbours.

'Well! I went home with great spirits at this seasonable and unexpected supply; for we had tapped our last sixpence, and there was little work to be had on account of the weather. I told my wife I had not come back empty-handed.—'No, I dare say not,' says she, 'you have been serving a master *who filleth the hungry with good things, though he sendeth the rich empty away.*' True; Mary, says I, we seldom fail to get good spiritual food from Mr. Jenkins, but to-day he has kindly supplied our bodily wants. She was more thankful when I showed her the shilling, than, I dare say, some

of your great people are when they get a hundred pounds.'

Mr. Johnson's heart smote him when he heard such a value set upon a shilling; surely, said he to himself, I will never waste another; but he said nothing to the shepherd, who thus pursued his story:

'Next morning before I went out, I sent part of the money to buy a little ale and brown sugar to put into her water-gruel; which you know, sir, made it nice and nourishing. I went out to cleave wood in a farm-yard, for there was no standing out on the plain, after such snow as had fallen in the night. I went with a lighter heart than usual, because I had left my poor wife a little better, and comfortably supplied for this day, and I now resolved more than ever to trust God for the supplies of the next. When I came back at night, my wife fell a crying as soon as she saw me. This, I own, I thought but a bad return for the blessings she had so lately received, and so I told her.—'Oh,' said she, 'it is too much, we are too rich; I am now frightened, not lest we should have no portion in this world, but for fear we should have our whole portion in it. Look here, John!' So saying, she uncovered the bed whereon she lay, and showed me two warm, thick, new blankets. I could not believe my own eyes, sir, because when I went out in the morning, I had left her with no other covering than our little old, thin, blue rug. I was still more amazed when she put half a crown into my hand, telling me she had had a visit from Mr. Jenkins, and Mr. Jones, the latter of whom had bestowed all these good things upon us. Thus, sir, have our lives been crowned with mercies. My wife got about again, and I do believe, under Providence, it was owing to these comforts; for the rheumatism, sir, without blankets by night, and flannel by day, is but a baddish job, especially to people who have little or no fire. She will always be a weakly body; but thank God her soul prospers and is in health. But I beg your pardon, sir, for talking on at this rate.'—'Not at all, not at all,' said Mr. Johnson; 'I am much pleased with your story, you shall certainly see me in a few days. Good night.' So saying, he slipped a crown into his hand and rode off. Surely, said the shepherd, *goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life*, as he gave the money to his wife when he got home at night.

As to Mr. Johnson, he found abundant, matter for his thoughts during the rest of his journey. On the whole, he was more disposed to envy than to pity the shepherd. I have seldom seen, said he, so happy a man. It is a sort of happiness which the world could not give, and which I plainly see, it has not been able to take away. This must be the true spirit of religion. I see more and more, that true goodness is not merely a thing of words and opinions, but a living principle brought into every common action of a man's life. What else could have supported this poor couple under every bitter trial of want and sickness? No, my honest shepherd, I do not pity, but I respect and even honour thee; and I will visit thy poor hovel on my return to Salisbury, with as much pleasure as I am now going to the house of my friend.

If Mr. Johnson keeps his word in sending me an account of his visit to the shepherd's cottage, I shall be very glad to entertain my readers with it.

PART II.

I AM willing to hope that my readers will not be sorry to hear some farther particulars of their old acquaintance, *the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*. They will call to mind that at the end of the first part, he was returning home full of gratitude for the favours he had received from Mr. Johnson, whom we left pursuing his journey, after having promised to make a visit to the shepherd's cottage.

Mr. Johnson, after having passed some time with his friend, set out on his return to Salisbury, and on the Saturday evening reached a very small inn, a mile or two distant from the shepherd's village; for he never travelled on a Sunday without such a reason as he might be able to produce at the day of judgment. He went the next morning to the church nearest the house where he had passed the night; and after taking such refreshment as he could get at that house, he walked on to find out the shepherd's cottage. His reason for visiting him on a Sunday was chiefly because he supposed it to be the only day which the shepherd's employment allowed him to pass at home with his family; and as Mr. Johnson had been struck with his talk, he thought it would be neither unpleasant or unprofitable to observe how a man who carried such an appearance of piety spent his Sunday: for though he was so low in the world, this gentleman was not above entering very closely into his character, of which he thought he should be able to form a better judgment, by seeing whether his practice at home kept pace with his professions abroad: for it is not so much by observing how people talk, as how they live, that we ought to judge of their characters.

After a pleasant walk, Mr. Johnson got within sight of the cottage, to which he was directed by the clump of hawthorns and the broken chimney. He wished to take the family by surprise; and walking gently up to the house he stood awhile to listen. The door being half open he saw the shepherd who (looked so respectable in his Sunday coat that he should hardly have known him) his wife, and their numerous young family, drawing round their little table, which was covered with a clean, though very coarse cloth. There stood on it a large dish of potatoes, a brown pitcher, and a piece of a coarse loaf. The wife and children stood in silent attention, while the shepherd, with uplifted hands and eyes, devoutly begged the blessing of heaven on their homely fare. Mr. Johnson could not help sighing to reflect, that he had sometimes seen better dinners eaten with less appearance of thankfulness.

The shepherd and his wife sat down with

great seeming cheerfulness, but the children stood; and while the mother was helping them, little fresh-coloured Molly, who had picked the wool from the bushes with so much delight, cried out, 'Father I wish I was big enough to say grace, I am sure I should say it very heartily to-day, for I was thinking what must *poor* people do who have no salt to their potatoes; and do but look, our dish is quite full.'—'That is the true way of thinking, Molly,' said the father; 'in whatever concerns bodily wants and bodily comforts, it is our duty to compare our own lot with the lot of those who are worse off, and will keep us thankful: on the other hand, whenever we are tempted to set up our own wisdom or goodness, we must compare ourselves with those who are wiser and better, and that will keep us humble.' Molly was now so hungry, and found the potatoes so good, that she had no time to make any more remarks; but was devouring her dinner very heartily, when the barking of the great dog drew her attention from her trencher to the door, and spying the stranger, she cried out, 'Look father, see here, if yonder is not the good gentleman!' Mr. Johnson finding himself discovered, immediately walked in, and was heartily welcomed by the honest shepherd, who told his wife that this was the gentleman to whom they were so much obliged.

The good woman began, as some very neat people are rather apt to do, with making many apologies that her house was not cleaner, and that things were not in a fitter order to receive such a gentleman. Mr. Johnson, however, on looking round, could discover nothing but the most perfect neatness. The trenchers on which they were eating, were almost as white as their linen; and notwithstanding the number and smallness of the children, there was not the least appearance of dirt or litter. The furniture was very simple and poor, hardly indeed amounting to bare necessaries. It consisted of four brown wooden chairs, which by constant rubbing, were become as bright as a looking-glass; an iron pot and kettle; a poor old grate, which scarcely held a handful of coal, and out of which the little fire that had been in it appeared to have been taken, as soon as it had answered the end for which it had been lighted—that of boiling their potatoes. Over the chimney stood an old-fashioned broad bright candlestick, and a still brighter spit; it was pretty clear that this last was kept rather for ornament than use. An old carved elbow chair, and a chest of the same date, which stood in the corner, were considered the most valuable part of the shepherd's goods, having been in his family for three generations. But all these were lightly esteemed by him, in comparison of another possession, which, added to the above, made up the whole of what he had inherited from his father; and which last he would not have parted with, if no other could have been had, for the king's ransom: this was a large old Bible, which lay on the window-seat, neatly covered with brown cloth, variously patched. This sacred book was most reverently preserved from dog's ears, dirt, and every other injury, but such as time and much use had made it suffer in spite of care. On the clean white walls was pasted, a hymn on the Crucifixion of our Saviour, a print of the Prodigal Son, the Shepherd's Hymn, a *New History of a True Book*, and Patient Joe, or the Newcastle Collier.*

After the first salutations were over, Mr. Johnson said, that if they would go on with their dinner he would sit down. Though a good deal ashamed, they thought it more respectful to obey the gentleman, who having cast his eye on their slender provisions, gently rebuked the shepherd for not having indulged himself, as it was Sunday, with a morsel of bacon to relish his potatoes. The shepherd said nothing, but poor Mary coloured and hung down her head, saying, 'Indeed, sir, it is not my fault, I did beg my husband to allow himself a bit of meat today out of your honour's bounty; but he was too good to do it, and it is all for my sake.' The shepherd seemed unwilling to come to an explanation, but Mr. Johnson desired Mary to go on. So she continued: 'You must know, sir, that both of us, next to a sin, dread a debt, and indeed in some cases a debt is a sin; but with all our care and pains, we have never been able quite to pay off the doctor's bill for that bad fit of rheumatism which I had last winter. Now when you were pleased to give my husband that kind present the other day, I heartily desired him to buy a bit of meat for Sunday as I said before, that he might have a little refreshment for himself out of your kindness.—'But answered he, 'Mary, it is never out of my mind long together that we still owe a few shillings to the doctor (and thank God it is all we did owe in the world.) Now if I carry him this money directly it will not only show him our honesty and our good-will, but it will be an encouragement to him to come to you another time in case you should be taken once more in such a bad fit; for I must own,' added my poor husband, 'that the thought of your being so terribly ill without any help, is the only misfortune that I want courage to face.'

Here the grateful woman's tears ran down so fast that she could not go on. She wiped them with the corner of her apron, and humbly begged pardon for making so free. 'Indeed, sir,' said the shepherd, 'though my wife is full as unwilling to be in debt as myself, yet I could hardly prevail on her to consent to my paying this money just then, because she said it was hard I should not have a taste of the gentleman's bounty myself.—But for once, sir, I would have my own way. For you must know, as I pass best part of my time alone, tending my sheep, 'tis a great point with me, sir, to get comfortable matter for my own thoughts; so that 'tis rather self-interest in me to allow myself in no pleasures and no practices that won't bear thinking on over and over. For when one is a good deal alone, you know, sir, all one's bad deeds do so rush in upon one, as I may say, and so torment one, that there is no true comfort to be had but in keeping clear of wrong doings and false pleasures; and that I suppose may be one reason why so many folks hate to stay a bit by themselves. But as I was saying—when I came to think the matter over on the hill yon-

* Printed for the Cheap Repository.

der, said I to myself, a good dinner is a good thing I grant, and yet it will be but cold comfort to me a week after, to be able to say—to be sure I had a nice shoulder of mutton last Sunday for dinner, thanks to the good gentleman! but then I am in debt. I *had* a rare dinner, that's certain, but the pleasure of that has long been over, and the debt still remains. I have spent the crown; and now if my poor wife should be taken in one of those fits again, die she must, unless God work a miracle to prevent it, for I can get no help for her. This thought settled all; and I set off directly and paid the crown to the doctor with as much cheerfulness as I should have felt on sitting down to the fattest shoulder of mutton that ever was roasted. And if I was contented at the time, think how much more happy I have been at the remembrance! O sir, there are no pleasures worth the name but such as bring no plague or penitence after them.'

Mr. Johnson was satisfied with the shepherd's reasons; and agreed that though a good dinner was not to be despised, yet it was not worthy to be compared with *a contented mind, which* (as the Bible truly says) *is a continual feast.* 'But come,' said the good gentleman, 'what have we got in this brown mug?'—'As good water,' said the shepherd, 'as any in the king's dominions. I have heard of countries beyond sea, in which there is no wholesome water; nay, I have been myself in a great town not far off, where they are obliged to buy all the water which they get, while a good Providence sends to my very door a spring as clear and fine as Jacob's well. When I am tempted to repine that I have often no other drink, I call to mind, that it was nothing better than a cup of cold water which the woman at the well of Sychar drew for the greatest guest that ever visited this world.

'Very well,' replied Mr. Johnson; 'but as your honesty has made you prefer a poor meal to being in debt, I will at least send and get something for you to drink. I saw a little public house just by the church, as I came along. Let that little rosy-faced fellow fetch a mug of beer.' So saying, he looked full at the boy, who did not offer to stir; but cast an eye at his father to know what he was to do. 'Sir,' said the shepherd, 'I hope we shall not appear ungrateful, if we seem to refuse your favour; my little body would, I am sure, fly to serve you on any other occasion. But, good sir, it is Sunday; and should any of my family be seen at a public house on a Sabbath-day, it would be a much greater grief to me than to drink water all my life. I am often talking against these doings to others; and if I should say one thing and do another, you can't think what an advantage it would give many of my neighbours over me, who would be glad enough to report that they had caught the shepherd's son at the alehouse without explaining how it happened. Christians you know, sir, must be doubly watchful; or they will not only bring disgrace on themselves, but what is much worse, on that holy name by which they are called.'

'Are you not a little too cautious, my honest friend?' said Mr. Johnson. 'I humbly ask your pardon, sir,' replied the shepherd, 'if I think that is impossible. In my poor notion I no more understand how a man can be too cautious, than how he can be too strong, or too healthy.'

'You are right indeed,' said Mr. Johnson, 'as a general principle, but this struck me as a very small thing.'—'Sir,' said the shepherd, 'I am afraid you will think me very bold, but you encourage me to speak out.'—''Tis what I wish,' said the gentleman. 'Then, sir,' resumed the shepherd, 'I doubt if, where there is a frequent temptation to do wrong, any fault can be called small; that is, in short, if there is any such thing as a small wilful sin. A poor man like me is seldom called out to do great things, so that it is not by a few striking deeds his character can be judged by his neighbours, but by the little round of daily customs he allows himself in.'

'I should like,' said Mr. Johnson, 'to know how you manage in this respect.'

'I am but a poor scholar, sir' replied the shepherd, 'but I have made myself a little sort of rule. I always avoid, as I am an ignorant man, picking out any one single difficult text to distress my mind about, or to go and build opinions upon, because I know that puzzles and injures poor unlearned Christians. But I endeavour to collect what is the *general* spirit or meaning of Scripture on any particular subject, by putting a few texts together, which though I find them dispersed up and down, yet all seem to look the same way, to prove the same truth, or hold out the same comfort. So when I am tried or tempted, or any thing happens in which I am at a loss what to do, I apply to my rule—to the *law and the testimony.* To be sure I can't always find a particular direction as to the very case, because then the Bible must have been bigger than all those great books I once saw in the library at Salisbury palace, which the butler told me were acts of parliament; and had that been the case, a poor man would never have had money to buy, nor a working man time to read the Bible; and so Christianity could only have been a religion for the rich, for those who had money and leisure; which, blessed be God! is so far from being the truth, that in all that fine discourse of our Saviour to John's disciples, it is enough to reconcile any poor man in the world to his low condition, to observe, when Christ reckons up the things for which he came on earth, to observe, I say, what he keeps for last. *Go tell John*, says he, *those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up.* Now, sir, all these are wonders to be sure, but they are nothing to what follows. They are but like the lower rounds of a ladder, as I may say, by which you mount to the top—*and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.* I dare say, if John had any doubts before, this part of the message must have cleared them up at once. For it must have made him certain sure at once, that a religion which placed preaching salvation to the poor above healing the sick, which ranked the soul above the body, and set heaven above health, must have come from God.'

'But,' said Mr. Johnson, 'you say you can generally pick out your particular duty from

the Bible, though that immediate duty be not fully explained.'

'Indeed, sir,' replied the shepherd, 'I think I can find out the principle at least, if I bring but a willing mind. The want of that is the great hindrance. *Whoso doeth my will, he shall know of the doctrine.* You know that text, sir. I believe a stubborn will makes the Bible harder to be understood than any want of learning. 'Tis corrupt affections which blind the understanding, sir. The more a man hates sin, the clearer he will see his way, and the more he loves holiness, the better he will understand his Bible—the more practical conviction will he get of that pleasant truth, that *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* Now, sir, suppose I had time and learning, and possessed of all the books I saw at the bishop's, where could I find out a surer way to lay the axe to the root of all covetousness, selfishness, and injustice, than the plain and ready rule, *to do unto all men as I would they should do unto me.* If my neighbour does me an injury, can I be at any loss how to proceed with him, when I recollect the parable of the unforgiving steward, who refused to pardon a debt of a hundred pence, when his own ten thousand talents had been remitted to him? I defy any man to retain habitual selfishness, hardness of heart, or any other allowed sin, who daily and conscientiously tries his own heart by this touchstone. The straight rule will show the crooked practice to every one who honestly tries the one by the other.'

'Why you seem to make Scripture a thing of general application,' said Mr. Johnston, 'in cases in which many, I fear do not apply.'

'It applies to every thing, sir,' replied the shepherd. 'When those men who are now disturbing the peace of the world, and trying to destroy the confidence of God's children in their Maker and their Saviour; when those men, I say, came to my poor hovel with their new doctrines and their new books, I would never look into one of them; for I remember it was the first sin of the first pair to lose their innocence for the sake of a little wicked knowledge; besides, *my own book* told me—*To fear God and honour the king—To meddle not with them who are given to change—Not to speak evil of dignities—To render honour to whom honour is due.* So that I was furnished with a little coat of mail, as I may say, which preserved me, while those who had no such armour fell into the snare.'

While they were thus talking, the children who had stood very quietly behind, and had not stirred a foot, now began to scamper about all at once, and in a moment ran to the window-seat to pick up their little old hats. Mr. Johnson looked surprised at this disturbance; the shepherd asked his pardon, telling him it was the sound of the church bell which had been the cause of their rudeness; for their mother had brought them up with such a fear of being too late for church, that it was but who could catch the first stroke of the bell, and be first ready. He had always taught them to think that nothing was more indecent than to get into church after it was begun; for as the service opened with an exhortation to repentance, and a confession of sin, it looked very presumptuous not to be ready to join it; it looked as if people did not feel themselves to be sinners. And though such as lived at a great distance might plead difference of clocks as an excuse, yet those who lived within the sound of the bell, could pretend neither ignorance nor mistake.

Mary and her children set forward. Mr. Johnson and the shepherd followed, taking care to talk the whole way on such subjects as might fit them for the solemn duties of the place to which they were going. 'I have often been sorry to observe, said Mr. Johnson, 'that many who are reckoned decent, good kind of people, and who would on no account neglect going to church, yet seem to care but little in what frame or temper of mind they go thither. They will talk of their worldly concerns till they get within the door, and then take them up again the very minute the sermon is over, which makes me ready to fear they lay too much stress on the mere form of going to a place of worship. Now, for my part, I always find that it requires a little time to bring my mind into a state fit to do any *common* business well, much more this great and most necessary business of all.'—'Yes, sir,' replied the shepherd; 'and then I think too how busy I should be in preparing my mind, if I were going into the presence of a great gentleman, or a lord, or the king; and shall the King of kings be treated with less respect? Besides, one likes to see people feel as if going to church was a thing of choice and pleasure, as well as a duty, and that they were as desirous not to be the last there, as they would be if they were going to a feast or a fair.'

After service, Mr. Jenkins the clergyman, who was well acquainted with the character of Mr. Johnson, and had a great respect for him, accosted him with much civility; expressing his concern that he could not enjoy just now so much of his conversation as he wished, as he was obliged to visit a sick person at a distance, but hoped to have a little talk with him before he left the village. As they walked along together, Mr. Johnson made such inquiries about the shepherd, as served to confirm him in the high opinion he entertained of his piety, good sense, industry, and self-denial. They parted; the clergyman promising to call in at the cottage in his way home.

The shepherd, who took it for granted that Mr. Johnson was gone to the parsonage, walked home with his wife and children, and was beginning in his usual way to catechise and instruct his family, when Mr. Johnson came in, and insisted that the shepherd should go on with his instructions just as if he were not there. This gentleman, who was very desirous of being useful to his own servants and workmen in the way of religious instruction, was sometimes sorry to find that though he took a good deal of pains, they now and then did not quite understand him; for though his meaning was very good, his language was not always very plain; and though the *things* he said were not hard to be understood, yet the *words* were, especially to such as were very ignorant. And he now began to find out that if people were ever so wise and good, yet if they had not a simple, agreeable, and familiar way of expressing themselves, some

of their plain hearers would not be much the better for them. For this reason he was not above listening to the plain, humble way in which this honest man taught his family; for though he knew that he himself had many advantages over the shepherd; had more learning, and could teach him many things, yet he was not too proud to learn even of so poor a man, in any point where he thought the shepherd might have the advantage of him.

This gentleman was much pleased with the knowledge and piety which he discovered in the answers of the children: and desired the shepherd to tell him how he contrived to keep up a sense of divine things in his own mind, and in that of his family, with so little leisure, and so little reading. 'Oh! as to that, sir,' said the shepherd, 'we do not read much except in one book, to be sure; but with my heart prayer for God's blessing on the use of that book, what little knowledge is needful seems to come of course, as it were. And my chief study has been to bring the fruits of the Sunday reading into the week's business, and to keep up the same sense of God in the heart, when the Bible is in the cupboard as when it is in the hand. In short, to apply what I read in the book to what I meet with in the field.'

'I don't quite understand you,' said Mr. Johnson. 'Sir, replied the shepherd, 'I have but a poor gift at conveying these things to others, though I have much comfort from them in my own mind; but I am sure that the most ignorant and hard-working people, who are in earnest about their salvation, may help to keep up devout thoughts and good affections during the week, though they have hardly any time to look at a book; and it will help them to keep out bad thoughts too; which is no small matter. But then they must know the Bible; they must have read the word of God diligently; that is a kind of stock in trade for a Christian to set up with; and it is this which makes me so careful in teaching it to my children; and even in storing their memories with psalms and chapters. This is a great help to a poor hard-working man, who will scarcely meet with any thing in them but what he may turn to some good account. If one lives in the fear and love of God, almost every thing one sees abroad will teach one to adore his power and goodness, and bring to mind some text of Scripture, which shall fill his heart with thankfulness, and the mouth with praise. When I look upwards *the Heavens declare the glory of God*, and shall I be silent and ungrateful? If I look round and see the vallies standing thick with corn, how can I help blessing that Power who *giveth me all things richly to enjoy?* I may learn gratitude from the beasts of the field, for the *ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib*, and shall a Christian not know, shall a Christian not consider what great things God has done for him? I, who am a shepherd, endeavour to fill my soul with a constant remembrance of that good shepherd, who *feedeth me in green pastures, and maketh me to lie down beside the still waters, and whose rod and staff comfort me.* A religion, sir, which has its seat in the heart, and its fruits in the life, takes up little time in the study. And yet in another sense, true religion, which from sound principles brings forth right practice, fills up the whole time, and life too as one may say.'

'You are happy,' said Mr. Johnson, 'in this retired life, by which you escape the corruptions of the world.' 'Sir,' replied the shepherd, 'I do not escape the corruptions of my own evil nature. Even there, on that wild solitary hill, I can find out that my heart is prone to evil thoughts. I suppose, sir, that different states have different temptations. You great folks that live in the world, perhaps, are exposed to some, of which such a poor man as I am, knows nothing. But to one who leads a lonely life like me, evil thoughts are a chief besetting sin; and I can no more withstand these without the grace of God, than a rich gentleman can withstand the snares of evil company, without the same grace. And I find that I stand in need of God's help continually, and if he should give me up to my own evil heart I should be lost.'

Mr. Johnson approved of the shepherd's sincerity, for he had always observed, that where there was no humility, and no watchfulness against sin, there was no religion, and he said that the man who did not feel himself to be a sinner, in his opinion could not be a Christian.

Just as they were in this part of their discourse, Mr. Jenkins, the clergyman, came in. After the usual salutations, he said, 'Well shepherd, I wish you joy; I know you will be sorry to gain any advantage by the death of a neighbour; but old Wilson, my clerk, was so infirm, and I trust so well prepared, that there is no reason to be sorry for his death. I have been to pray by him, but he died while I staid. I have always intended you should succeed to his place; 'tis no great matter of profit, but every little is something.'

'No great matter, sir!' cried the shepherd; 'indeed it is a great thing to me; it will more than pay my rent. Blessed be God for all his goodness!'—Mary said nothing, but lifted up her eyes full of tears in silent gratitude.

'I am glad of this little circumstance,' said Mr. Jenkins, 'not only for your sake, but for the sake of the office itself. I so heartily reverence every religious institution, that I would never have even the *amen* added to the excellent prayers of our church, by vain or profane lips, and if it depended on me, there should be no such thing in the land as an idle, drunken, or irreligious parish clerk. Sorry I am to say that this matter is not always sufficiently attended to, and that I know some of a very indifferent character.

Mr. Johnson now inquired of the clergyman whether there were many children in the parish. 'More than you would expect,' replied he, 'from the seeming smallness of it; but there are some little hamlets which you do not see.'—'I think,' returned Mr. Johnson, 'I recollect that in the conversation I had with the shepherd on the hill yonder, he told me you had no Sunday school.' 'I am sorry to say we have none,' said the minister. 'I do what I can to remedy this misfortune by public catechising; but having two or three churches to serve, I cannot give so much time as I wish to private instruction; and having a large family of my own, and no assistance from

others, I have never been able to establish a school.'

'There is an excellent institution in London,' said Mr. Johnson, 'called the Sunday-school Society, which kindly gives books and other helps, on the application of such pious clergymen as stand in need of their aid, and which I am sure would have assisted you, but I think we shall be able to do something ourselves. 'Shepherd,' continued he, 'if I were a king, and had it in my power to make you a rich and a great man, with a word speaking, I would not do it. Those who are raised, by some sudden stroke, much above the station in which Divine Providence had placed them, seldom turn out very good, or very happy. I have never had any great things in my power, but as far as I have been able, I have been always glad to assist the worthy. I have, however, never attempted or desired to set any poor man much above his natural condition, but it is a pleasure to me to lend him such assistance as may make that condition more easy to himself, and put him in a way which shall call him to the performance of more duties than perhaps he could have performed without my help, and of performing them in a better manner to others, and with more comfort to himself.—What rent do you pay for this cottage?' .

'Fifty shillings a year, sir,'

'It is in a sad tattered condition; is there not a better to be had in the village?'

'That in which the poor clerk lived,' said the clergyman, 'is not only more tight and whole, but has two decent chambers, and a very large light kitchen.'—'That will be very convenient,' replied Mr. Johnson, 'pray what is the rent?'—'I think,' said the shepherd, 'poor neighbour Wilson gave somewhat about four pounds a year, or it might be guineas.'—'Very well,' said Mr. Johnson, 'and what will the clerk's place be worth, think you?' About three pounds, was the answer.

'Now,' continued Mr. Johnson, 'my plan is that the shepherd should take that house immediately; for as the poor man is dead, there will be no need of waiting till quarter-day, if I make up the difference.' 'True, sir,' said Mr. Jenkins, 'and I am sure my wife's father, whom I expect to-morrow, will willingly assist a little towards buying some of the clerk's old goods. And the sooner they remove the better, for poor Mary caught that bad rheumatism by sleeping under a leaky thatch.' The shepherd was too much moved to speak, and Mary could hardly sob out, 'Oh, sir! you are too good; indeed this house will do very well.' 'It may do very well for you and your children, Mary,' said Mr. Johnson gravely, 'but it will not do for a school; the kitchen is neither large nor light enough. Shepherd,' continued he, 'with your good minister's leave, and kind assistance, I propose to set up in this parish a Sunday School, and to make you the master. It will not at all interfere with your weekly calling, and it is the only lawful way in which you could turn the Sabbath into a day of some little profit to your family, by doing, as I hope, a great deal of good to the souls of others. The rest of the week you will work as usual. The difference of rent between this house and the clerk's I shall pay myself, for to put you in a better house at your own expense would be no great act of kindness.—As for honest Mary, who is not fit for hard labour, or any other out-of-door, work, I propose to endow a small weekly school, of which she shall be the mistress, and employ her notable turn to good account, by teaching ten or a dozen girls to knit, sew, spin, card, or any other useful way of getting their bread; for all this I shall only pay her the usual price, for I am not going to make you rich, but useful.'

'Not rich, sir?' cried the shepherd; 'How can I ever be thankful enough for such blessings? And will my poor Mary have a dry thatch over her head? and shall I be able to send for the doctor when I am like to lose her? Indeed my cup runs over with blessings, I hope God will give me humility.'—Here he and Mary looked at each other and burst into tears. The gentleman saw their distress, and kindly walked out upon the little green before the door, that these honest people might give vent to their feelings. As soon as they were alone they crept into one corner of the room, where they thought they could not be seen, and fell on their knees, devoutly blessing and praising God for his mercies. Never were more hearty prayers presented, than this grateful couple offered up for their benefactors. The warmth of their gratitude could only be equalled by the earnestness with which they besought the blessing of God on the work in which they were going to engage.

The two gentlemen now left this happy family, and walked to the parsonage, where the evening was spent in a manner very edifying to Mr. Johnson, who the next day took all proper measures for putting the shepherd in immediate possession of his now comfortable habitation. Mr. Jenkins's father-in-law, the worthy gentleman who gave the shepherd's wife the blankets, in the first part of this history, arrived at the parsonage before Mr. Johnson left it, and assisted in fitting up the clerk's cottage.

Mr. Johnson took his leave, promising to call on the worthy minister and his new clerk once a year, in his summer's journey over the plain, as long as it should please God to spare his life. He had every reason to be satisfied with the objects of his bounty. The shepherd's zeal and piety made him a blessing to the rising generation. The old resorted to his school for the benefit of hearing the young instructed; and the clergyman had the pleasure of seeing that he was rewarded for the protection he gave the school by the great increase in his congregation. The shepherd not only exhorted both parents and children to the indispensable duty o a regular attendance at church, but by his pious counsels he drew them thither, and by his plain and prudent instructions enabled them to understand, and of course to delight in the public worship of God.

THE TWO SHOEMAKERS.

Jack Brown and James Stock, were two lads apprenticed at nearly the same time, to Mr. Williams, a shoemaker, in a small town in Oxfordshire: they were pretty near the same age, but of very different characters and dispositions.

Brown was eldest son to a farmer in good circumstances, who gave the usual apprentice fee with him. Being a wild giddy boy, whom his father could not well manage or instruct in farming, he thought it better to send him out to learn a trade at a distance, than to let him idle about at home; for Jack always preferred bird's-nesting and marbles to any other employment; he would trifle away the day, when his father thought he was at school, with any boys he could meet with, who were as idle as himself; and he could never be prevailed upon to do, or to learn any thing, while a game at taw could be had for love or money. All this time his little brothers, much younger than himself, were beginning to follow the plough, or to carry the corn to the mill as soon as they were able to mount a cart-horse.

Jack, however, who was a lively boy, and did not naturally want either sense or good-nature, might have turned out well enough, if he had not had the misfortune to be his mother's favourite. She concealed and forgave all his faults. To be sure he was a little wild, she would say, but he would not make the worse man for that, for Jack had a good spirit of his own, and she would not have it broke, and so make a mope of the boy. The farmer, for a quiet life, as it is called, gave up all these points to his wife, and, with them, gave up the future virtue and happiness of his child. He was a laborious and industrious man, but had no religion; he thought only of the gains and advantages of the present day, and never took the future into the account. His wife managed him entirely, and as she was really notable, he did not trouble his head about any thing farther. If she had been careless in her dairy, he would have stormed and sworn; but as she only ruined one child by indulgence, and almost broke the hearts of the rest by unkindness, he gave himself little concern about the matter. The cheese, certainly was good, and that indeed is a great point; but she was neglectful of her children, and a tyrant to her servants. Her husband's substance, indeed, was not wasted, but his happiness was not consulted. His house, it is true, was not dirty, but it was the abode of fury, ill-temper, and covetousness. And the farmer, though he did not care for liquor, was too often driven to the public-house in the evening, because his own was neither quiet nor comfortable. The mother was always scolding, and the children were always crying.

Jack, however, notwithstanding his idleness, picked up a little reading and writing, but never would learn to cast an account: that was too much labour. His mother was desirous he should continue at school, not so much for the sake of his learning, which she had not sense enough to value, but to save her darling from the fatigue of labour: for if he had not gone to school, she knew he must have gone to work, and she thought the former was the least tiresome of the two. Indeed this foolish woman had such an opinion of his genius, that she used from a child, to think he was too wise for any thing but a parson, and hoped she should live to see him one. She did not wish to see her son a minister, because she loved either learning or piety, but because she thought it would make Jack a gentleman, and set him above his brothers.

Farmer Brown still hoped, that though Jack was likely to make but an idle and ignorant farmer, yet he might make no bad tradesman, when he should be removed from the indulgences of a father's house, and from a silly mother, whose fondness kept him back in every thing. This woman was enraged when she found that so fine a scholar, as she took Jack to be, was to be put apprentice to a shoemaker. The farmer, however, for the first time in his life, would have his own way. But being a worldly man, and too apt to mind only what is falsely called *the main chance;* instead of being careful to look out for a sober, prudent, and religious master for his son, he left all that to accident, as if it had been a thing of little or no consequence. This is a very common fault; and fathers who are guilty of it, are in a great measure answerable for the future sins and errors of their children, when they come out into the world, and set up for themselves. If a man gives his son a good education, a good example, and a good master, it is indeed *possible* that the son may not turn out well, but it does not often happen; and when it does, the father has no blame resting on him; and it is a great point towards a man's comfort to have his conscience quiet in that respect, however God may think fit to overrule events.

The farmer, however, took care to desire his friends to inquire for a shoemaker who had good business, and was a good workman; and the mother did not forget to put in a word, and desired that it might be one who was not *too strict;* for Jack had been brought up tenderly, was a meek boy, and could not bear to be contradicted in any thing. And this is the common notion of meekness among people who do not take up their notions on rational and Christian grounds.

Mr. Williams was recommended to the farmer as being the best shoemaker in the town in which he lived, and far from a strict master, and, without farther inquiries, to Mr. Williams he went.

James Stock, who was the son of an honest labourer in the next village, was bound out by the parish in consideration of his father having so numerous a family, that he was not able to put him out himself. James was in every thing the very reverse of his new companion. He was a modest, industrious, pious youth; and though so poor, and the child of a labourer, was a much

better scholar than Jack, who was a wealthy farmer's son.—His father had, it is true, been able to give him but very little schooling, for he was obliged to be put to work when quite a child. When very young he used to run of errands for Mr. Thomas, the curate of the parish; a very kind-hearted young gentleman, who boarded next door to his father's cottage. He used also to rub down and saddle his horse, and do any other little job for him, in the most civil obliging manner. All this so recommended him to the clergyman, that he would often send for him of an evening, after he had done his day's work in the field, and condescended to teach him himself to write and cast accounts, as well as to instruct him in the principles of his religion. It was not merely out of kindness for the little good-natured services James did him, that he showed him this favour, but also for his readiness in the catechism, and his devout behaviour at church.

The first thing that drew the minister's attention to this boy, was the following; he had frequently given him half-pence and pence for holding his horse and carrying him to water before he was big enough to be further useful to him. On Christmas day he was surprised to see James at church, reading out of a handsome new prayer-book; he wondered how he came by it, for he knew there was nobody in the parish likely to have given it to him, for at that time there were no Sunday schools; and the father could not afford it he was sure.

'Well James,' said he, as he saw him when they came out, 'you made a good figure at church to-day: it made you look like a man and a Christian, not only to have so handsome a book, but to be so ready in all parts of the service. How came you by that book?' James owned modestly, that he had been a whole year saving up the money by single half-pence, all of which had been of the minister's own giving, and that in all that time he had not spent a single farthing on his own diversions.—'My dear boy,' said the good Mr. Thomas, 'I am much mistaken if thou dost not turn out well in the world, for two reasons:—first, from thy saving turn and self-denying temper; and next, because thou didst devote the first eighteen-pence thou wast ever worth in the world to so good a purpose.'

James bowed and blushed, and from that time Mr. Thomas began to take more notice of him, and to instruct him as I said above. As James soon grew able to do him more considerable service, he would now and then give him a sixpence. This he constantly saved till it became a little sum, with which he bought shoes and stockings; well knowing that his poor father, with a large family and low wages, could not buy them for him. As to what little money he earned himself by his daily labour in the field, he constantly carried it to his mother every Saturday night, to buy bread for the family, which was a pretty help to them.

As James was not overstout in his make, his father thankfully accepted the offer of the parish officers to bind out his son to a trade. This good man, however, had not, like farmer Brown, the liberty of choosing a master for his son; or he would carefully have inquired if he was a proper man to have the care of youth; but Williams the shoemaker was already fixed on, by those who were to put the boy out, who told him if he wanted a master it must be him or none; for the overseers had a better opinion of Williams than he deserved, and thought it would be the making of the boy to go to him. The father knew that beggars must not be choosers, so he fitted out James for his new place, having indeed little to give him besides his blessing.

The worthy Mr. Thomas, however, kindly gave him an old coat and waistcoat, which his mother, who was a neat and notable woman, contrived to make up for him herself without a farthing expense, and when it was turned and made fit for his size, it made him a very handsome suit for Sundays, and lasted him a couple of years.

And here let me stop to remark what a pity it is, that poor women so seldom are able or willing to do these sort of little handy jobs themselves; and that they do not oftener bring up their daughters to be more useful in family work. They are great losers by it every way, not only as they are disqualifying their girls from making good wives hereafter, but they are losers in point of present advantage; for gentry could much oftener afford to give a poor boy a jacket or a waistcoat, if it was not for the expense of making it, which adds very much to the cost. To my certain knowledge, many poor women would often get an old coat, or a bit of coarse new cloth given to them to fit out a boy, if the mothers or sisters were known to be able to cut out to advantage, and to make it up decently themselves. But half a crown for the making a bit of kersey, which costs but a few shillings, is more than many very charitable gentry can afford to give—so they often give nothing at all, when they see the mothers so little able to turn it to advantage. It is hoped they will take this hint kindly, as it is meant for their good.

But to return to our two young shoe-makers. They were both now settled at Mr. Williams's, who, as he was known to be a good workman, had plenty of business—He had sometimes two or three journeymen, but no apprentices but Jack and James.

Jack, who, with all his faults, was a keen, smart boy, took to learn the trade quick enough, but the difficulty was to make him stick two hours together to his work. At every noise he heard in the street down went the work—the last one way, the upper leather another; the sole dropped on the ground, and the thread dragged after him, all the way up the street. If a blind fiddler, a ballad singer, a mountebank, a dancing bear, or a drum were heard at a distance—out ran Jack—nothing could stop him, and not a stich more could he be prevailed on to do that day. Every duty, every promise was forgotten for the present pleasure—he could not resist the smallest temptation—he never stopped for a moment to consider whether a thing was right or wrong, but whether he liked or disliked it. And as his ill-judging mother took care to send him privately a good supply of pocket-money, that deadly bane to all youthful virtue

he had generally a few pence ready to spend, and to indulge in the present diversion whatever it was. And what was still worse even than spending his money, he spent his time too, or rather his master's time. Of this he was continually reminded by James, to whom he always answered, 'what have you to complain about? It is nothing to you or any one else; I spend nobody's money but my own. 'That may be,' replied the other, 'but you cannot say it is your own time that you spend.' He insisted upon it that it was; but James fetched down their indentures, and there showed him that he had solemnly bound himself by that instrument, not to waste his master's property. 'Now,' quoth James, 'thy own time is a very valuable part of thy master's property.' To this he replied, 'every one's time was his own, and he should not sit moping all day over his last—for his part, he thanked God, he was no parish 'prentice.'

James did not resent this piece of foolish impertinence, as some silly lads would have done; nor fly out into a violent passion: for even at this early age, he had begun to learn of Him *who was meek and lowly of heart;* and therefore *when he was reviled, he reviled not again.* On the contrary he was so very kind and gentle, that even Jack, vain and idle as he was, could not help loving him, though he took care never to follow his advice.

Jack's fondness for his boyish and silly diversions in the street, soon produced the effects which might naturally be expected; and the same idleness which led him to fly out into the town at the sound of a fiddle or the sight of a puppet-show, soon led him to those places to which all these fiddles and shows naturally lead; I mean the *alehouse.* The acquaintance picked up in the street was carried on at the Grayhound; and the idle pastimes of the boy soon led to the destructive vices of the man.

As he was not an ill-tempered youth, nor naturally much given to drink, a sober and prudent master, who had been steady in his management and regular in his own conduct, who would have recommended good advice by a good example, might have made something of Jack. But I am sorry to say, that Mr. Williams, though a good workman, and not a very hard or severe master, was neither a sober nor a steady man—so far from it that he spent much more time at the Grayhound than at home. There was no order either in his shop or family. He left the chief care of his business to his two young apprentices; and being but a worldly man, he was at first disposed to show favour to Jack, much more than to James, because he had more money, and his father was better in the world than the father of poor James.

At first, therefore, he was disposed to consider James as a sort of drudge; who was to do all the menial work of the family, and he did not care how little he taught him of his trade. With Mrs. Williams the matter was still worse; she constantly called him away from the business of his trade to wash the house, nurse the child, turn the spit, or run of errands. And here I must remark, that though parish apprentices are bound in duty to be submissive to both master and mistress, and always to make themselves as useful as they can in a family, and to be civil and humble; yet on the other hand, it is the duty of masters always to remember, that if they are paid for instructing them in their trade, they ought conscientiously to instruct them in it, and not to employ them the greater part of their time in such household or other drudgery, as to deprive them of the opportunity of acquiring their trade. This practice is not the less unjust because it is common.

Mr. Williams soon found out that his favourite Jack would be of little use to him in the shop; for though he worked well enough, he did not care how little he did. Nor could he be of the least use to his master in keeping an account, or writing out a bill upon occasion, for, as he never could be made to learn to cypher, he did not know addition from multiplication.

One day one of the customers called at the shop in a great hurry, and desired his bill might be made out that minute. Mr. Williams, having taken a cup too much, made several attempts to put down a clear account, but the more he tried, the less he found himself able to do it. James, who was sitting at his last, rose up, and with great modesty, asked his master if he would please to give him leave to make out the bill, saying, that though but a poor scholar, he would do his best, rather than keep the gentleman waiting. Williams gladly accepted his offer, and confused as his head was with liquor, he yet was able to observe with what neatness, despatch, and exactness, the account was drawn out. From that time he no longer considered James as a drudge, but as one fitted for the high departments of the trade, and he was now regularly employed to manage the accounts, with which all the customers were so well pleased, that it contributed greatly to raise him in his master's esteem: for there were now never any of those blunders or false charges for which the shop had before been so famous.

James went on in a regular course of industry, and soon became the best workman Mr. Williams had; but there were many things in the family which he greatly disapproved. Some of the journeymen used to swear, drink, and sing very licentious songs. All these things were a great grief to his sober mind; he complained to his master who only laughed at him; and, indeed, as Williams did the same himself, he put it out of his power to correct his servants, if he had been so disposed. James however, used always to reprove them with great mildness indeed, but with great seriousness also. This, but still more his own excellent example, produced at length very good effects on such of the men as were not quite hardened in sin.

What grieved him most, was the manner in which the Sunday was spent. The master lay in bed all the morning; nor did the mother or her children ever go to church, except there was some new finery to be shown, or a christening to be attended. The town's people were coming to the shop all the morning, for work which should have been sent home the night before, had not the master been at the alehouse. And what wounded James to the very soul was, that the master expected the two apprentices to carry home shoes to the country customers on the

Sunday morning; which he wickedly thought was a saving of time, as it prevented their hindering their work on the Saturday. These shameful practices greatly afflicted poor James; he begged his master with tears in his eyes, to excuse him, but he only laughed at his squeamish conscience, as he called it.

Jack did not dislike this part of the business, and generally after he had delivered his parcel, wasted good part of the day in nutting, playing at fives, or dropping in at the public house: any thing was better to Jack than going to church.

James on the other hand, when he was compelled, sorely against his conscience, to carry home any goods on a Sunday morning, always got up as soon as it was light, knelt down and prayed heartily to God to forgive him a sin which it was not in his power to avoid; he took care not to lose a moment by the way, but as he was taking his walk with the utmost speed, to leave his shoes with the customers, he spent his time in endeavouring to keep up good thoughts in his mind, and praying that the day might come when his conscience might be delivered from this grievous burthen. He was now particularly thankful, that Mr. Thomas had formerly taught him so many psalms and chapters, which he used to repeat in these walks with great devotion.

He always got home before the rest of the family were up, dressed himself very clean, and went twice to church; as he greatly disliked the company and practices of his master's house, particularly on the Sabbath-day, he preferred spending his evening alone, reading his Bible, which I had forgot to say the worthy clergyman had given him when he left his native village. Sunday evening, which is to some people such a burden, was to James the highest holiday. He had formerly learnt a little how to sing a psalm of the clerk of his own parish, and this was now become a very delightful part of his evening exercise. And as Will Simpson, one of the journeymen, by James's advice and example, was now beginning to be of a more serious way of thinking, he often asked him to sit an hour with him, when they read the Bible, and talked it over together in a manner very pleasant and improving; and as Will was a famous singer, a psalm or two sung together, was a very innocent pleasure.

James's good manners and civility to the customers drew much business to the shop; and his skill as a workman was so great, that every one desired that his shoes might be made by James. Williams grew so very idle and negligent, that he now totally neglected his affairs, and to hard drinking added deep gaming. All James's care, both of the shop and the accounts, could not keep things in any tolerable order: he represented to his master that they were growing worse and worse, and exhorted him, if he valued his credit as a tradesman, his comfort as a husband and father, his character as a master, and his soul as a Christian to turn over a new leaf. Williams swore a great oath, that he would not be restrained in his pleasures to please a canting parish 'prentice, nor to humour a parcel of squalling brats—that let people say what they would of him, they should never say he was a *hypocrite*, and as long as they could not call him that, he did not care what else they called him.

In a violent passion he immediately went to the Grayhound, where he now spent not only every evening, which he had long done, but good part of the day and night also.—His wife was very dressy, extravagant, and fond of company, and wasted at home as fast as her husband spent abroad, so that all the neighbours said, if it had not been for James, his master must have been a bankrupt long ago, but they were sure he could not hold it much longer.

As Jack Brown sung a good song, and played many diverting tricks, Williams liked his company; and often allowed him to make one at the Grayhound, where he would laugh heartily at his stories; so that every one thought Jack was much the greater favourite—se he was as a companion in frolic, and foolery, and *pleasure*, as it is called; but he would not trust him with an inch of leather or sixpence in money: No, no—when business was to be done, or trust was to be reposed, James was the man: the idle and the drunken never trust one another, if they have common sense. They like to laugh, and sing, and riot, and drink together, but when they want a friend, a counsellor, a helper in business or in trouble, they go farther afield; and Williams, while he would drink with Jack, would trust James with untold gold; and even was foolishly tempted to neglect his business the more from knowing that he had one at home who was taking care of it.

In spite of all James's care and diligence, however, things were growing worse and worse; the more James saved, the more his master and mistress spent. One morning, just as the shop was opened, and James had set every body to their respective work, and he himself was settling the business for the day, he found that his master was not yet come from the Grayhound. As this was now become a common case, he only grieved but did not wonder at it. While he was indulging sad thoughts on what would be the end of all this, in ran the tapster from the Grayhound out of breath, and with a look of terror and dismay, desired James would step over to the public house with him that moment, for that his master wanted him.

James went immediately, surprised at this unusual message. When he got into the kitchen of the public house, which he now entered for the first time in his life, though it was just opposite to the house in which he lived, he was shocked at the beastly disgusting appearance of every thing he beheld. There was a table covered with tankards, punch-bowls, broken glasses, pipes, and dirty greasy packs of cards, and all over wet with liquor; the floor was strewed with broken earthen cups, odd cards, and an EO table which had been shivered to pieces in a quarrel; behind the table stood a crowd of dirty fellows, with matted locks, hollow eyes, and faces smeared with tobacco; James made his way after the tapster, through this wretched looking crew, to a settle which stood in the chimney corner. Not a word was uttered, but the silent horror seemed to denote something more than a mere common drunken bout.

What was the dismay of James, when he saw his miserable master stretched out on the settle, in all the agonies of death! He had fallen into a fit; after having drunk hard best part of the night, and seemed to have but a few minutes to live. In his frightful countenance, was displayed the dreadful picture of sin and death, for he struggled at once under the guilt of intoxication, and the pangs of a dying man. He recovered his senses for a few moments, and called out to ask if his faithful servant was come.—James went up to him, took him by his cold hand, but was too much moved to speak.—'Oh! James, James,' cried he in a broken voice, 'pray for me, comfort me.' James spoke kindly to him, but was too honest to give him false comfort, as is too often done by mistaken friends in these dreadful moments.

'James,' said he, 'I have been a bad master to you—you would have saved me, soul and body, but I would not let you—I have ruined my wife, my children, and my own soul. Take warning, oh, take warning by my miserable end,' said he to his stupified companions: but none were able to attend to him but James, who bid him lift up his heart to God, and prayed heartily for him himself. 'Oh!' said the dying man, 'it is too late, too late for me—but you have still time,' said he to the half-drunken terrified crew around him. 'Where is Jack?' Jack Brown came forward, but was too much frightened to speak. 'O wretched boy!' said he, 'I fear I shall have the ruin of thy soul, as well as my own to answer for. Stop short!—Take warning—now in the days of thy youth. O James, James, thou dost not pray for me. Death is dreadful to the wicked—O the sting of death to a guilty conscience!' Here he lifted up his ghastly eyes in speechless horror, grasped hard at the hand of James; gave a deep hollow groan, and closed his eyes, never to open them but in an awful eternity.

This was death in all its horrors! the gay companions of his sinful pleasures, could not stand the sight; all slunk away like guilty thieves from their late favourite friend—no one was left to assist him, but his two apprentices. Brown was not so hardened but that he shed many tears for his unhappy master; and even made some hasty resolutions of amendment, which were too soon forgotten.

While Brown stepped home to call the workmen to come and assist in removing their poor master, James staid alone with the corpse, and employed those awful moments in indulging the most serious thoughts, and praying heartily to God, that so terrible a lesson might not be thrown away upon him; but that he might be enabled to live in a constant state of preparation for death.—The resolutions he made at this moment, as they were not made in his own strength, but in an humble reliance on God's gracious help, were of use to him as long as he lived; and if ever he was for a moment tempted to say, or do a wrong thing, the remembrance of his poor dying master's last agonies, and the dreadful words he uttered, always operated as an instant check upon him.

When Williams was buried, and his affairs came to be inquired into, they were found to be in a sad condition. His wife, indeed, was the less to be pitied, as she had contributed her full share to the common ruin. James, however, did pity her, and by his skill in accounts, his known honesty, and the trust the creditors put in his word, things came to be settled rather better than Mrs. Williams expected.

Both Brown and James were now within a month or two of being out of their time. The creditors, as was said before, employed James to settle his late master's accounts, which he did in a manner so creditable to his abilities, and his honesty, that they proposed to him to take the shop himself. He assured them it was utterly out of his power for want of money. As the creditors had not the least fear of being repaid, if it should please God to spare his life, they generously agreed among themselves to advance him a small sum of money without any security but his bond; for this he was to pay a very reasonable interest, and to return the whole in a given number of years. James shed tears of gratitude at this testimony to his character, and could hardly be prevailed on to accept their kindness, so great was his dread of being in debt.

He took the remainder of the lease from his mistress; and in settling affairs with her, took care to make every thing as advantageous to her as possible. He never once allowed himself to think how unkind she had been to him; he only saw in her the needy widow of his deceased master, and the distressed mother of an infant family; and was heartily sorry it was not in his power to contribute to their support; it was not only James's duty, but his delight, to return good for evil—for he was a Christian.

James Stock was now, by the blessing of God on his own earnest endeavours, master of a considerable shop, and was respected by the whole town for his prudence, honesty, and piety. How he behaved in his new station, and also what befel his comrade Brown, must be the subject of another book; and I hope my readers will look forward with some impatience for some further account of this worthy young man. In the meantime, other apprentices will do well to follow so praiseworthy an example, and to remember, that the respectable master of a large shop, and of a profitable business, was raised to that creditable situation, without money, friends, or connexions, from the low beginning of a parish apprentice, by sobriety, industry, the fear of God, and, an obedience to the divine principles of the Christian religion.

PART II.

The Apprentice turned Master.

The first part of this history left off with the dreadful sudden death of Williams the idle shoemaker, who died in a drunken fit at the Gray-hound. It also showed how James Stock, his faithful apprentice, by his honest and upright behaviour, so gained the love and respect of his late master's creditors, that they set him up in business, though he was not worth a shilling of his own—such is the power of a good character!

And when we last parted from him he had just got possession of his master's shop.

This sudden prosperity was a time of trial for James; who, as he was now become a creditable tradesman, I shall hereafter think proper to call Mr. James Stock. I say, this sudden rise in life was a time of trial; for we hardly know what we are ourselves till we become our own masters. There is indeed always a reasonable hope that a good servant will not make a bad master, and that a faithful apprentice will prove an honest tradesman. But the heart of man is deceitful; and some folks who seem to behave very well while they are under subjection, no sooner get a little power than their heads are turned, and they grow prouder than those who are gentlemen born. They forget at once that they were lately poor and dependant themselves, so that one would think that with their poverty they had lost their memory too. I have known some who had suffered most hardships in their early days, become the most hard and oppressive in their turn: so that they seem to forget that fine considerate reason which God gives to the children of Israel why they should be merciful to their servants, *remembering*, said he, *that thou thyself was a bond-man.*

Young Mr. Stock did not so forget himself. He had indeed the only sure guard from falling into this error. It was not from any uneasiness in his natural disposition: for that only just serves to make folks good-natured when they are pleased, and patient when they have nothing to vex them.—James went upon higher ground. He brought his religion into all his actions; he did not give way to abusive language, because he knew it was a sin. He did not use his apprentices ill, because he knew he had himself a Master in heaven.

He knew he owed his present happy situation to the kindness of the creditors. But did he grow easy and careless because he knew he had such friends? No indeed. He worked with double diligence in order to get out of debt, and to let these friends see he did not abuse their kindness. Such behaviour as this is the greatest encouragement in the world to rich people to lend a little money. It creates friends, and it keeps them.

His shoes and boots were made in the best manner; this *got* him business; he set out with a rule to tell no lies, and deceive no customers; this *secured* his business. He had two reasons for not promising to send home goods when he knew he should not be able to keep his word. The first, because he knew a lie was a sin, the next, because it was a folly. There is no credit sooner worn out than that which is gained by false pretences. After a little while no one is deceived by them. Falsehood is so soon detected, that I believe most tradesmen are the poorer for it in the long rung. Deceit is the worst part of a shopkeeper's stock in trade.

James was now at the head of a family.—This is a serious situation, (said he to himself, one fine summer's evening, as he stood leaning over the half-door of his shop to enjoy a little fresh air) I am now master of a family. My cares are doubled, and so are my duties. I see the higher one gets in life the more one has to answer for. Let me now call to mind the sorrow I used to feel when I was made to carry work home on a Sunday by an ungodly master: and let me now *keep* the resolution I then formed.

So what his heart found right to do, he resolved to do quickly; and he set out at first as he meant to go on. The Sunday was truly a day of rest at Mr. Stock's. He would not allow a pair of shoes to be given out on that day to oblige the best customer he had. And what did he lose by it? Why nothing. For when the people were once used to it, they liked Saturday night just as well. But had it been otherwise he would have given up his gains to his conscience.

Showing how Mr. Stock behaved to his apprentices.

When he got up in the world so far as to have apprentices, he thought himself as accountable for their behaviour as if they had been his children. He was very kind to them, and had a cheerful merry way of talking to them, so that the lads who had seen too much of swearing, reprobate masters, were fond of him. They were never afraid of speaking to him; they told him all their little troubles, and considered their master as their best friend, for they said they would do any thing for a good word and a kind look. As he did not swear at them when they had been guilty of a fault, they did not lie to him to conceal it, and thereby make one fault two. But though he was very kind, he was very watchful also, for he did not think neglect any part of kindness. He brought them to adopt one very pretty method, which was, on a Sunday evening to divert themselves with writing out half a dozen texts of Scripture in a neat copy-book with gilt covers. You have the same at any of the stationers; they do not cost above fourpence, and will last nearly a year.

When the boys carried him their books, he justly commended him whose texts were written in the fairest hand. 'And now my boys,' said he, 'let us see which of you will learn your texts best in the course of the week; he who does this shall choose for next Sunday.' Thus the boys soon got many psalms and chapters by heart, almost without knowing how they came by them. He taught them how to make a practical use of what they learnt: 'for,' said he, 'it will answer little purposes to learn texts if we do not try to live up to them.' One of the boys being apt to play in his absence, and to run back again to his work when he heard his master's step, he brought him to a sense of his fault by the last Sunday's text, which happened to be the sixth of Ephesians. He showed him what was meant by *being obedient to his master in singleness of heart as unto Christ*, and explained to him with so much kindness what it was, *not to work with eye-service as men pleasers, but doing the will of God from the heart*, that the lad said he should never forget it, and it did more towards curing him of idleness than the soundest horse-whipping would have done.

How Mr. Stock got out of debt.

Stock's behaviour was very regular, and he was much beloved for his kind and peaceable

temper. He had also a good reputation for skill in his trade, and his industry was talked of through the whole town, so that he had soon more work than he could possibly do. He paid all his dealers to the very day, and took care to carry his interest money to the creditors the moment it became due. In two or three years he was able to begin to pay off a small part of the principal. His reason for being so eager to pay money as soon as it became due, was this: —He had observed tradesmen, and especially his old master, put off the day of payment as long as they could, even though they had the means of paying in their power. This deceived them: for having money in their pockets they forgot it belonged to the creditor, and not to themselves, and so got to fancy they were rich when they were really poor. This false notion led them to indulge in idle expenses, whereas, if they had paid regularly, they would have had this one temptation the less: a young tradesman, when he is going to spend money, should at least ask himself, 'Whether this money is his own or his creditors?' This little question might help to prevent many a bankruptcy.

A true Christian always goes heartily to work to find out what is his besetting sin; and when he has found it (which he easily may if he looks sharp) against this sin he watches narrowly. Now I know it is the fashion among some folks, (and a bad fashion it is,) to faney that good people have no sin; but this only shows their ignorance. It is not true. That good man, St. Paul, knew better.* And when men do not own their sins, it is not because their is no sin in their hearts, but because they are not anxious to search for it, nor humble to confess it, nor penitent to mourn over it. But this was not the case with James Stock. 'Examine yourselves truly,' said he, 'is no bad part of the catechism.' He began to be afraid that his desire of living creditably, and without being a burden to any one, might, under the mask of honesty and independence, lead him into pride and covetousness. He feared that the bias of his heart lay that way. So instead of being proud of his sobriety; instead of bragging that he never spent his money idly, nor went to the alehouse; instead of boasting how hard he worked and how he denied himself, he strove in secret that even these good qualities might not grow out of a wrong root. The following event was of use to him in the way of indulging any disposition to covetousness.

One evening as he was standing at the door of his shop a poor dirty boy, without stockings and shoes, came up and asked him for a bit of broken victuals, for he had eaten nothing all day. In spite of his dirt and rags he was a very pretty, lively, civil spoken boy, and Mr. Stock could not help thinking he knew something of his face. He fetched him out a good piece of bread and cheese, and while the boy was devouring it, asked him if he had no parents, and why he went about in that vagabond manner? 'Daddy has been dead some years,' said the boy; 'he died in a fit over at the Grayhound. Mammy says he used to live at this shop, and then we did not want for clothes nor victuals neither.' Stock was melted almost to tears on finding that this dirty beggar-boy was Tommy Williams, the son of his old master. He blessed God on comparing his own happy condition with that of this poor destitute child, but he was not prouder at the comparison; and while he was thankful for his own prosperity, he pitied the helpless boy. 'Where have you been living of late?' said he to him, 'for I understand you all went home to your mother's friends.'—'So we did, sir,' said the boy, 'but they are grown tired of maintaining us, because they said that mammy spent all the money which should have gone to buy victuals for us, on snuff and drams. And so they have sent us back to this place, which is daddy's parish.'

'And where do you live here?' said Mr. Stock. 'O sir, we are all put into the parish poor-house.'—'And does your mother do any thing to help to maintain you?'—'No, sir, for mammy says she was not brought up to work like poor folks, and she would rather starve than spin or knit; so she lies a-bed all the morning, and sends us about to pick up what we can, a bit of victuals or a few half-pence.'—'And have you any money in your pocket now?'—'Yes, sir, I have got three half-pence which I have begged to-day.'—'Then, as you were so very hungry, how came you not to buy a roll at that baker's over the way?'—'Because, sir, I was going to lay it out in tea for mammy, for I never lay out a farthing for myself. Indeed mammy says she *will* have her tea twice a-day if we beg or starve for it.'—'Can you read my boy?' said Mr. Stock:—'A little, sir, and say my prayers too.'—'And can you say your catechism?'—'I have almost forgotten it all, sir, though I remember something about *honouring my father and mother*, and that makes me still carry the halfpence home to mammy instead of buying cakes.'—'Who taught you these good things?' —'One Jemmy Stock, sir, who was a parish 'prentice to my daddy. He taught me one question out of the catechism every night, and always made me say my prayers to him before I went to bed. He told me I should go to the wicked place if I did not fear God, so I am still afraid to tell lies like the other boys. Poor Jemmy gave me a piece of ginger bread every time I learnt well; but I have no friend now; Jemmy was very good to me, though mammy did nothing but beat him.'

Mr. Stock was too much moved to carry on the discourse; he did not make himself known to the boy, but took him over to the baker's shop; as they walked along he could not help repeating aloud a verse or two of that beautiful hymn so deservedly the favourite of all children

> 'Not more than others I deserve,
> Yet God hath given me more;
> For I have food while others starve,
> Or beg from door to door.'

The little boy looked up in his face, saying, 'Why, sir, that's the very hymn which Jemmy Stock gave me a penny for learning.' Stock made no answer, but put a couple of threepenny loaves into his hand to carry home, and told him to call on him again at such a time in the following week.

* See Romans, vii.

How Mr. Stock contrived to be charitable without any expense.

Stock had abundant subject for meditation that night. He was puzzled what to do with the boy. While he was carrying on his trade upon borrowed money, he did not think it right to give any part of that money to assist the idle, or even to help the distressed. 'I must be just,' said he, 'before I am generous.' Still he could not bear to see this fine boy given up to a certain ruin. He did not think it safe to take him into his shop in his present ignorant unprincipled state. At last he hit upon this thought: I work for myself twelve hours in the day. Why shall I not work one hour or two for this boy in the evening? It will be but for a year, and I shall then have more right to do what I please. My money will then be my own, I shall have paid my debts.

So he began to put his resolution in practice that very night, sticking to his old notion of not putting off till to-morrow what should be done to-day; and it was thought he owed much of his success in life, as well as his growth in goodness, to this little saying: 'I am young and healthy,' said he, 'one hour's work more will do me no harm; I will set aside all I get by these over-hours, and put the boy to school. I have not only no right to punish this child for the sins of his father, but I consider that though God hated those sins, he has made them to be instrumental to my advancement.'

Tommy Williams called at the time appointed. In the mean time Mr. Stock's maid had made him a neat little suit of clothes out of an old coat of her master's. She had also knit him a pair of stockings, and Mr. Stock made him sit down in the shop, while he fitted him with a pair of new shoes. The maid having washed and dressed him, Mr. Stock took him by the hand, and walked along with him to the parish poor-house to find his mother. They found her dressed in ragged filthy finery, standing at the door, where she passed most of her time, quarrelling with half a dozen women as idle and dirty as herself. When she saw Tommy so neat and well-dressed, she fell a crying for joy. She said 'it put her in mind of old times, for Tommy always used to be dressed like a gentleman.'—'So much the worse,' said Mr. Stock; 'if you had not begun by making him look like a gentleman, you needed not have ended by making him look like a beggar.' 'Oh Jem!' said she, (for though it was four years since she had seen him, she soon recollected him) 'fine times for you! set a beggar on horseback—you know the proverb. I shall beat Tommy well for finding you out and exposing me to you.'

Instead of entering into any dispute with this bad woman, or praising himself at her expense; instead of putting her in mind of her past ill behaviour to him, or reproaching her with the bad use she had made of her prosperity, he mildly said to her,—'Mrs. Williams I am sorry for your misfortunes; I am come to relieve you of part of your burden. I will take Tommy off your hands. I will give him a year's board and schooling, and by that time I shall see what he is fit for. I will promise nothing, but if the boy turns out well, I will never forsake him I shall make but one bargain with you, which is, that he must not come to this place to hear all this railing and swearing, nor shall he keep company with these pilfering idle children. You are welcome to go and see him when you please, but here he must not come.'

The foolish woman burst out a crying, saying, 'she should lose her poor dear Tommy for ever. Mr. Stock might give *her* the money he intended to pay at the school, for nobody could do so well by him as his own mother.' The truth was, she wanted to get these new clothes, into her clutches, which would all have been pawned at the dram-shop before the week was out. This Mr. Stock well knew. From crying she fell to scolding and swearing. She told him he was an unnatural wretch, that wanted to make a child despise his own mother because she was poor. She even went so far as to say she would not part from him; she said she hated your godly people, they had no bowels of compassion, but tried to set men, women, and children against their own flesh and blood.

Mr. Stock now almost lost his patience, and for one moment a thought came across him, to strip the boy, carry back the clothes, and leave him to his unnatural mother. 'Why,' said he, 'should I work over-hours, and wear out my strength for this wicked woman?' But soon he checked this thought, by reflecting on the patience and long-suffering of God with rebellious sinners. This cured his anger in a moment, and he mildly reasoned with her on the folly and blindness in opposing the good of her child.

One of the neighbours who stood by said, 'What a fine thing it was for the boy! but some people were born to be lucky. She wished Mr. Stock would take a fancy to *her* child, he should have him soon enough.' Mrs. Williams now began to be frightened lest Mr. Stock should take the woman at her word, and sullenly consented to let the boy go, from envy and malice, not from prudence and gratitude; and Tommy was sent to school that very night, his mother crying and roaring instead of thanking God for such a blessing.

And here I cannot forbear telling a very good-natured thing of Will Simpson, one of the workmen. By the by it was that very young fellow who was reformed by Stock's good example, when he was an apprentice, and who used to sing psalms with him on a Sunday evening, when they got out of the way of Williams's junketing. Will coming home early one evening was surprised to find his master at work by himself, long after the usual time. He begged so heartily to know the reason, that Stock owned the truth. Will was so struck with this piece of kindness, that he snatched up a last, crying out, 'Well, master, you shall not work by yourself however; we will go snacks in maintaining Tommy: it shall never be said that Will Simpson was idling about when his master was working for charity.' This made the hour pass cheerfully, and doubled the profits.

In a year or two Mr. Stock, by God's blessing on his labours, became quite clear of the world. He now paid off his creditors, but he never forgot his obligation to them, and found

many opportunities of showing kindness to them, and to their children after them. He now cast about for a proper wife, and as he was thought a prosperous man, and was very well looking besides, most of the smart girls of the place, with their tawdry finery, used to be often parading before the shop, and would even go to church in order to put themselves in his way. But Mr. Stock when he went to church, had other things in his head; and if ever he thought about these gay damsels at all, it was with concern in seeing them so improperly tricked out, so that the very means they took to please him made him dislike them.

There was one Betsy West, a young woman of excellent character, and very modest appearance. He had seldom seen her out, as she was employed night and day in waiting on an aged, widowed mother, who was both lame and blind. This good girl was indeed almost literally eyes and feet to her helpless parent, and Mr. Stock used to see her, through the little casement window, lifting her up, and feeding with a tenderness which greatly raised his esteem for her. He used to tell Will Simpson, as they sat at work, that such a dutiful daughter could hardly help to make a faithful wife. He had not, however, the heart to try to draw her off from her care of her sick mother. The poor woman declined very fast. Betsy was much employed in reading or praying by her, while she was awake, and passed a good part of the night while she slept, in doing some fine works to sell, in order to supply her sick mother with little delicacies which their poor pittance could not afford, while she herself lived on a crust.

Mr. Stock knew that Betsy would have little or nothing after her mother's death, as she had only a life income. On the other hand, Mr. Thompson, the tanner, had offered him two hundred pounds with his daughter Nancy; but he was almost sorry that he had not in this case an opportunity of resisting his natural bias, which rather lay on the side of loving money: 'For,' said he, 'putting principle and putting affection out of the question, I shall do a more prudent thing by marrying Betsy West, who will conform to her station, and is a religious, humble, industrious girl, without a shilling, than by having an idle dressy lass, who will neglect my family and fill my house with company, though she should have twice the fortune which Nancy Thompson would bring.'

At length poor old Mrs. West was released from all her sufferings. At a proper time Mr. Stock proposed marriage to Betsy, and was accepted. All the disappointed girls in the town wondered what any body could like in such a dowdy as that. Had the man no eyes? They thought Mr. Stock had had more taste. Oh! how did it provoke all the vain idle things to find, that staying at home, dressing plainly, serving God, and nursing a blind mother, should do that for Betsy West, which all their contrivances, flaunting, and dancing, could not do for them.

He was not disappointed in his hope of meeting with a good wife in Betsy, as indeed those who marry on right grounds seldom are. But if religious persons will, for the sake of money, choose partners for life who have no religion, do not let them complain that they are unhappy; they might have known that beforehand

Tommy Williams was now taken home to Stock's house and bound apprentice. He was always kind and attentive to his mother; and every penny which Will Simpson or his master, gave him for learning a chapter, he would save to buy a bit of tea and sugar for her. When the other boys laughed at him for being so foolish as to deny himself cakes and apples to give his money to her who was so bad a woman, he would answer, 'It may be so, but she is my mother for all that.'

Mr. Stock was much moved at the change in this boy, who turned out a very good youth. He resolved, as God should prosper him, that he would try to snatch other helpless creatures from sin and ruin. 'For,' said he, 'it is owing to God's blessing on the instructions of my good minister when I was a child, that I have been saved from the broad way of destruction.'—He still gave God the glory of every thing he did aright: and when Will Simpson one day said to him, 'Master, I wish I were half as good as you are.' 'Hold, William,' answered he gravely, 'I once read in a book, that the devil is willing enough we should appear to do good actions, if he can but make us proud of them.'

But we must not forget our other old acquaintance, Mr. Stock's fellow 'prentice. So next month you may expect a full account of the many tricks and frolics of idle Jack Brown.

PART III.

Some account of the frolics of idle Jack Brown.

You shall now hear what befel idle Jack Brown, who, being a farmer's son, had many advantages to begin life with. But he who wants prudence may be said to want every thing, because he turns all his advantages to no account.

Jack Brown was just out of his time when his master Williams died in that terrible drunken fit at the Grayhound. You know already how Stock succeeded to his master's business, and prospered in it. Jack wished very much to enter into partnership with him. His father and mother too were desirous of it, and offered to advance a hundred pounds with him. Here is a fresh proof of the power of character! The old farmer, with all his covetousness, was eager to get his son into partnership with Stock, though the latter was not worth a shilling; and even Jack's mother, with all her pride, was eager for it, for they had both sense enough to see it would be the making of Jack. The father knew that Stock would look to the main chance; and the mother that he would take the labouring oar, and so her darling would have little to do. The ruling passion operated in both. One parent wished to secure to the son a life of pleasure, the other a profitable trade. Both were equally indifferent to whatever related to his eternal good.

Stock, however, young as he was, was too old a bird to be caught with chaff. His wisdom

was an overmatch for their cunning. He had a kindness for Brown, but would on no account enter into business with him.—'One of these three things,' said he, 'I am sure will happen if I do; he will either hurt my principles, my character, or my trade; perhaps all.' And here by-the-by, let me drop a hint to other young men who are about to enter into partnership. Let them not do that in haste which they may repent at leisure. Next to marriage it is a tie the hardest to break; and next to that it is an engagement which ought to be entered into with the most caution. Many things go to the making such a connexion suitable, safe, and pleasant.—There is many a rich merchant need not be above taking a hint in this respect, from James Stock the shoemaker.

Brown was still unwilling to part from him; indeed he was too idle to look out for business, so he offered Stock to work with him as a journeyman, but this he also mildly refused. It hurt his good-nature to do so; but he reflected that a young man who has his way to make in the world must not only be good-natured, he must be prudent also. 'I am resolved,' said he, 'to employ none but the most sober, regular young men I can get. Evil communications corrupt good manners, and I should be answerable for all the disorders of my house, if I knowingly took a wild drinking young fellow into it. That which might be kindness to one, would be injustice to many, and therefore a sin in myself.'

Brown's mother was in a great rage when she heard that her son had stooped so low as to make this offer.—She valued herself on being proud, for she thought pride was a grand thing. Poor woman! She did not know that it is the meanest thing in the world. It was her ignorance which made her proud, as is apt to be the case.—'You mean-spirited rascal,' said she to Jack, 'I had rather follow you to your grave, as well as I love you, than see you disgrace your family by working under Jem Stock, the parish apprentice.' She forgot already what pains she had taken about the partnership, but pride and passion have bad memories.

It is hard to say which was now uppermost in her mind, her desire to be revenged on Stock, or to see her son make a figure. She raised every shilling she could get from her husband, and all she could crib from the dairy to set up Jack in a showy way. So the very next market day she came herself, and took for him the new white house, with the two little sash windows painted blue, and blue posts before the door. It is that house which has the old cross just before it, as you turn down between the church and the Grayhound. Its being so near the church to be sure was no recommendation to Jack, but its being so near the Grayhound was, and so taking one thing with the other it was to be sure no bad situation; but what weighed most with the mother was, that it was a much more showy shop than Stock's; and the house, though not half so convenient, was far more smart.

In order to draw custom, his foolish mother advised him to undersell his neighbours just at first; to buy ordinary but showy goods, and to employ cheap workmen. In short she charged him to leave no stone unturned to ruin his old comrade Stock. Indeed she always thought with double satisfaction of Jack's prosperity, because she always joined to it the hope that his success would be the ruin of Stock, for she owned it would be the joy of her heart to bring that proud upstart to a morsel of bread. She did not understand, for her part, why such beggars must become tradesmen; it was making a velvet purse of a sow's ear.

Stock, however, set out on quite another set of principles. He did not allow himself to square his own behaviour to others by theirs to him. He seldom asked himself what he should *like* to to do: but he had a mighty way of saying, I wonder now what is my *duty* to do?—And when he was once clear in that matter he generally did it, always begging God's blessing and direction. So instead of setting Brown at defiance; instead of all that vulgar selfishness, of catch he that catch can—and two of a trade can never agree—he resolved to be friendly towards him. Instead of joining in the laugh against Brown for making his house so fine, he was sorry for him, because he feared he would never be able to pay such a rent. He very kindly called upon him, told him there was business enough for them both, and gave him many useful hints for his going on. He warned him to go oftener to church and seldomer to the Grayhound: put him in mind how following the one and forsaking the other had been the ruin of their poor master, and added the following

ADVICE TO YOUNG TRADESMEN.

Buy the best goods; cut the work out yourself; let the eye of the master be every where; employ the soberest men; avoid all the low deceits of trade; never lower the credit of another to raise your own; make short payments; keep exact accounts; avoid idle company, and be very strict to your word.

For a short time things went on swimmingly. Brown was merry and civil. The shop was well situated for gossip; and every one who had something to say, and nothing to do was welcome. Every idle story was first spread, and every idle song first sung, in Brown's shop. Every customer who came to be measured was promised that his shoes should be done first. But the misfortune was, if twenty came in a day the same promise was made to all; so that nineteen were disappointed, and of course affronted. He never said *no* to any one. It is indeed a word which it requires some honesty to pronounce. By all these false promises he was thought the most obliging fellow that ever made a shoe. And as he set out on the principle of underselling, people took a mighty fancy to the cheap shop. And it was agreed among all the young and giddy, that he would beat Stock hollow, and that the old shop would soon be knocked up.

All is not gold that glistens.

After a few months, however, folks began to be not quite so fond of the cheap shop; one found out that the leather was bad, another that the work was slight. Those who liked substantial goods went all of them to Stock's, for they said Brown's heel taps did not last a week; his

new boots let in water; and they believed he made his soles of brown paper. Besides, it was thought by most, that this promising all, and keeping his word with none, hurt his business as much as any thing. Indeed, I question, putting religion out of the question, if lying ever answers, even in a political view.

Brown had what is commonly called *good heart;* that is, he had a thoughtless good nature, and a sort of feeling for the moment which made him very sorry when others were in trouble. But he was not apt to put himself to any inconvenience, nor go a step out of his way, nor give up any pleasure to serve the best friend he had. He loved *fun;* and those who do should always see that it be harmless, and that they do not give up more for it than it is worth. I am not going to say a word against innocent merriment. I like it myself. But what the proverb says of gold, may be said of mirth; it may be bought too dear. If a young man finds that what he fancies is a good joke may possibly offend God, hurt his neighbour, afflict his parent, or make a modest girl blush, let him then be assured it is not fun, but wickedness, and he had better let it alone.

Jack Brown then, as *good a heart* as he had, did not know what it was to deny himself any thing. He was so *good-natured* indeed, that he never in his life refused to make one of a jolly set; but he was not good-natured enough to consider that those men whom he kept up all night roaring and laughing, had wives and children at home, who had little to eat, and less to wear, because *they* were keeping up the character of merry fellows, and good hearts at the public house.

The Mountebank.

One day he saw his father's plough-boy come galloping up to the door in great haste. This boy brought Brown word that his mother was dangerously ill, and that his father had sent his own best bay mare Smiler, that his son might lose no time, but set out directly to see his mother before she died. Jack burst into tears, lamented the danger of so fond a mother, and all the people in the shop extolled his *good heart.*

He sent back the boy directly, with a message that he would follow him in half an hour, as soon as the mare had baited: for he well knew that his father would not thank him for any haste he might make if Smiler was hurt.

Jack accordingly set off, and rode with such speed to the next town, that both himself and Smiler had a mind to another bait. They stopped at the Star: unluckily it was fair-day, and as he was walking about while Smiler was eating her oats, a bill was put into his hand setting forth, that on the stage opposite the Globe a mountebank was showing away, and his Andrew performing the finest tricks that ever were seen. He read—he stood still—he went on—'It will not hinder me,' says he; 'Smiler must rest; and I shall see my poor dear mother quite as soon if I just take a peep, as if I sit moping at the Star.'

The tricks were so merry that the time seemed short, and when they were over he could not forbear going into the Globe and treating these choice spirits with a bowl of punch. Just as they were taking the last glass Jack happened to say that he was the best fives player in the country. 'That is lucky,' said the Andrew, 'for there is a famous match now playing in the court, and you may never again have such an opportunity to show your skill.' Brown declared 'he could not stay, for that he had left his horse at the Star, and must set off on urgent business.' They now all pretended to call his skill in question. This roused his pride, and he thought another half hour could break no squares. Smiler had now had a good feed of corn, and he would only have to push her on a little more; so to it he went.

He won the first game. This spurred him on; and he played till it was so dark they could not see a ball. Another bowl was called for from the winner. Wagers and bets now drained Brown not only of all the money he had won, but of all he had in his pocket, so that he was obliged to ask leave to go to the house where his horse was, to borrow enough to discharge his reckoning at the Globe.

All these losses brought his poor dear mother to his mind, and he marched off with rather a heavy heart to borrow the money, and to order Smiler out of the stable. The landlord expressed much surprise at seeing him, and the ostler declared there was no Smiler there; that he had been rode off above two hours ago by the merry Andrew, who said he come by order of the owner, Mr. Brown, to fetch him to the Globe, and to pay for his feed. It was indeed one of the neatest tricks the Andrew ever performed, for he made such a clean conveyance of Smiler, that neither Jack nor his father ever heard of her again.

It was night: no one could tell what road the Andrew took, and it was another hour or two before an advertisement could be drawn up for apprehending the horse-stealer. Jack had some doubts whether he should go on or return back. He knew that though his father might fear his wife most, yet he loved Smiler best. At length he took that courage from a glass of brandy which he ought to have taken from a hearty repentance, and he resolved to pursue his journey. He was obliged to leave his watch and silver buckles in pawn for a little old hack which was nothing but skin and bone, and would hardly trot three miles an hour.

He knocked at his father's door about five in the morning. The family were all up.—He asked the boy who opened the door how his mother was? 'She is dead,' said the boy; 'she died yesterday afternoon.' Here Jack's heart smote him, and he cried aloud, partly from grief, but more from the reproaches of his own conscience, for he found by computing the hours, that had he come straight on, he should have been in time to receive his mother's blesing.

The farmer now came from within, 'I hear Smiler's step. Is Jack come?'—'Yes, father,' said Jack, in a low voice. 'Then,' cried the farmer, 'run every man and boy of you and take care of the mare. Tom, do thou go and rub her down; Jem, run and get her a good feed of corn. Be sure walk her about that she may not catch cold.' Young Brown came in.

'Are you not an undutiful dog? said the father; 'you might have been here twelve hours ago. Your mother could not die in peace without seeing you. She said it was cruel return for all her fondness that you could not make a little haste to see her; but it was always so, for she had wronged her other children to help you, and this was her reward.' Brown sobbed out a few words, but his father replied, 'Never cry Jack, for the boy told me that it was out of regard for Smiler, that you were not here as soon as he was; and if 'twas your over care of her, why there's no great harm done. You could not have saved your poor mother, and you might have hurt the mare.' Here Jack's double guilt flew into his face. He knew that his father was very covetous, and had lived on bad terms with his wife; and also that his own unkindness to her had been forgiven by him out of love to the horse; but to break to him how he had lost that horse through his own folly and want of feeling, was more than Jack had courage to do. The old man, however, soon got at the truth, and no words can describe his fury. Forgetting that his wife lay dead above stairs, he abused his son in a way not fit to be repeated; and though his covetousness had just before found an excuse for a favourite son neglecting to visit a dying parent, yet he now vented his rage against Jack as an unnatural brute, whom he would cut off with a shilling, and bade him never see his face again.

Jack was not allowed to attend his mother's funeral, which was a real grief to him; nor would his father advance even the little money which was needful to redeem his things at the Star. He had now no fond mother to assist him, and he set out on his return home on his borrowed hack, full of grief. He had the added mortification of knowing, that he had also lost by his folly a little hoard of money which his mother had saved up for him.

When Brown got back to his own town he found that the story of Smiler and the Andrew had got thither before him, and it was thought a very good joke at the Grayhound. He soon recovered his spirits as far as related to the horse, but as to his behaviour to his dying mother it troubled him at times to the last day of his life, though he did all he could to forget it. He did not however go on at all better, nor did he engage in one frolic the less for what had passed at the Globe; his *good heart* continually betrayed him into acts of levity and vanity.

Jack began at length to feel the reverse of that proverb, *Keep your shop and your shop will keep you.* He had neglected his customers, and they forsook him. Quarter-day came round; there was much to pay and little to receive. He owed two years' rent. He was in arrears to his men for wages. He had a long account with his currier. It was in vain to apply to his father. He had now no mother. Stock was the only true friend he had in the world, and had helped him out of many petty scrapes, but he knew Stock would advance no money in so hopeless a case. Duns came fast about him. He named a speedy day for payment; but as soon as they were out of the house, and the danger put off to a little distance, he forgot every promise, was as merry as ever, and run the same round of thoughtless gaiety. Whenever he was in trouble Stock did not shun him, because that was the moment to throw in a little good advice. He one day asked him if he always intended to go on in this course?' 'No, said he, 'I am resolved by and by to reform, grow sober, and go to church. Why I am but five and twenty, man, I am stout and healthy, and likely to live long; I can repent, and grow melancholy and good at any time.'

'Oh Jack!' said Stock, 'don't cheat thyself' with that false hope. What thou dost intend to do, do quickly. Did'st thou never read about the heart growing hardened by long indulgence in sin? Some folk, who pretend to mean well, show that they mean nothing at all, by never beginning to put their good resolutions into practice; which made a wise man once say, that hell is paved with good intentions. We cannot repent when we please. *It is the goodness of God which leadeth us to repentance.*';

'I am sure,' replied Jack, 'I am no one's enemy but my own.'

'It is as foolish,' said Stock, 'to say a bad man is no one's enemy but his own, as that a good man is no one's friend but his own. There is no such neutral character. A bad man corrupts or offends all within reach of his example, just as a good man benefits or instructs all within the sphere of his influence. And there is no time when we can say that this transmitted good and evil will end. A wicked man may be punished for sins he never committed himself, if he has been the cause of sin in others, as surely as a saint will be rewarded for more good deeds that he himself has done, even for the virtues and good actions of all those who are made better by his instruction, his example, or his writings.'

Michaelmas-day was at hand. The landlord declared he would be put off no longer, but would seize for rent if it was not paid him on that day, as well as for a considerable sum due to him for leather. Brown at last began to be frightened. He applied to Stock to be bound for him. This, Stock flatly refused. Brown now began to dread the horrors of a jail, and really seemed so very contrite, and made so many vows and promises of amendment, that at length Stock was prevailed on, together with two or three of Brown's other friends, to advance each a small sum of money to quiet the landlord, Brown promising to make over to them every part of his stock, and to be guided in future by their advice, declaring that he would turn over a new leaf, and follow Mr. Stock's example, as well as his direction in every thing.

Stock's good nature was at length wrought upon, and he raised the money. The truth is, he did not know the worst, nor how deeply Brown was involved. Brown joyfully set out on the very quarter-day to a town at some distance, to carry his landlord this money, raised by the imprudent kindness of his friend. At his departure Stock put him in mind of the old story of Smiler and the Merry Andrew, and he promised of his own head that he would not even call at a public house till he had paid the money.

He was as good as his word. He very triumphantly passed by several. He stopped a little under the window of one where the sounds of merriment and loud laughter caught his ear. At another he heard the enticing notes of a fiddle and the light heels of the merry dancers. Here his heart had well nigh failed him, but the dread of a jail on the one hand, and what he feared almost as much, Mr. Stock's anger on the other, spurred him on; and he valued himself not a little at having got the better of this temptation. He felt quite happy when he found he had reached the door of his landlord without having yielded to one idle inclination.

He knocked at the door. The maid who opened it said her master was not at home. 'I am sorry for it,' said he, strutting about; and with a boasting air he took out his money. 'I want to pay him my rent: he needed not to have been afraid of *me*.' The servant, who knew her master was very much afraid of him, desired him to walk in, for her master would be at home in half an hour. 'I will call again,' said he; 'but no, let him call on me, and the sooner the better: I shall be at the Blue Posts.' While he had been talking he took care to open his black leather case, and to display the bank bills to the servant, and then, in a swaggering way, he put up his money and marched off to the Blue Posts.

He was by this time quite proud of his own resolution, and having tendered the money, and being clear in his own mind that it was the landlord's own fault and not his that it was not paid, he went to refresh himself at the Blue Posts. In a barn belonging to this public house a set of strollers were just going to perform some of that sing-song ribaldry by which our villages are corrupted, the laws broken, and that money drawn from the poor for pleasure, which is wanted by their families for bread. The name of the last new song which made part of the entertainment, made him think himself in high luck, that he should have just that half hour to spare. He went into the barn, but was too much delighted with the actor, who sung his favourite song, to remain a quiet hearer. He leaped out of the pit, and got behind the two ragged blankets which served for a curtain. He sung so much better than the actors themselves, that they praised and admired him to a degree which awakened all his vanity. He was so intoxicated with their flattery, that he could do no less than invite them all to supper, an invitation which they were too hungry not to accept.

He did not, however, quite forget his appointment with his landlord; but the half hour was long since past by. 'And so,' says he, 'as I know he is a mean curmudgeon, who goes to bed by daylight to save candles, it will be too late to speak with him to-night; besides, let him call upon me; it is his business and not mine. I left word where I was to be found; the money is ready, and if I don't pay him to-night, I can do it before breakfast.'

By the time these firm resolutions were made, supper was ready. There never was a more jolly evening. Ale and punch were as plenty as water. The actors saw what a vain fellow was feasting them; and as they wanted victuals, and he wanted flattery, the business was soon settled. They ate, and Brown sung They pretended to be in raptures. Singing promoted drinking, and every fresh glass produced a song or a story still more merry than the former. Before morning, the players, who were engaged to act in another barn a dozen miles off, stole away quietly. Brown having dropt asleep they left him to finish his nap by himself. As to him his dreams were gay and pleasant, and the house being quite still, he slept comfortably till morning.

As soon as he had breakfasted, the business of the night before popped into his head. He set off once more to his landlord's in high spirits, gaily singing by the way, scraps of all the tunes he had picked up the night before from his new friends. The landlord opened the door himself, and reproached him with no small surliness for not having kept his word with him the evening before, adding, that he supposed he was come now with some more of his shallow excuses. Brown put on all that haughtiness which is common to people who being generally apt to be in the wrong, happen to catch themselves doing a right action; he looked big, as some sort of people do when they have money to pay. 'You need not have been so anxious about your money,' said he, 'I was not going to break or run away.' The landlord well knew this was the common language of those who are ready to do both. Brown haughtily added, 'You shall see I am a man of my word; give me a receipt.' The landlord had it ready and gave it him.

Brown put his hand in his pocket for his black leathern case in which the bills were; he felt, he searched, he examined, first one pocket, then the other; then both waistcoat pockets, but no leather case could he find. He looked terrified. It was indeed the face of real terror, but the landlord conceived it to be that of guilt, and abused him heartily for putting his old tricks upon him; he swore he would not be imposed upon any longer; the money or a jail—there lay his choice.

Brown protested for once with great truth, that he had no intention to deceive; declared that he had actually brought the money, and knew not what was become of it; but the thing was far too unlikely to gain credit. Brown now called to mind that he had fallen asleep on the settle in the room where they had supped. This raised his spirits; for he had no doubt but the case had fallen out of his pocket; he said he would step to the public house and search for it, and would be back directly. Not one word of this did the landlord believe, so inconvenient is it to have a bad character. He swore Brown should not stir out of his house without a constable, and made him wait while he sent for one. Brown, guarded by the constable, went back to the Blue Posts, the landlord charging the officer not to lose sight of the culprit. The caution was needless; Brown had not the least design of running away, so firmly persuaded was he that he should find his leather case.

But who can paint his dismay, when no tale or tidings of the leather case could be had: The master, the mistress, the boy, the maid of the public house all protested they were innocent. His suspicions soon fell on the strollers

with whom he had passed the night; and he now found out for the first time, that a merry evening did not always produce a happy morning. He obtained a warrant, and proper officers were sent in pursuit of the strollers. No one, however, believed he had really lost any thing; and as he had not a shilling left to defray the expensive treat he had given, the master of the inn agreed with the other landlord in thinking this story was a trick to defraud them both, and Brown remained in close custody. At length the officers returned, who said they had been obliged to let the strollers go, as they could not fix the charge on any one, and they had offered to swear before a justice that they had seen nothing of the leasher case. It was at length agreed that as he had passed the evening in a crowded barn, he had probably been robbed there, if at all; and among so many, who could pretend to guess at the thief?

Brown raved like a madman; he cried, tore his hair, and said he was ruined forever. The abusive language of his old landlord, and his new creditor at the Blue Posts, did not lighten his sorrow. His landlord would be put off no longer. Brown declared he could neither find bail nor raise another shilling; and as soon as the forms of law were made out, he was sent to the county jail.

Here it might have been expected that hard living and much leisure would have brought him to reflect a little on his past follies. But his heart was not truly touched. The chief thing which grieved him at first was, his having abused the kindness of Stock, for to him he should appear guilty of a real fraud, where he had indeed been only vain, idle, and imprudent. And it is worth while here to remark, that vanity, idleness, and imprudence, often bring a man to utter ruin both of soul and body, though silly people do not put them in the catalogue of heavy sins, and those who indulge in them are often reckoned honest, merry fellows, with *the best hearts in the world.*

I wish I had room to tell my readers what befel Jack in his present doleful habitation, and what became of him afterwards. I promise them, however, that they shall certainly know the first of next month, when I hope they will not forget to inquire for the fourth part of the Shoemakers, or Jack Brown in prison

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PART IV.

Jack Brown in Prison.

Brown was no sooner lodged in his doleful habitation, and a little recovered from his first surprise, than he sat down and wrote his friend Stock the whole history of the transaction. Mr. Stock, who had long known the exceeding lightness and dissipation of his mind, did not so utterly disbelieve the story as all the other creditors did. To speak the truth, Stock was the only one among them who had good sense enough to know, that a man may be completely ruined, both in what relates to his property and his soul, without committing Old Bailey crimes. He well knew that idleness, vanity, and the love of *pleasure*, as it is falsely called, will bring a man to a morsel of bread, as surely as those things which are reckoned much greater sins and that they undermine his principles as certainly, though not quite so fast.

Stock was too angry with what had happened to answer Brown's letter, or to seem to take the least notice of him. However, he kindly and secretly, undertook a journey to the hard-hearted old farmer, Brown's father, to intercede with him, and to see if he would do any thing for his son. Stock did not pretend to excuse Jack, or even to lessen his offences; for it was a rule of his never to disguise truth or to palliate wickedness. Sin was still sin in his eyes, though it were committed by his best friend; but though he would not soften the sin, he felt tenderly for the sinner. He pleaded with the old farmer on the ground, that his son's idleness and other vices would gather fresh strength in a jail. He told him, that the loose and worthless company which he would there keep, would harden him in vice, and if he was now wicked, he might there become irreclaimable.

But all his pleas were urged in vain. The farmer was not to be moved, indeed he argued with some justice, that he ought not to make his industrious children beggars to save one rogue from the gallows. Mr. Stock allowed the force of his reasoning, though he saw the father was less influenced by this principle of justice than by resentment on account of the old story of Smiler. People, indeed, should take care that what appears in their conduct to proceed from justice, does not really proceed from revenge. Wiser men than farmer Brown often deceive themselves, and fancy they act on better principles than they really do, for want of looking a little more closely into their own hearts, and putting down every action to its true motive. When we are praying against deceit we should not forget to take self-deceit into the account.

Mr. Stock at length wrote to poor Jack; not to offer him any help, that was quite out of the question, but to exhort him to repent of his evil ways; to lay before him the sins of his past life, and to advise him to convert the present punishment into a benefit, by humbling himself before God. He offered his interest to get his place of confinement exchanged for one of those improved prisons, where solitude and labour have been made the happy instruments of bringing many to a better way of thinking, and ended by saying, that if he ever gave any solid signs of real amendment he would still be his friend, in spite of all that was past.

If Mr. Stock had sent him a good sum of money to procure his liberty, or even to make merry with his wretched companions, Jack would have thought him a friend indeed. But to send him nothing but dry advice, and a few words of empty comfort, was, he thought, but a cheap shabby way of showing his kindness Unluckily the letter came just as he was going to sit down to one of those direful merry-makings which are often carried on with brutal riot within the doleful walls of a jail on the entrance of a new prisoner, who is often expected to give a feast to the rest.

When his companions were heated with gin; 'Now,' said Jack, 'I'll treat you with a sermon, and a very pretty preachment it is.' So saying, he took out Mr. Stock's kind and pious letter, and was delighted at the bursts of laughter it produced. 'What a canting dog!' said one. 'Repentance, indeed!' cried Tom Crew; 'No, no, Jack, tell this hypocritical rogue that if we have lost our liberty, it is only for having been jolly, hearty fellows, and we have more spirit than to repent of that I hope: all the harm we have done is living a little too fast, like honest bucks as we are.—'Ay, ay,' said jolly George, 'had we been such sneaking miserly fellows as Stock, we need not have come hither. But if the ill nature of the laws has been so cruel as to clap up such fine hearty blades, we are no *felons* however. We are afraid of no Jack Ketch; and I see no cause to repent of any sin that's not hanging matter. As to those who are thrust into the condemned hole indeed, and have but a few hours to live, they *must* see the parson, and hear a sermon, and such stuff. But I do not know what such stout young fellows as we are have to do with repentance. And so, Jack, let us have that rare new catch which you learnt of the strollers that merry night when you lost your pocket-book.'

This thoughtless youth soon gave a fresh proof of the power of evil company, and of the quick progress of the heart of a sinner from bad to worse. Brown, who always wanted principle, soon grew to want feeling also. He joined in the laugh which was raised against Stock, and told many *good stories*, as they were called, in derision of the piety, sobriety, and self-denial of his old friend. He lost every day somewhat of those small remains of shame and decency which he had brought with him to the prison. He even grew reconciled to this wretched way of life, and the want of money seemed to him the heaviest evil in the life of a jail.

Mr. Stock finding from the jailer that his letter had been treated with ridicule, would not write to him any more. He did not come to see him nor send him any assistance, thinking it right to let him suffer that want which his vices had brought upon him. But as he still hoped that the time would come when he might be brought to a sense of his evil courses, he continued to have an eye upon him by means of the jailer, who was an honest, kind-hearted man.

Brown spent one part of his time in thoughtless riot, and the other in gloomy sadness. Company kept up his spirits; with his new friends he contrived to drown thought; but when he was alone he began to find that a *merry fellow*, when deprived of his companions and his liquor, is often a most forlorn wretch. Then it is that even a merry fellow says, *Of laughter, what is it? and of mirth, it is madness.*

As he contrived, however, to be as little alone as possible his gaiety was commonly uppermost till that loathsome distemper, called the jail fever, broke out in the prison. Tom Crew, the ringleader in all their evil practices, was first seized with it. Jack staid a little while with his comrade to assist and divert him, but of assistance he could give little, and the very thought of diversion was now turned into horror. He soon caught the distemper, and that in so dreadful a degree, that his life was in great danger. Of those who remained in health not a soul came near him, though he shared his last farthing with them. He had just sense enough left to feel this cruelty. Poor fellow! he did not know before, that the friendship of the worldly is at an end when there is no more drink or diversion to be had. He lay in the most deplorable condition; his body tormented with a dreadful disease, and his soul terrified and amazed at the approach of death: that death which he thought at so great a distance, and of which his comrades had so often assured him that a young fellow of five-and-twenty was is no danger. Poor Jack! I cannot help feeling for him. Without a shilling! without a friend! without one comfort respecting this world, and what is far more terrible, without one hope respecting the next.

Let not the young reader fancy that Brown's misery arose entirely from his altered circumstances. It was not merely his being in want, and sick, and in prison, which made his condition so desperate. Many an honest man unjustly accused, many a persecuted saint, many a holy martyr has enjoyed sometimes more peace and content in a prison than wicked men have ever tasted in the height of their prosperity. But to any such comforts, to any comfort at all, poor Jack was an utter stranger.

A christian friend generally comes forward at the very time when worldly friends forsake the wretched. The other prisoners would not come near Brown, though he had often entertained, and had never offended them; even his own father was not moved with his sad condition. When Mr. Stock informed him of it, he answered, ''Tis no more than he deserves. As he brews so he must bake. He has made his own bed, and let him lie in it.' The hard old man had ever at his tongue's end some proverb of hardness, or frugality, which he contrived to turn in such a way as to excuse himself.

We shall now see how Mr. Stock behaved. He had his favourite sayings too; but they were chiefly on the side of kindness, mercy, or some other virtue. 'I must not,' said he, 'pretend to call myself a Christian, if I do not requite evil with good.' When he received the jailer's letter with the account of Brown's sad condition, Will Simpson and Tommy Williams began to compliment him on his own wisdom and prudence, by which he had escaped Brown's misfortunes. He only gravely said, 'Blessed be God that I am not in the same misery. It is *He* who has made us to differ. But for *his* grace I might have been in no better condition.—Now Brown is brought low by the hand of God, it is my time to go to him.' 'What, you!' said Will, 'whom he cheated of your money?'—'This is not a time to remember injuries,' said Mr. Stock. 'How can I ask forgiveness for my own sins, if I withhold forgiveness from him?' So saying, he ordered his horse, and set off to see poor Brown; thus proving that his was a religion not of words but of deeds.

Stock's heart nearly failed him as he passed

through the prison. The groans of the sick and dying, and, what to such a heart as his was still more moving, the brutal merriment of the healthy in such a place, pierced his very soul. Many a silent prayer did he put up as he passed along, that God would yet be pleased to touch their hearts, and that now (during this infectious sickness) might be the accepted time. The jailer observed him drop a tear, and asked the cause. 'I cannot forget, said he, 'that the most dissolute of these men is still my fellow creature. The same God made them; the same Saviour died for them; how then can I hate the worst of them? With my advantages they might have been much better than I am; without the blessing of God on my good minister's instructions, I might have been worse than the worst of these. I have no cause for pride, much for thankfulness; *Let us not be high-minded, but fear.*'

It would have moved a heart of stone to have seen poor miserable Jack Brown lying on his wretched bed, his face so changed by pain, poverty, dirt, and sorrow, that he could hardly be known for that merry soul of a jack-boot, as he used to be proud to hear himself called. His groans were so piteous that it made Mr. Stock's heart ache. He kindly took him by the hand, though he knew the distemper was catching.—'How dost do, Jack?' said he, 'dost know me?' Brown shook his head and said, faintly, 'Know you? ay, that I do. I am sure I have but one friend in the world who would come to see me in this woeful condition. O James! what have I brought myself to? What will become of my poor soul? I dare not look back, for that is all sin; nor forward, for that is all misery and woe.'

Mr. Stock spake kindly to him, but did not attempt to cheer him with false comfort, as is too often done. 'I am asham'd to see you in this dirty place,' says Brown. 'As to the place, Jack,' replied the other, 'if it has helped to bring you to a sense of your past offences, it will be no bad place for you. I am heartily sorry for your distress and your sickness; but if it should please God by them to open your eyes, and to show you that sin is a greater evil than the prison to which it has brought you, all may yet be well. I had rather see you in this humble penitent state, lying on this dirty bed, in this dismal prison, than roaring and rioting at the Grayhound, the king of the company, with handsome clothes on your back, and plenty of money in your pocket.'

Brown wept bitterly, and squeezed his hand, but was too weak to say much. Mr. Stock then desired the jailor to let him have such things as were needful, and he would pay for them. He would not leave the poor fellow till he had given him, with his own hands, some broth which the jailor had got ready for him, and some medicines which the doctor had sent. All this kindness cut Brown to the heart. He was just able to sob out, 'My unnatural father leaves me to perish, and my injured friend is more than a father to me.' Stock told him that one proof he must give of his repentance, was, that he must forgive his father, whose provocation had been very great. He then said he would leave him for the present to take some rest, and desired him to lift up his heart to God for mercy. 'Dear James,' replied Brown, 'do you pray for me God perhaps may hear you, but he will never hear the prayer of such a sinner as I have been.' 'Take care how you think so,' said Stock., 'To believe that God cannot forgive you would be still a greater sin than any you have yet committed against him.' He then explained to him in a few words, as well as he was able, the nature of repentance and forgiveness through a Saviour, and warned him earnestly against unbelief and hardness of heart.

Poor Jack grew much refreshed in body with the comfortable things he had taken; and a little cheered with Stock's kindness in coming so far to see and to forgive such a forlorn outcast, sick of an infectious distemper, and locked within the walls of a prison.

Surely, said he to himself, there must be some mighty power in a religion which can lead men to do such things! things so much against the grain as to forgive such an injury, and to risk catching such a distemper; but he was so weak he could not express this in words. He tried to pray but he could not; at length, overpowered with weariness, he fell asleep.

When Mr. Stock came back, he was surprised to find him so much better in body; but his agonies of mind were dreadful, and he had now got strength to express part of the horrors which he felt. 'James,' said he (looking wildly) 'it is all over with me. I am a lost creature. Even your prayers cannot save me.'—'Dear Jack,' replied Mr. Stock, 'I am no minister; it does not become me to talk much to thee: but I know I may venture to say whatever is in the Bible. As ignorant as I am I shall be safe enough while I stick to that.' 'Ay,' said the sick man, 'you used to be ready enough to read to me, and I would not listen, or if I did it was only to make fun of what I heard, and now you will not so much as read a bit of a chapter to me.'

This was the very point to which Stock longed to bring him. So he took a little Bible out of his pocket, which he always carried with him on a journey, and read slowly, verse by verse, the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. When he came to the sixth and seventh verses, poor Jack cried so much that Stock was forced to stop. The words were, *Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord.* Here Brown stopped him, saying, 'Oh it is too late, too late for me.'—'Let me finish the verse,' said Stock, 'and you will see your error; you will see that it is never too late.' So he read on—*Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.* Here Brown started up, snatched the book out of his hand, and cried out, 'Is that really there? No, no; that's of your own putting in, in order to comfort me; let me look at the words myself.'—'No, indeed,' said Stock, 'I would not for the world give you unfounded comfort, or put off any notion of my own for a Scripture doctrine.'—'But is it possible,' cried the sick man, 'that God may really pardon me? Do'st think he can! Do'st think he will?' 'I dare not give thee false hopes, or indeed any hopes of my own. But these are God's own words, and the only difficulty is to know when we are really brought

into such a state as that the words may be applied to us. For a text may be full of comfort, and yet may not belong to us.'

Mr. Stock was afraid of saying more. He would not venture out of his depth; nor indeed was poor Brown able to bear more discourse just now. So he made him a present of the Bible, folding down such places as he thought might be best suited to his state, and took his leave, being obliged to return home that night. He left a little money with the jailor, to add a few comforts to the allowance of the prison, and promised to return in a short time.

When he got home, he described the sufferings and misery of Brown in a very moving manner; but Tommy Williams, instead of being properly affected by it, only said, 'Indeed, master, I am not very sorry; he is rightly served.'—'How, Tommy,' said Mr. Stock (rather sternly) 'not sorry to see a fellow creature brought to the lowest state of misery; one too whom you have known so prosperous?' 'No, master, I can't say I am; for Mr. Brown used to make fun of you, and laugh at you for being so godly, and reading your Bible.'

'Let me say a few words to you Tommy,' said Mr. Stock. 'In the first place you should never watch for the time of a man's being brought low by trouble to tell of his faults. Next, you should never rejoice at his trouble, but pity him, and pray for him. Lastly, as to his ridiculing me for my religion, if I cannot stand an idle jest, I am not worthy the name of a Christian.—*He that is ashamed of me and my word*—do'st remember what follows Tommy?'—'Yes, master, it was last Sunday's text—*of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall judge the world.*'

Mr. Stock soon went back to the prison. But he did not go alone. He took with him Mr. Thomas, the worthy minister who had been the guide and instructor of his youth, who was so kind as to go at his request and visit this forlorn prisoner. When they got to Brown's door, they found him sitting up in his bed with the Bible in his hand. This was a joyful sight to Mr. Stock, who secretly thanked God for it. Brown was reading aloud; they listened; it was the fifteenth of Saint Luke. The circumstances of this beautiful parable of the prodigal son were so much like his own, that the story pierced him to the soul; and he stopped every minute to compare his own case with that of the prodigal. He was just got to the eighteenth verse, *I will arise and go to my father*—at that moment he spied his two friends; joy darted into his eyes. 'O dear Jem,' said he, 'it is *not* too late, I will arise, and go to my Father, my heavenly Father, and you, sir, will show me the way, won't you?' said he to Mr. Thomas, whom he recollected. 'I am very glad to see you in so hopeful a disposition,' said the good minister. 'O, sir,' said Brown, 'what a place is this to receive you in? O, see to what I have brought myself!'

'Your condition, as to this world, is indeed very low,' replied the good divine. 'But what are mines, dungeons, or gallies, to that eternal hopeless prison to which your unrepented sins must soon have consigned you. Even in the gloomy prison, on this bed of straw, worn down by pain, poverty, and want, forsaken by your worldly friends, an object of scorn to those with whom you used to carouse and riot; yet here, I say, brought thus low, if you have at last found out your own vileness, and your utterly undone state by sin, you may still be more an object of favour in the sight of God, than when you thought yourself prosperous and happy; when the world smiled upon you, and you passed your days and nights in envied gaiety and unchristian riot. If you will but improve the present awful visitation; if you do but heartily renounce and abhor your present evil courses; if you even now turn to the Lord your Saviour with lively faith, deep repentance, and unfeigned obedience, I shall still have more hope of you than of many who are going on quite happy, because quite insensible. The heavy laden sinner, who has discovered the iniquity of his own heart, and his utter inability to help himself, may be restored to God's favour, and become happy, though in a dungeon. And be assured, that he who from deep and humble contrition dares not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, when with a hearty faith he sighs out, *Lord, be merciful to me a sinner*, shall in no wise be cast out. These are the words of him who cannot lie.'

It is impossible to describe the self-abasement, the grief, the joy, the shame, the hope, and the fear which filled the mind of this poor man. A dawn of comfort at length shone on his benighted mind. His humility and fear of falling back into his former sins, if he should ever recover, Mr. Thomas thought were strong symptoms of a sound repentance. He improved and cherished every good disposition he saw arising in his heart, and particularly warned him against self-deceit, self-confidence, and hypocrisy

After Brown had deeply expressed his sorrow for his offences, Mr. Thomas thus addressed him. 'There are two ways of being sorry for sin. Are you, Mr. Brown, afraid of the guilt of sin because of the punishment annexed to it, or are you afraid of sin itself? Do you wish to be delivered from the power of sin? Do you hate sin because you know it is offensive to a pure and holy God? Or are you only ashamed of it because it has brought you to a prison and exposed you to the contempt of the world? It is not said that the wages of this or that particular sin is death, but of sin in general; there is no exception made because it is a more creditable or a favourite sin, or because it is a little one. There are, I repeat, two ways of being sorry for sin. Cain was sorry—*My punishment is greater than I can bear*, said he; but here you see the punishment seemed to be the cause of concern, not the sin. David seems to have had a good notion of godly sorrow, when he says, *Wash me from mine iniquity, cleanse me from my sin.* And when Job *repented in dust and ashes*, it is not said he excused himself, but he *abhorred himself.* And the prophet Isaiah called himself undone, because he was *a man of unclean lips;* for, said he "I have seen the King, the Lord of hosts;" that is, he could not take the proper measure of his own iniquity till he had considered the perfect holiness of God.'

One day, when Mr. Thomas and Mr. Stock

came to see him, they found him more than commonly affected. His face was more ghastly pale than usual, and his eyes were red with crying. 'Oh, sir,' said he, 'what a sight have I just seen! jolly George, as we used to call him, the ringleader of all our mirth, who was at the bottom of all the fun and tricks, and wickedness that are carried on within these walls, jolly George is just dead of the jail distemper! He taken, and I left! I *would* be carried into his room to speak to him, to beg him to take warning by me, and that I might take warning by him. But what did I see! what did I hear! not one sign of repentance; not one dawn of hope. Agony of body, blasphemies on his tongue, despair in his soul; while I am spared and comforted with hopes of mercy and acceptance. Oh, if all my old friends at the Grayhound could but then have seen jolly George! A hundred sermons about death, sir, don't speak so home, and cut so deep, as the sight of one dying sinner.'

Brown grew gradually better in his health, that is, the fever mended, but the distemper settled in his limbs, so that he seemed likely to be a poor, weakly cripple the rest of his life. But as he spent much of his time in prayer, and in reading such parts of the Bible as Mr. Thomas directed, he improved every day in knowledge and piety, and of course grew more resigned to pain and infirmity.

Some months after this, his hard-hearted father, who had never been prevailed upon to see him, or offer him the least relief, was taken off suddenly by a fit of apoplexy; and, after all his threatenings, he died without a will. He was one of those silly, superstitious men, who fancy they shall die the sooner for having made one; and who love the world and the things that are in the world so dearly, that they dread to set about any business which may put them in mind that they are not always to live in it. As, by this neglect, his father had not fulfilled his threat of cutting him off with a shilling, Jack, of course, went shares with his brothers in what their father left. What fell to him proved to be just enough to discharge him from prison, and to pay all his debts, but he had nothing left. His joy at being thus enabled to make restitution was so great that he thought little of his own wants. He did not desire to conceal the most trifling debt, nor to keep a shilling for himself.

Mr. Stock undertook to settle all his affairs. There did not remain money enough after every creditor was satisfied, even to pay for his removal home. Mr. Stock kindly sent his own cart for him with a bed in it, made as comfortable as possible, for he was too weak and lame to be removed any other way, and Mrs. Stock gave the driver particular charge to be tender and careful of him, and not to drive hard, nor to leave the cart a moment.

Mr. Stock would fain have taken him into his own house, at least for a time, so convinced was he of the sincere reformation both of heart and life; but Brown would not be prevailed on to be further burthensome to this generous friend. He insisted on being carried to the parish workhouse, which he said was a far better place than he deserved. In this house Mr. Stock furnished a small room for him, and sent him every day a morsel of meat from his own dinner. Tommy Williams begged that he might always be allowed to carry it, as some atonement for his having for a moment so far forgotten his duty, as rather to rejoice than sympathize in Brown's misfortunes. He never thought of this fault without sorrow, and often thanked his master for the wholesome lesson he then gave him, and he was the better for it all his life.

Mrs. Stock often carried poor Brown a dish of tea or a basin of good broth herself. He was quite a cripple, and never able to walk out as long as he lived. Mr. Stock, Will Simpson and Tommy Williams laid their heads together, and contrived a sort of barrow on which he was often carried to church by some of his poor neighbours, of which Tommy was always one; and he requited their kindness, by reading a good book to them whenever they would call in; and he spent his time in teaching their children to sing psalms or say the catechism.

It was no small joy to him thus to be enabled to go to church. Whenever he was carried by the Grayhound, he was much moved, and used to put up a prayer full of repentance for the past, and praise for the present.

PART V.

A dialogue between James Stock and Will Simpson, the shoemakers, as they sat at work, on the duty of carrying religion into our common business.

James Stock, and his journeyman Will Simpson, as I informed my readers in the second part, had resolved to work together one hour every evening, in order to pay for Tommy Williams's schooling. This circumstance brought them to be a good deal together when the rest of the men were gone home. Now it happened that Mr. Stock had a pleasant way of endeavouring to turn all common events to some use; and he thought it right on the present occasion to make the only return in his power to Will Simpson for his great kindness. For, said he, if Will gives up so much of his time to help to provide for this poor boy, it is the least I can do to try to turn part of that time to the purpose of promoting Will's spiritual good. Now as the bent of Stock's own mind was religious, it was easy to him to lead their talk to something profitable. He always took especial care, however, that the subject should be introduced properly, cheerfully, and without constraint. As he well knew that great good may be sometimes done by a prudent attention in seizing proper opportunities, so he knew that the cause of piety had been sometimes hurt by forcing serious subjects where there was clearly no disposition to receive them. I say he had found out that two things were necessary to the promoting of religion among his friends; a warm zeal to be always on the watch for occasions, and a cool judgment to distinguish which was the right time and place to make use of them. To know *how* to do good is a great matter, but to know *when* to do it is no small one.

Simpson was an honest good-natured young man; he was now become sober, and rather religiously disposed. But he was ignorant, he did not know much of the grounds of religion, or of the corruption of his own nature: He was regular at church, but was first drawn thither rather by his skill in psalm-singing than by any great devotion. He had left off going to the Grayhound, and often read the Bible, or some other good book on the Sunday evening. This he thought was quite enough; he thought the Bible was the prettiest history book in the world, and that religion was a very good thing for Sundays. But he did not much understand what business people had with it on working days. He had left off drinking because it had brought Williams to the grave, and his wife to dirt and rags; but not because he himself had seen the evil of sin. He now considered swearing and Sabbath-breaking as scandalous and indecent, but he had not found out that both were to be left off because they are highly offensive to God, and grieve his Holy Spirit. As Simpson was less self-conceited than most ignorant people are, Stock had always a good hope that when he should come to be better acquainted with the word of God, and with the evil of his own heart, he would become one day a good Christian. The great hindrance to this was, that he fancied himself so already.

One evening Simpson had been calling to Stock's mind how disorderly the house and shop, where they were now sitting quietly at work, had formerly been and he went on thus:

Will. How comfortably we live now, master, to what we used to do in Williams's time! I used then never to be happy but when we were keeping it up all night, but now I am as merry as the day is long. I find I am twice as happy since I am grown good and sober.

Stock. I am glad you are happy, Will, and I rejoice that you are sober; but I would not have you take too much pride in your own *goodness*, for fear it should become a sin, almost as great as some of those you have left off. Besides, I would not have you make quite so sure that you *are* good.

Will. Not good, master! why don't you find me regular and orderly at work?

Stock. Very much so; and accordingly I have a great respect for you.

Will. I pay every one his own, seldom miss church, have not been drunk since Williams died, have handsome clothes for Sundays, and save a trifle every week.

Stock. Very true, and very laudable it is; and to all this you may add that you very generously work an hour, for poor Tommy's education, every evening without fee or reward.

Will. Well, master, what can a man do more? If all this is not being good, I don't know what is.

Stock. All these things are very right as far as they go, and you could not well be a Christian without doing them. But I shall make you stare, perhaps, when I tell you, you may do all these things, and many more, and yet be no Christian.

Will. No Christian! surely, master, I do hope that after all I have done, you will not be so unkind as to say I am no Christian.

Stock. God forbid that I should say so, Will. I hope better things of you. But come now, what do you think it is to be a Christian?

Will. What! why to be christened when one is a child; to learn the catechism when one can read; to be confirmed when one is a youth; and to go to church when one is a man.

Stock. These are all very proper things, and quite necessary. They make part of a Christian's life. But for all that, a man may be exact in them all, and yet not be a Christian.

Will. Not be a christian! ha! ha! ha! you are very comical, master.

Stock. No, indeed, I am very serious, Will. At this rate it would be a very easy thing to be a Christian, and every man who went through certain forms would be a good man; and one man who observed those forms would be as good as another. Whereas, if we come to examine ourselves by the word of God, I am afraid there are but few comparatively whom our Saviour would allow to be real Christians. What is your notion of a Christian's practice?

Will. Why, he must not rob, nor murder, nor get drunk. He must avoid scandalous things, and do as other decent orderly people do.

Stock. It is easy enough to be what the world calls a Christian, but not to be what the Bible calls so.

Will. Why, master, we working men are not expected to be saints, and martyrs, and apostles, and ministers.

Stock. We are not. And yet, Will, there are not two sorts of Christianity; we are called to practise the same religion which they practised, and something of the same spirit is expected in us which we reverence in them. It was not saints and martyrs only to whom our Saviour said that they must *crucify the world with its affections and lusts.* We are called to *be holy* in our measure and degree, *as he who hath called us is holy.* It was not only saints and martyrs who were told that they must be *like minded with Christ.* That *they must do all to the glory of God.* That *they must renounce the spirit of the world, and deny themselves.* It was not to apostles only that Christ said, *They must have their conversation in heaven.* It was not to a few holy men, set apart for the altar, that he said, *They must set their affections on things above.* That *they must not be conformed to the world.* No, it was to fishermen, to publicans, to farmers, to day-labourers, to poor tradesmen, that he spoke when he told them, they must *love not the world, nor the things of the world.—That they must renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, grow in grace, lay up for themselves treasures in Heaven.*

Will. All this might be very proper for *them* to be taught, because they had not been bred up Christians, but Heathens or Jews: and Christ, wanted to make them his followers, that is, Christians. But thank God we do not want to be taught all this, for we *are* Christians, born in a Christian country, of Christian parents.

Stock. I suppose then you fancy that Christianity comes to people in a Christian country by nature?

Will. I think it comes by a good education or a good example. When a fellow who has

got any sense, sees a man cut off in his prime by drinking, like Williams, I think he will begin to leave it off. When he sees another man respected, like you, master, for honesty and sobriety, and going to church, why he will grow honest, and sober, and go to church: that is, he will see it his advantage to be a Christian.

Stock. Will, what you say is the truth, but 'tis not the whole truth. You are right as far as you go, but you do not go far enough. The worldly advantages of piety, are, as you suppose, in general great. Credit, prosperity, and health, almost naturally attend on a religious life, both because a religious life supposes a sober and industrious life, and because a man who lives in a course of duty puts himself in the way of God's blessing. But a true Christian has a still higher aim in view, and will follow religion even under circumstances, when it may hurt his credit and ruin his prosperity, if it should ever happen to be the will of God that he should be brought into such a trying state.

Will. Well, master, to speak the truth, if I go to church on Sundays, and follow my work in the week, I must say I think that is being good.

Stock. I agree with you, that he who does both, gives the best outward signs that he is good, as you call it. But our going to church, and even reading the Bible, are no proofs that we are as good as we need be, but rather that we do both these in order to make us better than we are. We do both on Sundays, as means, by God's blessing, to make us better all the week. We are to bring the fruits of that chapter or of that sermon into our daily life, and try to get our inmost heart and secret thoughts, as well as our daily conduct, amended by them.

Will. Why sure, master, you won't be so unreasonable as to want a body to be religious always? I can't do that neither. I'm not such a hypocrite as to pretend to it.

Stock. Yes, you can be so in every action of your life.

Will. What, master, always to be thinking about religion?

Stock. No, far from it, Will; much less to be always talking about it. But you must be always under its power and spirit.

Will. But surely 'tis pretty well if I do this when I go to church; or while I am saying my prayers. Even you, master, as strict as you are, would not have me always on my knees, nor always at church, I suppose: for then how would your work be carried on, and how would our town be supplied with shoes?

Stock. Very true, Will. 'Twould be no proof of our religion to let our customers go barefoot; but 'twould be a proof of our laziness, and we should starve, as we ought to do. The business of the world must not only be carried on, but carried on with spirit and activity. We have the same authority for not being *slothful in business*, as we have for being *fervent in spirit*. Religion has put godliness and laziness, as wide asunder as any two things in the world; and what God has separated let no man pretend to join. Indeed, the spirit of religion can have no fellowship with sloth, indolence, and self-indulgence. But still, a Christian does not carry on his common trade quite like another man neither; for something of the spirit which he labours to attain at church, he carries with him into his worldly concerns. While there are some who set up for Sunday Christians, who have no notion that they are bound to be week-day Christians too.

Will. Why, master, I do think, if God Almighty is contented with one day in seven, he won't thank you for throwing him the other six into the bargain. I thought he gave us them for our own use; and I am sure nobody works harder all the week than you do.

Stock. God, it is true, sets apart one day in seven for actual rest from labour, and for more immediate devotion to his service.—But show me that text wherein he says, thou shalt love the Lord thy God on *Sundays*—Thou shalt keep my commandments on the *Sabbath day*—To be carnally minded on *Sundays, is death*—Cease to do evil, and learn to do well *one day in seven*—Grow in grace on the *Lord's day*—Is there any such text?

Will. No, to be sure there is not; for that would be encouraging sin on all the other days.

Stock. Yes, just as you do when you make religion a thing for the church, and not for the world. There is no one lawful calling, in pursuing which we may not serve God acceptably. You and I may serve him while we are stitching this pair of boots. Farmer Furrow, while he is ploughing yonder field. Betsy West, over the way, whilst she is nursing her sick mother. Neighbour Incle, in measuring out his tapes and ribands. I say, all these may serve God just as acceptably in those employments as at church, I had almost said more so.

Will. Ay, indeed; how can that be?—Now you're too much on t'other side.

Stock. Because a man's trials in trade being often greater, they give him fresh means of glorifying God, and proving the sincerity of religion. A man who mixes in business, is naturally brought into continual temptations and difficulties. These will lead him, if he be a good man, to look more to God, than he perhaps would otherwise do.—He sees temptations on the right hand and on the left; he knows that there are snares all around him; this makes him watchful: he feels that the enemy within is too ready to betray him; this makes him humble himself; while a sense of his own difficulties makes him tender to the failings of others.

Will. Then you would make one believe, after all, that trade and business must be sinful in itself, since it brings a man into all these snares and scrapes.

Stock. No, no, Will; trade and business don't create evil passions—they were in the heart before—only now and then they seem to lie snug a little—our concerns with the world bring them out into action a little more, and thus show both others and ourselves what we really are. But then, as the world offers more trials on the one hand, so on the other it holds out more duties. If we are called to battle oftener, we have more opportunities of victory. Every temptation resisted, is an enemy subdued; and *he that ruleth his own spirit, is better than he that taketh a city*

Will. I don't quite understand you, master

Stock. I will try to explain myself.—There is no passion more called out by the transactions of trade than covetousness.—Now, 'tis impossible to withstand such a master sin as that, without carrying a good deal of the spirit of religion into one's trade.

Will. Well, I own I don't yet see how I am to be religious when I'm hard at work, or busy settling an account. I can't do two things at once; 'tis as if I were to pretend to make a shoe and cut out a boot at the same moment.

Stock. I tell you both must subsist together. Nay, the one must be the motive to the other. God commands us to be industrious, and if we love him, the desire of pleasing him should be the main spring of our industry.

Will. I don't see how I can always be thinking about pleasing God.

Stock. Suppose, now, a man had a wife and children whom he loved, and wished to serve; would he not be often thinking about them while he was at work? and though he would not be *always* thinking nor always talking about them, yet would not the very love he bore them be a constant spur to his industry? He would always be pursuing the same course from the same motive, though his words and even his thoughts must often be taken up in the common transactions of life.

Will. I say first one, then the other; now for labour, now for religion.

Stock. I will show that both must go together. I will suppose you were going to buy so many skins of our currier—that is quite a worldly transaction—you can't see what a spirit of religion has to do with buying a few calves' skins. Now, I tell you it has a great deal to do with it. Covetousness, a desire to make a good bargain, may rise up in your heart. Selfishness, a spirit of monopoly, a wish to get all, in order to distress others; these are evil desires, and must be subdued. Some opportunity of unfair gain offers, in which there may be much sin, and yet little scandal. Here a Christian will stop short; he will recollect, *That he who maketh haste to be rich shall hardly be innocent.* Perhaps the sin may be on the side of your dealer —*he* may want to overreach *you*—this is provoking—you are tempted to violent anger, perhaps to swear;—here is a fresh demand on you for a spirit of patience and moderation, as there was before for a spirit of justice and self-denial. If, by God's grace, you get the victory over these temptations, you are the better man for having been called out to them; always provided, that the temptations be not of your own seeking. If you give way, and sink under these temptations, don't go and say trade and business have made you covetous, passionate, and profane. No, no; depend upon it, you were so before; you would have had all these evil seeds lurking in your heart, if you had been loitering about at home and doing nothing, with the additional sin of idleness into the bargain. When you are busy, the devil often tempts you; when you are idle, you tempt the devil. If business and the world call these evil tempers into action, business and the world call that religion into action too which teaches us to resist them. And in this you see the week-day fruit of the Sunday's piety. 'Tis trade and business in the week which call us to put our Sunday readings, praying, and church-going into practice.

Will. Well, master, you have a comical way, somehow, of coming over one. I never should have thought there would have been any religion wanted in buying and selling a few calves' skins. But I begin to see there is a good deal in what you say. And, whenever I am doing a common action, I will try to remember that it must be done *after a godly sort.*

Stock. I hear the clock strike nine—let us leave off our work. I will only observe farther, that one good end of our bringing religion into our business is, to put us in mind not to undertake more business than we can carry on consistently with our religion. I shall never commend that man's diligence, though it is often commended by the world, who is not diligent about the salvation of his soul. We are as much forbidden to be overcharged with the *cares* of life, as with its *pleasures.* I only wish to prove to you, that a discreet Christian may be wise for both worlds; that he may employ his hands without entangling his soul, and labour for the meat that perisheth, without neglecting that which endureth unto eternal life; that he may be prudent for time whilst he is wise for eternity.

PART VI.

Dialogue the second. On the duty of carrying Religion into our amusements.

The next evening Will Simpson being got first to his work, Mr. Stock found him singing very cheerfully over his last. His master's entrance did not prevent his finishing his song, which concluded with these words:

> 'Since life is no more than a passage at best,
> Let us strew the way over with flowers.'

When Will had concluded his song, he turned to Mr. Stock, and said, 'I thank you, master, for first putting it into my head how wicked it is to sing profane and indecent songs. I never sing any now which have any wicked words in them.'

Stock. I am glad to hear it. So far you do well. But there are other things as bad as wicked words, nay worse perhaps, though they do not so much shock the ear of decency.

Will. What is that, master? What can be so bad as wicked words?

Stock. Wicked *thoughts*, Will. Which thoughts, when they are covered over with smooth words, and dressed out in pleasing rhymes, so as not to shock modest young people by the sound, do more harm to their principles, than those songs of which the words are so gross and disgusting, that no person of common decency can for a moment listen to them.

Will. Well, master, I am sure that was a very pretty song I was singing when you came in, and a song which very sober good people sing.

Stock. Do they? Then I will be bold to say

that singing such songs is no part of their goodness. I heard indeed but two lines of it, but they were so heathenish that I desire to hear no more.

Will. Now you are really too hard. What harm could there be in it? there was not one indecent word.

Stock. I own, indeed, that indecent words are particularly offensive. But, as I said before, though immodest expressions offend the ear more, they do not corrupt the heart, perhaps, much more than songs of which the words are decent, and the principle vicious. In the latter case, because there is nothing that shocks his ear, a man listens till the sentiment has so corrupted his heart, that his ears grow hardened too, and by long custom he loses all sense of the danger of profane diversions; and I must say I have often heard young women of character sing songs in company, which I should be ashamed to read by myself. But come, as we work, let us talk over this business a little; and first let us stick to this sober song of yours, that you boast so much about. (*repeats.*)

'Since life is no more than a passage at best,
Let us strew the way over with flowers.

Now what do you learn by this?

Will. Why, master, I don't pretend to learn much by it. But 'tis a pretty tune and pretty words.

Stock. But what do these pretty words mean?

Will. That we must make ourselves merry because life is short.

Stock. Will! Of what religion are you?

Will. You are always asking one such odd questions, master; why a Christian to be sure.

Stock. If I often ask you, or others this question, it is only because I like to know what grounds I am to go upon when I am talking with you or them. I conceive that there are in this country two sorts of people, Christians and no Christians. Now, if people profess to be of this first description, I expect one kind of notions, opinions, and behaviour from them; if they say they are of the latter, then I look for another set of notions and actions from them. I compel no man to think with me. I take every man at his word. I only expect him to think and believe according to the character he takes upon himself, and to act on the principles of that character which he professes to maintain.

Will. That's fair enough; I can't say but it is, to take a man at his own word, and on his own grounds.

Stock. Well then. Of whom does the Scripture speak when it says, *Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die?*

Will. Why of heathens to be sure, not of Christians.

Stock. And of whom when it says, *Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they are withered?*

Will. O that is Solomon's worldly fool.

Stock. You disapprove of both then.

Will. To be sure I do. I should not be a Christian if I did not.

Stock. And yet, though a Christian, you are admiring the very same thought in the song you were singing. How do you reconcile this?

Will. O there is no comparison between them. These several texts are designed to describe loose wicked heathens. Now I learn texts as part of my religion. But religion you know has nothing to do with a song. I sing a song for my pleasure.

Stock. In our last night's talk, Will, I endeavoured to prove to you that religion was to be brought into our *business*. I wish now to let you see that it is to be brought into our *pleasure* also. And that he who is really a Christian, must be a Christian in his very diversions.

Will. Now you are too strict again, master, as you last night declared, that in our business you would not have us always praying, so I hope that in our pleasure you would not have us always psalm-singing. I hope you would not have all one's singing to be about good things.

Stock. Not so, Will; but I would not have any part either of our business or our pleasure to be about evil things. It is one thing to be singing *about* religion, it is another thing to be singing *against* it. Saint Peter, I fancy, would not much have approved your favourite song. He, at least seemed to have another view of the matter, when he said, *The end of all things is at hand.* Now this text teaches much the same awful truth with the first line of your song. But let us see to what different purposes the apostle and the poet turn the very same thought. Your song says, because life is so short, let us make it merry. Let us divert ourselves so much on the road, that we may forget the end. Now what says the apostle, *Because the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.*

Will. Why master, I like to be sober too, and have left off drinking. But still I never thought that we were obliged to carry texts out of the Bible to try the soundness of a song; and to enable us to judge if we might be both merry and wise in singing it.

Stock. Providence has not so stinted our enjoyments, Will, but he has left us many subjects of harmless merriment: but, for my own part, I am never certain that any one is quite harmless till I have tried it by this rule that you seem to think so strict. There is another favourite catch which I heard you and some of the workmen humming yesterday.

Will. I will prove to you that there is not a word of harm in *that;* pray listen now. (*sings.*)

'Which is the best day to drink—Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday?'

Stock. Now, Will, do you really find your unwillingness to drink is so great that you stand in need of all these incentives to provoke you to it? Do you not find temptation strong enough without exciting your inclinations, and whetting your appetites in this manner? Can any thing be more unchristian than to persuade youth by pleasant words, set to the most alluring music, that the pleasures of drinking are so great, that every day in the week, naming them all successively, by way of fixing and enlarging the idea, is equally fit, equally proper, and equally delightful, for what?—for the low and sensual purpose of getting drunk. Tell me, Will, are you so *very* averse to pleasure? Are

you naturally so cold and dead to all passion and temptation, that you really find it necesaary to inflame your imagination, and disorder your senses, in order to excite a quicker relish for the pleasures of sin?

Will. All this is true enough, indeed; but I never saw it in this light before.

Stock. As I passed by the Grayhound last night, in my way to my evening's walk in the fields, I caught this one verse of a song which the club were singing:

'Bring the flask, the music bring,
Joy shall quickly find us;
Drink and dance, and laugh and sing,
And cast dull care behind us.'

When I got into the fields, I could not forbear comparing this song with the second lesson last Sunday evening at church; these were the words: *Take heed lest at any time your heart be overcharged with drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares, for as a snare shall it come upon all them that are on the face of the earth.*

Will. Why, to be sure, if the second lesson was right, the song must be wrong.

Stock. I ran over in my mind also a comparison between such songs as that which begins with

'Drink and drive care away.'

with those injunctions of holy writ, *Watch and pray therefore, that you enter not into temptation;* and again, *Watch and pray that you may escape all these things.* I say I compared this with the song I allude to,

Drink and drive care away,
Drink and be merry;
You'll ne'er go the faster
To the Stygian ferry.'

I compared this with that awful admonition of Scripture how to pass the time. *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Will. I am afraid then, master, you would not much approve of what I used to think a very pretty song, which begins with,

'A plague on those musty old lubbers,
Who teach us to fast and to think.'

Stock. Will, what would you think of any one who should sit down and write a book or a song to abuse the clergy?

Will. Why I should think he was a very wicked fellow, and I hope no one would look into such a book, or sing such a song.

Stock. And yet it must certainly be the clergy, who are scoffed at in that verse, it being their professed business to teach us to think and be serious.

Will. Ay, master, and now you have opened my eyes, I think I can make some of those comparisons myself between the spirit of the Bible, and the spirit of these songs.

'Bring the flask, the goblet bring,'

won't stand very well in company with the threat of the prophet: *Wo unto them that rise up early, that they may mingle strong drink.*

Stock. Ay, Will; and these thoughtless people who live up to their singing, seem to be the very people described in another place as glorying in their intemperance, and acting what their songs describe:—*They look at the wine, and say it is red, it moveth itself aright in the cup.*

Will. I do hope I shall for the future not only become more careful what songs I sing myself, but also not to keep company with those who sing nothing else but what in my sober judgment, I now see to be wrong.

Stock. As we shall have no *body* in the world to come, it is a pity not only to make our pleasures here consist entirely in the delights of animal life, but to make our very songs consist in extolling and exalting those delights which are unworthy of the man as well as of the Christian. If, through temptation or weakness, we fall into errors, let us not establish and confirm them by picking up all the songs and scraps of verses which excuse, justify, and commend sin. That time is short, is a reason given by these song mongers why we should give into greater indulgences. That time is short, is a reason given by the apostle why we should enjoy our dearest comforts as if we enjoyed them not.

Now, Will, I hope you will see the importance of so managing, that our diversions (for diversions of some kind we all require,) may be as carefully chosen as our other employments. For to make them such as effectually drive out of our minds all that the Bible and the minister have been putting into them, seems to me as imprudent as it is unchristian. But this is not all. Such sentiments as these songs contain, set off by the prettiest music, heightened by liquor and all the noise and spirit of what is called jovial company, all this, I say, not only puts every thing that is right out of the mind, but puts every thing that is wrong into it. Such songs, therefore, as tend to promote levity, thoughtlessness, loose imaginations, false views of life, forgetfulness of death, contempt of whatever is serious, and neglect of whatever is sober, whether they be love songs, or drinking songs, will not, cannot be sung by any man or any woman who makes a serious profession of Christianity.*

* It is with regret I have lately observed, that the fashionable author and singer of songs more loose, profane, and corrupt, than any of those here noticed, not only received a prize as the reward of his important services, but received also the public acknowledgments of an illustrious society for having contributed to the happiness of their country

THE HISTORY OF TOM WHITE, THE POST BOY.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

Tom White was one of the best drivers of a post-chaise on the Bath road. Tom was the son of an honest labourer at a little village in Wiltshire: he was an active industrious boy, and as soon as he was old enough he left his father, who was burdened with a numerous family, and went to live with farmer Hodges, a sober worthy man in the same village. He drove the wagon all the week; and on Sundays, though he was now grown up, the farmer required him to attend the Sunday school, carried on under the inspection of Dr. Shepherd, the worthy vicar, and always made him read his Bible in the evening after he had served his cattle; and would have turned him out of his service if he had ever gone to the ale-house for his own pleasure.

Tom by carrying some wagon loads of fagots to the Bear inn, at Devizes, made many acquaintances in the stable-yard. He soon learnt to compare his own carter's frock, and shoes thick set with nails, with the smart red jacket, and tight boots of the post-boys, and grew ashamed of his own homely dress; he was resolved to drive a chaise, to get money, and to see the world. Foolish fellow! he never considered that, though it is true, a wagoner works hard all day, yet he gets a quiet evening at home, and undisturbed rest at night. However, as there must be chaise-boys as well as plough-boys, there was no great harm in the change. The evil company to which it exposed him, was the chief mischief. He left farmer Hodges, though not without sorrow at quitting so kind a master, and got himself hired at the Black Bear.

Notwithstanding the temptations to which he was now exposed, Tom's good education stood by him for some time. At first he was frightened to hear the oaths and wicked words which are too often uttered in a stable-yard. However, though he thought it very wrong, he had not the courage to reprove it, and the next step to being easy at seeing others sin is to sin ourselves. By degrees he began to think it manly, and a mark of spirit in others to swear; though the force of good habits was so strong, that at first when he ventured to swear himself it was with fear, and in a low voice. But he was soon laughed out of his sheepishness, as they called it; and though he never became so profane and blasphemous as some of his companions (for he never swore in cool blood, or in mirth, as so many do) yet he would too often use a dreadful bad word when he was in a passion with his horses. And here I cannot but drop a hint on the deep folly as well as wickedness, of being in a great rage with poor beasts, who, not having the gift of reason, cannot be moved like human creatures, with all the wicked words that are said to them; though these dumb creatures, unhappily, having the gift of feeling, suffer as much as human creatures can do, at the cruel and unnecessary beatings given them. Tom had been bred up to think that drunkenness was a great sin, for he never saw farmer Hodges drunk in his life, and where a farmer is sober himself his men are less likely to drink, or if they do the master can reprove them with the better grace.

Tom was not naturally fond of drink, yet for the sake of being thought merry company, and a hearty fellow, he often drank more than he ought. As he had been used to go to church twice on a Sunday, while he lived with the farmer (who seldom used his horses on that day, except to carry his wife to church behind him) Tom felt a little uneasy when he was sent the very first Sunday a long journey with a great family; for I cannot conceal the truth, that too many gentlefolks will travel, when there is no necessity for it, on a Sunday, and when Monday would answer the end just as well. This is a great grief to all good and sober people, both rich and poor; and it is still more inexcusable in the great, who have every day at their command. However, he kept his thoughts to himself, though he could not now and then help thinking how quietly things were going on at the farmer's, whose wagoner on a Sunday led as easy life as if he had been a gentleman. But he soon lost all thoughts of this kind, and in time did not know a Sunday from a Monday. Tom went on prosperously, as it is called, for three or four years, got plenty of money, but saved not a shilling. As soon as his horses were once in the stable, whoever would might see them fed for Tom. He had other fish to fry.—Fives, cards, cudgel-playing, laying wagers, and keeping loose company, each of which he at first disliked, and each of which he soon learned to practise, ran away with all his money, and all his spare time; and though he was generally in the way as soon as the horses were ready (because if there was no driving there was no pay) yet he did not care whether the carriage was clean or dirty, if the horses looked well or ill, if the harness was whole, or the horses were shod. The certainty that the gains of to-morrow would make up for the extravagance of to-day, made him quite thoughtless and happy; for he was young, active, and healthy, and never foresaw that a rainy day might come, when he would want what he now squandered.

One day being a little flustered with liquor as he was driving his return chaise through Brentford, he saw just before him another empty carriage, driven by one of his acquaintance: he whipped up his horses, resolving to outstrip the other, and swearing dreadfully that he would be at the Red Lion first—for a pint—'Done,' cried the other—a wager. Both cut and spurred the poor beasts with the usual fury, as if their credit had been really at stake, or their lives had depended on this foolish contest. Tom's chaise had now got up to that of his rival, and they drove along side of each other with great fury and many imprecations. But in a narrow part Tom's chaise being in the middle, with his antagonist on one side, and a cart driving against him on the other, the horses reared, the carriages

got entangled; Tom roared out a great oath to the other to stop, which he either could not, or would not do, but returned an horrid imprecation that he would win the wager if he was alive.—Tom's horses took fright, and he himself was thrown to the ground with great violence.—As soon as he could be got from under the wheels, he was taken up senseless, his leg was broken in two places, and his body much bruised. Some people whom the noise had brought together, put him in the post-chaise in which the wagoner kindly assisted, but the other driver seemed careless and indifferent, and drove off, observing with a brutal coolness, I am sorry I have lost my pint; I should have beat him hollow, had it not been for this *little accident.* Some gentlemen who came out of the inn, after reprimanding this savage, inquired who he was, wrote to inform his master, and got him discharged: resolving that neither they nor any of their friends would ever employ him, and he was long out of place, and nobody ever cared to be driven by him.

Tom was taken to one of those excellent hospitals with which London abounds. His agonies were dreadful, his leg was set, and a high fever came on. As soon as he was left alone to reflect on his condition, his first thought was that he should die, and his horror was inconceivable. Alas! said he, what will become of my poor soul? I am cut off in the very commission of three great sins:—I was drunk, I was in a horrible passion, and I had oaths and blasphemies in my mouth. He tried to pray, but he could not; his mind was all distraction, and he thought he was so very wicked that God would not forgive him; because, says he, I have sinned against light and knowledge; I have had a sober education, and good examples; I was bred in the fear of God, and the knowledge of Christ, and I deserve nothing but punishment. At length he grew light-headed, and there was little hope of his life. Whenever he came to his senses for a few minutes, he cried out, O! that my old companions could now see me, surely they would take warning by my sad fate, and repent before it is too late.

By the blessing of God on the skill of the surgeon, and the care of the nurses, he however, grew better in a few days. And here let me stop to remark, what a mercy it is that we live in a christian country, where the poor, when sick, or lame, or wounded, are taken as much care of as any gentry; nay, in some respects more, because in hospitals and infirmaries there are more doctors and surgeons to attend, than most private gentlefolks can afford to have at their own houses, whereas *there never was an hospital in the whole heathen world.* Blessed be God for this, among the thousand other excellent fruits of the christian religion! A religion which, like its Divine founder, while its grand object is the salvation of men's souls, teaches us also to relieve their bodily wants. It directs us never to forget that He who forgave sins, healed diseases, and while he preached the Gospel, fed the multitude.

It was eight weeks before Tom could be taken out of bed. This was a happy affliction; for by the grace of God, this long sickness and solitude gave him time to reflect on his past life. He began seriously to hate those darling sins which had brought him to the brink of ruin. He could now pray heartily; he confessed and lamented his iniquities, with many tears, and began to hope that the mercies of God, through the merits of a Redeemer, might yet be extended to him on his sincere repentance. He resolved never more to return to the same evil courses, but he did not trust in his own strength, but prayed that God would give him grace for the future, as well as pardon for the past. He remembered, and he was humbled at the thought, that he used to have short fits of repentance, and to form resolutions of amendment, in his wild and thoughtless days; and often when he had a bad head-ache after a drinking bout, or had lost his money at all-fours, he vowed never to drink or play again. But as soon as his head was well and his pockets recruited, he forgot all his resolutions. And how should it be otherwise? for he trusted in his own strength, he never prayed to God to strengthen him, nor ever avoided the next temptation. He thought that amendment was a thing to be set about at any time; he did not know that *it is the grace of God which bringeth us to repentance.*

The case was now different. Tom began to find that *his strength was perfect weakness*, and that he could do nothing without the divine assistance, for which he prayed heartily and constantly. He sent home for his Bible and Prayer book, which he had not opened for two years, and which had been given him when he left the Sunday school. He spent the chief part of his time in reading them, and derived great comfort, as well as great knowledge, from this employment of his time. The study of the Bible filled his heart with gratitude to God, who had not cut him off in the midst of his sins; but had given him space for repentance; and the agonies he had lately suffered with his broken leg increased his thankfulness, that he had escaped the more dreadful pain of eternal misery. And here let me remark what encouragement this is for rich people to give away Bibles and good books, and not to lose all hope, though, for a time, they see little or no good effect from it. According to all appearance, Tom's books were never likely to do him any good, and yet his generous benefactor, who had cast his bread upon the waters, found it after many days; for this Bible, which had lain untouched for years, was at last made the instrument of his reformation. God will work in his own good time, and in his own way, but *our* zeal and our exertions are the means by which he commonly chooses to work.

As soon as he got well, and was discharged from the hospital, Tom began to think he must return to get his bread. At first he had some scruples about going back to his old employ: but, says he sensibly enough, gentlefolks must travel, travellers must have chaises, and chaises must have drivers: 'tis a very honest calling, and I don't know that goodness belongs to one sort of business more than another; and he who can be good in a state of great temptation, provided the calling be lawful, and the temptations are not of his own seeking, and he be diligent

in prayer, may be better than another man for aught I know: and *all that belongs to us is, to do our duty in that state of life in which it shall please God to call us;* and to leave events in God's hand. Tom had rubbed up his catechism at the hospital, and 'tis a pity that people don't look at their catechism sometimes when they are grown up; for it is full as good for men and women as it is for children; nay, better; for though the answers contained in it are intended for children to *repeat*, yet the duties enjoined in it are intended for men and women to put in *practice*. It is, if I may so speak, the very grammar of Christianity and of our church, and they who understand every part of their catechism thoroughly, will not be ignorant of any thing which a plain Christian need know.

Tom now felt grieved that he was obliged to drive on Sundays. But people who are in earnest and have their hearts in a thing, can find helps in all cases. As soon as he had set down his company at their stage, and had seen his horses fed, says Tom, a man who takes care of his horses, will generally think it right to let them rest an hour or two at least. In every town it is a chance but there may be a church open during part of that time. If the prayers should be over, I'll try hard for the sermon; and if I dare not stay to the sermon it is a chance but I may catch the prayers; it is worth trying for, however; and as I used to think nothing of making a push, for the sake of getting an hour to gamble, I need not grudge to take a little pains extraordinary to serve God. By this watchfulness he soon got to know the hours of service at all the towns on the road he travelled; and while the horses fed, Tom went to church; and it became a favourite proverb with him, that *prayers and provender hinder no man's journey;* and I beg leave to recommend Tom's maxim to all travellers; whether master or servant, carrier or coachman.

At first his companions wanted to laugh and make sport of this—but when they saw that no lad on the road was up so early or worked so hard as Tom; when they saw no chaise so neat, no glasses so bright, no harness so tight, no driver so diligent, so clean, or so civil, they found he was no subject to make sport at. Tom indeed was very careful in looking after the linch pins; in never giving his horses too much water when they were hot; nor whatever was his haste, would he ever gallop them up hill, strike them across the head, or when tired, cut and slash them, or gallop over the stones, as soon as he got into town, as some foolish fellows do. What helped to cure Tom of these bad practices, was that remark he met with in the Bible, that *a good man is merciful to his beast.* He was much moved one day on reading the prophet Jonah, to observe what compassion the great God of Heaven and earth had for poor beasts: for one of the reasons there given why the Almighty was unwilling to destroy the great city of Nineveh was, *because there was much cattle in it.* After this, Tom never could bear to see a wanton stroke inflicted. Doth God care for horses, said he, and shall man be cruel to them?

Tom soon grew rich for one in his station: for every gentleman on the road would be driven by no other lad if *careful Tom* was to be had. Being diligent, he *got* a great deal of money; being frugal, he *spent* but little: and having no vices, he *wasted* none. He soon found out that there was some meaning in that text which says, that *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come:* for the same principles which make a man sober and honest, have also a natural tendency to make him healthy and rich; while a drunkard and a spendthrift can hardly escape being sick and a beggar. Vice is the parent of misery in both worlds.

After a few years Tom begged a holiday, and made a visit to his native village; his good character had got thither before him. He found his father was dead, but during his long illness Tom had supplied him with money, and by allowing him a trifle every week, had had the honest satisfaction of keeping him from the parish. Farmer Hodges was still living, but being grown old and infirm, he was desirous to retire from business. He retained a great regard for his old servant, Tom; and finding he was worth money, and knowing he knew something of country business, he offered to let him a small farm at an easy rate, and promised his assistance in the management for the first year, with the loan of a small sum of money, that he might set out with a pretty stock. Tom thanked him with tears in his eyes, went back and took a handsome leave of his master, who made him a present of a horse and cart, in acknowledgment of his long and faithful services; for, says he, I have saved many horses by Tom's care and attention, and I could well afford to do the same by every servant who did the same by me; and should be a richer man at the end of every year by the same generosity, provided I could meet with just and faithful servants who deserve the same rewards. Tom was soon settled in his new farm, and in less than a year had got every thing neat and decent about him. Farmer Hodge's long experience and friendly advice, joined to his own industry and hard labour, soon brought the farm to great perfection. The regularity, sobriety, peaceableness, and piety of his daily life, his constant attendance at church twice every Sunday, and his decent and devout behaviour when there, soon recommended him to the notice of Dr. Shepherd, who was still living a pattern of zeal, activity, and benevolence to all parish priests. The doctor soon began to hold up Tom, or, as we must now more properly term him, Mr. Thomas White, to the imitation of the whole parish, and the frequent and condescending conversation of this worthy clergyman contributed no less than his preaching to the improvement of his new parishioner in piety.

Farmer White soon found out that a dairy could not well be carried on without a mistress, and began to think seriously of marrying; he prayed to God to direct him in so important a business. He knew that a tawdry, vain, dressy girl was not likely to make good cheese and butter, and that a worldly ungodly woman would make a sad wife and mistress of a family. He soon heard of a young woman of excellent character, who had been bred up by the vicar's

ady, and still lived in the family as upper maid. She was prudent, sober, industrious and religious. Her neat, modest, and plain appearance at church (for she was seldom seen any where else out of her master's family) was an example to all persons in her station, and never failed to recommend her to strangers, even before they had an opportunity of knowing the goodness of her character. It was her character, however, which recommended her to farmer White. He knew that *favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised*:—ay, and not only praised, but chosen too, says farmer White, as he took down his hat from the nail on which it hung, in order to go and wait on Dr. Shepherd, to break his mind and ask his consent; for he thought it would be a very unhandsome return for all the favours he was receiving from his minister, to decoy away his faithful servant from her place without his consent.

This worthy gentleman, though sorry to lose so valuable a member of his little family, did not scruple a moment about parting with her, when he found it would be so greatly to her advantage. Tom was agreeably surprised to hear she had saved fifty pounds by her frugality. The doctor married them himself, farmer Hodges being present.

In the afternoon of the wedding day, Dr. Shepherd condescended to call on farmer and Mrs. White, to give a few words of advice on the new duties they had entered into; a common custom with him on these occasions. He often took an opportunity to drop, in the most kind and tender way, a hint upon the great indecency of making marriages, christenings, and above all, funerals, days of riot and excess, as is too often the case in country villages. The expectation that the vicar might possibly drop in, in his walks, on these festivals, often restrained excessive drinking, and improper conversation, even among those who were not restrained by higher motives, as farmer and Mrs. White were.

What the doctor said was always in such a cheerful, good-humoured way, that it was sure to increase the pleasure of the day, instead of damping it. 'Well, farmer,' said he, 'and you, my faithful Sarah, any other friend might recommend peace and agreement to you on your marriage; but I, on the contrary, recommend cares and strifes.'* The company stared—but Sarah, who knew that her old master was a facetious gentleman, and always had some meaning behind, looked serious. 'Cares and strife, sir, said the farmer, 'what do you mean?'—'I mean,' said he, 'for the first, that your cares shall be who shall please God most, and your strifes, who shall serve him best, and do your duty most faithfully. Thus, all your cares and strifes being employed to the highest purposes, all petty cares and worldly strifes shall be at an end.'

'Always remember, that you have, both of you, a better friend than each other.' The company stared again, and thought no woman could have so good a friend as her husband. 'As you have chosen each other from the best motives,' continued the doctor, 'you have every reasonable ground to hope for happiness; but as this world is a soil in which troubles and misfortunes will spring up; troubles from which you cannot save one another; misfortunes which no human prudence can avoid: then remember, 'tis the best wisdom to go to that friend who is always near, always willing, and always able to help you; and that friend is God.'

'Sir,' said farmer White, 'I humbly thank you for all your kind instructions, of which I shall now stand more in need than ever, as I shall have more duties to fulfil. I hope the remembrance of my past offences will keep me humble, and the sense of my remaining sin will keep me watchful. I set out in the world, sir, with what is called a good-natural disposition, but I soon found to my cost, that without God's grace that will carry a man but a little way. A good temper is a good thing, but nothing but the fear of God can enable one to bear up against temptation, evil company, and evil passions. The misfortune of breaking my leg, as I then thought it, has proved the greatest blessing of my life. It showed me my own weakness, the value of the Bible, and the goodness of God. How many of my brother drivers have I seen, since that time, cut off in the prime of life by drinking, or sudden accident, while I have not only been spared, but blessed and prospered. O sir!' it would be the joy of my heart, if some of my old comrades, good-natured, civil fellows (whom I can't help loving) could see, as I have done, the danger of evil courses before it is too late. Though they may not hearken to you, sir, or any other minister they may believe *me* because I have been one of them: and I can speak from experience, of the great difference there is, even as to worldly comfort, between a life of sobriety and a life of sin. I could tell them, sir, not as a thing I have read in a book, but as a truth I feel in my own heart, that to fear God and keep his commandments, will not only bring a man peace at last, but will make him happy *now*. And I will venture to say, sir, that all the stocks, pillories, prisons, and gibbets in the land, though so very needful to keep bad men in order, yet will never restrain a good man from committing evil half so much as that single text, *How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*' Dr. Shepherd condescended to approve of what the farmer had said, kindly shook him by the hand and took leave.

* See Dodd's Sayings

PART II.

The Way to Plenty, or the second part of Tom White. Written in 1795, the year of scarcity.

Tom White, as we have shown in the first part of this history, from an idle post boy was become a respectable farmer. God had blessed his industry, and he had prospered in the world. He was sober and temperate, and, as was the natural consequence, he was active and healthy. He was industrious and frugal, and he became prosperous in his circumstances. This is in the

ordinary course of Providence. But it is not a certain and necessary rule. *God maketh his sun to shine on the just and on the unjust.* A man who uses every honest means of thrift and industry, will, in most cases, find success attend his labours. But still, the *race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong.* God is sometimes pleased, for wise ends, to disappoint all the worldly hopes of the most upright man. His corn may be smitten by a blight; his barns may be consumed by fire; his cattle may be carried off by distemper. And to these, and other misfortunes, the good man is as liable as the spendthrift or the knave. Success is the *common* reward of industry, but if it were its *constant* reward, the industrious would be tempted to look no further than the present state. They would lose one strong ground of their faith. It would set aside the scripture scheme. This world would then be looked on as a state of reward, instead of trial, and we should forget to look to a day of final retribution.

Farmer White never took it into his head, that, because he paid his debts, worked early and late, and ate the bread of carefulness, he was therefore to come into no misfortune like other folk, but was to be free from the common trials and troubles of life. He knew that prosperity was far from being a sure mark of God's favour, and had read in good books, and especially in the Bible, of the great poverty and afflictions of the best of men. Though he was no great scholar, he had sense enough to observe, that a time of public prosperity was not always a time of public virtue; and he thought that what was true of a whole nation might be true of one man. So the more he prospered the more he prayed that prosperity might not corrupt his heart. And when he saw lately signs of public distress coming on, he was not half so much frightened as some others were, because he thought it might do us good in the long run; and he was in hope that a little poverty might bring on a little penitence. The great grace he laboured after was that of a cheerful submission. He used to say, that if the Lord's prayer had only contained those four little words, *Thy will be done*, it would be worth more than the biggest book in the world without them.

Dr. Shepherd, the worthy vicar (with whom the farmer's wife had formerly lived as housekeeper) was very fond of taking a walk with him about his grounds, and he used to say that he learnt as much from the farmer as the farmer did from him. If the doctor happened to observe, I am afraid these long rains will spoil this fine piece of oats, the farmer would answer, but then, sir, think how good it is for the grass. If the doctor feared the wheat would be but indifferent, the farmer was sure the rye would turn out well. When grass failed, he did not doubt but turnips would be plenty. Even for floods and inundations he would find out some way to justify Providence. 'Tis better, said he, to have our lands a little overflowed, than that the springs should be dried up, and our cattle faint for lack of water. When the drought came, he thanked God that the season would be healthy; and the high winds, which frightened others, he said, served to clear the air. Whoever, or whatever was wrong, he was always sure that Providence was in the right. And he used to say, that a man with ever so small an income, if he had but frugality and temperance, and would cut off all vain desires, and cast his care upon God, was richer than a lord who was tormented by vanity and covetousness. When he saw others in the wrong, he did not, however, abuse them for it, but took care to avoid the same fault. He had sense and spirit enough to break through many old, but very bad customs of his neighbours. If a thing is wrong in itself (said he one day to farmer Hodges) a whole parish doing it can't make it right. And as to its being an old custom, why, if it be a good one, I like it the better for being old, because it has had the stamp of ages, and the sanction of experience on its worth. But if it be old as well as bad, that is another reason for my trying to put an end to it, that we may not mislead our children as our fathers have misled us.

The Roof-Raising.

Some years after he was settled, he built a large new barn. All the workmen were looking forward to the usual holiday of roof-raising. On this occasion it was a custom to give a dinner to the workmen, with so much liquor after it, that they got so drunk that they not only lost the remaining half day's work, but they were not always able to work the following day.

Mrs. White provided a plentiful dinner for roof-raising, and gave each man his mug of beer. After a hearty meal they began to grow clamorous for more drink. The farmer said, 'My lads, I don't grudge you a few gallons of ale merely for the sake of saving my liquor, though that is some consideration, especially in these dear times; but I never will, knowingly, help any man to make a beast of himself. I am resolved to break through a bad custom. You are now well refreshed. If you will go cheerfully to your work, you will have half a day's pay to take on Saturday night more than you would have if this afternoon were wasted in drunkenness. For this your families will be the better; whereas, were I to give you more liquor, when you have already had enough, I should help to rob them of their bread. But I wish to show you, that I have your good at heart full as much as my profit. If you will now go to work, I will give you all another mug at night when you leave off. Thus your time will be saved, your families helped, and my ale will not go to make reasonable creatures worse than brute beasts.'

Here he stopped. 'You are in right on't, master,' said Tom the thatcher; 'you are a hearty man, farmer,' said John Plane, the carpenter 'Come along, boys,' said Tim Brick the mason: so they all went merrily to work, fortified with a good dinner. There was only one drunken surly fellow that refused; this was Dick Guzzle, the smith.—Dick never works above two or three days in the week, and spends the others at the Red Lion. He swore, that if the farmer did not give him as much liquor as he liked at roof-raising, he would not strike another stroke, but would leave the job unfinished, and he might get hands where he could. Farmer White took him at his word, and paid him

off directly: glad enough to get rid of such a sot, whom he had only employed from pity to a large and almost starving family. When the men came for their mug in the evening, the farmer brought out the remains of the cold gammon; they made a hearty supper, and thanked him for having broken through a foolish custom, which was afterwards much left off in that parish, though Dick would not come into it, and lost most of his work in consequence.

Farmer White's labourers were often complaining, that things were so dear that they could not buy a bit of meat. He knew it was partly true, but not entirely; for it was before these very hard times that their complaints began. One morning he stept out to see how an outhouse which he was thatching went on. He was surprised to find the work at a stand. He walked over to the thatcher's house. 'Tom,' said he, 'I desire that piece of work may be finished directly. If a shower comes my grain will be spoiled.' 'Indeed, master, I shan't work to-day, nor to-morrow neither,' said Tom.—'You forget that 'tis Easter Monday, and to-morrow is Easter Tuesday. And so on Wednesday I shall thatch away, master.—But it is hard if a poor man, who works all the seasons round, may not enjoy these few holydays, which come but once a year.'

'Tom,' said the farmer, 'when these days were first put into our prayer-book, the good men who ordained them to be kept, little thought that the time would come when *holyday* should mean *drunken-day*, and that the seasons which they meant to distinguish by superior piety, should be converted into seasons of more than ordinary excess. How much dost think now I shall pay thee for this piece of thatch? 'Why, you know, master, you have let it to me by the great. I think between this and to-morrow night, as the weather is so fine, I could clear about four shillings, after I have paid my boy; but thatching does not come often, and other work is not so profitable.' 'Very well, Tom; and how much now do you think you may spend in these two holydays?' 'Why, master, if the ale is pleasant, and the company merry, I do not expect to get off for less than three shillings.' 'Tom, can you do pounds, shillings, and pence?' 'I can make a little score, master, behind the kitchen door, with a bit of chalk, which is as much as I want.' 'Well, Tom, add the four shillings you would have earned to the three you intend to spend, what does that make?' 'Let me see! three and four make seven. Seven shillings, master.' 'Tom, you often tell me the times are so bad that you can never buy a bit of meat. Now here is the cost of two joints at once: to say nothing of the sin of wasting time and getting drunk.' 'I never once thought of that,' said Tom. 'Now Tom,' said the farmer, if I were you, I would step over to butcher Jobbins's, buy a shoulder of mutton, which being left from Saturday's market you will get a little cheaper. This I would make my wife bake in a deep dish full of potatoes. I would then go to work, and when the dinner was ready I would go and enjoy it with my wife and children; you need not give the mutton to the brats, the potatoes will have all the gravy, and be very savoury for them.' 'Ay, but I have got no beer, master; the times are so hard that a poor man can't afford to brew a drop of drink now as we used to do.'

'Times are bad, and malt is very dear, Tom, and yet both don't prevent you from spending seven shillings in keeping holyday. Now send for a quart of ale as it is to be a feast: and you will even then be four shillings richer than if you had gone to the public house. I would have you put by these four shillings, till you can add a couple to them; with this I would get a bushel of malt, and my wife should brew it, and you may take a pint of your own beer at home of a night, which will do you more good than a gallon at the Red Lion.' 'I have a great mind to take your advice, master, but I shall be made such fun of at the Lion! they will so laugh at me if I don't go!' 'Let those laugh that win, Tom.' 'But master, I have got a friend to meet me there.' 'Then ask your friend to come and eat a bit of your cold mutton at night, and here is sixpence for another pot, if you will promise to brew a small cask of your own.' 'Thank you, master, and so I will; and I won't go to the Lion. Come boy, bring the helm, and fetch the ladder.' And so Tom was upon the roof in a twinkling. The barn was thatched, the mutton bought, the beer brewed, the friend invited, and the holyday enjoyed.

The Sheep Shearing

Dr. Shepherd happened to say to farmer White one day, that there was nothing that he disliked more than the manner in which sheep-shearing and harvest-home were kept by some in his parish. 'What,' said the good doctor, 'just when we are blest with a prosperous gathering in of these natural riches of our land, the fleece of our flocks; when our barns are crowned with plenty, and we have, through the Divine blessing on our honest labour, reaped the fruits of the earth in due season; is that very time to be set apart for ribaldry, and riot, and drunkenness? Do we thank God for his mercies, by making ourselves unworthy and unfit to enjoy them? When he crowns the year with his goodness, shall we affront him by our impiety? It is more than a common insult to his providence; it is a worse than brutal return to *Him* who openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness.'

'I thank you for the hint, sir,' said the farmer. 'I am resolved to rejoice though, and others shall rejoice with me: and we will have a merry night on't.'

So Mrs. White dressed a very plentiful supper of meat and pudding; and spread out two tables. The farmer sat at the head of one, consisting of some of his neighbours, and all his work-people. At the other sat his wife, with two long benches on each side of her. On these benches sat all the old and infirm poor, especially those who lived in the work-house, and had no day of festivity to look forward to in the whole year but this. On the grass, in the little court, sat the children of his labourers, and of the other poor, whose employment it had been to gather flowers, and dress and adorn the horns of the ram; for the farmer did not wish to put an end

to an old custom, if it was innocent.—His own children stood by the table, and he gave them plenty of pudding, which they carried to the children of the poor, with a little draught of cider to every one. The farmer who never sat down without begging a blessing on his meal, did it with suitable solemnity on the present joyful occasion.

Dr. Shepherd practised one very useful method, which I dare say was not peculiar to himself; a method of which I doubt not other country clergymen have found the advantage. He was often on the watch to observe those seasons when a number of his parishioners were assembled together, not only at any season of festivity, but at their work. He has been known to turn a walk through a hay-field to good account; and has been found to do as much good by a few minutes discourse with a little knot of reapers, as by a Sunday's sermon. He commonly introduced his religious observations by some questions relating to their employment; he first gained their affections by his kindness, and then converted his influence over them to their soul's good. The interest he took in their worldly affairs opened their hearts to the reception of those divine truths which he was always earnest to impress upon them. By these methods too he got acquainted with their several characters, their spiritual wants, their individual sins, dangers, and temptations, which enabled him to preach with more knowledge and successful application, than those ministers can do who are unacquainted with the state of their congregations. It was a remark of Dr. Shepherd, that a thorough acquaintance with human nature was one of the most important species of knowledge a clergyman could possess.

The sheep-shearing feast, though orderly and decent, was yet hearty and cheerful. Dr. Shepherd dropped in with a good deal of company he had at his house, and they were much pleased. When the doctor saw how the aged and infirm poor were enjoying themselves, he was much moved; he shook the farmer by the hand and said, 'But thou, when thou makest a feast, call the blind, and the lame, and the halt, they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.'

'Sir,' said the farmer, 'tis no great matter of expense; I kill a sheep of my own; potatoes are as plenty as blackberries, with people who have a little forethought. I save much more cider in the course of a year by never allowing any carousing in my kitchen, or drunkenness in my fields, than would supply many such feasts as these, so that I shall be never the poorer at Christmas. It is cheaper to make people happy, sir, than to make them drunk. The doctor and the ladies condescended to walk from one table to the other, and heard many merry stories, but not one profane word, or one indecent song: so that he was not forced to the painful necessity either of reproving them, or leaving them in anger. When all was over, they sung the sixty-fifth Psalm, and the ladies all joined in it; and when they got home to the vicarage to tea, they declared they liked it better than any concert.

The Hard Winter.

In the famous cold winter of the year 1795, it was edifying to see how patiently farmer White bore that long and severe frost. Many of his sheep were frozen to death, but he thanked God that he had still many left. He continued to find in-door work that his men might not be out of employ. The season being so bad, which some others pleaded as an excuse for turning off their workmen, he thought a fresh reason for keeping them. Mrs. White was so considerate, that just at that time she lessened the number of her hogs, that she might have more whey and skim-milk to assist poor families. Nay, I have known her to live on boiled meat for a long while together, in a sickly season, because the pot liquor made such a supply of broth for the sick poor. As the spring came on, and things grew worse, she never had a cake, a pie, or a pudding in her house; notwithstanding she used to have plenty of these good things, and will again I hope, when the present scarcity is over; though she says she will never use such white flour again, even if it should come down to five shillings a bushel.

All the parish now began to murmur. Farmer Jones was sure the frost had killed the wheat. Farmer Wilson said the rye would never come up. Brown, the maltster, insisted the barley was dead at the root. Butcher Jobbins said beef would be a shilling a pound. All declared there would not be a hop to brew with. The orchards were all blighted; there would not be apples enough to make a pie; and as to hay there would be none to be had for love nor money. 'I'll tell you what,' said farmer White, 'the season is dreadful; the crops unpromising just now; but 'tis too early to judge. Don't let us make things worse than they are. We ought to comfort the poor, and you are driving them to despair. Don't you know how much God was displeased with the murmurs of his chosen people? And yet, when they were tired of manna he sent them quails; but all did not do. Nothing satisfies grumblers. We have a promise on our side, that *there shall be seed-time and harvest time to the end.* Let us then hope for a good day, but provide against an evil one. Let us rather prevent the evil before it is come upon us, than sink under it when it comes. Grumbling cannot help us; activity can. Let us set about planting potatoes in every nook and corner, in case the corn *should* fail, which, however, I don't believe will be the case. Let us mend our management before we are driven to it by actual want. And if we allow our honest labourers to plant a few potatoes for their families in the headlands of our ploughed fields, or other waste bits of ground, it will do us no harm, and be a great help to them. The way to lighten the load of any public calamity is not to murmur at it but put a hand to lessen it.

The farmer had many temptations to send his corn at an extravagant price to *a certain seaport town*, but as he knew that it was intended to export it against law, he would not be tempted to encourage unlawful gain; so he thrashed out a small mow at a time, and sold it to the neigh-

bouring poor far below the market-price. He served his own workmen first. This was the same to them as if he had raised their wages, and even better, as it was a benefit of which their families were sure to partake. If the poor in the next parish were more distressed than his own, he sold them at the same rate. For, said he, there is no distinction of parishes in heaven; and though charity begins at home, yet it ought not to end there.

He had been used in good times now and then to catch a hare or a partridge, as he was qualified; but he now resolved to give up that pleasure. So he parted from a couple of spaniels he had: for he said he could not bear that his dogs should be eating the meat, or the milk, which so many men, women, and children wanted.

The White Loaf.

One day, it was about the middle of last July, when things seemed to be at the dearest, and the rulers of the land had agreed to set the example of eating nothing but coarse bread, Dr. Shepherd read, before sermon, in the church, their public declaration, which the magistrates of the county sent him, and which they had also signed themselves. Mrs. White, of course, was at church, and commended it mightily. Next morning the doctor took a walk over to the farmer's, in order to settle further plans for the relief of the parish. He was much surprised to meet Mrs. White's little maid Sally with a very small white loaf, which she had been buying at a shop. He said nothing to the girl, as he never thought it right to expose the faults of a mistress to her servants; but walked on, resolving to give Mrs. White a severe lecture for the first time in his life. He soon changed his mind, for on going into the kitchen, the first person he saw was Tom the thatcher, who had had a sad fall from a ladder; his arm, which was slipped out of his sleeve, was swelled in a frightful manner. Mrs. White was standing at the dresser making the little white loaf into a poultice, which she laid upon the swelling in a large clean old linen cloth.

'I ask your pardon, my good Sarah,' said the doctor; 'I ought not, however appearances were against you, to have suspected that so humble and prudent a woman as you are, would be led either to indulge any daintines of your own, or to fly in the face of your betters, by eating white bread while they are eating brown. Whenever I come here, I see it is not needful to be rich in order to be charitable. A bountiful rich man would have sent Tom to a surgeon, who would have done no more for him than you have done; for in those inflammations the most skilful surgeon could only apply a poultice. Your kindness in dressing the wound yourself, will, I doubt not, perform the cure at the expense of that threepenny loaf and a little hog's lard. And I will take care that Tom shall have a good supply of rice from the subscription.' 'And he shan't want for skim-milk,' said Mrs. White; 'and was he the best lord in the land in the state he is in, a dish of good rice milk would be better for him than the richest meat.'

The Parish Meeting.

On the tenth of August, the vestry held another meeting, to consult on the best method of further assisting the poor. The prospect of abundant crops now cheered every heart. Farmer White, who had a mind to be a little jocular with his desponding neighbours, said, 'Well, neighbour Jones, all the wheat was killed, I suppose! the barley is all dead at the root!' Farmer Jones looked sheepish, and said, 'To be sure the crops had turned out better than he thought.'—'Then,' said Dr. Shepherd, 'let us learn to trust Providence another time; let our experience of his past goodness strengthen our faith.'

Among other things, they agreed to subscribe for a large quantity of rice, which was to be sold out to the poor at a very low price, and Mrs. White was so kind as to undertake the trouble of selling it. After their day's work was over, all who wished to buy at these reduced rates, were ordered to come to the farm on the Tuesday evening. Dr. Shepherd dropped in at the same time, and when Mrs. White had done weighing her rice, the doctor spoke as follows:

'My honest friend, it has pleased God, for some wise end, to visit this land with a scarcity, to which we have been but little accustomed. There are some idle, evil-minded people, who are on the watch for the public distresses; not that they may humble themselves under the mighty hand of God (which is the true use to be made of all troubles) but that they may benefit themselves by disturbing the public peace. These people, by riot and drunkenness, double the evil which they pretend to cure. Riot will complete our misfortunes; while peace, industry, and good management, will go near to cure them. Bread, to be sure, is uncommonly dear. Among the various ways of making it cheaper, one is to reduce the quality of it, another to lessen the quantity we consume. If we cannot get enough of coarse wheaten bread, let us make it of other grain. Or let us mix one half of potatoes, and one half of wheat. This last is what I eat in my own family; it is pleasant and wholesome. Our blessed Saviour ate barley bread, you know, as we are told in the last month's Sunday reading of the Cheap Repository,* which I hope you have all heard; as I desired the master of the Sunday-school to read it just after evening service, when I know many of the parents are apt to call in at the school. This is a good custom, and one of those little books shall be often read at that time.

'My good women, I truly feel for you at this time of scarcity; and I am going to show my good will, as much by my advice as my subscription. It is my duty, as your friend and minister, to tell you, that one half of your present hardships is owing to *bad management*. I often meet your children without shoes and stockings, with great luncheons of the very whitest bread, and that three times a day. Half that quantity, and still less if it were coarse, put into a dish of good onion or leek porridge, would

* See Cheap Repository, Tract on the Scarcity, printed for T. Evans, Long-lane, West Smithfield, London

make them an excellent breakfast. Many too, of the very poorest of you, eat your bread hot from the oven; this makes the difference of one loaf in five; I assure you 'tis what I cannot afford to do. Come, Mrs. White, you must assist me a little. I am not very knowing in these matters myself; but I know that the rich would be twice as charitable as they are, if the poor made a better use of their bounty. Mrs. White, do give these poor women a little advice how to make their pittance go further than it now does. When you lived with me you were famous for making us nice cheap dishes, and I dare say you are not less notable, now you manage for yourself.'

'Indeed, neighbours,' said Mrs. White, 'what the good doctor says is very true. A halfpenny worth of oatmeal, or groats, with a leek or onion, out of your own garden, which costs nothing, a bit of salt, and a little coarse bread, will breakfast your whole family. It is a great mistake at any time to think a bit of meat is so ruinous, and a great load of bread so cheap. A poor man gets seven or eight shillings a week; if he is careful he brings it home. I dare not say how much of this goes for tea in the afternoon, now sugar and butter are so dear, because I should have you all upon me; but I will say, that too much of this little goes even for bread, from a mistaken notion that it is the hardest fare. This, at all times, but particularly just now, is bad management. Dry peas, to be sure, have been very dear lately; but now they are plenty enough. I am certain then, that if a shilling or two of the seven or eight was laid out for a bit of coarse beef, a sheep's head, or any such thing, it would be well bestowed. I would throw a couple of pounds of this into the pot, with two or three handsful of gray peas, an onion, and a little pepper. Then I would throw in cabbage or turnip, and carrot; or any garden stuff that was most plenty; let it stew two or three hours, and it will make a dish fit for his majesty. The working men should have the meat; the children don't want it; the soup will be thick and substantial, and requires no bread.'

Rice Milk.

'You who can get skim-milk, as all our workmen can, have a great advantage. A quart of this, and a quarter of a pound of the rice you have just bought, a little bit of alspice, and brown sugar, will make a dainty and cheap dish.'

'Bless your heart!' muttered Amy Grumble, who looked as dirty as a cinder-wench, with her face and fingers all daubed with snuff: 'rice milk, indeed! it is very nice to be sure for those who can dress it, but we have not a bit of coal; rice is no use to us without firing;' 'and yet,' said the doctor, 'I see your tea-kettle boiling twice every day, as I pass by the poor-house, and fresh butter at thirteen-pence a pound on your shelf.' 'O dear sir,' cried Amy, 'a few sticks serve to boil the tea-kettle.'—'And a few more,' said the doctor, 'will boil the rice milk, and give twice the nourishment at a quarter of the expense.'

Rice Pudding.

'Pray, Sarah,' said the doctor, 'how did you use to make that pudding my children were so fond of? And I remember, when it was cold, we used to have it in the parlour for supper.' 'Nothing more easy,' said Mrs. White: 'I put half a pound of rice, two quarts of skim-milk, and two ounces of brown sugar.' 'Well,' said the doctor, 'and how many will this dine?' 'Seven or eight, sir.' 'Very well, and what will it cost?'—'Why, sir, it did not cost you so much, because we baked it at home, and I used our own milk; but it will not cost above seven pence to those who pay for both. Here, too, bread is saved.'

'Pray, Sarah, let me put in a word,' said farmer White: 'I advise my men to raise each a large bed of parsnips. They are very nourishing, and very profitable. Sixpenny worth of seed, well sowed and trod in, will produce more meals than four sacks of potatoes; and what is material to you who have so little ground, it will not require more than an eighth part of the ground which the four sacks will take. Providence having contrived by the very formation of this root that it shall occupy but a very small space. Parsnips are very good the second day warmed in the frying pan, and a little rasher of pork, or bacon, will give them a nice flavour.'

Dr. Shepherd now said, 'as a proof of the nourishing quality of parsnips, I was reading in a history book this very day, that the American Indians make a great part of their bread of parsnips, though Indian corn is so famous; it will make a little variety too.'

A Cheap Stew.

'I remember,' said Mrs. White, 'a cheap dish, so nice that it makes my mouth water. I peel some raw potatoes, slice them thin, put the slices into a deep frying-pan, or pot with a little water, an onion, and a bit of pepper. Then I got a bone or two of a breast of mutton, or a little strip of salt pork and put into it. Cover it down close, keep in the steam, and let it stew for an hour.'

'You really give me an appetite, Mrs. White, by your dainty receipts,' said the doctor. 'I am resolved to have this dish at my own table.' 'I could tell you another very good dish, and still cheaper,' answered she. 'Come, let us have it,' cried the doctor. 'I shall write all down as soon as I get home, and I will favour any body with a copy of these receipts who will call at my house.'—'And I will do more, sir,' said Mrs. White, 'for I will put any of these women in the way how to dress it the first time, if they are at a loss. But this is my dish:

'Take two or three pickled herrings, put them into a stone jar, fill it up with potatoes, and a little water, and let it bake in the oven till it is done. I would give one hint more,' added she; 'I have taken to use nothing but potatoe starch; and though I say it, that should not say it, nobody's linen in a common way looks better than ours.'

The doctor now said, 'I am sorry for one hardship which many poor people labour under: I mean the difficulty of getting a little milk. I wish all farmer's wives were as considerate as you are, Mrs. White. A little milk is a great comfort to the poor, especially when their chil-

dren are sick; and I have known it answer to the seller as well as to the buyer, to keep a cow or two on purpose to sell it by the quart, instead of making butter and cheese.

'Sir, said farmer White, 'I beg leave to say a word to the men, if you please, for all your advice goes to the women. If you will drink less gin, you may get more meat. If you abstain from the ale-house, you may, many of you, get a little one-way beer at home.'—'Ay, that we can farmer,' said poor Tom, the thatcher, who was now got well. 'Easter Monday for that—I say no more. A word to the wise.' The farmer smiled and went on: 'The number of public houses in many a parish, brings on more hunger and rags, than all the taxes in it, heavy as they are. All the other evils put together hardly make up the sum of that one. We are now raising a fresh subscription for you. This will be our rule of giving. We will not give to sots, gamblers, and Sabbath-breakers. Those who do not set their young children to work on week-days, and send them to school and church on Sundays, deserve little favour. No man should keep a dog till he has more food than his family wants. If he feeds them at home, they rob his children; if he starves them, they rob his neighbours. We have heard in a neighbouring city, that some people carried back the subscription loaves, because they were too coarse; but we hope better things of you.' Here Betty Plane begged, with all humility, to put in a word. 'Certainly,' said the doctor, 'we will listen to all modest complaints, and try to redress them.' 'You are pleased to say, sir,' said she, 'that we might find much comfort from buying coarse bits of beef. And so we might, but you do not know, sir, that we could seldom get them, even when we had the money, and times were so bad.' 'How so, Betty?' 'Sir, when we go to butcher Jobbins, for a bit of shin, or any other lean piece, his answer is, 'You can't have it to-day. The cook at the great house has bespoke it for gravy, or the doctor's maid (begging your pardon, sir,) has just ordered it for soup.'—Now, if such kind gentlefolk were aware that this gravy and soup not only consume a great deal of meat, which, to be sure, those have a right to do who can pay for it; but that it takes away those coarse pieces which the poor would buy, if they bought at all. For, indeed, the rich have been very kind, and I don't know what we should have done without them.'

'I thank you for the hint, Betty,' said the doctor, 'and I assure you I will have no more gravy soup. My garden will supply me with soups that are both wholesomer and better; and I will answer for my lady at the great house, that she will do the same. I hope this will become a general rule, and then we shall expect that butchers will favour you in the prices of the coarse pieces, if *we* who are rich, buy nothing but the prime. In our gifts we shall prefer, as the farmer has told you, those who keep steadily to their work. Such as come to the vestry for a loaf, and do not come to church for the sermon, we shall mark; and prefer those who come constantly, whether there are any gifts or not. But there is one rule from which we never will depart. Those who have been seen aiding, or abetting any riot, any attack on butchers, bakers, wheat-mows, mills, or millers, we will not relieve; but with the quiet, contented, hard-working man, I will share my last morsel of bread. I shall only add, though it has pleased God to send us this visitation as a punishment, yet we may convert this short trial into a lasting blessing, if we all turn over a new leaf. Prosperity had made most of us careless. The thoughtless profusion of some of the rich could only be exceeded by the idleness and bad management of some of the poor. Let us now at last adopt that good old maxim, *every one mend one.* And may God add his blessing.'

The people now cheerfully departed with their rice, resolving as many of them as could get milk, to put one of Mrs. White's receipts in practice, and an excellent supper they had.

THE HISTORY OF HESTER WILMOT.

BEING THE SECOND PART OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Hester Wilmot was born in the parish of Weston, of parents who maintained themselves by their labour; they were both of them ungodly, it is no wonder therefore they were unhappy. They lived badly together, and how could they do otherwise? for their tempers were very different, and they had no religion to smooth down this difference, or to teach them that they ought to bear with each other's faults. Rebecca Wilmot was a proof that people may have some right qualities, and yet be but bad characters, and utterly destitute of religion. She was clean, notable and industrious. Now I know some folks fancy that the poor who have these qualities need have no other, but this is a sad mistake, as I am sure every page in the Bible would show; and it is a pity people do not consult it oftener. They direct their ploughing and sowing by the information of the Almanac, why will they not consult the Bible for the direction of their hearts and lives? Rebecca was of a violent, ungovernable temper; and that very neatness which is in itself so pleasing, in her became a sin, for her affection to her husband and children was quite lost in an over-anxious desire to have her house reckoned the nicest in the parish. Rebecca was also a proof that a poor woman may be as vain as a rich one, for it was not so much the comfort of neatness, as the praise of neatness, which she coveted. A spot on her hearth, or a bit of rust on a brass candlestick, would throw her into a violent passion. Now it is very right to keep the hearth clean and the candlestick bright, but it is very wrong

so to set one's affections on a hearth or a candlestick, as to make one's self unhappy if any trifling accident happens to them; and if Rebecca had been as careful to keep her heart without spot, or her life without blemish, as she was to keep her fire-irons free from either, she would have been held up in this history, not as a warning, but as a pattern, and in that case her nicety would have come in for a part of the praise. It was no fault in Rebecca, but a merit, that her oak table was so bright you could almost see to put your cap on in it; but it was no merit but a fault, that when John, her husband, laid down his cup of beer upon it so as to leave a mark, she would fly out into so terrible a passion that all the children were forced to run to corners; now poor John having no corner to run to, ran to the ale-house, till that which was at first a refuge too soon became a pleasure.

Rebecca never wished her children to learn to read, because she said it would only serve to make them lazy, and she herself had done very well without it. She would keep poor Hester from church to stone the space under the stairs in fine patterns and flowers. I don't pretend to say there was any harm in this little decoration, it looks pretty enough, and it is better to let the children do that than nothing. But still these are not things to set one's heart upon; and besides Rebecca only did it as a trap for praise; for she was sulky and disappointed if any ladies happened to call in and did not seem delighted with the flowers which she used to draw with a burnt stick on the whitewash of the chimney corners. Besides all this finery was often done on a Sunday, and there is a great deal of harm in doing right things at a wrong time, or in wasting much time on things which are of no real use, or in doing any thing at all out of vanity. Now I beg that no lazy slattern of a wife will go and take any comfort in her dirt from what is here said against Rebecca's nicety; for I believe, that for one who makes her husband unhappy through neatness, twenty do so by dirt and laziness. All excuses are wrong, but the excess of a good quality is not so common as the excess of a bad one; and not being so obvious, perhaps, for that very reason requires more animadversion.

John Wilmot was not an ill-natured man, but he had no fixed principle. Instead of setting himself to cure his wife's faults by mild reproof and good example, he was driven by them into still greater faults himself. It is a common case with people who have no religion when any cross accident befals them, instead of trying to make the best of a bad matter, instead of considering their trouble as a trial sent from God to purify them, or instead of considering the faults of others as a punishment for their own sins, instead of this I say, what do they do, but either sink down at once into despair, or else run for comfort into evil courses. Drinking is the common remedy for sorrow, if that can be called a remedy, the end of which is to destroy soul and body. John now began to spend all his leisure hours at the Bell. He used to be fond of his children: but when he could not come home in quiet, and play with the little ones, while his wife dressed him a bit of hot supper, he grew in time not to come home at all. He who has once taken to drink can seldom be said to be guilty of one sin only; John's heart became hardened. His affection for his family was lost in self-indulgence. Patience and submission, on the part of the wife, might have won much upon a man of John's temper; but instead of trying to reclaim him, his wife seemed rather to delight in putting him as much in the wrong as she could, that she might be justified in her constant abuse of him. I doubt whether she would have been as much pleased with his reformation as she was with always talking of his faults, though I know it was the opinion of the neighbours, that if she had taken as much pains to reform her husband by reforming her own temper, as she did to abuse him and expose him, her endeavours might have been blessed with success. Good Christians, who are trying to subdue their own faults, can hardly believe that the ungodly have a sort of savage satisfaction in trying, by indulgence of their own evil tempers, to lessen the happiness of those with whom they have to do. Need we look any farther for a proof of our own corrupt nature, when we see mankind delight in sins which have neither the temptation of profit or the allurement of pleasure, such as plaguing, vexing, or abusing each other.

Hester was the eldest of their five children she was a sharp sensible girl, but at fourteen years old she could not tell a letter, nor had she ever been taught to bow her knee to Him who made her, for John's or rather Rebecca's house, had seldom the name of God pronounced in it, except to be blasphemed.

It was just about this time, if I mistake not, that Mrs. Jones set up her Sunday-school, of which Mrs. Betty Crew was appointed mistress, as has been before related. Mrs. Jones finding that none of the Wilmots were sent to school, took a walk to Rebecca's house, and civilly told her, she called to let her know that a school was opened, to which she desired her to send her children on Sunday following, especially her eldest daughter Hester. 'Well,' said Rebecca, 'and what will you give her if I do?' 'Give her!' replied Mrs. Jones, 'that is rather a rude question, and asked in a rude manner: however, as a soft answer turneth away wrath, I assure you that I will give her the best of learning; I will teach her to *fear God and keep his commandments*.' 'I would rather you would teach her to fear me, and keep my house clean,' said this wicked woman. 'She shan't come, however, unless you will pay her for it.' 'Pay her for it!' said the lady, 'will it not be reward enough that she will be taught to read the word of God without any expense to you? For though many gifts both of books and clothing will be given the children, yet you are not to consider these gifts so much in the light of payment as an expression of good will in your benefactors.' 'I say,' interrupted Rebecca, 'that Hester shan't go to school. Religion is of no use that I know of but to make people hate their own flesh and blood; and I see no good in learning but to make folks proud, and lazy, and dirty. I cannot tell a letter myself, and, though I say it, that should not say it, there is not a notabler woman in the parish.' 'Pray,' said Mrs. Jones mildly

do you think that young people will disobey their parents the more for being taught to fear God?' 'I don't think any thing about it,' said Rebecca; 'I shan't let her come, and there's the long and short of the matter. Hester has other fish to fry; but you may have some of these little ones if you will:' 'No,' said Mrs. Jones, 'I will not; I have not set up a nursery, but a school. I am not at all this expense to take crying babes out of the mother's way, but to instruct reasonable beings in the road to eternal life; and it ought to be a rule in all schools not to take the troublesome *young* children unless the mother will try to spare the *elder* ones, who are capable of learning.' 'But,' said Rebecca, 'I have a young child which Hester must nurse, while I dress dinner. And she must iron the rags, and scour the irons, and dig the potatoes, and fetch the water to boil them.' 'As to nursing the child, that is indeed a necessary duty, and Hester ought to stay at home part of the day to enable you to go to church; and families should relieve each other in this way, but as to all the rest they are no reasons at all, for the irons need not be scoured so often, and the rags should be ironed, and the potatoes dug, and the water fetched on the Saturday; and I can tell you that neither your minister here, nor your Judge hereafter, will accept of any such excuses.'

All this while Hester staid behind pale and trembling, lest her unkind mother should carry her point. She looked up at Mrs. Jones with so much love and gratitude, as to win her affection, and this good lady went on trying to soften this harsh mother. At last Rebecca condescended to say, 'Well I don't know but I may let her come now and then when I can spare her, provided I find you make it worth her while.' All this time she had never asked Mrs. Jones to sit down, nor had once bid her young children be quiet, though they were crying and squalling the whole time. Rebecca fancied this rudeness was the only way she had of showing she thought herself to be as good as her guest, but Mrs. Jones never lost her temper. The moment she went out of the house, Rebecca called out loud enough for her to hear, and ordered Hester to get the stone and a bit of sand to scrub out the prints of that dirty woman's shoes. Hester in high spirits cheerfully obeyed, and rubbed out the stains so neatly, that her mother could not help lamenting that so handy a girl was going to be spoiled, by being taught godliness, and learning any such nonsense.

Mrs. Jones who knew the world, told her agent Mrs. Crew, that her grand difficulty would arise not so much from the children as the parents. These, said she, are apt to fall into that sad mistake, that because their children are poor, and have a little of this world's goods, the mothers must make it up to them in false indulgence. The children of the gentry are much more reproved and corrected for their faults, and bred up in far stricter discipline. He was a king who said, *Chasten thy son, and let not thy rod spare for his crying.* But do not lose your patience; the more vicious the children are, you must remember the more they stand in need of your instruction. When they are bad, comfort yourself with thinking how much worse they would have been but for you; and what a burden they would become to society if these evil tempers were to receive no check. The great thing which enabled Mrs. Crew to teach well, was the deep insight she had got into the corruption of human nature. And I doubt if any one can make a thoroughly good teacher of religion and morals, who wants the master-key to the heart. Others indeed may teach knowledge, decency, and good manners; but those, however valuable, are not Christianity. Mrs. Crew, who knew that out of the heart proceed lying, theft, and all that train of evils which begin to break out even in young children, applied her labours to correct this root of evil. But though a diligent, she was a humble teacher, well knowing that unless the grace of God blessed her labours, she should but labour in vain.

Hestor Wilmot never failed to attend the school, whenever her perverse mother would give her leave, and her delight in learning was so great, that she would work early and late to gain a little time for her book. As she had a quick capacity, she learned soon to spell and read, and Mrs. Crew observing her diligence, used to lend her a book to carry home, that she might pick up a little at odd times. It would be well if teachers would make this distinction. To give, or lend books to those who take no delight in them is an useless expense; while it is kind and right to assist well-disposed young people with every help of this sort. Those who love books seldom hurt them, while the slothful who hate learning, will wear out a book more in a week, than the diligent will do in a year. Hester's way was to read over one question in her catechism, or one verse in her hymn book, by fire-light before she went to bed; this she thought over in the night; and when she was dressing herself in the morning, she was glad to find she always knew a little more than she had done the morning before. It is not to be believed how much those people will be found to have gained at the end of the year, who are accustomed to work up all the little odd ends and remnants of leisure; who value time even more than money; and who are convinced that minutes are no more to be wasted than pence. Nay, he who finds he has wasted a shilling may by diligence hope to fetch it up again; but no repentance or industry can ever bring back one wasted hour. My good young reader, if ever *you* are tempted to waste an hour, go and ask a dying man what he would give for that hour which you are throwing away, and according as he answers so do you act.

As her mother hated the sight of a book, Hester was forced to learn out of sight: it was no disobedience to do this, as long as she wasted no part of that time which it was her duty to spend in useful labour. She would have thought it a sin to have left her work for her book; but she did not think it wrong to steal time from her sleep, and to be learning an hour before the rest of the family were awake. Hester would not neglect the washing-tub, or the spinning-wheel, even to get on with her catechism; but she thought it fair to think over her questions, while she was washing and spinning. In a few months

she was able to read fluently in St. John's Gospel, which is the easiest. But Mrs. Crew did not think it enough that her children could read a chapter, she would make them understand it also. It is in a good degree owing to the want of religious knowledge in teachers, that there is so little religion in the world. Unless the Bible is laid open to the understanding, children may read from Genesis to the Revelation, without any other improvement than barely learning how to pronounce the words. Mrs. Crew found there was but one way to compel their attention; this was by obliging them to return back again to her the sense of what she had read to them, and this they might do in their own words, if they could not remember the words of Scripture. Those who had weak capacities would, to be sure, do this but very imperfectly; but even the weakest, if they were willing, would retain something. She so managed that *saying the catechism* was not merely an act of the memory, but of the understanding: for she had observed formerly that those who had learned the catechism in the common formal way, when they were children, had never understood it when they became men and women, and it remained in the memory without having made any impression on the mind. Thus this fine summary of the Christian religion is considered as little more than a form of words, the being able to repeat which, is a qualification for being confirmed by the bishop, instead of being considered as really containing those grounds of Christian faith and practice, by which they are to be confirmed Christians.

Mrs. Crew used to say to Mrs. Jones, those who teach the poor must indeed give line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, as they can receive it. So that teaching must be a great grievance to those who do not really make it a *labour of love*. I see so much levity, obstinacy, and ignorance, that it keeps my own forbearance in continual exercise, insomuch that I trust I am getting good myself, while I am doing good to others. No one, madam, can know till they try, that after they have asked a poor untaught child the same question nineteen times, they must not lose their temper, but go on and ask it the twentieth. Now and then, when I am tempted to be impatient, I correct myself by thinking over that active proof which our blessed Saviour requires of our love to him when he says, *Feed my lambs*.

Hester Wilmot had never been bred to go to church, for her father and mother had never thought of going themselves, unless at a christening in their own family, or at a funeral of their neighbours, both of which they considered merely as opportunities for good eating and drinking, and not as offices of religion.

As poor Hester had no comfort at home, it was the less wonder she delighted in her school, her Bible, and her church; for so great is God's goodness, that he is pleased to make religion a peculiar comfort to those who have no other comfort. The God whose name she had seldom heard but when it was *taken in vain*, was now revealed to her as a God of infinite power, justice, and holiness. What she read in her Bible, and what she felt in her own heart, convinced her she was a sinner, and her catechism said the same. She was much distressed one day on thinking over this promise which she had just made (in answer to the question which fell to her lot) *To renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.* I say she was distressed on finding that these were not merely certain words which she was bound to repeat, but certain conditions which she was bound to perform. She was sadly puzzled to know how this was to be done, till she met with these words in her Bible: *My grace is sufficient for thee.* But still she was at a loss to know how this grace was to be obtained. Happily Mr. Simpson preached on the next Sunday from this text, *Ask and ye shall receive*, &c. In this sermon was explained to her the nature, the duty, and the efficacy of prayer. After this she opened her heart to Mrs. Crew, who taught her the great doctrines of Scripture, in a serious but plain way. Hester's own heart led her to assent to that humbling doctrine of the catechism, that *We are by nature born in sin;* and truly glad was she to be relieved by hearing of *That spiritual grace by which we have a new birth unto righteousness.* Thus her mind was no sooner humbled by one part than it gained comfort from another. On the other hand, while she was rejoicing in *a lively hope in God's mercy through Christ*, her mistress put her in mind that that was only the *true* repentance *by which we forsake sin.* Thus the catechism, explained by a pious teacher, was found to contain *all the articles of the Christian faith.*

Mrs. Jones greatly disapproved the practice of turning away the scholars because they were grown up. Young people, said she, want to be warned at sixteen more than they did at six, and they are commonly turned adrift at the very age when they want most instruction; when dangers and temptations most beset them. They are exposed to more evil by the leisure of a Sunday evening than by the business of a whole week: but then religion must be made pleasant, and instruction must be carried on in a kind, and agreeable, and familiar way. If they once dislike the teacher they will soon get to dislike what is taught, so that a master or mistress is in some measure answerable for the future piety of young persons, inasmuch as that piety depends on their manner of making religion pleasant as well as profitable.

To attend Mrs. Jones's evening instructions was soon thought not a task but a holiday. In a few months it was reckoned a disadvantage to the character of any young person in the parish to know that they did not attend the evening school. At first, indeed, many of them came only with a view to learn amusement; but, by the blessing of God, they grew fond of instruction, and some of them became truly pious. Mrs. Jones spoke to them on Sunday evening as follows:—'My dear young women, I rejoice at your improvement; but I rejoice with trembling. I have known young people set out well, who afterwards fell off. The heart is deceitful. Many like religious knowledge, who do not like the strictness of a religious life. I must therefore watch whether those who are diligent at

church and school, are diligent in their daily walk. Whether those who say they *believe* in God, really *obey* him. Whether they who profess to *love* Christ keep his *commandments*. Those who hear themselves commended for early piety, may learn to rest satisfied with the praise of man. People may get a knack at religious phrases without being religious; they may even get to frequent places of worship as an amusement, in order to meet their friends, and may learn to delight in a sort of *spiritual gossip*, while religion has no power in their hearts. But I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak.

What became of Hester Wilmot, with some account of Mrs. Jones's May-day feast for her school, my readers shall be told next month.

PART II.

The New Gown.

Hester Wilmot, I am sorry to observe, had been by nature peevish, and lazy; she would when a child, now and then slight her work, and when her mother was unreasonable she was too apt to return a saucy answer; but when she became acquainted with her own heart, and with the Scriptures, these evil tempers were, in a good measure, subdued, for she now learnt to imitate, not her violent mother, but *him who was meek and lowly*. When she was scolded for doing ill, she prayed for grace to do better; and the only answer she made to her mother's charge, 'that religion only served to make people lazy,' was to strive to do twice as much work, in order to prove that really made them diligent. The only thing in which she ventured to disobey her mother was, that when she ordered her to do week day's work on a Sunday, Hester cried, and said, she did not dare to disobey God; but to show that she did not wish to save her own labour, she would do a double portion of work on the Saturday night, and rise two hours earlier on Monday morning.

Once, when she had worked very hard, her mother told her she would treat her with a holyday the following Sabbath, and take her a fine walk to eat cakes and drink ale at Weston fair, which, though it was professed to be kept on the Monday, yet, to the disgrace of the village, always began on the Sunday evening.* Rebecca, who would on no account have wasted the Monday, which was a working day, in idleness and pleasure, thought she had a very good right to enjoy herself at the fair on the Sunday evening, as well as to take her children. Hester earnestly begged to be left at home, and her mother in a rage went without her. A wet walk, and more ale than she was used to drink, gave Rebecca a dangerous fever.—During this illness Hester, who would not follow her to a scene of dissolute mirth, attended her night and day, and denied herself necessaries that her sick mother might have comforts: and though she secretly prayed to God that this sickness might change her mother's heart, yet she never once reproached her, or put her in mind, that it was caught by indulging in a sinful pleasure.

Another Sunday night her father told Hester, he thought she had now been at school long enough for him to have a little good of her learning, so he desired she would stay at home and read to him. Hester cheerfully ran and fetched her Testament. But John fell a laughing, called her a fool, and said, it would be time enough to read the Testament to him when he was going to die, but at present he must have something merry. So saying, he gave her a song book which he had picked up at the Bell. Hester having cast her eyes over it, refused to read it, saying she did not dare offend God by reading what would hurt her own soul.—John called her a canting hypocrite; and said, he would put the Testament into the fire for that there was not a more merry girl than she was before she became religious.—Her mother for once took her part, not because she thought her daughter in the right, but because she was glad of any pretence to show her husband was in the wrong; though she herself would have abused Hester for the same thing if John had taken her part. John, with a shocking oath abused them both; and went off in a violent passion.—Hester, instead of saying one undutiful word against her father, took up a Psalter in order to teach her little sisters; but Rebecca was so provoked at her for not joining her in her abuse of her husband, that she changed her humour, said John was in the right, and Hester a perverse hypocrite, who only made religion a pretence for being undutiful to her parents. Hester bore all in silence, and committed her cause to Him *who judgeth righteously*. It would have been a great comfort to her if she had dared to go to Mrs. Crew, and to have joined in the religious exercises of the evening at school. But her mother refused to let her, saying it would only harden her heart in mischief. Hester said not a word, but after having put the little ones to bed, and heard them say their prayers out of sight, she went and sat down in her own little loft, and said to herself, it would be pleasant to me to have taught my little sisters to read, I thought it was my duty, for David has said, *Come ye children hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord*. It would have been still more pleasant to have passed the evening at school, because I am still ignorant, and fitter to learn than to teach; but I cannot do either without flying in the face of my mother; God sees fit to-night to change my pleasant duties into a painful trial. I give up my will, and I submit to the will of my father; but when he orders me to commit a known sin, then I dare not do it, because, in so doing, I must disobey my Father which is in heaven.

Now it so fell out, that this dispute happened on the very Sunday next before Mrs. Jones's yearly feast. On May-day all the school attended her to church, each in a stuff gown of

*This practice is too common. Those fairs which profess to be kept on Monday, commonly begin on the Sunday. It is much to be wished that magistrates would put a stop to it, as Mr. Simpson did at Weston, at the request of Mrs. Jones. There is another great evil worth the notice of justices. In many villages, during the fair, ale is sold at private houses, which have no license, to the great injury of sobriety and good morals.

their own earning, and a cap and white apron of her giving. After church there was an examination made into the learning and behaviour of the scholars; those who were most perfect in their chapters, and who brought the best character for industry, humility, and sobriety, received a Bible, or some other good book.

Now Hester had been a whole year hoarding up her little savings, in order to be ready with a new gown on the May-day feast. She had never got less than two shillings a week by her spinning, besides working for the family, and earning a trifle by odd jobs.—This money she faithfully carried to her mother every Saturday night, keeping back by consent, only twopence a-week towards the gown. The sum was complete, the pattern had long been settled, and Hester had only on the Monday morning to go to the shop, pay her money, and bring home her gown to be made. Her mother happened to go out early that morning to iron in a gentleman's family, where she usually staid a day or two, and Hester was busy putting the house in order before she went to the shop.

On that very Monday there was to be a meeting at the Bell of all the idle fellows in the parish. John Wilmot of course was to be there. Indeed he had accepted a challenge of the blacksmith to a batch at all-fours. The blacksmith was flush of money, John thought himself the best player; and that he might make sure of winning, he resolved to keep himself sober, which he knew was more than the other would do. John was so used to go upon tick for ale, that he got to the door of the Bell before he recollected that he could not keep his word with the gambler without money, and he had not a penny in his pocket, so he sullenly turned homewards. He dared not apply to his wife, as he knew he should be more likely to get a scratched face than a sixpence from her; but he knew that Hester had received two shillings for her last week's spinning on Saturday, and perhaps she might not yet have given it to her mother. Of the hoarded sum he knew nothing. He asked her if she could lend him half a crown, and he would pay her next day. Hester pleased to see him in good humour after what had passed the night before ran up and fetched down her little box, and in the joy of her heart that he now desired something she *could* comply with without wounding her conscience, cheerfully poured out her whole little stock upon the table. John was in raptures at the sight of three half-crowns and a sixpence, and eagerly seized it, box and all, together with a few hoarded halfpence at the bottom, though he had only asked to borrow half-a-crown. None but one whose heart was hardened by a long course of drunkenness could have taken away the whole, and for such a purpose. He told her she should certainly have it again next morning, and, indeed intended to pay it, not doubting but he should double the sum. But John overrated his own skill, or luck, for he lost every farthing to the blacksmith, and sneaked home before midnight, and quietly walked up to bed. He was quite sober, which Hester thought a good sign. Next morning she asked him, in a very humble way, for the money, which she said she would not have done, but that if the gown was not bought directly it would not be ready in time for the feast. John's conscience had troubled him a little for what he had done, for when he was not drunk he was not ill-natured, and he stammered out a broken excuse, but owned he had lost the money, and had not a farthing left. The moment Hester saw him mild and kind her heart was softened, and she begged him not to vex, adding, that she would be contented never to have a new gown as long as she lived, if she could have the comfort of always seeing him come home sober as he was last night. For Hester did not know that he had refrained from getting drunk, only that he might gamble with a better chance of success, and that when a gamester keeps himself sober, it is not that he may practice a virtue, but that he may commit a worse crime. 'I am indeed sorry for what I have done,' said he; 'you cannot go to the feast, and what will madam Jones say?'—'Yes, but I can, said Hester, 'for God looks not at the gown, but at the heart, and I am sure he sees mine full of gratitude at hearing you talk so kindly; and if I thought my dear father would change his present evil courses, I should be the happiest girl at the feast to-morrow.' John walked away mournfully, and said to himself, surely there must be something in religion, since it can thus change the heart. Hester was once a pert girl, and now she is as mild as a lamb. She was once an indolent girl, and now she is up with the lark. She was a vain girl, and would do any thing for a new riband; and now she is contented to go in rags to a feast at which every one else will have a new gown. She deprived herself of her gown to give me the money; and yet this very girl, so dutiful in some respects, would submit to be turned out of doors rather than read a loose book at my command, or break the Sabbath. I do not understand this; there must be some mystery in it. All this he said as he was going to work. In the evening he did not go to the Bell: whether it was owing to his new thoughts, or to his not having a penny in his pocket, I will not take upon me positively to say, but I believe it was a little of one and a little of the other.

As the pattern of the intended gown had long been settled in the family, and as Hester had the money by her, it was looked on as good as bought, so that she was trusted to get it brought home, and made in her mother's absence. Indeed, so little did Rebecca care about the school, that she would not have cared any thing about the gown, if her vanity had not made her wish that her daughter should be the best drest of any girl at the feast. Being from home, as was said before, she knew nothing of the disappointment. On May-day morning, Hester, instead of keeping from the feast, because she had not a new gown, or meanly inventing any excuse for wearing an old one, dressed herself out as neatly as she could in her poor old things, and went to join the school in order to go to church. Whether Hester had formerly indulged a little pride of heart, and talked of this gown rather too much, I am not quite sure; certain it is, there was a great hue and cry made at seeing Hester Wilmot, the neatest girl,

the most industrious girl in the school, come to the May-day feast in an old stuff gown, when every other girl was so creditably drest. Indeed, I am sorry to say, there were two or three much too smart for their station, and who had dizened themselves out in very improper finery, which Mrs. Jones made them take off before her. 'I mean this feast,' said she, 'as a reward of industry and piety, and not as a trial of skill who can be finest, and outvie the rest in show. If I do not take care, my feast will become an encouragement, not to virtue, but to vanity. I am so great a friend to decency of apparel, that I even like to see you deny your appetites, that you may be able to come decently dressed to the house of God. To encourage you to do this. I like to set apart this one day of innocent pleasure, against which you may be preparing all the year, by laying aside something every week towards buying a gown out of all your savings. But, let me tell you, that meekness and an humble spirit is of more value in the sight of God and good men, than the gayest cotton gown, or the brightest pink riband in the parish.'

Mrs. Jones for all this, was as much surprised as the rest at Hester's mean garb: but such is the power of a good character, that she gave her credit for a right intention, especially as she knew the unhappy state of her family. For it was Mrs. Jones's way, (and it is not a bad way,) always to wait, and inquire into the truth before she condemned any person of good character, though appearances were against them. As we cannot judge of people's motives, said she, we may, from ignorance, often condemn their best actions, and approve of their worst. It will be always time enough to judge unfavourably, and let us give others credit as long as we can, and then we in our turn, may expect a favourable judgment from others, and remember who had said, *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

Hester was no more proud of what she had done for her farther, than she was humbled by the meanness of her garb; and notwithstanding Betty Stiles, one of the girls whose finery had been taken away, sneered at her, Hester never offered to clear herself, by exposing her father, though she thought it right, secretly to inform Mrs. Jones of what had past. When the examination of the girls began, Betty Stiles was asked some questions on the fourth and fifth commandments, which she answered very well. Hester was asked nearly the same questions, and, though she answered them no better than Betty had done, they were all surprised to see Mrs. Jones rise up, and give a handsome Bible to Hester, while she gave nothing to Betty. This girl cried out rather pertly, 'Madam, it is very hard that I have no book: I was as perfect as Hester.'—'I have often told you,' said Mrs. Jones, 'that religion is not a thing of the tongue but of the heart. That girl gives me the best proof that she has learned the fourth commandment to good purpose, who persists in keeping holy the Sabbath day, though commanded to break it by a parent whom she loves. And that girl best proves that she keeps the fifth, who gives up her own comfort, and clothing, and credit, *to honour and obey her father and mother*, even though they are not such as she could wish. Betty Stiles, though she could answer the questions so readily, went abroad last Sunday when she should have been at school, and refused to nurse her sick mother, when she could not help herself. Is this having learnt those two commandments to any good purpose?'

Farmer Hoskins, who stood by, whispered Mrs. Jones, 'Well, madam, now you have convinced even me of the benefit of religious instruction; now I see there is a meaning to it. I thought it was in at one ear and out at the other, and that a song was as well as a psalm; but now I have found the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I see your scholars must *do* what they *hear*, and *obey* what they *learn*. Why, at this rate, they will all be better servants for being really godly, and so I will add a pudding to next year's feast.'

The pleasure Hester felt in receiving a new Bible, made her forget that she had on an old gown. She walked to church in a thankful frame; but how great was her joy, when she saw, among a number of working men, her own father going into church. As she past by him she cast on him a look of so much joy and affection that it brought tears into his eyes, especially when he compared her mean dress with that of the other girls, and thought who had been the cause of it. John, who had not been at church for some years, was deeply struck with the service. The confession with which it opens went to his heart. He felt, for the first time, that he was a *miserable sinner, and that there was no health in him.* He now felt compunction for sin in general, though it was only his ill-behaviour to his daughter which had brought him to church. The sermon was such as to strengthen the impression which the prayers had made; and when it was over, instead of joining the ringers, (for the belfry was the only part of the church John liked, because it usually led to the ale-house,) he quietly walked back to his work. It was, indeed, the best day's work he ever made. He could not get out of his head the whole day, the first words he heard at church; *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.* At night, instead of going to the Bell, he went home, intending to ask Hester to forgive him; but as soon as he got to the door, he heard Rebecca scolding his daughter for having brought such a disgrace on the family as to be seen in that old rag of a gown, and insisted on knowing what she had done with the money. Hester tried to keep the secret, but her mother declared she would turn her out of doors if she did not tell the truth. Hester was at last forced to confess she had given it to her father. Unfortunately for poor John, it was at this very moment that he opened the door. The mother now divided her fury between her guilty husband and her innocent child, till from words she fell to blows. John defended his daughter, and received some of the strokes intended for the poor girl. This turbulent scene partly put John's good resolution to flight, though the patience of Hester did him almost as much good

as the sermon he had heard. At length the poor girl escaped up stairs, not a little bruised, and a scene of much violence passed between John and Rebecca. She declared she would not sit down to supper with such a brute, and set off to a neighbour's house, that she might have the pleasure of abusing him the longer. John, whose mind was much disturbed, went up stairs without his supper. As he was passing by Hester's little room he heard her voice, and as he concluded she was venting bitter complaints against her unnatural parents, he stopped to listen, resolved to go in and comfort her. He stopped at the door, for, by the light of the moon, he saw her kneeling by her bedside, and praying so earnestly that she did not hear him. As he made sure she could be praying for nothing but his death, what was her surprise to hear these words: 'O Lord, have mercy upon my dear father and mother, teach me to love them, to pray for them, and do them good; make me more dutiful and more patient, that, adorning the doctrine of God, my Saviour, I may recommend his holy religion, and my dear parents may be brought to love and fear thee, through Jesus Christ.'

Poor John, who would never have been hard-hearted if he had not been a drunkard, could not stand this, he fell down on his knees, embraced his child; and begged her to teach him how to pray. He prayed himself as well as he could, and though he did not know what words to use, yet his heart was melted; he owned he was a sinner, and begged Hester to fetch the prayer-book, and read over the confession with which he had been so struck at church. This was the pleasantest order she had ever obeyed. Seeing him deeply affected with a sense of sin she pointed out to him the Saviour of sinners; and in this manner she passed some hours with her father, which were the happiest of her life; such a night was worth a hundred cotton, or even silk gowns. In the course of the week Hester read over the confession, and some other prayers, to her father so often that he got them by heart, and repeated them while he was at work.—She next taught him the fifty-first psalm. At length he took courage to kneel down and pray before he went to bed. From that time he bore his wife's ill-humour much better than he had ever done, and, as he knew her to be neat, and notable, and saving, he began to think, that if her temper was not quite so bad, his home might still become as pleasant a place to him as ever the Bell had been; but unless she became more tractable he did not know what to do with his long evenings after the little ones were in bed, for he began, once more, to delight in playing with them. Hester proposed that she herself should teach him to read an hour every night, and he consented. Rebecca began to storm, from the mere trick she had got of storming; but finding that he now brought home all his earnings, and that she got both his money and his company, (for she had once loved him,) she began to reconcile herself to this new way of life. In a few months John could read a psalm. In learning to read it he also got it by heart, and this proved a little store for private devotion, and while he was mowing or reaping, he could call to mind a text to cheer his labour. He now went constantly to church, and often dropped in at the school on a Sunday evening to hear their prayers. He expressed so much pleasure at this, that one day Hester ventured to ask him if they should set up family prayer at home? John said he should like it mightily, but as he could not yet read quite well enough, he desired Hester to try to get a proper book and begin next Sunday night. Hester had bought of a pious hawker, for three halfpence,* the Book of prayers, printed for the Cheap Repository, and knew she should there find something suitable.

When Hester read the exhortation at the beginning of this little book, her mother, who sat in the corner, and pretended to be asleep, was so much struck that she could not find a word to say against it. For a few nights, indeed, she continued to sit still, or pretended to rock the young child while her husband and daughter were kneeling at their prayers. She expected John would have scolded her for this, and so perverse was her temper, that she was disappointed at his finding no fault with her. Seeing at last that he was very patient, and that though he prayed fervently himself he suffered her to do as she liked, she lost the spirit of opposition for want of something to provoke it. As her pride began to be subdued, some little disposition to piety was awakened in her heart.—By degrees she slid down on her knees, though at first it was behind the cradle, or the clock, or in some corner where she thought they would not see her. Hester rejoiced even in this outward change in her mother, and prayed that God would at last be pleased to touch her heart as he had done that of her father.

As John now spent no idle money, he had saved up a trifle by working over-hours; this he kindly offered to Hester to make up for the loss of her gown. Instead of accepting it, Hester told him, that as she herself was young and healthy, she should soon be able to clothe herself out of her own savings, and begged him to make her mother a present of this gown, which he did. It had been a maxim of Rebecca, that it was better not to go to church at all, than go in an old gown. She had, however, so far conquered this evil notion, that she had lately gone pretty often. This kindness of the gown touched her not a little, and the first Sunday she put it on Mr. Simpson happened to preach from this text, *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* This sermon so affected Rebecca that she never once thought she had her new gown on, till she came to take it off when she went to bed, and that very night, instead of skulking behind, she knelt down by her husband, and joined in prayer with much fervour.

There was one thing sunk deep in Rebecca's mind; she had observed that since her husband had grown religious he had been so careful not to give her any offence, that he was become scrupulously clean; took off his dirty shoes before he sat down, and was very cautious not to spill a drop of beer on her shining table. Now

* These prayers may be had also divided into two parts, one fit for private persons, the other for families price one halfpenny.

it was rather remarkable, that as John grew more neat, Rebecca grew more indifferent to neatness. But both these changes arose from the same cause, the growth of religion in their hearts. John grew cleanly from the fear of giving pain to his wife, while Rebecca grew indifferent from having discovered the sin and folly of an over-anxious care about trifles. When the heart is once given up to God, such vanities in a good degree die of themselves.

Hester continues to grow in grace, and in knowledge. Last Christmas-day she was appointed an under teacher in the school, and many people think that some years hence, if any thing should happen to Mrs. Crew, Hester may be promoted to be head mistress

THE GRAND ASSIZES, &c.

OR GENERAL JAIL DELIVERY.

AN ALLEGORY.

THERE was in a certain country a great king, who was also a judge. He was very merciful, but he was also very just; for he used to say, that justice was the foundation of all goodness, and that indiscriminate and misapplied mercy was in fact injustice. His subjects were apt enough, in a general way, to extol his merciful temper, and espccially those subjects who were always committing crimes which made them particularly liable to be punished by his justice. This last quality they constantly kept out of sight, till they had cheated themselves into a notion that he was too good to punish at all.

Now it had happened a long time before, that this whole people had broken their allegiance, and had forfeited the king's favour, and had also fallen from a very prosperous state in which he had originally placed them, having one and all become bankrupts. But when they were over head and ears in debt, and had nothing to pay, the king's son most generously took the whole burden of their debts on himself; and, in short, it was proposed that all their affairs should be settled, and their very crimes forgiven, (for they were criminals as well as debtors) provided only they would show themselves sincerely sorry for what they had done themselves, and be thankful for what had been done for them. I should however remark, that a book was also given them, in which a true and faithful account of their own rebellion was written; and of the manner of obtaining the king's pardon, together with a variety of directions for their conduct in time to come; and in this book it was particularly mentioned, that after having lived a certain number of years in a remote part of the same king's country, yet still under his eye and jurisdiction, there should be a *grand assizes*, when every one was to be publicly tried for his past behaviour; and after this trial was over, certain heavy punishments were to be inflicted on those who should have still persisted in their rebellion, and certain high premiums were to be bestowed as a gracious reward upon the penitent and obedient.

It may be proper here to notice, that this king's court differed in some respect from our courts of justice, being indeed a sort of court of appeal, to which questions were carried after they had been imperfectly decided in the common courts! And although with us all criminals are tried (and a most excellent mode of trial it is) by a jury of their peers, yet in this king's country the mode was very different; for since every one of the people had been in a certain sense criminals, the king did not think it fair to make them judges also. It would, indeed, have been impossible to follow in all respects the customs which prevail with us, for the crimes with which men are charged in our courts are mere *overt acts*, as the lawyers call them, that is, acts which regard the outward behaviour; such as the acts of striking, maiming, stealing, and so forth. But in this king's court it is not merely outward sins, but sins of the heart also which were to be punished. Many a crime, therefore, which was never heard of in the court of King's Bench, or at the Old Bailey, and which indeed could not be cognizable by these courts, was here to be brought to light, and was reserved for this great day. Among these were pride, and oppression, and envy, and malice, and revenge, and covetousness, and secret vanity of mind, and evil thoughts of all sorts, and all sinful wishes and desires. When covetousness, indeed, put men on committing robbery, or when malice drove them to acts of murder, then the common courts immediately judged the criminal, without waiting for these great assizes; nevertheless, since even a thief and murderer would now and then escape in the common courts, for want of evidence, or through some fault or other of the judge or jury, the escape was of little moment to the poor criminal, for he was sure to be tried again by this great king; and even though the man should have been punished in some sense before, yet he had now a farther and more lasting punishment to fear, unless, indeed, he was one of those who had obtained (by the means I before spoke of) this great king's pardon. The *sins of the heart*, however, were by far the most numerous sort of sins, which were to come before this great tribunal; and these were to be judged by this great king in person, and by none but himself; because he alone possessed a certain power of getting at all secrets.

I once heard of a certain king of Sicily, who built a whispering gallery in the form of an ear, through which he could hear every word his rebellious subjects uttered, though spoken ever so low. But this secret of the king of Sicily was nothing to what this great king possessed; for he had the power of knowing every thought which was conceived in the mind, though it never broke out into words, or proceeded to actions.

Now you may be ready to think, perhaps

that these people were worse off than any others, because they were to be examined so closely, and judged so strictly. Far from it; the king was too just to expect bricks without giving them straw; he gave them, therefore, every help that they needed. He gave them a book of directions, as I before observed; and because they were naturally short-sighted, he supplied them with a glass for reading it, and thus the most dim-sighted might see, if they did not wilfully shut their eyes: but though the king *invited* them to open their eyes he did not *compel* them; and many remain stone blind all their lives with the book in their hand, because they would not use the glass, nor take the proper means for reading and understanding all that was written for them. The humble and sincere learned in time to see even that part of the book which was least plainly written; and it was observed that the ability to understand it depended more on the heart than the head; an evil disposition blinded the sight, while humility operated like an eye-salve.

Now it happened that those who had been so lucky as to escape the punishment of the lower courts, took it into their heads that they were all very good sort of people, and of course very safe from any danger at this *great assize*. This grand intended trial, indeed, had been talked of so much, and put off so long (for it had seemed long at least to these short-sighted people) that many persuaded themselves it would never take place at all; and far the greater part were living away therefore without ever thinking about it; they went on just as if nothing at all had been done for their benefit; and as if they had no king to please, no king's son to be thankful to, no book to guide themselves by, and as if the assizes were never to come about.

But with this king *a thousand years were as a day, for he was not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness.*—So at length the solemn period approached. Still, however, the people did not prepare for the solemnity, or rather, they prepared for it much as some of the people in our provincial towns are apt to prepare for the annual assize times; I mean by balls and feastings, and they saw their own trial come on, with as little concern as is felt by the people in our streets, when they see the judge's procession enter the town; they indeed comfort themselves that it is only those in the prisons who are guilty.

But when at last the day came, and every man found that he was to be judged for himself; and that somehow or other, all his secrets were brought out, and that there was now no escape, not even a short reprieve, things began to take a more serious turn. Some of the worst of the criminals were got together debating in an outer court of the grand hall; and there they passed their time, not in compunction and tears, not in comparing their lives with what was required in that book which had been given them, but they derived a fallacious hope by comparing themselves with such as had been still more notorious offenders.

One who had grown wealthy by rapine and oppression, but had contrived to keep within the letter of the law, insulted a poor fellow as a thief, because he had stolen a loaf of bread. 'You are far wickeder than I was,' said a citizen to his apprentice, 'for you drank and swore at the ale-house every Sunday night.' 'Yes,' said the poor fellow, 'but it was your fault that I did so, for you took no care of my soul, but spent all your Sabbaths in jaunting abroad or in rioting at home; I might have learnt, but there was no one to teach me; I might have followed a good example, but I saw only bad ones. I sinned against less light than you did.' A drunken journeyman, who had spent all his wages on gin, rejoiced that he had not spent a great estate in bribery at elections, as the lord of his manor had done, while a perjured elector boasted that he was no drunkard like the journeyman; and the member himself took comfort that he had never *received* the bribes which he had not been ashamed to *offer*.

I have not room to describe the awful pomp of the court, nor the terrible sounding of the trumpet which attended the judge's entrance, nor the sitting of the judge, nor the opening of the books, nor the crowding of the millions, who stood before him. I shall pass over the multitudes who were tried and condemned to dungeons and chains, and eternal fire, and to perpetual banishment from the presence of the king, which always seemed to be the saddest part of the sentence. I shall only notice further, a few who brought some plea of merit, and claimed a right to be rewarded by the king, and even deceived themselves so far as to think that his own book of laws would be their justification.

A thoughtless spendthrift advanced without any contrition, and said, 'that he had lived handsomely, and had hated the covetous whom God abhorreth; that he trusted in that passage of the book which said, that *covetouness was idolatry;* and that he therefore hoped for a favourable sentence.' Now it proved that this man had not only avoided covetousness, but that he had even left his wife and children in want through his excessive prodigality. The judge therefore immediately pointed to that place in the book where it is written, *he that provideth not for his household is worse than an infidel. He that liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth;* 'thou,' said he, '*in thy life time, receivedst thy good things, and now thou must be tormented.*' Then a miser, whom hunger and hoarding had worn to skin and bone, crept forward, and praised the sentence passed on this extravagant youth, 'and surely,' said he, 'since he is condemned, I am a man that may make some plea to favour—I was never idle or drunk, I kept my body in subjection. I have been so self-denying that I am certainly a saint: I have loved neither father nor mother, nor wife nor children, to excess, in all this I have obeyed the book of the law.' Then the judge said, 'But where are thy works of mercy and thy labours of love, see that family which perished in thy sight last hard winter, while thy barns were overflowing; that poor family were my representatives; yet they were hungry, and thou gavest them no meat. *Go to, now thou rich man, weep and howl for the miseries that are come upon you. Your gold and your silver is cankered, and the rust of them*

shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.'

Then came up one with a most self-sufficient air. He walked up boldly, having in one hand the plan of an hospital which he had built, and in the other the drawing of a statue, which was erecting for him in the country that he had just left, and on his forehead appeared, in gold letters, the list of all the public charities to which he had subscribed. He seemed to take great pleasure in the condemnation of the miser, and said, 'Lord, when saw I thee hungry and fed thee not, or in prison and visited thee not? I have visited the fatherless and widow in their affliction.' Here the judge cut him short, by saying, 'True, thou didst visit the fatherless, but didst thou fulfil equally that other part of my command, 'to keep thyself unspotted from the world.' No, thou wast conformed to the world in many of its sinful customs, 'thou didst follow a multitude to do evil; thou didst love the world and the things of the world; and the motive to all thy charities was not a regard to me but to thy own credit with thy fellow men. Thou hast done every thing for the sake of reputation, and now thou art vainly trusting in thy deceitful works, instead of putting all thy trust in my son, who has offered himself to be a surety for thee. Where has been that humility and gratitude to him which was required of thee. No, thou wouldst be thine own surety: thou hast trusted in thyself: thou hast made thy boast of thine own goodness; thou hast sought after and thou hast enjoyed the praise of men, and verily I say unto thee, 'thou hast had thy reward.'

A poor diseased blind cripple, who came from the very hospital which this great man had built, then fell prostrate on his face, crying out, 'Lord be merciful to me a sinner!' on which the judge, to the surprise of all, said, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' The poor man replied, 'Lord, I have done nothing!'—'But thou hast 'suffered well,' said the judge; 'thou hast been an example of patience and meekness, and though thou hadst but few talents, yet thou hast well improved those few; thou hadst time, this thou didst spend in the humble duties of thy station, and also in earnest prayer; thou didst pray even for that proud founder of the hospital, who never prayed for himself; thou wast indeed blind and lame, but it is no where said, my son give me thy feet, or thine eyes, but give me thy heart; and even the few faculties I did grant thee, were employed to my glory; with thine ears thou didst listen to my word, with thy tongue thou didst show forth my praise, 'enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

There were several who came forward, and boasted of some single and particular virtue, in which they had been supposed to excel. One talked of his generosity, another of his courage, and a third of his fortitude; but it proved on a close examination, that some of those supposed virtues were merely the effect of a particular constitution of body; that others proceeded from a false motive, and that not a few of them were actual vices, since they were carried to excess; and under the pretence of fulfilling one duty, some other duty was lost sight of; in short, these partial virtues were none of them practised in obedience to the will of the king, but merely to please the person's own humour, or to gain praise, and they would not, therefore, stand this day's trial, for 'he that had kept the whole law, and yet had wilfully and habitually offended in any one point, was declared guilty of breaking the whole.'

At this moment a sort of thick scales fell from the eyes of the multitude. They could now no longer take comfort, as they had done for so many years, by measuring their neighbours' conduct against their own. Each at once saw himself in his true light, and found, alas! when it was too late, that he should have made the book which had been given him his rule of practice before, since it now proved to be the rule by which he was to be judged. Nay, every one now thought himself even worse than his neighbour, because, while he only *saw* and *heard* of the guilt of others, he *felt* his own in all its aggravated horror.

To complete their confusion, they were compelled to acknowledge the justice of the judge who condemned them; and also to approve the favourable sentence by which thousands of other criminals had not only their lives saved, but were made happy and glorious beyond all imagination; not for any great merits which they had to produce, but in consequence of their sincere repentance, and their humble acceptance of the pardon offered to them by the king's son. One thing was remarkable, that whilst most of those who were condemned, never expected condemnation, but even claimed a reward for their supposed innocence or goodness, all who were really rewarded and forgiven were sensible that they owed their pardon to a mere act of grace, and they cried out with one voice, 'Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise!'

THE SERVANT MAN TURNED SOLDIER.

OR THE FAIR-WEATHER CHRISTIAN.

AN ALLEGORY.

William was a lively young servant, who lived in a *great but very irregular family.* His place was on the whole, agreeable to him, and suited to his gay thoughtless temper. He found a plentiful table and a good cellar. There was, indeed, a great deal of work to be done, though it was performed with much disorder and confusion. The family in the main were not unkind to him, though they often contradicted and crossed him, especially when things went ill

with themselves. This, William never much liked, for he was always fond of having his own way. There was a merry, or rather a noisy and riotous servant's hall; for disorder and quarrels are indeed the usual effects of plenty and unrestrained indulgence. The men were smart, but idle; the maids were showy but licentious, and all did pretty much as they liked for a time, but the time was commonly short. The wages were reckoned high, but they were seldom paid, and it was even said by sober people, that the family was insolvent, and never fulfilled any of their flattering engagements, or their most positive promises; but still, notwithstanding their real poverty, things went on with just the same thoughtlessness and splendour, and neither master nor servants looked beyond the jollity of the present hour.

In this unruly family there was little church going, and still less praying at home. They pretended, indeed, in a general way, to believe in the Bible, but it was only an outward profession, few of them read it at all, and even of those who did read it still fewer were governed by it. There was indeed a Bible lying on the table in the great hall, which was kept for the purpose of administering an oath, but was seldom used on any other occasion, and some of the heads of the family were of opinion that this was its only real use, as it might serve to keep the lower parts of it in order.

William, who was fond of novelty and pleasure, was apt to be negligent of the duties of the house. He used to stay out on his errands, and one of his favourite amusements was going to the parade to see the soldiers exercise. He saw with envy how smartly they were dressed, listened with rapture to the music, and fancied that a soldier had nothing to do but to walk to and fro in a certain regular order, to go through a little easy exercise, in short, to live without fighting, fatigue, or danger.

O, said he, whenever he was affronted at home, what a fine thing it must be to be a soldier! to be so well dressed, to have nothing to do but to move to the pleasant sound of fife and drum, and to have so many people come to look at one, and admire one. O it must be a fine thing to be a soldier!

Yet when the vexation of the moment was over, he found so much ease and diversion in the great family, it was so suited to his low taste and sensual appetites, that he thought no more of the matter. He forgot the glories of a soldier, and eagerly returned to all the mean gratifications of the kitchen. His evil habits were but little attended to by those with whom he lived; his faults, among which were lying and swearing, were not often corrected by the family, who had little objection to those sins, which only offended God and did not much affect their own interest or property. And except that William was obliged to work rather more than he liked, he found little, while he was young and healthy, that was very disagreeable in this service. So he went on, still thinking, however, when things went a little cross, what a fine thing it was to be a soldier! At last one day as he was waiting at dinner, he had the misfortune to let fall a china dish, and broke it all to pieces. It was a curious dish, much valued by the family, as they pretended; this family were indeed apt to set a false fantastic value on things, and not to estimate them by their real worth. The heads of the family, who had generally been rather patient and good-humoured with William, as I said before, for those vices, which though offensive to God did not touch their own pocket, now flew out into a violent passion with him, called him a thousand hard names, and even threatened to horsewhip him for his shameful negligence.

William in a great fright, for he was a sad coward at bottom, ran directly out of the house to avoid the threatened punishment; and happening just at that very time to pass by the parade where the soldiers chanced to be then exercising, his resolution was taken in a moment. He instantly determined to be no more a slave, as he called it; he would return no more to be subject to the humours of a tyrannical family; no, he was resolved to be free; or at least, if he must serve, he would serve no master but the king.

William, who had now and then happened to hear from the accidental talk of the soldiers, that those who served the great family he had lived with, were slaves to their tyranny and vices, had also heard in the same casual manner, that the service of the king was *perfect freedom*. Now he had taken it into his head to hope that this might be a freedom to do evil, or at least to do nothing, so he thought it was the only place in the world to suit him.

A fine likely young man as William was, had no great difficulty to get enlisted. The few forms were soon settled, he received the bounty money as eagerly as it was offered, took the oaths of allegiance, was joined to the regiment and heartily welcomed by his new comrades. He was the happiest fellow alive. All was smooth and calm. The day happened to be very fine, and therefore William always reckoned upon a fine day. The scene was gay and lively, the music cheerful, he found the exercise very easy, and he thought there was little more expected from him.

He soon began to flourish away in his talk; and when he met with any one of his old fellow servants, he fell a prating about marches and counter-marches, and blockades, and battles, and sieges, and blood, and death, and triumphs, and victories, all at random, for these were words and phrases he had picked up without at all understanding what he said. He had no knowledge, and therefore he had no modesty, he had no experience and therefore he had no fears.

All seemed to go on swimmingly, for he had as yet no trial. He began to think with triumph what a mean life he had escaped from in the old quarrelsome family, and what a happy, honourable life he should have in the army. O there was no life like the life of a soldier!

In a short time, however, war broke out, his regiment was one of the first which was called out to actual and hard service. As William was the most raw of all the recruits he was the first to murmur at the difficulties and hardships, the cold and hunger, the fatigue and danger of being a soldier. O what watchings, and perils

and trials, and hardships, and difficultics he now thought attended a military life! Surely, said he, I could never have suspected all this misery when I used to see the men on the parade in our town

He now found, when it was too late, that all the field-days he used to attend, all the evolutions and exercises which he had observed the soldiers to go through in the calm times of peace and safety, were only meant to fit, train and qualify them, for the actual service which they were now sent out to perform by the command of the king.

The truth is, William often complained when there was no real hardship to complain of; for the common troubles of life fell out pretty much alike to the great family which William had left, and to the soldiers in the king's army. But the spirit of obedience, discipline, and self-denial of the latter seemed hardships to one of William's loose turn of mind. When he began to murmur, some good old soldier clapped him on the back, saying, cheer up lad, it is a kingdom you are to strive for, if we faint not, henceforth there is laid up for us a great reward, we have the king's word for it man. William observed, that to those who truly believed this, their labours were as nothing, but he himself did not at the bottom believe it; and it was observed, of all the soldiers who failed, the true cause was that they did not really believe the king's promise. He was surprised to see that those soldiers, who used to bluster and boast, and deride the assaults of the enemy, now began to fall away; while such as had faithfully obeyed the king's orders, and believed in his word, were sustained in the hour of trial. Those who had trusted in their own strength all fainted on the slightest attack, while those who had put on the armour of the king's providing, the sword, and the shield, and the helmet, and the breastplate, and whose feet were shod according to order, now endured hardship as good soldiers, and were enabled to fight the good fight.

An engagement was expected immediately. The men were ordered to prepare for battle. While the rest of the corps were so preparing, William's whole thoughts were bent on contriving how he might desert. But alas! he was watched on all sides, he could not possibly devise any means to escape. The danger increased every moment, the battle came on. William, who had been so sure and confident before he entered, flinched in the moment of trial, while his more quiet and less boastful comrades prepared boldly to do their duty. William looked about on all sides, and saw that there was no eye upon him, for he did not know that the king's eye was every where at once. He at last thought he spied a chance of escaping, not from the enemy, but from his own army. While he was endeavouring to escape, a ball from the opposite camp took off his leg. As he fell, the first words which broke from him were, while I was in my duty I was preserved; in the very act of deserting I am wounded. He lay expecting every moment to be trampled to death, but as the confusion was a little over, he was taken off the field by some of his own party, laid in a place of safety, and left to himself, after his wound was dressed.

The skirmish, for it proved nothing more, was soon over. The greater part of the regiment escaped in safety. William in the mean time suffered cruelly both in mind and body. To the pains of a wounded soldier, he added the disgrace of a coward, and the infamy of a deserter. O, cried he, why was I such a fool as to leave the *great family* I lived in, where there was meat and drink enough and to spare, only on account of a little quarrel? I might have made up that with them as we had done our former quarrels. Why did I leave a life of ease and pleasure, where I had only a little rub now and then, for a life of daily discipline and constant danger? Why did I turn soldier? O what a miserable animal is a soldier!

As he was sitting in this weak and disabled condition, uttering the above complaints, he observed a venerable old officer, with thin gray locks on his head, and on his face, deep wrinkles engraved by time, and many an honest scar inflicted by war. William had heard this old officer highly commended for his extraordinary courage and conduct in battle, and in peace he used to see him cool and collected, devoutly employed in reading and praying in the interval of more active duties. He could not help comparing this officer with himself. I, said he, flinched and drew back, and would even have deserted in the moment of peril, and now in return, I have no consolation in the hour of repose and safety. I would not fight then, I cannot pray now. O why would I ever think of being a soldier? He then began afresh to weep and lament, and he groaned so loud that he drew the notice of the officer, who came up to him, kindly sat down by him, took him by the hand, and inquired with as much affection as if he had been his brother, what was the matter with him, and what particular distress, more than the common fortune of war it was which drew from him such bitter groans? 'I know something of surgery,' added he, 'let me examine your wound, and assist you with such little comfort as I can.'

William at once saw the difference between the soldiers in the king's army, and the people in the great family; the latter commonly withdrew their kindness in sickness and trouble, when most wanted, which was just the very time when the others came forward to assist. He told the officer his little history, the manner of his living in the great family, the trifling cause of his quarrelling with it, the slight ground of his entering into the king's service. 'Sir,' said he, 'I quarrelled with the family and I thought I was at once fit for the army: I did not know the qualifications it required. I had not reckoned on discipline, and hardships, and self-denial. I liked well enough to sing a loyal song, or drink the king's health, but I find I do not relish working and fighting for him, though I rashly promised even to lay down my life for his service if called upon, when I took the bounty money and the oath of allegiance. In short, sir, I find that I long for the ease and sloth, the merriment and the feasting of my old

service; I find I cannot be a soldier, and, to speak truth, I was in the very act of deserting when I was stopped short by the cannon ball. So that I feel the guilt of desertion, and the misery of having lost my leg into the bargain.'

The officer thus replied: 'your state is that of every worldly irreligious man. The great family you served is a just picture of the world. The wages the world promises to those who are willing to do its work are high, but the payment is attended with much disappointment; nay, the world, like your great family, is in itself insolvent, and in its very nature incapable of making good the promises, and of paying the high rewards which it holds out to tempt its credulous followers. The ungodly world, like your family, cares little for church, and still less for prayer; and considers the Bible rather as an instrument to make an oath binding, in order to keep the vulgar in obedience, than in containing in itself a perfect rule of faith and practice, and as a title deed to heaven. The generality of men love the world as you did your service, while it smiles upon them, and gives them easy work and plenty of meat and drink; but as soon as it begins to cross and contradict them, they get out of humour with it, just as you did with your service. They then think its drudgery hard, its rewards low. They find out that it is high in its expectations from them, and slack in its payments to them. And they begin to fancy, (because they do not hear religious people murmur as they do,) that there must be some happiness in religion. The world, which takes no account of their deeper sins, at length brings them into discredit for some act of imprudence, just as your family overlooked your lying and swearing, but threatened to drub you for breaking a china dish. Such is the judgment of the world! it particularly bears with those who only break the laws of God, but severely punishes the smallest negligence by which they themselves are injured. The world sooner pardons the breaking ten commandments of God, than even a china dish of its own.

'After some cross or opposition, worldly men, as I said before, begin to think how much content and cheerfulness they remember to have seen in religious people. They therefore begin to fancy that religion must be an easy and delightful, as well as a good thing. They have heard that, *her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;* and they persuade themselves, that by this is meant worldly pleasantness and sensual peace. They resolve at length to try it, to turn their back upon the world, to engage in the service of God and turn Christians; just as you resolved to leave your old service, to enter into the service of the king and turn soldier. But as you quitted your place in a passion, so they leave the world in a huff. They do not count the cost. They do not calculate upon the darling sin, the habitual pleasures, the ease and vanities which they undertake by their new engagements to renounce, any more than you counted what indulgences you were going to give up when you quitted the luxuries and idleness of your place to enlist in the soldier's warfare. They have, as I said, seen Christians cheerful, and they mistook the ground of their cheerfulness; they fancied it arose, not because through grace they had conquered difficulties, but because they had no difficulties in their passage. They fancied that religion found the road smooth, whereas it only helps to bear with a rough road without complaint. They do not know that these Christians are of good cheer, not because the world is free from tribulation, but because Christ, their captain, has *overcome the world.* But the irreligous man, who has only seen the outside of a Christian in his worldly intercourse, knows little of his secret conflicts, his trials, his self-denials, his warefare with the world without; and with his own corrupt desires within.

'The irreligious man quarrels with the world on some such occasion as you did with your place. He now puts on the outward forms and ceremonies of religion, and assumes the badge of Christianity, just as you were struck with the show of a field day; just as you were pleased with the music and the marching, and put on the cockade and red coat. All seems smooth for a little while. He goes through the outward exercises of a Christian, a degree of credit attends his new profession, but he never suspects there is either difficulty or discipline attending it; he fancies religion is a thing for talking about, and not a thing of the heart and the life. He never suspects that all the psalm-singing he joins in, and the sermons he hears, and the other means he is using, are only as the exercises and the evolutions of the soldiers, to fit and prepare him for actual service; and that these means are no more religion itself, than the exercises and evolutions of your parade were real warfare.

'At length some trial arises: this nominal Christian is called to differ from the world in some great point; something happens which may strike at his comfort, or his credit, or security. This cools his zeal for religion, just as the view of an engagement cooled your courage as a soldier. He finds he was only *angry* with the world, he was not *tired* of it. He was out of humour with the world, not because he had seen through its vanity and emptiness, but because the world was out of humour with him. He finds that it is an easy thing to be a fair-weather Christian, bold where there is nothing to be done, and confident where there is nothing to be feared. Difficulties unmask him to others; temptations unmask him to himself; he discovers, that though he is a high professor, he is no Christian; just as you found out that your red coat and your cockade, your shoulder-knot, and your musket, did not prevent you from being a coward.

'Your misery in the military life, like that of the nominal Christian, arose from your love of ease, your cowardice, and your self-ignorance. You rushed into a new way of life, without trying after one qualification for it. A total change of heart and temper were necessary for your new calling. With new views and principles the soldier's life would have been not only easy, but delightful to you. But while with a new profession you retained your old nature it is no wonder if all discipline seemed intolerable to you.

'The true Christian, like the brave soldier, is supported under dangers by a strong faith that the fruits of that victory for which he fights will be safety and peace. But, alas! the pleasures of this world are present and visible; the rewards for which he strives are remote. He therefore fails, because nothing short of a lively faith can ever outweigh a strong present temptation, and lead a man to prefer the joys of conquest to the pleasures of indulgence.

BETTY BROWN,

THE ST. GILES'S ORANGE GIRL:

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF MRS. SPONGE, THE MONEY-LENDER.

Betty Brown the orange girl, was born nobody knows where, and bred nobody knows how. No girl in all the streets of London could drive a barrow more nimbly, avoid pushing against passengers more dexterously, or cry her 'fine China oranges' in a shriller voice. But then she could neither sew, nor spin, nor knit, nor wash, nor iron, nor read, nor spell. Betty had not been always in so good a situation as that in which we now describe her. She came into the world before so many good gentlemen and ladies began to concern themselves so kindly that the poor might have a little learning. There was no charitable society then as there is now, to pick up poor friendless children in the streets,* and put them into a good house, and give them meat, and drink, and lodging, and learning, and teach them to get their bread in an honest way, into the bargain. Whereas, this now is often the case in London; blessed be God who *has ordered the bounds of our habitation*, and cast our lot in such a country!

The longest thing that Betty can remember is, that she used to crawl up out of a night cellar, stroll about the streets, and pick cinders from the scavengers' carts. Among the ashes she sometimes found some ragged gauze and dirty ribands; with these she used to dizen herself out, and join the merry bands on the first of May. This was not, however, quite fair, as she did not lawfully belong either to the female dancers, who foot it gayly round the garland, or to the sooty tribe, who, on this happy holyday, forget their year's toil in Portman square, cheered by the tender bounty of her whose wit has long enlivened the most learned, and whose taste and talents long adorned the most polished societies. Betty, however, often got a few scraps, by appearing to belong to both parties. But as she grew bigger and was not an idle girl, she always put herself in the way of doing something. She would run of errands for the footmen, or sweep the door for the maid of any house where she was known; she would run and fetch some porter and never was once known either to sip a drop by the way, or steal the pot. Her quickness and fidelity in doing little jobs, got her into favour with a lazy cook-maid, who was too apt to give away her master's cold meat and beer, not to those who were most in want, but to those who waited upon her, and did the little things for her which she ought to have done herself.

The cook, who found Betty a dexterous girl, soon employed her to sell ends of candles, pieces of meat and cheese, the lumps of butter, or any thing else she could crib from the house. These were all carried to her friend, Mrs. Sponge, who kept a little shop, and a kind of eating-house for poor working people, not far from the Seven Dials. She also bought as well as sold, many kinds of second-hand things, and was not scrupulous to know whether what she bought was honestly come by, provided she could get it for a sixth part of what it was worth. But if the owner presumed to ask for its real value, then she had sudden qualms of conscience, instantly suspected the things were stolen, and gave herself airs of honesty, which often took in poor silly people, and gave her a sort of half reputation among the needy and ignorant, whose friend she hypocritically pretended to be.

To this artful woman Betty carried the cook's pilferings; and as Mrs. Sponge would give no great price for these in money, the cook was willing to receive payment for her eatables in Mrs. Sponge's drinkables; for she dealt in all kinds of spirits. I shall only just remark here, that one receiver, like Mrs. Sponge, makes many pilferers, who are tempted to commit these petty thieveries, by knowing how easy it is to dispose of them at such iniquitous houses.

Betty was faithful to both her employers, which is extrrordinary, considering the greatness of the temptation and her utter ignorance of good and evil. One day she ventured to ask Mrs. Sponge, if she could not assist her to get into a more settled way of life. She told her that when she rose in the morning she never knew where she should lie at night, nor was she ever sure of a meal beforehand. Mrs. Sponge asked her what she thought herself fit for. Betty, with fear and trembling, said there was one trade for which she thought herself qualified, but she had not the ambition to look so high; it was far above her humble views; this was, to have a barrow, and sell fruit, as several other of Mrs. Sponge's customers did, whom she had often looked up to with envy, little expecting herself ever to attain so independent a station.

Mrs. Sponge was an artful woman. Bad as she was, she was always aiming at something of a character; this was a great help to her trade. While she watched keenly to make every thing turn to her own profit, she had a false fawning way of seeming to do all she did out of pity and kindness to the distressed; and she seldom committed an extortion, but she tried to make the persons she cheated believe themselves highly obliged to her kindness. By thus

* The Philanthropic.

pretending to be their friend, she gained their confidence; and she grew rich herself, while they thought she was only showing favour to them. Various were the arts she had of getting rich; and the money she got by grinding the poor, she spent in the most luxurious living; while she would haggle with her hungry customers for a farthing, she would spend pounds on the most costly delicacies for herself.

Mrs. Sponge, laying aside that haughty look and voice, well known to such as had the misfortune to be in her debt, put on the hypocritical smile and soft canting tone, which she always assumed, when she meant to flatter her superiors, or take in her dependents. 'Betty,' said she, 'I am resolved to stand your friend. These are sad times to be sure. Money is money now. Yet I am resolved to put you in a handsome way of living. You shall have a barrow, and well furnished too.' Betty could not have felt more joy or gratitude, if she had been told that she should have a coach. 'O, madam!' said Betty, 'it is impossible. I have not a penny in the world towards helping me to set up.' 'I will take care of that,' said Mrs. Sponge; 'only you must do as I bid you. You must pay me interest for my money; and you will, of course, be glad also to pay so much every night for a nice hot supper which I get ready *quite out of kindness*, for a number of poor working people. This will be a great comfort for such a friendless girl as you, for my victuals and drink are the best, and my company the merriest of any in all St. Giles's.' Betty thought all this only so many more favours, and curtseying to the ground, said, 'To be sure, ma'am, and thank you a thousand times into the bargain. I never could hope for such a rise in life.'

Mrs. Sponge knew what she was about. Betty was a lively girl, who had a knack at learning any thing; and so well looking through all her dirt and rags, that there was little doubt she would get custom. A barrow was soon provided, and five shillings put into Betty's hands. Mrs. Sponge kindly condescended to go to show her how to buy the fruit; for it was a rule with this prudent gentlewoman, and one from which she never departed, that no one should cheat but herself; and suspecting from her own heart the fraud of all other dealers, she was seldom guilty of the weakness of being imposed upon.

Betty had never possessed such a sum before. She grudged to lay it out all at once, and was ready to fancy she could live upon the capital. The crown, however, was laid out to the best advantage. Betty was carefully taught in what manner to cry her oranges; and received many useful lessons how to get off the bad with the good, and the stale with the fresh. Mrs. Sponge also lent her a few bad sixpences, for which she ordered her to bring home good ones at night. Betty stared. Mrs. Sponge said, 'Betty, those who would get money, must not be too nice about trifles. Keep one of these sixpences in your hand, and if an ignorant young customer gives you a good sixpence, do you immediately slip it into your other hand, and give him the bad one, declaring that it is the very one you have just received, and be ready to swear that you have not another sixpence in the world. You must also learn how to treat different sorts of customers. To some you may put off, with safety, goods which would be quite unsaleable to others. Never offer bad fruit, Betty, to those who know better; never waste the good on those who may be put off with worse: put good oranges at top to attract the eye, and the mouldy ones under for sale.'

Poor Betty had not a nice conscience, for she had never learnt that grand, but simple rule of all moral obligation, *Never do that to another which you would not have another do to you.* She set off with her barrow, as proud and as happy as if she had been set up in the first shop in Covent Garden. Betty had a sort of natural good temper, which made her unwilling to impose, but she had no principle which told her it was a sin to do so. She had such good success, that when night came, she had not an orange left. With a light heart she drove her empty barrow to Mrs. Sponge's door. She went in with a merry face, and threw down on the counter every farthing she had taken. 'Betty,' said Mrs. Sponge, 'I have a right to it all, as it was got by my money. But I am too generous to take it. I will therefore only take sixpence for this day's use of my five shillings. This is a most reasonable interest, and I will lend you the same sum to trade with to-morrow, and so on; you only paying me sixpence for the use of it every night, which will be a great bargain to you. You must also pay me my price every night for your supper, and you shall have an excellent lodging above stairs; so you see every thing will now be provided for you in a genteel manner, through my generosity.'*

Poor Betty's gratitude blinded her so completely, that she had forgot to calculate the vast proportion which this generous benefactress was to receive out of her little gains. She thought herself a happy creature, and went in to supper with a number of others of her own class. For this supper, and for more porter and gin than she ought to have drunk, Betty was forced to pay so high that it ate up all the profits of the day, which, added to the daily interest, made Mrs. Sponge a rich return for her five shillings.

Betty was reminded again of the gentility of her new situation, as she crept up to bed in one of Mrs. Sponge's garrets, five stories high. This loft, to be sure, was small and had no window, but what it wanted in light was made up in company, as it had three beds and thrice as many lodgers. Those gentry had one night, in a drunken frolic, broken down the door, which happily had never been replaced; for, since that time, the lodgers had died much seldomer of infectious distempers, than when they were close shut in. For this lodging Betty paid twice as much to her *good friend* as she would have done to a stranger. Thus she continued with great industry and a thriving trade, as poor as on the first day, and not a bit nearer to saving money enough to buy her even a pair of shoes, though her feet were nearly on the ground.

One day, as Betty was driving her barrow through a street near Holborn, a lady from a

* For an authentic account of numberless frauds of this kind, see that very useful work of Mr. Colquhoun on the 'Police of the Metropolis of London.'

window called out to her that she wanted some oranges. While the servant went to fetch a plate, the lady entered into some talk with Betty, having been struck with her honest countenance and civil manner She questioned her as to her way of life, and the profits of her trade; and Betty, who had never been so kindly treated before by so genteel a person, was very communicative. She told her little history as far as she knew it, and dwelt much on the generosity of Mrs. Sponge, in keeping her in her house, and trusting her with so large a capital as five shillings. At first it sounded like a very good-natured thing; but the lady, whose husband was one of the justices of the new police, happened to know more of Mrs. Sponge than was good, which led her to inquire still further. Betty owned, that to be sure it was not all clear profit, for that besides that the high price of the supper and bed ran away with all she got, she paid sixpence a-day for the use of the five shillings.' 'And how long have you done this?' said the lady. 'About a year, madam.'

The lady's eyes were at once opened. 'My poor girl,' said she, 'do you know that you have already paid for that single five shillings the enormous sum of 7*l.* 10*s.*? I believe it is the most profitable five shillings Mrs. Sponge ever laid out.'—'O no, madam,' said the girl, 'that good gentlewoman does the same kindness to ten or twelve other poor friendless creatures like me.'—'Does she so?' said the lady; 'then I never heard of a more lucrative trade than this woman carries on, under the mask of charity, at the expense of her poor deluded fellow creatures.'

'But, madam,' said Betty, who did not comprehend this lady's arithmetic, 'what can I do? I now contrive to pick up a morsel of bread without begging or stealing. Mrs. Sponge has been very good to me; and I don't see how I can help myself.'

'I will tell you,' said the lady: 'if you will follow my advice, you may not only maintain yourself honestly but independently. Only oblige yourself to live hard for a little time, till you have saved five shillings out of your own earnings. Give up that expensive supper at night, drink only one pint of porter, and no gin at all. As soon as you have scraped together the five shillings, carry it back to your false friend; and if you are industrious, you will, at the end of the year, have saved 7*l.* 10*s.* If you can make a shift to live now, when you have this heavy interest to pay, judge how things will mend when your capital becomes your own. You will put some clothes on your back; and, by leaving the use of spirits, and the company in which you drink them, your health, your morals, and your condition will mend.'

The lady did not talk thus to save her money. She would willingly have given the girl the five shillings; but she thought it was beginning at the wrong end. She wanted to try her. Besides, she knew there was more pleasure, as well as honour, in possessing five shillings of one's own saving, than of another's giving. Betty promised to obey. She owned she had got no good by the company or the liquor at Mrs. Sponge's. She promised that very night to begin saving the expense of the supper: and that she would not taste a drop of gin till she had the five shillings beforehand. The lady, who knew the power of good habits, was contented with this, thinking, that if the girl could abstain for a certain time, it would become easy to her. She therefore, at present, said little about the *sin* of drinking, and only insisted on the *expense* of it.

In a very few weeks Betty had saved up the five shillings. She went to carry back this money with great gratitude to Mrs. Sponge. This kind friend began to abuse her most unmercifully. She called her many hard names, not fit to repeat, for having forsaken the supper, by which she swore she herself got nothing at all; but as she had the charity to dress it for such beggarly wretches, she insisted they should pay for it, whether they eat it or not. She also brought in a heavy score for lodging, though Betty had paid for it every night, and had given notice of her intending to quit her. By all these false pretences, she got from her, not only her own five shillings, but all the little capital with which Betty was going to set up for herself. All was not sufficient to answer her demands—she declared she would send her to prison: but while she went to call a constable, Betty contrived to make off.

With a light pocket and a heavy heart she went back to the lady; and with many tears told her sad story. The lady's husband, the justice, condescended to listen to Betty's tale. He said Mrs. Sponge had long been upon his books as a receiver of stolen goods. Betty's evidence strengthened his bad opinion of her. 'This petty system of usury,' said the magistrate, 'may be thought trifling; but it will no longer appear so, when you reflect, that if one of these female sharpers possesses a capital of seventy shillings, or 3*l.* 10*s.* with fourteen steady regular customers, she can realize a fixed income of one hundred guineas a year. Add to this the influence such a loan gives her over these friendless creatures, by compelling them to eat at her house, or lodge, or buy liquors, or by taking their pawns, and you will see the extent of the evil. I pity these poor victims: you, Betty, shall point out some of them to me, I will endeavour to open their eyes on their own bad management. It is not by giving to the importunate shillings and half crowns, and turning them adrift to wait for the next accidental relief, that much good is done. It saves trouble, indeed, but that trouble being the most valuable part of charity, ought not to be spared; at least by those who have leisure as well as affluence. It is one of the greatest acts of kindness to the poor to mend their economy, and to give them right views of laying out their little money to advantage. These poor blinded creatures look no farther than to be able to pay this heavy interest every night, and to obtain the same loan on the same hard terms the next day. Thus they are kept in poverty and bondage all their lives; but I hope as many as hear of this will go on a better plan, and I shall be ready to help any who are willing to help themselves.' This worthy magistrate went directly to Mrs. Sponge's with proper officers; and he soon got to the bot-

tom of many iniquities. He not only made her refund poor Betty's money, but committed her to prison for receiving stolen goods, and various other offences, which may, perhaps, make the subject of another history.

Betty was now set up in trade to her heart's content. She had found the benefit of leaving off spirits, and she resolved to drink them no more. The first fruits of this resolution was, that in a fortnight she bought her a pair of new shoes; and as there was now no deduction for interest, or for gin, her earnings became considerable. The lady made her a present of a gown and a hat, on the easy condition that she should go to church. She accepted the terms, at first rather as an act of obedience to the lady than from a sense of higher duty. But she soon began to go from a better motive. This constant attendance at church, joined to the instructions of the lady, opened a new world to Betty. She now heard, for the first time, that she was a sinner; that God had given a law which was holy, just, and good; that she had broken this law, had been a swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, and had lived *without God in the world.* All this was sad news to Betty; she knew, indeed, before, that there were sinners, but she thought they were only to be found in the prisons, or at Botany Bay, or in those mournful carts which she had sometimes followed with her barrow, with the unthinking crowd, to Tyburn.—She was deeply struck with the great truths revealed in the Scripture, which were quite new to her; her heart smote her, and she became anxious *to flee from the wrath to come.* She was desirous of improvement, and said, 'she would give up all the profits of her barrow, and go into the hardest service, rather than live in sin and ignorance.'

'Betty,' said the lady, 'I am glad to see you so well disposed, and will do what I can for you. Your present way of life, to be sure, exposes you to much danger; but the trade is not unlawful in itself, and we may please God in any calling, provided it be not a dishonest one. In this great town there must be barrow-women to sell fruit. Do you, then, instead of forsaking your business, set a good example to those in it, and show them, that though a dangerous trade, it need not be a wicked one. Till Providence points out some safer way of getting your bread, let your companions see, that it is possible to be good even in this. Your trade being carried on in the open street, and your fruit bought in an open shop, you are not so much obliged to keep sinful company as may be thought. Take a garret in an honest house, to which you may go home in safety at night. I will give you a bed, and a few necessaries to furnish your room; and I will also give you a constant Sunday's dinner. A barrow woman, blessed be God and our good laws, is as much her own mistress on Sundays as a duchess; and the church and the Bible are as much open to her. You may soon learn as much of religion as you are expected to know. A barrow-woman may pray as heartily morning and night, and serve God as acceptably all day, while she is carrying on her little trade, as if she had her whole time to spare.'

'To do this well, you must mind the following

'*Rules for Retail Dealers.*

'Resist every temptation to cheat.
'Never impose bad goods on false pretences.
'Never put off bad money for good.
'Never use profane or uncivil language.

'Never swear your goods cost so much, when you know it is false. By so doing you are guilty of two sins in one breath, a lie and an oath.

'To break these rules will be your chief temptation. God will mark how you behave under them, and will reward or punish you accordingly. These temptations will be as great to you, as higher trials are to higher people; but you have the same God to look to for strength to resist them as they have.—You must pray to him to give you this strength. You shall attend a Sunday-school, where you will be taught these good things; and I will promote you as you shall be found to deserve.'

Poor Betty here burst into tears of joy and gratitude, crying out, 'What! shall such a poor friendless creature as I be treated so kindly, and learn to read the word of God too? Oh, madam, what a lucky chance brought me to your door!' —'Betty,' said the lady, 'what you have just said shows the need you have of being better taught; there is no such thing as chance; and we offend God when we call that luck or chance which is brought about by his will and pleasure. —None of the events of your life have happened by chance; but all have been under the direction of a good and kind Providence.—He has permitted you to experience want and distress, that you might acknowledge His hand in your present comfort and prosperity. Above all, you must bless his goodness in sending you to me, not only because I have been of use to you in your worldly affairs, but because he has enabled me to show you the danger of your state from sin and ignorance, and to put you in a way to know his will and to keep his commandments, which is eternal life.

How Betty, by industry and piety, rose in the world, till at length she came to keep that handsome sausage shop near the Seven Dials, and was married to that very hackney-coachman, whose history and honest character may be learned from that ballad of the Cheap Repository which bears his name, may be shown hereafter

BLACK GILES THE POACHER:

CONTAINING SOME ACCOUNT OF A FAMILY WHO HAD RATHER LIVE BY THEIR WITS THAN THEIR WORK.

PART I.

Poaching Giles lives on the borders of those great moors in Somersetshire. Giles, to be sure, has been a sad fellow in his time; and it is none of his fault if his whole family do not end their career, either at the gallows or Botany Bay. He lives at that mud cottage with the broken windows, stuffed with dirty rags, just beyond the gate which divides the upper from the lower moor. You may know the house at a good distance by the ragged tiles on the roof, and the loose stones which are ready to drop out from the chimney; though a short ladder, a hod of mortar, and half an hour's leisure time, would have prevented all this, and made the little dwelling tight enough. But as Giles had never learnt any thing that was good, so he did not know the value of such useful sayings, as, that 'a tile in time saves nine.'

Besides this, Giles fell into that common mistake, that a beggarly looking cottage, and filthy ragged children, raised most compassion, and of course drew most charity. But as cunning as he was in other things, he was out in his reckoning here; for it is neatness, housewifery, and a decent appearance, which draw the kindness of the rich and charitable, while they turn away disgusted from filth and laziness; not out of pride, but because they see that it is next to impossible to mend the condition of those who degrade themselves by dirt and sloth; and few people care to help those who will not help themselves.

The common on which Giles's hovel stands, is quite a deep marsh in a wet winter: but in summer it looks green and pretty enough. To be sure it would be rather convenient when one passes that way in a carriage, if one of the children would run out and open the gate: but instead of any one of them running out as soon as they heard the wheels, which would be quite time enough, what does Giles do, but set all his ragged brats, with dirty faces, matted locks, and naked feet and legs, to lie all day upon a sand bank hard by the gate, waiting for the slender chance of what may be picked up from travellers. At the sound of a carriage, a whole covey of these little scare-crows start up, rush to the gate, and all at once thrust out their hats and aprons; and for fear this, together with the noise of their clamorous begging, should not sufficiently frighten the horses, they are very apt to let the gate slap full against you, before you are half way through, in their eager scuffle to snatch from each other the halfpence which you have thrown out to them. I know two ladies who were one day very near being killed by these abominable tricks.

Thus five or six little idle creatures, who might be earning a trifle by knitting at home, who might be useful to the public by working in the field, and who might assist their families by learning to get their bread twenty honest ways, are suffered to lie about all day, in the hope of a few chance halfpence, which after all, they are by no means sure of getting. Indeed, when the neighbouring gentlemen found out that opening the gate was a family trade, they soon left off giving any thing. And I myself, though I used to take out a penny ready to give, had there been only one to receive it, when I see a whole family established in so beggarly a trade, quietly put it back again in my pocket, and give nothing at all. And so few travellers pass that way, that sometimes after the whole family have lost a day, their gains do not amount to two-pence.

As Giles had a far greater taste for living by his wits than his work, he was at one time in hopes that his children might have got a pretty penny by *tumbling* for the diversion of travellers, and he set about training them in that indecent practice; but unluckily the moors being level, the carriage travelled faster than the children tumbled. He envied those parents who lived on the London road, over the Wiltshire downs, which downs being very hilly, it enables the tumbler to keep pace with the traveller, till he sometimes extorts from the light and unthinking, a reward instead of a reproof. I beg leave, however, to put all gentlemen and ladies in mind, that such tricks are a kind of apprenticeship to the trades of begging and thieving; and that nothing is more injurious to good morals than, to encourage the poor in any habits which may lead them to live upon chance.

Giles, to be sure, as his children grew older, began to train them to such other employments, as the idle habits they had learned at the gate very properly qualified them for. The right of common, which some of the poor cottagers have in that part of the country, and which is doubtless a considerable advantage to many, was converted by Giles, into the means of corrupting his whole family; for his children, as soon as they grew too big for the trade of begging at the gate, were promoted to the dignity of thieves on the moor. Here he kept two or three asses, miserable beings, which if they had the good fortune to escape an untimely death by starving, did not fail to meet with it by beating. Some of the biggest boys were sent out with these lean and galled animals to carry sand or coals about the neighbouring towns. Both sand and coals were often stolen before they got them to sell; or if not, they always took care to cheat in selling them. By long practice in this art, they grew so dexterous, that they could give a pretty good guess how large a coal they could crib out of every bag before the buyer would be likely to miss it.

All their odd time was taken up under the pretence of watching their asses on the moor, or running after five or six half-starved geese: but the truth is these boys were only watching

for an opportunity to steal an odd goose of their neighbour's, while they pretended to look after their own. They used also to pluck the quills or the down from these poor live creatures, or half milk a cow before the farmer's maid came with her pail. They all knew how to calculate to a minute what time to be down in a morning to let out their lank hungry beasts, which they had turned over night into the farmer's field to steal a little good pasture. They contrived to get there just time enough to escape being caught replacing the stakes they had pulled out for the cattle to get over. For Giles was a prudent long-headed fellow; and whenever he stole food for his colts, took care never to steal stakes from the hedges at the same place. He had sense enough to know that the gain did not make up for the danger; he knew that a loose faggot, pulled from a neighbour's pile of wood after the family were gone to bed, answered the end better, and was not half the trouble.

Among the many trades which Giles professed, he sometimes practised that of a rat-catcher; but he was addicted to so many tricks, that he never followed the same trade long; for detection will, sooner or later, follow the best concerted villany. Whenever he was sent for to a farm house, his custom was to kill a few of the old rats, always taking care to leave a little stock of young ones alive, sufficient to keep up the breed; 'for,' said he, 'if I were to be such a fool as to clear a house or a barn at once, how would my trade be carried on?' And where any barn was over-stocked, he used to borrow a few rats from thence, just to people a neighbouring granary which had none; and he might have gone on till now, had he not unluckily been caught one evening emptying his cage of rats under parson Wilson's barn door.

This worthy minister, Mr. Wilson, used to pity the neglected children of Giles, as much as he blamed the wicked parents. He one day picked up Dick, who was far the best of Gile's bad boys. Dick was loitering about in a field behind the parson's garden in search of a hen's nest, his mother having ordered him to bring home a few eggs that night, by hook or by crook, as Giles was resolved to have some pancakes for supper, though he knew that eggs were a penny a-piece. Mr. Wilson had long been desirous of snatching some of this vagrant family from ruin; and his chief hopes were bent on Dick, as the least hackneyed in knavery. He had once given him a new pair of shoes, on his promising to go to school next Sunday; but no sooner had Rachel, the boy's mother, got the shoes into her clutches, than she pawned them for a bottle of gin; and ordered the boy to keep out of the parson's sight, and to be sure to play his marbles on Sunday for the future, at the other end of the parish, and not near the churchyard. Mr. Wilson, however, picked up the boy once more, for it was not his way to despair of any body. Dick was just going to take to his heels, as usual, for fear the old story of the shoes should be brought forward; but finding he could not get off, what does he do but run into a little puddle of muddy water which lay between him and the parson, that the sight of his naked feet might not bring on the dreaded subject. Now it happened that Mr. Wilson was planting a little field of beans, so he thought this a good opportunity to employ Dick, and he told him he had got some pretty easy work for him. Dick did as he was bid; he willingly went to work, and readily began to plant his beans with despatch and regularity according to the directions given him.

While the boy was busily at work by himself, Giles happened to come by, having been skulking round the back way to look over the parson's garden wall, to see if there was any thing worth climbing over for on the ensuing night. He spied Dick, and began to scold him for working for the stingy old parson, for Giles had a natural antipathy to whatever belonged to the church. 'What has he promised thee a-day?' said he; 'little enough I dare say.' 'He is not to pay me by the day,' said Dick, 'but says he will give me so much when I have planted this peck, and so much for the next.' 'Oh, oh! that alters the case,' said Giles. 'One may, indeed, get a trifle by this sort of work. I hate your regular day-jobs, where one can't well avoid doing one's work for one's money. Come, give me a handful of beans, I will teach thee how to plant when thou art paid for planting by the peck. All we have to do in that case is to despatch the work as fast as we can, and get rid of the beans with all speed; and as to the seed coming up or not, that is no business of our's; we are paid for planting not for growing. At the rate thou goest on thou would'st not get sixpence to-night. Come along, bury away.' So saying he took his hatful of the seed, and where Dick had been ordered to set one bean, Giles buried a dozen; of course the beans were soon out. But though the peck was emptied, the ground was unplanted. But cunning Giles knew this could not be found out till the time when the beans might be expected to come up, 'and then Dick,' says he, 'the snails and the mice may go shares in the blame, or we can lay the fault on the rooks or the blackbirds.' So saying he sent the boy into the parsonage to receive his pay, taking care to secure about a quarter of the peck of beans for his own colt. He put both bag and beans into his own pocket to carry home, bidding Dick tell Mr. Wilson that he had planted the beans and lost the bag.

In the meantime Giles's other boys were busy in emptying the ponds and trout-streams in the the neighbouring manor. They would steal away the carp and tench when they were no bigger than gudgeons. By this untimely depredation they plundered the owner of his property, without enriching themselves. But the pleasure of mischief was reward enough. These, and a hundred other little thieveries, they committed with such dexterity, that old Tim Crib, whose son was transported last assizes for sheep stealing, used to be often reproaching his boys that Giles's sons were worth a hundred of such blockheads, as he had; for scarce a night passed but Giles had some little comfortable thing for supper which his boys had pilfered in the day, while his undutiful dogs never stole any thing worth having. Giles, in the meantime, was busy in his way, but as busy as he was

in laying his nets, starting coveys, and training dogs, he always took care that his depredations should not be confined merely to game.

Gile's boys had never seen the inside of a church since they were christened, and the father thought he knew his own interest better than to force them to it; for church-time was the season of their harvest. Then the hen's nests were searched, a stray duck was clapped under the smock frock, the tools which might have been left by chance in a farm-yard were picked up, and all the neighbouring pigeon-houses were thinned, so that Giles used to boast to tawny Rachel his wife, that Sunday was to them the most profitable day in the week. With her it was certainly the most laborious day, as she always did her washing and ironing on the Sunday morning, it being, as she said, the only leisure day she had, for on the other days she went about the country telling fortunes, and selling dream-books and wicked songs. Neither her husband's nor her children's clothes were ever mended, and if Sunday, her idle day, had not come about once in every week, it is likely they would never have been washed neither. You might however see her as you were going to church smoothing her own rags on her best red cloak, which she always used for her ironing-cloth on Sundays, for her cloak when she travelled, and for her blanket at night; such a wretched manager was Rachel! Among her other articles of trade, one was to make and sell pepper-mint, and other distilled waters. These she had the cheap art of making without trouble and without expense, for she made them without herbs and without a still. Her way was, to fill so many quart bottles with plain water, putting a spoonful of mint water in the mouth of each; these she corked down with rosin, carrying to each customer a phial of real distilled water to taste by way of sample. This was so good that her bottles were commonly bought up without being opened; but if any suspicion arose, and she was forced to uncork a bottle, by the few drops of distilled water lying at top, she even then escaped detection, and took care to get out of reach before the bottle was opened a second time. She was too prudent ever to go twice to the same house.

The upright Magistrate.

There is hardly any petty mischief that is not connected with the life of a poacher. Mr. Wilson was aware of this; he was not only a pious clergyman, but an upright justice. He used to say, that people who were truly conscientious, must be so in small things as well as in great ones, or they would destroy the effect of their own precepts, and their example would not be of general use. For this reason he never would accept of a hare or a partridge from any unqualified person in the parish: He did not content himself with shuffling the thing off by asking questions, and pretending to take it for granted in a general way that the game was fairly come at; but he used to say, that by receiving the booty he connived at a crime, made himself a sharer in it; and if he gave a present to the man who brought it, he even tempted him to repeat the fault.

One day poor Jack Weston, an honest fellow in the neighbourhood, whom Mr. Wilson had kindly visited and relieved in a long sickness, from which he was but just recovered, was brought before him as he was sitting on the justice's bench; Jack was accused of having knocked down a hare; and of all the birds in the air who should the informer be but black Giles the poacher? Mr. Wilson was grieved at the charge; he had a great regard for Jack, but he had still a greater regard for the law. The poor fellow pleaded guilty. He did not deny the fact, but said he did not consider it as a crime, for he did not think game was private property, and he owned he had a strong temptation for doing what he had done, which he hoped would plead his excuse. The justice desired to know what this temptation was.—'Sir,' said the poor fellow, 'you know I was given over this spring in a bad fever. I had no friend in the world but you, sir. Under God you saved my life by your charitable relief; and I trust also you may have helped to save my soul by your prayers and your good advice; for, by the grace of God, I have turned over a new leaf since that sickness.

'I know I can never make you amends for all your goodness, but I thought it would be some comfort to my full heart if I could but once give you some little token of my gratitude. So I had trained a pair of nice turtle doves for madam Wilson, but they were stolen from me, sir, and I do suspect black Giles stole them. Yesterday morning, sir, as I was crawling out to my work, for I am still but very weak, a fine hare ran across my path. I did not stay to consider whether it was wrong to kill a hare, but I felt it was right to show my gratitude; so, sir, without a moment's thought I did knock down the hare, which I was going to carry to your worship, because I knew madam was fond of hare. I am truly sorry for my fault, and will submit to whatever punishment your worship may please to inflict.'

Mr. Wilson was much moved with this honest confession, and touched with the poor fellow's gratitude. What added to the effect of the story, was the weak condition and pale sickly looks of the offender. But this worthy magistrate never suffered his feeling to bias his integrity; he knew that he did not sit on that bench to indulge pity, but to administer justice; and while he was sorry for the offender, he would never justify the offence. 'John,' said he, 'I am surprised that you could for a moment forget that I never accept any gift which causes the giver to break a law. On Sunday I teach you from the pulpit the laws of God, whose minister I am. At present I fill the chair of the magistrate, to enforce and execute the laws of the land. Between those and the others there is more connexion than you are aware. I thank you, John, for your affection to me, and I admire your gratitude; but I must not allow either affection or gratitude to be brought as a plea for a wrong action. It is not your business nor mine, John, to settle whether the game laws are good or bad. Till they are repealed we must obey them. Many, I doubt not, break these laws through ignorance, and many, I am certain, who would not dare to steal a goose or a turkey,

make no scruple of knocking down a hare or a partridge. You will hereafter think yourself happy that this your first attempt has proved unsuccessful, as I trust you are too honest a fellow ever to intend to turn poacher. With poaching much moral evil is connected; a habit of nightly depredation; a custom of prowling in the dark for prey produces in time a disrelish for honest labour. He whose first offence was committed without much thought or evil intention, if he happens to succeed a few times in carrying off his booty undiscovered, grows bolder and bolder: and when he fancies there is no shame attending it, he very soon gets to persuade himself that there is also no sin. While some people pretend a scruple about stealing a sheep, they partly live by plundering of warrens. But remember that the warrener pays a high rent, and that therefore his rabbits are as much his property as his sheep. Do not then deceive yourselves with these false distinctions. All property is sacred, and as the laws of the land are intended to fence in that property, he who brings up his children to break down any of these fences, brings them up to certain sin and ruin. He who begins with robbing orchards, rabbit-warrens, and fish-ponds, will probably end with horse-stealing or high-way robbery. Poaching is a regular apprenticeship to bolder crimes. He whom I may commit as a boy to sit in the stocks for killing a partridge, may be likely to end at the gallows for killing a man.

'Observe, you who now hear me, the strictness and impartiality of justice. I know Giles to be a worthless fellow, yet it is my duty to take his information; I know Jack Weston to be an honest youth, yet I must be obliged to make him pay the penalty. Giles is a bad man, but he can prove this fact; Jack is a worthy lad, but he has committed this fault. I am sorry for you, Jack; but do not let it grieve you that Giles has played worse tricks a hundred times, and yet got off, while you were detected in the very first offence, for that would be grieving because you are not as great a rogue as Giles. At this moment you think your good luck is very unequal; but all this will one day turn out in your favour. Giles is not the more a favourite of Heaven because he has hitherto escaped Botany Bay, or the hulks; nor is it any mark of God's displeasure against you, John, that you were found out in your very first attempt.'

Here the good justice left off speaking, and no one could contradict the truth of what he had said. Weston humbly submitted to his sentence, but he was very poor, and knew not where to raise the money to pay his fine. His character had always been so fair, that several farmers present kindly agreed to advance a trifle each to prevent his being sent to prison, and he thankfully promised to work out the debt. The justice himself, though he could not soften the law, yet showed Weston so much kindness that he was enabled before the year was out, to get out of this difficulty. He began to think more seriously than he had ever yet done, and grew to abhor poaching, not merely from fear, but from principle.

We shall soon see whether poaching Giles always got off so successfully. Here we have seen that worldly prosperity is no sure sign of goodness. Next month we may, perhaps, see that the 'triumph of the wicked is short;' for I then promise to give the second part of the Poacher, together with the entertaining story of the Widow Brown's Apple-tree.

PART II.

History of Widow Brown's Apple-tree.

I think my readers got so well acquainted last month with black Giles the poacher, that they will not expect this month to hear any great good, either of Giles himself, his wife Rachel, or any of their family. I am sorry to expose their tricks, but it is their fault, not mine. If I pretend to speak about people at all, I must tell the truth. I am sure, if folks would but turn about and mend, it would be a thousand times pleasanter to me to write their histories; for it is no comfort to tell of any body's faults. If the world would but grow good, I should be glad enough to publish it; but till it really becomes so, I must go on describing it as it is; otherwise, I should only mislead my readers, instead of instructing them. It is the duty of a faithful historian to relate the evil with the good.

As to Giles and his boys, I am sure old widow Brown has good reason to remember their dexterity. Poor woman! she had a fine little bed of onions in her neat and well-kept garden; she was very fond of her onions, and many a rheumatism has she caught by kneeling down to weed them in a damp day, notwithstanding the little flannel cloak and the bit of an old mat which madam Wilson gave her, because the old woman would needs weed in wet weather. Her onions she always carefully treasured up for her winter's store; for an onion makes a little broth very relishing, and is indeed the only savoury thing poor people are used to get. She had also a small orchard, containing about a dozen apple-trees, with which in a good year she had been known to make a couple of barrels of cider, which she sold to her landlord towards paying her rent, besides having a little keg which she was able to keep back for her own drinking. Well! would you believe it, Giles and his boys marked both onions and apples for their own; indeed, a man who stole so many rabbits from the warrener, was likely enough to steal onions for sauce. One day, when the widow was abroad on a little business, Giles and his boys made a clear riddance of the onion bed; and when they had pulled up every single onion, they then turned a couple of pigs into the garden, who, allured by the smell, tore up the bed in such a manner, that the widow, when she came home, had not the least doubt but the pigs had been the thieves. To confirm this opinion, they took care to leave the latch half open at one end of the garden, and to break down a slight fence at the other end.

I wonder how any body can find in his heart not to pity and respect poor old widows. There is something so forlorn and helpless in their condition, that methinks it is a call on every body, men, women, and children, to do them all

the kind services that fall in their way. Surely their having no one to take their part, is an additional reason for kind-hearted people not to hurt and oppress them. But it was this very reason which led Giles to do this woman an injury. With what a touching simplicity is it recorded in Scripture, of the youth whom our blessed Saviour raised from the dead, that he was the only son of his mother, *and she a widow!*

It happened unluckily for poor widow Brown that her cottage stood quite alone. On several mornings together, (for roguery gets up much earlier than industry,) Giles and his boys stole regularly into her orchard, followed by their jack-asses. She was so deaf that she could not hear the asses if they had brayed ever so loud, and to this Giles trusted; for he was very cautious in his rogueries; since he could not otherwise have contrived so long to keep out of prison; for though he was almost always suspected, he had seldom been taken up, and never convicted. The boys used to fill their bags, load their asses, and then march off; and if in their way to the town where the apples were to be sold they chanced to pass by one of their neighbours who might be likely to suspect them, they then all at once began to scream out, 'Buy my coal!—buy my sand!'

Besides the trees in her orchard, poor widow Brown had in her small garden, one apple-tree particularly fine; it was a red-streak, so tempting and so lovely, that Giles's family had watched it with longing eyes, till at last they resolved on a plan for carrying off all this fine fruit in their bags. But it was a nice point to manage. The tree stood directly under her chamber window, so that there was some danger that she might spy them at the work. They therefore determined to wait till the next Sunday morning when they knew she would not fail to be at church. Sunday came, and during service Giles attended. It was a lone house, as I said before, and the rest of the parish were safe at church. In a trice the tree was cleared, the bags were filled, the asses were whipped, the thieves were off, the coast was clear, and all was safe and quiet by the time the sermon was over.

Unluckily, however, it happened, that this tree was so beautiful, and the fruit so fine, that the people, as they used to pass to and from the church, were very apt to stop and admire widow Brown's red-streaks: and some of the farmers rather envied her that in that scarce season, when they hardly expected to make a pye out of a large orchard, she was likely to make a cask of cider from a single tree. I am afraid, indeed, if I must speak out, she herself rather set her heart too much upon this fruit, and had felt as much pride in her tree as gratitude to a good Providence for it; but this failing of hers was no excuse for Giles. The covetousness of this thief had for once got the better of his caution; the tree was too completely stripped, though the youngest boy Dick did beg hard that his father would leave the poor old woman enough for a few dumplings; and when Giles ordered Dick in his turn to shake the tree, the boy did it so gently that hardly any apples fell, for which he got a good stroke of the stick with which the old man was beating down the apples.

The neighbours on their return from church stopped as usual, but it was not, alas! to admire the apples, for apples there were none left, but to lament the robbery, and console the widow; meantime the red-streaks were safely lodged in Giles's hovel under a few bundles of new hay which he had contrived to pull from the farmer's mow the night before, for the use of his jack-asses. Such a stir, however, began to be made about the widow's apple-tree, that Giles, who knew how much his character had laid him open to suspicion, as soon as he saw the people safe in church again in the afternoon, ordered his boys to carry each a hatful of the apples and thrust them in a little casement window which happened to be open in the house of Samuel Price, a very honest carpenter in that parish. who was at church with his whole family. Giles's plan, by this contrivance, was to lay the theft on Price's sons in case the thing should come to be further inquired into. Here Dick put in a word, and begged and prayed his father not to force them to carry the apples to Price's. But all that he got by his begging was such a knock as had nearly laid him on the earth. 'What, you cowardly rascal,' said Giles, 'you will go and *'peach*, I suppose, and get your father sent to gaol.'

Poor widow Brown, though her trouble had made her still weaker than she was, went to church again in the afternoon: indeed she rightly thought that her being in trouble was a new reason why she ought to go. During the service she tried with all her might not to think of her red-streaks, and whenever they would come into her head, she took up her prayer-book directly, and so she forgot them a little; and indeed she found herself much easier when she came out of the church than when she went in; an effect so commonly produced by prayer, that methinks it is a pity people do not try it oftener. Now it happened oddly enough, that on that Sunday, of all the Sundays in the year, the widow should call in to rest a little at Samuel Price's, to tell over again the lamentable story of the apples, and to consult with him how the thief might be brought to justice. But O, reader! guess if you can, for I am sure I cannot tell you, what was her surprise, when, on going into Samuel Price's kitchen, she saw her own red streaks lying on the window! The apples were of a sort too remarkable, for colour, shape, and size, to be mistaken. There was not such another tree in the parish. Widow Brown immediately screamed out, 'Alas-a-day! as sure as can be, here are my red-streakes; I could swear to them in any court.' Samuel Price, who believed his sons to be as honest as himself, was shocked and troubled at the sight. He knew he had no red-streaks of his own, he knew there were no apples in the window when he went to church: he did verily believe these apples to be the widow's. But how they came there he could not possibly guess. He called for Tom, the only one of his sons who now lived at home. Tom was at the Sunday-school, which he had never once missed since Mr. Wilson the minister had set up one in the parish. Was such a boy likely to do such a deed!

A crowd was by this time got about Price's

door, among which were Giles and his boys, who had already taken care to spread the news that Tom Price was the thief. Most people were unwilling to believe it. His character was very good, but appearances were strongly against him. Mr. Wilson, who had staid to christen a child, now came in. He was much concerned that Tom Price, the best boy in his school, should stand accused of such a crime. He sent for the boy, examined, and cross-examined him.—No marks of guilt appeared. But still though he pleaded *not guilty*, there lay the red-streaks in his father's window. All the idle fellows in the place, who were most likely to have committed such a theft themselves, were the very people who fell with vengeance on poor Tom. The wicked seldom give any quarter. 'This is one of your sanctified ones!' cried they. 'This was all the good that Sunday-schools did! For their parts they never saw any good come by religion. Sunday was the only day for a little pastime, and if poor boys must be shut up with their godly books, when they ought to be out taking a little pleasure, it was no wonder they made themselves amends by such tricks.' Another said he should like to see parson Wilson's righteous one well whipped. A third hoped he would be clapped in the stocks for a young hypocrite as he was; while old Giles, who thought the only way to avoid suspicion was by being more violent than the rest, declared, 'that he hoped the young dog would be transported for life.'

Mr. Wilson was too wise and too just to proceed against Tom without full proof.—He declared the crime was a very heavy one, and he feared that heavy must be the punishment. Tom, who knew his own innocence, earnestly prayed to God that it might be made to appear as clear as the noon-day; and very fervent were his secret devotions on that night.

Black Giles passed his night in a very different manner. He set off as soon as it was dark, with his sons and their jack-asses, laden with their stolen goods. As such a cry was raised about the apples, he did not think it safe to keep them longer at home, but resolved to go and sell them at the next town; borrowing without leave a lame colt out of the moor to assist in carrying off his booty.

Giles and his eldest sons had rare sport all the way in thinking, that while they were enjoying the profit of their plunder, Tom Price would be whipt round the market place at least, if not sent beyond sea. But the younger boy Dick, who had naturally a tender heart, though hardened by his long familiarity with sin, could not help crying, when he thought that Tom Price might, perhaps, be transported for a crime which he himself had helped to commit. He had had no compunction about the robbery, for he had not been instructed in the great principles of truth and justice; nor would he therefore, perhaps, have had much remorse about accusing an innocent boy. But though utterly devoid of principle, he had some remains of natural feeling and of gratitude. Tom Price had often given him a bit of his own bread and cheese; and once, when Dick was like to be drowned, Tom had jumped into the pond with his clothes on, and saved his life when he was just sinking; the remembrance of all this made his heart heavy. He said nothing; but as he trotted barefoot after the asses, he heard his father and brothers laugh at having outwitted the godly ones; and he grieved to think how poor Tom would suffer for his wickedness, yet fear kept him silent; they called him a sulky dog, and lashed the asses till they bled.

In the mean time Tom Price kept up his spirits as well as he could. He worked hard all day, and prayed heartily night and morning. It is true, said he to himself, I am not guilty of this sin; but let this accusation set me on examining myself, and truly repenting of all my other sins; for I find enough to repent of, though I thank God I did not steal the widow's apples.

At length Sunday came, and Tom went to school as usual. As soon as he walked in there was a great deal of whispering and laughing among the worst of the boys; and he overheard them say, 'Who would have thought it? This is master's favourite!—This is parson Wilson's sober Tommy! We shan't have Tommy thrown in our teeth again if we go to get a bird's nest, or gather a few nuts on a Sunday.' 'Your demure ones are always hypocrites,' says another. —'The still sow sucks all the milk,' says a third.

Giles's family had always kept clear of the school. Dick, indeed, had sometimes wished to go; not that he had much sense of sin, or desire after goodness, but he thought if he could once read, he might rise in the world, and not be forced to drive asses all his life. Through this whole Saturday night he could not sleep. He longed to know what would be done to Tom. He began to wish to go to school, but he had not courage; sin is very cowardly. So on the Sunday morning he went and sat himself down under the church wall. Mr. Wilson passed by. It was not his way to reject the most wicked, till he had tried every means to bring them over; and even then he pitied and prayed for them.—He had, indeed, long left off talking to Giles's sons; but seeing Dick sitting by himself, he once more spoke to him, desired him to leave off his vagabond life, and go with him into the school. The boy hung down his head, but made no answer. He did not, however, either rise up and run away, or look sulky, as he used to do. The minister desired him once more to go. 'Sir,' said the boy, 'I can't go; I am so big I am ashamed.' 'The bigger you are the less time you have to lose.' But, sir, I can't read.' 'Then it is high time you should learn.' 'I should be ashamed to begin to learn my letters.' 'The shame is not in beginning to learn them, but in being contented never to know them.'—'But, sir, I am so ragged!' 'God looks at the heart, and not at the coat.' 'But, sir, I have no shoes and stockings.' 'So much the worse. I remember who gave you both—(Here Dick coloured.) It is bad to want shoes and stockings, but still if you can drive your asses a dozen miles without them, you may certainly walk a hundred yards to school without them.' 'But, Sir, the good boys will hate me, and won't speak to me.'—'Good boys hate nobody · and as to not

speaking to you, to be sure they will not keep your company while you go on in your present evil courses, but as soon as they see you wish to reform, they will help you, and pity you, and teach you; and so come along.'—Here Mr. Wilson took this dirty boy by the hand, and gently pulled him forward, kindly talking to him all the way, in the most condescending manner.

How the whole school stared to see Dick Giles come in! No one however, dared to say what he thought. The business went on, and Dick slunk into a corner, partly to hide his rags, and partly to hide his sin; for last Sunday's transaction sat heavy on his heart, not because he had stolen the apples, but because Tom Price had been accused. This, I say, made him slink behind. Poor boy! he little thought there was One saw him who sees all things, and from whose eye no hole nor corner can hide the sinner: 'for he is about our bed, and about our path, and spieth out all our ways.'

It was the custom in that school, and an excellent custom it is, for the master, who was a good and wise man, to mark down in his pocket-book all the events of the week, that he might turn them to some account in his Sunday evening instructions; such as any useful story in the newspaper, any account of boys being drowned as they were out in a pleasure boat on Sundays, any sudden death in the parish, or any other remarkable visitation of Providence; insomuch, that many young people in the place, who did not belong to the school, and many parents also, used to drop in for an hour on a Sunday evening, when they were sure to hear something profitable. The minister greatly approved this practice, and often called in himself, which was a great support to the master, and encouragement to the people who attended.

The master had taken a deep concern in the story of widow Brown's apple tree. He could not believe Tom Price was guilty, nor dared he pronounce him innocent; but he resolved to turn the instructions of the present evening to this subject. He began thus: 'My dear boys, however light some of you may make of robbing an orchard, yet I have often told you there is no such thing as a *little* sin, if it be wilful or habitual. I wish now to explain to you, also, that there is hardly such a thing as a *single* solitary sin. You know I teach you not merely to repeat the commandments as an exercise for your memory, but as a rule for your conduct. If you were to come here only to learn to read and spell on a Sunday, I should think that was not employing God's day for God's work; but I teach you to read that you may, by this means, come so to understand the Bible and the Catechism, as to make every text in the one, and every question and answer in the other, to be so fixed in your hearts, that they may bring forth in you the fruits of good living.'

Master. How many commandments are there?

Boy. Ten.

Master. How many commandments did that boy break who stole widow Brown's apples?

Boy. Only one, master; the eighth.

Master. What is the eighth?

Boy. Thou shalt not steal.

Master. And you are very sure that this was the only one he broke? Now suppose I could prove to you that he probably broke not less than six out of those ten commandments, which the great Lord of heaven himself stooped down from his eternal glory to deliver to men, would you not, then, think it a terrible thing to steal, whether apples or guineas?

Boy. Yes, master.

Master. I will put the case. Some wicked boy has robbed widow Brown's orchard. (Here the eyes of every one were turned on poor Tom Price, except those of Dick Giles, who fixed his on the ground.) I accuse no one, continued the master, Tom Price is a good boy, and was not missing at the time of the robbery; these are two reasons why I presume that he is innocent; but whoever it was, you allow that by stealing these apples he broke the eighth commandment?

Boy. Yes, master.

Master. On what day were these apples stolen?

Boy. On Sunday.

Master. What is the fourth commandment?

Boy. Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-day

Master. Does that person keep holy the Sabbath-day who loiters in an orchard on Sunday, when he should be at church, and steals apples when he ought to be saying his prayers?

Boy. No, master.

Master. What command does he break?

Boy. The fourth.

Master. Suppose this boy had parents who had sent him to church, and that he had disobeyed them by not going, would that be keeping the fifth commandment?

Boy. No, master; for the fifth commandment says, *Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother.*

This was the only part of the case in which poor Dick Giles's heart did not smite him; he knew he had disobeyed no father; for his father, alas! was still wickeder than himself, and had brought him up to commit the sin. But what a wretched comfort was this! The master went on.

Master. Suppose this boy earnestly coveted this fruit, though it belonged to another person, would that be right?

Boy. No, master; for the tenth commandment says, *thou shalt not covet.*

Master. Very well. Here are four of God's positive commands already broken. Now do you think thieves ever scruple to use wicked words?

Boy. I am afraid not, master.

Here Dick Giles was not so hardened but that he remembered how many curses had passed between him and his father while they were filling the bags, and he was afraid to look up. The master went on.

I will now go one step further. If the thief, to all his other sins, has added that of accusing the innocent to save himself, if he should break the ninth commandment, by *bearing false witness against a harmless neighbour*, then six commandments are broken for an *apple!* But if it be otherwise, if Tom Price should be found guilty, it is not his good character shall save him. I shall shed tears over him, but punish him I must, and that severely. 'No, that you shan't,' roared out Dick Giles, who sprung from his hiding

place, fell on his knees, and burst out a crying, 'Tom Price is as good a boy as ever lived; it was father and I who stole the apples!'

It would have done your heart good to have seen the joy of the master, the modest blushes of Tom Price, and the satisfaction of every honest boy in the school. All shook hands with Tom, and even Dick got some portion of pity. I wish I had room to give my readers the moving exhortation which the master gave. But while Mr. Wilson left the guilty boy to the management of the master, he thought it became him, as a minister and a magistrate, to go to the extent of the law in punishing the father. Early on the Monday morning he sent to apprehend Giles. In the meantime Mr. Wilson was sent for to a gardener's house two miles distant, to attend a man who was dying. This was a duty to which all others gave way in his mind. He set out directly; but what was his surprise, on his arrival, to see, on a little bed on the floor, poaching Giles lying in all the agonies of death! Jack Weston, the same poor young man against whom Giles had informed for killing a hare, was kneeling by him, offering him some broth, and talking to him in the kindest manner. Mr. Wilson begged to know the meaning of all this; and Jack Weston spoke as follows:

'At four in the morning, as I was going out to mow, passing under the high wall of this garden, I heard a most dismal moaning. The nearer I came the more dismal it grew. At last, who should I see but poor Giles groaning, and struggling under a quantity of bricks and stones, but not able to stir. The day before he had marked a fine large net on this old wall, and resolved to steal it, for he thought it might do as well to catch partridges as to preserve cherries; so, sir, standing on the very top of this wall, and tugging with all his might to loosen the net from the hooks which fastened it, down came Giles, net, wall, and all; for the wall was gone to decay. It was very high indeed, and poor Giles not only broke his thigh, but has got a terrible blow on his head, and is bruised all over like a mummy. On seeing me, sir, poor Giles cried out, 'Oh, Jack! I did try to ruin thee by lodging that information, and now thou wilt be revenged by letting me lie here and perish.' 'God forbid, Giles! cried I; thou shalt see what sort of revenge a Christian takes.' So sir, I sent off the gardener's boy to fetch a surgeon, while I scampered home and brought on my back this bit of a hammock, which is indeed my own bed, and put Giles upon it: we then lifted him up, bed and all, as tenderly as if he had been a gentleman, and brought him in here. My wife has just brought him a drop of nice broth; and now, sir, as I have done what I could for this poor perishing body, it was I who took the liberty to send to you to come to try to help his poor soul, for the doctor says he can't live.

Mr. Wilson could not help saying to himself, Such an action as this is worth a whole volume of comments on that precept of our blessed Master, *Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you.* Giles's dying groans confirmed the sad account Weston had just given. The poor wretch could neither pray himself nor attend to the minister. He could only cry out, 'Oh! sir, what will become of me? I don't know how to repent. O my poor wicked children! Sir, I have bred them all up in sin and ignorance. Have mercy on them, sir; let me not meet them in the place of torment to which I am going. Lord grant them that time for repentance which I have thrown away!' He languished a few days, and died in great misery:—a fresh and sad instance that people who abuse the grace of God and resist his Spirit, find it difficult to repent when they will.

Except the minister and Jack Weston, no one came to see poor Giles, besides Tommy Price, who had been so sadly wronged by him. Tom often brought him his own rice-milk or apple-dumpling; and Giles, ignorant and depraved as he was, often cried out, 'That he thought now there must be some truth in religion, since it taught even a boy to *deny himself*, and to *forgive an injury.* Mr. Wilson the next Sunday, made a moving discourse on the danger of what are called *petty offences.* This, together with the awful death of Giles, produced such an effect that no poacher has been able to show his head in that parish ever since.

TAWNEY RACHEL;

OR, THE FORTUNE TELLER:

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF DREAMS, OMENS, AND CONJURORS.

Tawney Rachel was the wife of poaching Giles. There seemed to be a conspiracy in Giles's whole family to maintain themselves by tricks and pilfering. Regular labour and honest industry did not suit their idle habits. They had a sort of genius at finding out every unlawful means to support a vagabond life. Rachel travelled the country with a basket on her arm. She pretended to get her bread by selling laces, cabbage-nets, ballads, and history books, and used to buy old rags and rabbit skins. Many honest people trade in these things, and I am sure I do not mean to say a word against honest people, let them trade in what they will. But Rachel only made this traffic a pretence for getting admittance into farmers' kitchens in order to tell fortunes.

She was continually practising on the credulity of silly girls; and took advantage of their ignorance to cheat and deceive them. Many an innocent servant has she caused to be suspected of a robbery, while she herself, perhaps, was in league with the thief. Many a harmless maid has she brought to ruin by first contriving plots and events herself, and then pretending to foretel them. She had not, to be sure, the power

of really foretelling things, because she had no power of seeing into futurity: but she had the art sometimes to bring them about according as she foretold them. So she got that credit for her wisdom which really belonged to her wickedness.

Rachel was also a famous interpreter of dreams, and could distinguish exactly between the fate of any two persons who happened to have a mole on the right or the left cheek. She had a cunning way of getting herself off when any of her prophecies failed. When she explained a dream according to the natural appearance of things, and it did not come to pass; then she would get out of that scrape by saying, that this sort of dreams went by contraries. Now of two very opposite things, the chance always is that one of them may turn out to be true; so in either case she kept up the cheat.

Rachel, in one of her rambles, stopped at the house of farmer Jenkins. She contrived to call when she knew the master of the house was from home, which indeed was her usual way. She knocked at the door; the maids being in the field haymaking, Mrs. Jenkins went to open it herself. Rachel asked her if she would please to let her light her pipe? This was a common pretence, when she could find no other way of getting into a house. While she was filling her pipe, she looked at Mrs. Jenkins, and said, she could tell her some good fortune. The farmer's wife, who was a very inoffensive, but a weak and superstitious woman, was curious to know what she meant. Rachel then looked about carefully, and shutting the door with a mysterious air, asked her if she was sure nobody would hear them. This appearance of mystery was at once delightful and terrifying to Mrs. Jenkins, who, with trembling agitation, bid the cunning woman speak out. 'Then,' said Rachel in a solemn whisper, 'there is to my certain knowledge a pot of money hid under one of the stones in your cellar.'—'Indeed!' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'it is impossible, for now I think of it, I dreamt last night I was in prison for debt.' 'Did you really?' said Rachel; 'that is quite surprising. Did you dream this before twelve o'clock or after?'—'O it was this morning, just before I awoke.'—'Then I am sure it is true, for morning dreams always go by contraries,' cried Rachel. 'How lucky it was you dreamt it so late.'—Mrs. Jenkins could hardly contain her joy, and asked how the money was to be come at. 'There is but one way,' said Rachel; 'I must go into the cellar. I know by my art under which stone it lies, but I must not tell.' Then they both went down into the cellar, but Rachel refused to point at the stone unless Mrs. Jenkins would put five pieces of gold into a basin and do as she directed. The simple woman, instead of turning her out of doors for a cheat, did as she was bid. She put the guineas into a basin which she gave into Rachel's hand. Rachel strewed some white powder over the gold, muttered some barbarous words, and pretended to perform the black art. She then told Mrs. Jenkins to put the basin quietly down within the cellar; teling her that if she offered to look into it, or even to speak a word, the charm would be broken She also directed her to lock the cellar door, and on no pretence to open it in less than forty-eight hours. 'If,' added she, 'you closely follow these directions, then, by the power of my art, you will find the basin conveyed to the very stone under which the money lies hid, and a fine treasure it be!' Mrs. Jenkins, who firmly believed every word the woman said, did exactly as she was told, and Rachel took her leave with a handsome reward.

When farmer Jenkins came home he desired his wife to draw him a cup of cider; this she put off so long that he began to be displeased. At last she begged he would be so good as to drink a little beer instead. He insisted on knowing the reason, and when at last he grew angry, she told him all that had passed; and owned that as the pot of gold happened to be in the cider cellar, she did not dare open the door, as she was sure it would break the charm. 'And it would be a pity you know,' said she, 'to lose a good fortune for the sake of a draught of cider.' The farmer, who was not so easily imposed upon, suspected a trick. He demanded the key, and went and opened the cellar door; there he found the basin, and in it five round pieces of tin covered with powder. Mrs. Jenkins burst out a-crying; but the farmer thought of nothing but of getting a warrant to apprehend the cunning woman. Indeed she well proved her claim to that name, when she insisted that the cellar door might be kept locked till she had time to get out of the reach of all pursuit.

Poor Sally Evans! I am sure she rued the day that ever she listened to a fortune-teller. Sally was as harmless a girl as ever churned a pound of butter; but Sally was credulous, ignorant and superstitious. She delighted in dream books, and had consulted all the cunning women in the country to tell her whether the two moles on her cheek denoted that she was to have two husbands, or two children. If she picked up an old horse-shoe going to church, she was sure that would be a lucky week. She never made a black pudding without borrowing one of the parson's old wigs to hang in the chimney, firmly believing there was no other means to preserve them from burning. She would never go to bed on Midsummer eve without sticking up in her room the well-known plant called Midsummermen, as the bending of the leaves to the right or to the left, would not fail to tell her whether Jacob, of whom we shall speak presently, was true or false. She would rather go five miles about than pass near a church-yard at night. Every seventh year she would not eat beans because they grew downward in the pod, instead of upward; and, though a very neat girl, she would rather have gone with her gown open than have taken a pin from an old woman, for fear of being bewitched. Poor Sally had so many unlucky days in her calender, that a large portion of her time became of little use, because on these days she did not dare set about any new work. And she would have refused the best offer in the country if made to her on a Friday, which she thought so unlucky a day that she often said what a pity it was that there were any Friday in the week. Sally had twenty pounds left her by her grandmother. She had long been courted by Jacob, a sober lad, with

whom she lived fellow servant at a creditable farmer's. Honest Jacob, like his namesake of old, thought it little to wait seven years to get this damsel to wife, because of the love he bore her, for Sally had promised to marry him when he could match her twenty pounds with another of his own.

Now there was one Robert, a rambling idle young gardener, who, instead of sitting down steadily in one place, used to roam about the country, and do odd jobs where he could get them. No one understood any thing about him, except that he was a down-looking fellow, who came nobody knew whence, and got his bread nobody knew how, and never had a penny in his pocket. Robert, who was now in the neighbourhood, happened to hear of Sally Evans and her twenty pounds. He immediately conceived a long desire for the latter. So he went to his old friend Rachel the fortune-teller, told her all he had heard of Sally, and promised if she could bring about a marriage between them, she should go shares in the money.

Rachel undertook the business. She set off to the farm-house, and fell to singing one of her most enticing songs just under the dairy window. Sally was so struck with the pretty tune, which was unhappily used, as is too often the case, to set off some very loose words, that she jumped up, dropped the skimming dish into the cream and ran out to buy the song. While she stooped down to rummage the basket for those songs which had the most tragical pictures (for Sally had a tender heart, and delighted in whatever was mournful) Rachel looked stedfastly in her face, and told her she knew by art that she was born to good fortune, but advised her not to throw herself away. 'These two moles on your cheek,' added she, 'show you are in some danger.' 'Do they denote husbands or children?' cried Sally, starting up, and letting fall the song of the Children in the Wood—'Husbands,' muttered Rachel—'Alas! poor Jacob!' said Sally, mournfully, 'then he will die first, won't he?' 'Mum for that,' quoth the fortune teller, 'I will say no more.' Sally was impatient, but the more curiosity she discovered, the more mystery Rachel affected. At last, she said, 'if you will cross my hand with a piece of silver, I will tell your fortune. 'By the power of my art I can do this three ways; first by cards, next by the lines on your hand, or by turning a cup of tea grounds; which will you have?' 'O, all! all!' cried Sally, looking up with reverence to this sun-burnt oracle of wisdom, who was possessed of no less than three different ways of diving into the secrets of futurity. Alas! persons of better sense than Sally have been so taken in; the more is the pity. The poor girl said she would run up stairs to her little box where she kept her money tied up in a bit of an old glove, and would bring down a bright queen Ann's sixpence very crooked. 'I am sure,' added she, 'it is a lucky one, for it cured me of a very bad ague last spring, by only laying it nine nights under my pillow without speaking a word. But then you must know what gave the virtue to this sixpence was, that it had belonged to three young men of the name of John; I am sure I had work enough to get it. But true it is, it certainly cured me. It must be the sixpence you know, for I am sure I did nothing else for my ague, except indeed taking some bitter stuff every three hours which the doctor called bark. To be sure I lost my ague soon after I took it, but I am certain it was owing to the crooked sixpence, and not to the bark. And so, good woman, you may come in, if you will, for there is not a soul in the house but me.' This was the very thing Rachel wanted to know, and very glad she was to learn it.

While Sally was above stairs untying her glove, Rachel slipped in to the parlour, took a small silver cup from the beaufet, and clapped it into her pocket. Sally ran down, lamenting that she had lost her sixpence, which she verily believed was owing to her having put it into a left glove, instead of a right one. Rachel comforted her by saying, that if she gave her two plain ones instead, the charm would work just as well. Simple Sally thought herself happy to be let off so easily, never calculating that a smooth shilling was worth two crooked sixpences. But this skill was a part of the black art in which Rachel excelled. She took the money and began to examine the lines of Sally's left hand. She bit her withered lip, shook her head, and bade her poor dupe beware of a young man who had black hair. 'No, indeed,' cried Sally, all in a fright, 'you mean black eyes, for our Jacob has got brown hair, 'tis his eyes that are black.' 'That is the very thing I was going to say,' muttered Rachel, 'I meant eyes, though I said hair, for I know his hair is as brown as a chesnut, and his eyes as black as a sloe.' 'So they are, sure enough,' cried Sally, 'how in the world could you know that?' forgetting that she herself had just told her so. And it is thus that these hags pick out of the credulous all which they afterwards pretend to reveal to them. 'O, I know a pretty deal more than that,' said Rachel, 'but you must beware of this man.' 'Why so,' cried Sally, with great quickness: 'Because,' answered Rachel, 'you are fated to marry a man worth a hundred of him, who has blue eyes, light hair, and a stoop in the shoulders.' 'No, indeed, but I can't,' said Sally; 'I have promised Jacob, and Jacob I will marry.' 'You cannot, child,' returned Rachel in a solemn tone; 'it is out of your power, you are *fated* to marry the gray eyes and light hair.' 'Nay, indeed,' said Sally, sighing deeply, 'if I am fated, I must; I know there's no resisting one's fate.' This is a common cant with poor deluded girls, who are not aware that they themselves make their fate by their folly, and then complain there is no resisting it. 'What can I do?' said Sally. 'I will tell you that, too,' said Rachel. 'You must take a walk next Sunday afternoon to the church-yard, and the first man you meet in a blue coat, with a large posy of pinks and southern-wood in his bosom, sitting on the church-yard wall, about seven o'clock, he will be the man.' 'Provided,' said Sally, much disturbed, 'that he has grey eyes and stoops.' 'O, to be sure,' said Rachel, 'otherwise it is not the right man.' 'But if I should mistake,' said Sally, 'for two men may happen to have a coat and eyes of the same co-

lour?' 'To prevent that,' replied Rachel, 'if it is the right man, the two first letters of his name will be R. P. This man has got money beyond sea.' 'O, I do not value his money,' said Sally, with tears in her eyes, 'for I love Jacob better than house or land; but if I am fated to marry another, I can't help it; you know there is no struggling against my fate.'

Poor Sally thought of nothing, and dreamt of nothing all the week but the blue coat and the gray eyes. She made a hundred blunders at her work. She put her rennet into the butter-pan, and her skimming-dish into the cheese-tub. She gave the curds to the hogs, and put the whey into the vats. She put her little knife out of her pocket for fear it should cut love, and would not stay in the kitchen if there was not an even number of people, lest it should break the charm. She grew cold and mysterious in her behaviour to faithful Jacob, whom she truly loved.—But the more she thought of the fortune-teller, the more she was convinced that brown hair and black eyes were not what she was fated to marry, and therefore, though she trembled to think it, Jacob could not be the man.

On Sunday she was too uneasy to go to church; for poor Sally had never been taught that her being uneasy was only a fresh reason why she ought to go thither. She spent the whole afternoon in her little garret, dressing in all her best. First she put on her red riband, which she had bought at last Lammas fair: then she recollected that red was an unlucky colour, and changed it for a blue riband, tied in a true lover's knot; but suddenly calling to mind that poor Jacob had bought this knot for her of a pedlar at the door, and that she had promised to wear it for his sake, her heart smote her, and she laid it by, sighing to think she was not fated to marry the man who had given it to her.—When she had looked at herself twenty times in the glass (for one vain action always brings on another) she set off, trembling and shaking every step she went. She walked eagerly towards the church-yard, not daring to look to the right or left, for fear she should spy Jacob, who would have offered to walk with her, and so have spoilt all. As soon as she came within sight of the wall, she spied a man sitting upon it: Her heart beat violently. She looked again; but alas! the stranger not only had on a black coat, but neither hair nor eyes answered the description. She now happened to cast her eyes on the church-clock, and found she was two hours before her time. This was some comfort. She walked away and got rid of the two hours as well as she could, paying great attention not to walk over any straws which lay across, and carefully looking to see if there were never an old horse-shoe in the way, that infallible symptom of good fortune. While the clock was striking seven, she returned to the church-yard, and O! the wonderful power of fortune-tellers! there she saw him! there sat the very man! his hair as light as flax, his eyes as blue as butter-milk, and his shoulders as round as a tub. Every tittle agreed to the very nosegay in his waistcoat button-hole. At first, indeed, she thought it had been sweetbriar, and glad to catch at a straw, whispered to herself, it is not he, and I shall marry Jacob still; but on looking again, she saw it was southern-wood plain enough, and that of course all was over. The man accosted her with some very nonsensical, but too acceptable, compliments. She was naturally a modest girl, and but for Rachel's wicked arts, would not have had courage to talk with a strange man; but how could she resist her fate you know? After a little discourse, she asked him, with a trembling heart, what might be his name? Robert Price, at your service, was the answer. 'Robert Price! that is R. P. as sure as I am alive, and the fortune-teller was a witch! It is all out! O the wonderful art of fortune-tellers!'

The little sleep she had that night was disturbed with dreams of graves, and ghosts, and funerals, but as they were morning dreams, she knew those always went by contraries, and that a funeral denoted a wedding. Still a sigh would now and then heave, to think that in that wedding Jacob would have no part. Such of my readers as know the power which superstition has over the weak and credulous mind, scarcely need be told, that poor Sally's unhappiness was soon completed. She forgot all her vows to Jacob; she at once forsook an honest man whom she loved, and consented to marry a stranger, of whom she knew nothing, from a ridiculous notion that she was compelled to do so by a decree which she had it not in her power to resist. She married this Richard Price, the strange gardener, whom she soon found to be very worthless, and very much in debt. He had no such thing as 'money beyond sea,' as the fortune-teller had told her; but alas! he had another wife there.—He got immediate possession of Sally's twenty pounds. Rachel put in for her share, but he refused to give her a farthing, and bid her get away or he would have her taken up on the vagrant act. He soon ran away from Sally, leaving her to bewail her own weakness; for it was that indeed, and not any irresistible fate, which had been the cause of her ruin. To complete her misery, she herself was suspected of having stole the silver cup which Rachel had pocketed. Her master, however, would not prosecute her, as she was falling into a deep decline, and she died in a few months of a broken heart, a sad warning to all credulous girls.

Rachel, whenever she got near home, used to drop her trade of fortune-telling, and only dealt in the wares of her basket. Mr. Wilson, the clergyman, found her one day dealing out some very wicked ballads to some children. He went up with a view to give her a reprimand; but had no sooner begun his exhortation than up came a constable, followed by several people.—'There she is, that is the old witch who tricked my wife out of the five guineas,' said one of them, 'Do your office constable, seize that old hag. She may tell fortunes and find pots of gold in Taunton jail, for there she will have nothing else to do!' This was that very farmer Jenkins, whose wife had been cheated by Rachael of the five guineas. He had taken pains to trace her to her own parish: he did not so much value the loss of the money, as he thought it was a duty he owed the public to clear the country of

such vermin. Mr. Wilson immediately committed her. She took her trial at the next assizes, when she was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. In the mean time, the pawnbroker to whom she had sold the silver cup, which she had stolen from poor Sally's master, impeached her; and as the robbery was fully proved upon Rachel, she was sentenced for this crime to Botany Bay; and a happy day it was for the county of Somerset, when such a nuisance was sent out of it. She was transported much about the same time that her husband Giles lost his life in stealing the net from the garden wall, as related in the second part of poaching Giles.

I have thought it my duty to print this little history, as a kind of warning to all young men and maidens not to have any thing to say to *cheats*, *impostors*, *cunning-women*, *fortune-tellers*, *conjurors*, and *interpreters of dreams*. Listen to me, your true friend, when I assure you that God never reveals to weak and wicked women those secret designs of his providence, which no human wisdom is able to foresee. To consult these false oracles is not only foolish, but sinful. It is foolish, because they are themselves as ignorant as those whom they pretend to teach: and is sinful, because it is prying into that futurity which God, in mercy as well as wisdom, hides from men. God indeed *orders* all things; but when you have a mind to do a foolish thing, do not fancy you are *fated* to do it. This is tempting Providence, and not trusting him. It is indeed *charging God with folly*. Prudence is his gift, and you obey him better when you make use of prudence, under the direction of prayer, than when you madly run into ruin, and think you are only submitting to your fate. Never fancy that you are compelled to undo yourself, or to rush upon your own destruction, in compliance with any supposed fatality. Never believe that God conceals his will from a sober Christian who obeys his laws, and reveals it to a vagabond gypsy who runs up and down breaking the laws both of God and man. King Saul never consulted the witch till he left off serving God. The Bible will direct us what to do better than any conjurer, and there are no days unlucky but those which we make so by our own vanity, sin, and folly.

THOUGHTS

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MANNERS OF THE GREAT,

TO GENERAL SOCIETY.

'You are the makers of manners.'—*Shakspeare.*

To a large and honourable class of the community, to persons considerable in reputation, important by their condition in life, and commendable for the decency of general conduct, these slight hints are respectfully addressed. They are not intended as a satire upon vice, or ridicule upon folly, being written neither for the foolish nor the vicious. The subject is too serious for ridicule; and those to whom it is addressed are too respectable for satire. It is recommended to the consideration of those who, filling the higher ranks of life, are naturally regarded as patterns, by which the manners of the rest of the world are to be fashioned.

The mass of mankind, in most places, and especially in those conditions of life which exempt them from the temptation to shameful vices, is perhaps chiefly composed of what is commonly termed by the courtesy of the world *good kind of people*; for persons of very flagitious wickedness are almost as rare as those of very eminent piety. To the latter of these, admonition were impertinent; to the former it were superfluous. These remarks, therefore, are principally written with a view to those persons of rank and fortune who live within the restraints of moral obligation, and acknowledge the truth, of the Christian religion; and who, if in certain instances they allow themselves in practices not compatible with a strict profession of Christianity, seem to do it rather from habit and want of reflection, than either from disbelief of its doctrines, or contempt of its precepts.

Inconsideration, fashion, and the world, are three confederates against virtue, with whom even good kind of people often contrive to live on excellent terms; and the fair reputation which may be obtained by a complaisant conformity to the prevailing practice, and by mere decorum of manners without a strict attention to religious principle, is a constant source of danger to the rich and great. There is something almost irresistibly seducing in the contagion of general example; hence the necessity of that vigilance, which it is the business of Christianity to quicken by incessant admonition, and which it is the business of the world, to lay asleep by the perpetual opiates of ease and pleasure.

A fair reputation is among the laudable objects of human ambition; yet even this really valuable blessing is sometimes converted into a snare, by inducing a treacherous security as soon as it is obtained; and by leading him who is too anxious about obtaining it to stop short without aiming at a higher motive of action. A fatal indolence is apt to creep in upon the soul when it has once acquired the good opinion of mankind, if the acquisition of that good opinion was the ultimate end of its endeavours. Pursuit is at an end when the object is in possession; for he is not likely to 'press forward,' who thinks he has already 'attained.' The love of worldly reputation, and the desire of God's favour, have this specific difference, that in the latter, the possession always augments the desire; and the spiritual mind accounts

nothing done while any thing remains undone.

But after all, a fair fame, the support of numbers, and the flattering concurrence of human opinion, is obviously a deceitful dependence; for as every individual must die for himself, and answer for himself, both these imaginary resources will fail, just at the moment when they could have been of any use. A good reputation, even without internal piety, would be worth obtaining, if the tribunal of heaven were fashioned after the manner of human courts of judicature. If at the general judgment we were to be tried by a jury of our fellow mortals, it would be but common prudence to secure their favour at any price. But it can stand us in little stead in the great day of decision, it being the consummation of infinite goodness not to abandon us to the mercy of each other's sentence; but to reserve us for *his* final judgment who knows every motive of every action: who will make strict inquisition into singleness of heart, and uprightness of intention; in whose eyes the sincere prayer of powerless benevolence will outweigh the most splendid profession or the most dazzling action.

We cannot but rejoice in every degree of human virtue which operates favourably on society, whatever be the motive, or whoever be the actor; and we should gladly commend every degree of goodness, though it be not exactly squared by our own rules and notions. Even the good actions of such persons as are too much actuated by a regard to appearances, are not without their beneficial effects. The righteousness of those who occupy this middle region of morality among us, certainly exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; for they are not only exact in ceremonials, but in many respects fulfil the weightier matters of law and conscience. Like Herod, they often 'hear gladly,' and 'do many things.' Yet I am afraid I shall be thought severe in remarking that in general those characters in the New Testament, of whose future condition no very comfortable hope is given, seem to have been taken, not from the profligate, the abandoned, and the dishonourable; but from that decent class commonly described by the term *good sort of people*, that mixed kind of character in which virtue appears, if it do not predominate. The young ruler was certainly one of the first of this order; and yet we are left in dark uncertainty as to his final allotment. The rich man who built him barns and storehouses, and only proposed to himself the full enjoyment of that fortune, which we do not hear was unfairly acquired, might have been for all that appears to the contrary, a *very good sort of man;* at least if we may judge of him by multitudes who live precisely for the same purposes, and yet enjoy a good degree of credit, and who are rather considered as objects of respect, than of censure. His plan, like theirs, was 'to take his ease, to eat, drink, and be merry.'

But the most alarming instance is that of the splendid epicure, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. He committed no enormities that have been transmitted to us; for that he dined well and dressed well, could hardly incur the bitter penalty of eternal misery. That his expenses were suitable to his station, and his splendour proportioned to his opulence, does not exhibit one objection to his character. Nor are we told that he refused the crumbs which Lazarus solicited. And yet this man on an authority which we are not permitted to question, is represented, in a future state, as *lifting up his eyes being in torments.* His punishment seems to have been the consequence of an irreligious, a worldly spirit, a heart corrupted by the softness and delights of life. It was not because he was rich, but because he trusted in riches; or, if even he was charitable, his charity wanted that principle which alone could sanctify it. His views terminated here; this world's good, and this world's applause, were the motives and the end of his actions. He forgot God; he was destitute of piety; and the absence of this great and first principle of human actions rendered his shining deeds, however they might be admired among men, of no value in the sight of God.

There is no error more common, or more dangerous, than the notion that an unrestrained indulgence of pleasure, and an unbounded gratification of the appetites is generally attended with a liberal, humane, and merciful temper. Nor is there any opinion more false and more fatal, or which demands to be more steadily controverted, than that libertinism and good-nature are natural and necessary associates. For after all that corrupt poets, and more corrupt philosophers, have told us of the blandishments of pleasure, and of its tendency to soften the temper and humanize the affections, it is certain, that nothing hardens the heart like excessive and unbounded luxury; and he who refuses the fewest gratifications to his own voluptuousness, will generally be found the least susceptible of tenderness for the wants of others. In one reign the cruelties at Rome bore an exact proportion to the dissoluteness at Capreæ. And in another it is not less notorious: that the imperial fiddler became more barbarous, as he grew more profligate. Prosperity, says the Arabian proverb, fills the heart until it makes it hard; and the most dangerous pits and snares for human virtue are those, which are so covered over with the flowers of prosperous fortune, that it requires a cautious foot, and a vigilant eye, to escape them.

Ananias and Sapphira, were, perhaps, well esteemed in society; for it was enough to establish a very considerable reputation to sell even part of their possessions for religious purposes: but what an alarm does it sound to hypocrisy, that, instead of being rewarded for what they brought, they were punished for what they kept back! And it is to be feared, that this deceitful pair are not the only one, upon whom a good action, without a pure intention, has drawn down a righteous retribution.

Outward actions are the surest, and, indeed, to human eyes the only evidences of sincerity, but Christianity is a religion of *motives* and *principles.* The Gospel is continually referring to the *heart*, as the source of good; it is to the poor in *spirit*, to the pure in *heart*, that the divine blessing is annexed. A man may correct many improper practices, and refrain from many im-

moral actions, from merely human motives; but though this partial amendment is not without its uses, yet this is only attacking symptoms, and neglecting the mortal disease. But to subdue a worldly temper, to controul irregular desires, and to have 'a clean heart,' is to attack sin in its strong holds. Totally to *accomplish* this, is, perhaps, beyond the narrow limits of human perfection, the best men being constantly humbled to find, that when they 'would do good, evil is present with them;' but to *attempt* it, with an humble reliance on superior aid, is so far from being an extravagant or romantic flight of virtue, that it is but the common duty of every ordinary Christian. And this perfection is not the less real, because it is a point which seems constantly to recede from our approaches, just as the sensible horizon recedes from our natural eye. Our highest attainments, instead of bringing us 'to the mark,' only teach us that the mark is at a greater distance, by giving us more humbling views of ourselves, and more exalted conceptions of the state after which we are labouring.—Though the progress towards perfection may be perpetual in this world, the actual attainment is reserved for a better. And this restless desire of a happiness which we cannot reach, and this lively idea of a perfection which we cannot attain, are among the many arguments for a future state, which seem to come little short of demonstration. The humble Christian, takes refuge under the deep sense of his disappointments and defects, in this consoling hope, 'When I awake up after thy likeness I shall be satisfied.'

Let me not here be misunderstood as undervaluing the virtues which even worldly men may possess. I am charmed with humanity, generosity, and integrity, in whomsoever they may be found. But one virtue must not intrench upon another. Charity must not supplant faith. If a man be generous, good-natured, and humane, it is impossible not to feel for him the tenderness of a brother; but if, at the same time, he be irreligious, intemperate, or profane, who shall dare to say he is in a safe state? Good humour and generous sentiments, will always make a man a pleasant acquaintance; but who shall lower the doctrines of the Gospel, to accommodate them to the conduct of men? Who shall bend a straight rule to favour a crooked practice? Who shall controvert that authority which has said, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord?*

May I venture to be a little paradoxical; and while so many grave persons are descanting on the mischiefs of vice, may I be permitted to say a word on the mischiefs of virtue, or, rather, of that shining counterfeit, which, while it wants the specific gravity, has much of the brightness of sterling worth? Never, perhaps, did any age produce more beautiful declamations in praise of virtue than the present; never were more polished periods rounded in honour of humanity. An ancient Pagan would imagine that Astrea had returned to take up her abode in our metropolis; a primitive Christian would conclude that 'righteousness and peace had there met together.' But how would they be surprised to find that the obligation to these duties was not always thought binding, not only on the reader, but on their eloquent encomiasts themselves. How would they be surprised to find that universal benevolence may subsist with partial injustice, and boundless liberality with sordid selfishness! that a man may seem eager in redressing the injuries of half the globe, without descending to the petty detail of private virtues: and burn with zeal for the good of millions he never saw, while he is spreading vice and ruin through the little circle of his own personal influence!

When the general texture of an irregular life is spangled over with some constitutional pleasing qualities; when gayety, good humour, and a thoughtless profusion of expense, throw a lustre round the faultiest characters, it is no wonder that common observers are blinded into admiration; a profuse generosity dazzles *them* more than all the duties of the decalogue. But though it may be a very good electioneering virtue, yet there are many qualities which may obtain popularity among men, which do not tend to secure the favour of God. It is somewhat strange that the extravagance of the great should be the criterion of their goodness with those very people who are themselves the victims to this idol; for the prodigal pays no debts if he can help it; and it is a notorious instance of the danger of these popular virtues, and of the false judgments of men, that in one of the wittiest and most popular comedies* which this country has ever produced, those very passages which exalt liberality, and turn justice into ridicule, were nightly applauded with enthusiastic rapture by those deluded tradesmen, whom, perhaps that very sentiment helped to keep out of their money.

There is another sort of fashionable character, whose false brightness is still more pernicious, by casting a splendour over the most destructive vices. Corrupt manners, ruinous extravagance, and the most fatal passion for play, are sometimes gilded over with many engaging acts of charity, and a general attention and respect to the ceremonials of religion. But this is degrading the venerable image and superscription of Christianity, by stamping them on a baser metal than they were ever intended to impress. The young and gay shelter themselves under such examples, and scruple the less to adopt the bad parts of such mixed characters, when they see that a loose and negligent, not to say immoral conduct, is so compatible with a religious profession.

But I digress from my intention; for it is not the purpose of this address to take notice of any actions which the common consent of mankind has determined to be wrong: but of such chiefly as are practised by the sober, the decent, and the regular; and to drop a few hints on such less obvious offences as are, in general,

Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne.

Nor will the bounds which I have prescribed myself allow of my wandering into a wide and general field of observation.

The idea of the present slight performance was suggested by reading the king's late excel-

* The School for Scandal.

lent proclamation against irreligion and immorality.* Under the shelter of so high a sanction, it may not be unseasonable to press on the hearts of the better disposed, such observances as seem to be generally overlooked, and to remark such offences as commonly elude censure, because they are not commonly thought censurable.

It is obvious to all pious persons, that that branch of the divine law, against which the better kind of people trespass with the least scruple, is the fourth commandment. Many who would shudder at the violation of the other nine, seem without ceremony to expunge this from the Divine code; but by what authority they do this, has never been explained. The christian legislator does not seem to have abridged the commandments: and there is no subsequent authority so much as pretended to by Protestants.

It is not here intended to take notice of such flagrant offences as lie open to the cognizance of higher tribunals; or to pollute this paper with descanting on the holders of card assemblies on Sundays; the frequenters of taverns and gaming houses; the printers of Sunday newspapers; the proprietors of Sunday Stage-coaches; and others who openly insult the laws of the land; laws which will always be held sacred by good subjects, even were not the law of God antecedent to them.

Many of the order whom I here address are persons of the tenderest humanity, and not only wish well to the interests of virtue, but are favourably disposed to advance the cause of religion; nay, would be extremely startled at not being thought sincerely religious; yet from inconsideration, want of time, want of self-examination, want of a just sense of the high requirements of the Divine law, want of suspecting the deceitfulness of the human heart, sometimes allow themselves in inattentions and negligences which materially affect their own safety, and the comfort of others.—While an animated spirit of charity seems to be kindled among us: while there is a general disposition to instruct the ignorant, and to reform the vicious; we cannot help regretting that these amiable exertions should be counteracted, in some degree, by practices of a directly opposite tendency; trifling in their appearance, but serious in their effects.

There are still among us petty domestic evils, which seemed too inconsiderable to claim redress. There is an aggrieved body of men in our very capital, whose spiritual hardships seem scarcely to have been taken into consideration, I mean the HAIR DRESSERS on whom

The Sunday shines, no day of rest to them.

Is there not a peculiar degree of unkindness in exercising such cruelty on the souls of men, whose whole lives are employed in embellishing our persons? And is it quite conceivable how a lady's conscience is able to make such nice distinctions that she would be shocked at the idea of sending for her mantuamaker† or milliner, her carpenter or mason, on a Sunday, while she makes no scruple regularly to employ a hair-dresser?

Is it not almost ridiculous to observe the zeal we have for doing good at a distance, while we neglect the little, obvious, every-day, domestic duties which should seem to solicit our immediate attention? But an action ever so right and praise-worthy which is only to be periodically performed, at distant intervals, is less burthensome to corrupt nature, than an undeviating attention to such small, constant right habits as are hostile to our natural indolence, and would be perpetually vexing and disturbing our self-love. The weak heart indulges its infirmity, by allowing itself intermediate omissions, and habitual neglects of duty; reposing itself for safety, on regular but remote returns of stated performances. It is less trouble to subscribe to the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, than to have daily prayers in our own families, and I am persuaded that there are multitudes of well-meaning people who would gladly contribute to a mission of Christianity to Japan or Otaheite, to whom it never occurred that the hair-dresser, whom they are every Sunday detaining from church has a soul to be saved; that the law of the land co-operates with the law of God, to forbid their employing him; and that they have no right, either legal or moral, to this portion of his time. The poor man, himself, perhaps, dares not remonstrate, for fear he should be deprived of his employment for the rest of the week. If there were no other objection to a pleasurable Sunday among the great and affluent, methinks this single one might operate: would not a devout heart be unwilling to rob a fellow creature of his time for devotion, or a humane one of his hour of rest? 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.'

It is strange that there should be so little consistency in human conduct, that the same persons should gladly contribute to spread the light of Christianity in another hemisphere; while, by their example, they actually obstruct the progress of it at home. But it is, I doubt not, much oftener owing to the imperceptible influence of custom and habit, than to a decided ill intention. Besides, it may be in morals as it is in optics, the eye and the object may come too close to each other, to answer the end of vision. There are certain faults which press too near our self-love to be even perceptible to us.

The petty mischief of what is called *card money* is so assimilated to our habits, and interwoven with our family arrangements, that even many of the prudent and virtuous no longer consider it as a worm which is feeding on the vitals of domestic virtue. How many poor youths, after having been trained in a wholesome dread of idleness and gaming, when they are sent abroad into the world, are astonished to find that part of the wages of the servant is to be paid by his furnishing the implements of diversion for the guests of the master. Thus good servants are a commodity which has long been diminishing by an elaborate system. The more sober the family, the fewer attractions it must necessarily have; for these servants will naturally quit a place, however excellent, where there

* This tract was written soon after the institution of the society for enforcing the king's proclamation against vice and irreligion.

† It is feared that since these pages were written the scruple of sending for either is much diminished.

is no play, for one where there is some; and a family where there is but little, for one where there is much. Thus if the advantage of the dependent is to increase in a direct ratio to the dissipation of his employer, what encouragement is left for valuable servants, or what prospect remains of securing valuable servants for sober minded families?

It will be said that so small an evil is scarcely worth insisting on. But a small fault which is become a part of a system, in time establishes an error into a principle. And that remonstrance which should induce people to abolish one wrong habit, or pluck out one rooted error, however trifling, would be of more real use than the most eloquent declamation against vice in general. To take out only one thorn from a suffering patient, is more beneficial to him than the most elaborate disquisition on the pain he is suffering from the thorns which remain.

It should be held as an eternal truth, that what is morally wrong can never be politically right. It would be arguing great ignorance of human nature, and exacting a very rigorous degree of virtue from a person of vulgar sentiments to expect that he should wish well to the interests of sobriety, or heartily desire the decrease of dissipation, while the growth of it is made so profitable to himself. It is requiring too much to make the temptation so forcible where the power of resistance is so weak. To hold out to a poor fellow the strong seduction of interest, and yet to expect he will retain the same inflexible principle, is to expect from an illiterate servant an elevation of virtue, which has not always been found even in statesmen and ministers.

It is not here intended to enter into any animadversion on the subject of play itself. But may we not ask without offence, if it be perfectly right to introduce any money arising from or connected with it, into a part of regular family economy? Is it not giving an air of system to diversion, which does not seem entirely of a piece with the other orderly practices of many discreet families where this odd traffic is carried on? Would not our ancestors, who seem to have understood economy and magnificence too, at least as well as their descendants, have been scandalized had it been proposed to them to incorporate play so intimately with the texture of their domestic arrangements, as that it should make part of their plan! And would they have thought it a very dignified practice not to have paid themselves for the amusements of their own houses; but to have invited their friends to an entertainment of which the guests were to defray part of the expense?

Let me suppose a case: what appearance would it have, if every gentleman who has partaken of the social entertainment of a friend's table, were after dinner, expected by the butler, to leave a piece of money under his plate to pay for his wine? Do not common sense, hospitality, friendship, and liberal feelings revolt at the bare suggestion of such a project? Yet there is in effect as little hospitality, as little friendship, and as little liberality in being obliged to pay for the cards as for the wine; both equally making a part of the entertainment.

It is hardly too ludicrous to add, that seeing how this point has been carried in favour of the groom of the chambers (and it descends down to the lowest footman,) we need not despair of seeing the butler insist on being allowed to furnish the wine, for which he shall compel the guests to pay with the same high interest with which they now pay for the cards. It will seem odd at first, but afterwards we shall think no more about it, to see him, during dinner, noting down those who drink the more costly wines, that they may be taxed double. And it will sound whimsical *at first*, to hear the butler give his master notice that he must quit his place, because the company have drank a little wine. This only sounds ridiculous, while the leaving a place through deficiency of card money sounds reasonable, because we are accustomed to the one, and the other is not yet become fashionable.

The extinction of this favourite perquisite would at first be considered as a violent innovation. All reformations seem formidable before they are attempted. The custom of *vails*, 'which gave corruption *broader* wings to fly,' was supposed to be invincible. Yet how soon did a general concurrence exterminate it! Had any one foretold twenty years ago, that in a very short space, near half a million of pilfering, swearing, Sabbath-breaking children, should be rescued from the streets, and brought into habits of sobriety and virtue, should we not have undertaken that the cleansing stream of religious instruction should thus be poured through the Augean stable of ignorance and vice, and in some measure wash away its grossest impurities?

The servant would probably complain of the annihilation of this gainful custom: but the master would find his account in indemnifying the loss; for he in his turn would be released from the preposterous contribution to the wages of other men's servants. If in a family of overgrown dissipation the stated addition should not be found equivalent to the relinquished perquisite, the servant must heroically submit to the disadvantageous commutation for the public good. And after all it would be no very serious grievance if his reduced income should not then exceed that of the chaplain. It will still at least exceed that of many a deserving gentleman, bred to liberal learning, whose feelings that learning has refined to a painful acuteness, and who is withering away in hopeless penury with a large family, on a curacy, but little surpassing the wages of a livery servant.

The same principle in human nature by which the nabob, the contractor, and others, by a sudden influx of unaccustomed wealth, become voluptuous, extravagant, and insolent, seldom fails to produce the same effect on persons in these humbler stations, when raised from inferior places, to the sudden affluence of these gainful ones. Increased profligacy on a sudden swell of fortune is commonly followed by desperate methods to improve the circumstances when impaired by the improvidence attending unaccustomed prosperity.

There is another domestic practice which it is almost idle to mention, because it is so difficult to redress, since such is the present state

of society, that even the conscientious think themselves obliged to concur in it. That ingenuity which could devise some effectual substitute for the daily and hourly lie of *Not at home*, would deserve well of society. Why will not some of those illustrious ladies who lead in the fashionable world invent some phrase which shall equally rescue from destruction the time of the master and the veracity of the servant? Some new and appropriate expression, the not adopting which should be blended with the stigma of vulgarity, might accomplish that which the charge of its being immoral has failed to accomplish.

The expediency of the denial itself, no one will dispute, who has a just idea of the value of time. Some scrupulous persons so very much dispute the lawfulness of making their servant's tongue the medium of any kind of falsehood, as to make it a point of conscience rather to lay themselves open to the irruption of every idle invader, who sallies out on morning visits bent on the destruction of business and the annihilation of study. People of very strict integrity lament that this practice induces a general spirit of lying, mixes itself with the habit, and by a quality, the reverse of an alterative, gradually undermines the moral constitution. Others on the contrary assert, that it is one of those lies of convention, no more intended to deceive than the *dear sir* at the beginning, or your *humble servant* at the close of a letter to a person who is not dear to you, and to whom you owe no subjection. There is, however, this very material difference, that if the first be a falsehood, you do not convey it by proxy: You use it yourself, and you use it to one who sets no more value on your words than you intended he should; and who shows you he does not, by using the same stated phrase in return, in addressing you, for whom he cares as little. Here the words pass for no more than they are worth.

The ill effect of the custom we are lamenting may be traced in marking the gradual initiation of an unpractised country servant. And who has not felt for his virtuous distress, when he has been ordered to call back a more favoured visitant, whom he had just sent away with the assurance that his lady was not at home? Who has not seen his suppressed indignation at being obliged to become himself the detector of that falsehood of which he had been before the instrument? But a little practice, and a repetition of reproof for even daring to *look* honest, soon cures this fault, especially as he is sure to be commended in proportion to the increased firmness of his voice, and the steadiness of his countenance.

If this evil, petty as it may seem to be, be really without a remedy; if the state of society be such that it cannot be redressed, let us not be so unreasonable as to expect that a servant will equivocate in small instances, and not in great ones. To hope that he will always lie for your convenience, and never for his own, is perhaps expecting more from human nature in a low and uncultivated state than we have any right to expect. Nor should the master look for undeviating and perfect rectitude from his servant, in whom the principle of veracity is daily and hourly weakened in conformity to his own command.

Let us bring home the case to ourselves, the only fair way of determining in all cases of conscience. Suppose we had established it into a system to allow ourselves regularly to lie on one certain given subject, every day; while we continued to value ourselves on the most undeviating adherence to truth on every other point. Who shall say, that at the end of one year's tolerable and systematic lying, on this individual subject, we should continue to look upon falsehood in general with the same abhorrence we did, when we first entered upon this partial exercise of it.

There is an evil newly crept into polished society, and it comes under a mask so specious that they who are allured by it, come not seldom under the description of *good sort of people*, I allude to SUNDAY-CONCERTS. Many who would be startled at a profane or even a light amusement, allow themselves to fancy that the name of sacred music sanctifies the diversion. But if those more favoured beings, whom Providence enables to live in ease and affluence, do not make these petty renunciations of their own ways, and their own pleasure, what criterion have we by which to judge of their sincerity? For as the goodness of Providence has exempted them from painful occupations, they have neither labour from which to rest, nor business from which to refrain. A little abstinence from pleasure is the only valid evidence they have to give of their obedience to the divine precept.

I know with what indignant scorn this remark will, by many, be received: I know that much will be advanced in favour of the sanctity of this amusement. I shall be told that the words are, many of them, extracted from the Bible, and that the composition is the divine Handel's. But were the angel Gabriel the poet, the archangel Michael the composer, and the song of the Lamb the subject, it would not abrogate that statute of the Most High, which has said, 'Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day, and thy SERVANT, and thy CATTLE, shall do no manner of work.' I am persuaded that the hallelujahs of heaven would make no moral music to the ear of a conscientious person, while he reflected that multitudes of servants are through his means waiting in the street, exposed to every temptation; engaged, perhaps, in profane swearing, and idle, if not dissolute conversation, and the very cattle are deprived of that rest which the tender mercy of God was graciously pleased, by an astonishing condescension, to include in the commandment.

But I will, for the sake of argument, so far concede as to allow of the innocence and even piety of Sunday-concerts: I will suppose (what, however, does not often happen) that no unhallowed strains are ever introduced; I will admit that some attend these concerts with a view to cultivate devout affections; that they cherish the serious impressions excited by the music, and retire in such a frame of spirit as convinces them that the heart was touched while the ear was gratified: nay, I *would* grant, if such a concession would be accepted, that the intervals were filled up with conversation, 'whereby one

may edify another:' yet all these good effects, allowing them really to have been produced, will not remove the invincible objection of an EVIL EXAMPLE; and what liberal spirit would refuse any reasonable sacrifice of its own pleasure to so important a motive? Your servants have been accustomed to consider a concert as a secular diversion; if you, therefore, continue it on a Sunday, will not they also expect to be indulged on that day with their common amusements? Saint Paul, who was a very liberal thinker, believed it prudent to make frequent sacrifices of things indifferent in themselves. He was willing to deny himself a harmless and lawful gratification, *even as long as the world stood*, rather than shock the tender consciences of men of less understanding. Where a practice is neither good nor evil in itself, it is both discreet and generous to avoid it, if it can be attended with any possible danger to minds less enlightened, and to faith less confirmed.

But religion apart, I have sometimes wondered that people do not yield to the temptation that is held out to them, of abstaining from diversions one day in seven, upon motives of mere human policy; as voluptuaries sometimes fast, to give a keener relish to the delights of the next repast: for pleasure, like an over-fed lamp, is extinguished by the excess of its own aliment: not to say that the instrument of our gratification is often converted into our bane. Anacreon was choaked by a grape stone. The lovers of pleasure are not always prudent, even upon their own principles; for I am persuaded that this world would afford much more real satisfaction than it does, if we did not press, and torture, and strain it, in order to make it yield what it does not contain. Much good, and much pleasure, it does liberally bestow; but no labour or art, can extract from it that elixir of peace, that divine essence of content, which it is not in its nature to produce. There is good sense in searching into every blessing for its *hidden* properties; but it is folly to ransack and plunder it for such properties as the experience of all ages tells us are *foreign* to it. We exhaust the world of its pleasures, and then lament that it is empty: we wring those pleasures to the very dregs, and then complain that they are vapid. We erroneously seek in the world for that peace which we are repeatedly told is not to be found in it. While we neglect to seek it in *Him* who has expressly told us that *our* happiness depends on *his* having overcome the world.—'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as *the world giveth give I unto you*.'

I shall, probably, be accused of a very narrow and fanatical spirit in animadverting on a practice so little suspected of harm as the frequenting of public walks and gardens on a Sunday; and certainly there cannot be an amusement more entirely harmless in itself. But I must appeal to the honest testimony of our own hearts, if the *effect* be favourable to seriousness. Do we commonly retire from these places with the impressions which were made on us at church, in their full force? We entered these sprightly scenes, perhaps with a strong remaining tincture of that devout spirit which the public worship had infused into the mind: but have we not felt it gradually diminish? Have not our powers of resistance grown insensibly weaker? Has not the gayety of the scene converted, as it were, argument into allusion? The doctrines, which in the morning appeared the sober dictates of reason, now seem unreasonably rigid, and truths, which were then thought incontrovertible, now appear impertinent. To answer objections is much easier than to withstand allurements. The understanding may controvert a startling proposition with less difficulty than the sliding heart can resist the infection of seducing gayety. To oppose a cold and speculative faith to the enchantment of present pleasure, is to fight with inadequate weapons; it is resisting arms with rules; it is combating temptation with an idea. Whereas, he who engages in the christian warfare, will find that his chief strength consists in knowing that he is very weak; his progress will depend on his conviction that he is every hour liable to go back; his success, on the persuasion of his fallibility; his safety, on the assurance that to retreat from danger is his highest glory, and to decline the combat his truest courage.

Whatever indisposes the mind for the duty of any particular season, though it assume ever so innocent a form, cannot be perfectly right. If the heart be laid open to the incursion of vain imaginations, and worldly thoughts, it matters little by what gate the enemy entered. If the effect be injurious, the cause cannot be quite harmless. It is the perfidious property of certain pleasures, that though they seem not to have the smallest harm in themselves, they imperceptibly indispose the mind to every thing that is good.

Many readers will be apt to produce against all this preciseness, that hackneyed remark which one is tired of hearing, that Sunday diversions are allowed publicly in many foreign countries, as well in those professing the reformed religion, as popery. But the corruptions of one part of the protestant world are no reasonable justification of the evil practices of another. Error and infirmity can never be proper objects of imitation. It is still a remnant of the old leaven; and as to pleading the practice of Roman catholic countries, one blushes to hear an enlightened protestant justifying himself by examples drawn from that benighted religion, whose sanctions we should in any other instance be ashamed to plead.

Besides, though I am far from vindicating the amusements permitted on Sundays in foreign countries, by allowing that established custom and long prescription have the privilege of conferring right; yet foreigners may, at least, plead the sanction of custom, and the connivance of the law: while in this country, the law of the land, and established usage, concurring with still higher motives, give a sort of venerable sanction to religious observances, the breach of which will be always more liable to misconstruction than in countries where so many motives do not concur in its support.

I do not assert that all those who neglect a strict observation of the Lord's day are remiss in the performance of all their other duties

though they should bear in mind that the observance of their other duties is no atonement for the neglect of this; I will however venture to affirm, that all whom I have remarked conscientiously to observe this day from right motives, have been uniformly attentive to their general conduct. It has been the opinion of many wise and good men,* that Christianity will stand or fall, as this day is neglected or observed. Sunday seems to be a kind of Christian Palladium; and the city of God will never be totally taken by the enemy till the observance of that be quite lost. Every sincere soldier of the great Captain of our Salvation must, therefore, exert himself in its defence, if ever he would preserve the divine Fort of Revelation against the confederated attacks of the world and the devil.

I shall proceed to enumerate a few of the many causes which seem to impede well-disposed people in the progress of religion. None perhaps contributes more to it than that cold, prudential caution against the folly of aiming at *perfection*, so frequent in the mouths of the worldly wise. 'We must take the world,' say they, 'as we find it, reformation is not our business, and we are commanded not to be righteous overmuch.' A text by the way entirely misunderstood and perverted by people of this sort. But these admonitions are contrary to every maxim in human affairs. In arts and letters† the most consummate models are held out to imitation. We never hear any body cautioned against becoming too wise, too learned, or too rich. Activity in business is accounted commendable; in friendship it is amiable; in ambition it is laudable. The highest exertions of industry are commended; the finest energies of genius are admired. In all the perishing concerns of earthly things, zeal is extolled as exhibiting marks of a sprightly temper and a vigorous mind! Strange! that to be 'fervent in spirit,' should only be dishonourable in that single instance which should seem to demand unremitting diligence, and unextinguishable warmth.

But after all, is an excessive and intemperate zeal the *common* vice of the times? Is there any *very* imminent danger that the enthusiasm of the great should transport them to dangerous and inconvenient excesses? Are our young men of fashion so *very* much led away by the fervours of piety, that they require to have their imaginations tamed and their ardours cooled by the freezing maxims of worldly wisdom? Is the spirit of the age so *very* much inclined to catch and communicate the fire of devotion, as to require to be damped by admonition, or extinguished by ridicule? When the inimitable Cervantes attacked the wild notions and romantic ideas which misled the age in which he lived, he did wisely, because he combated an actually existing evil: but in this latter end of the 18th century, there seems to be little more occasion, (among persons of rank, I mean) of cautions against enthusiasm than against chivalry; and he who declaims against religious excesses in the company of well-bred people shows himself to be as little acquainted with the manners of the times in which he lives, as he would do who should think it a point of duty to write another Don Quixotte.

Among the devices dangerous to our moral safety, certain favourite and specious maxims are not the least successful, as they carry with them an imposing air of indulgent candour, and always seem to be on the popular side of good nature. Of the most obvious of these is, that method of reconciling the conscience to practices not decidedly wicked, and yet not scrupulously right by the qualifying phrase, *that there is no harm in it.* I am mistaken if more innocent persons do not inflame their spiritual reckoning by this treacherous apology than by almost any other means. Few are systematically, or premeditatedly wicked, or propose to themselves, at first, more than such small indulgences as they are persuaded *have no harm in them.* But this latitude is gradually and imperceptibly enlarged. As the expression is vague and indeterminate; as the darkest shade of virtue, and the brightest shade of vice, melt into no very incongruous colouring; as the bounds between good and evil are not always so precisely defined but that he who ventures to the confines of the one, will find himself on the borders of the other; every one furnishes his own definition; every one extends the supposed limits a little farther; till the bounds which fence in, permitted from unlawful pleasures, are gradually broken down and the marks which separated them imperceptibly destroyed.

It is, perhaps, one of the most alarming symptoms of the degeneracy of morals in the present day, that the distinctions of right and wrong are almost swept away in polite conversation. The most grave offences are often named with cool indifference; the most shameful profligacy with affected tenderness and indulgent toleration. The substitution of the word *gallantry* for that crime which stabs domestic happiness and conjugal virtue, is one of the most dangerous of all the modern abuses of language. Atrocious deeds should never be called by gentle names. This must certainly contribute more than any thing to diminish the horror of vice in the rising generation. That our passions should be too often engaged on the side of error, we may look for the cause, though not for the vindication, in the unresisted propensities of our constitution: but that our *reason* should ever be exerted in its favour, that our *conversation* should ever be taught to palliate it, that our *judgment* should ever look on with indifference,

* The testimony of one lawyer, will, perhaps, be less suspected than that of many priests. 'I have ever found,' says the great lord chief justice Hale, 'by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of the duty of Sunday has ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week that has been so begun has been blessed and prosperous to me: and, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week has been unsuccessful and unhappy to my own secular employments. So that I could easily make an estimate of my successes the week following, by the manner of my passing this day. And I do not write this lightly but by long and sound experience.'—*Sir Matthew Hale's Works.*

† When Pliny the younger was accused of despising the degenerate eloquence of his own age, and of the vanity of aspiring at perfection in oratory, and of endeavouring to become the rival of Cicero; instead of denying the charge, he exclaimed with a noble spirit, 'I think it the height of folly not always to propose to myself the most perfect object of imitation.'

that our tongues should ever be employed to confound the eternal distinctions of right and wrong; this has no shadow of excuse: because this can pretend to no foundation in nature, no apology in temptation, no palliative in passion.

However defective, therefore, our practice may be; however we may be allured by seduction or precipitated by passion, let us beware of lowering the STANDARD OF RIGHT. This induces an imperceptible corruption into the heart, stagnates the noblest principles of action, irrecoverably debases the sense of moral and religious obligation, and prevents us from living up to the height of our nature, because it prevents us from knowing its possible elevation. It cuts off all communication with virtue, and almost prevents the possibility of a return to it. If we do not rise as high as we aim, we shall rise the higher for having aimed at a lofty mark: but where the RULE is low, the practice cannot be high, though the converse of the proposition is not proportionably true.

Nothing more benumbs the exertions of ardent youthful virtue than the cruel sneer which worldly prudence bestows on active goodness, and the cool derision it expresses at the defeat of a benevolent scheme, of which malice, rather than penetration, had foreseen the failure. Alas! there is little need of any such discouragements. The world is a climate which too naturally chills a glowing generosity, and contracts an expanded heart. The zeal of the most sanguine is but too apt to cool, and the activity of the most diligent, to slacken of itself: and the disappointments which benevolence encounters in the failure of her best concerted projects, and the frequent depravity of the most chosen objects of her bounty, would soon dry up the amplest streams of charity, were they not fed by the living fountain of religious principle.

I cannot dismiss this part of my subject without animadverting on the too prompt alacrity, even of worthy people, to disseminate, in public and general conversation, instances of their unsuccessful attempts to do good. I never hear a charity sermon begun to be related in mixed company that I do not tremble for the catastrophe, lest it should exhibit some mortifying disappointment, which may deter the inexperienced from running any generous hazards, and excite harsh suspicions, at an age when it is less dishonourable to meet with a few casual hurts, and transient injuries, than to go cased in the cumbersome and impenetrable armour of distrust. The liberal should be particularly cautious how they furnish the avaricious with creditable pretences for saving their money, since all the instances of the mortifications the humane meet with are carefully treasured up, and added to the armoury of the covetous man's arguments, and never fail to be produced by him as defensive weapons, upon every fresh attack on his heart or his purse.

But I am willing to hope that that uncharitableness which we so often meet with in persons of advanced years, is not always the effect of a heart naturally hard. Misanthropy is very often nothing but abused sensibility. Long habits of the world, and a melancholy conviction how little good he has been able to do in it, harden many a tender-hearted person. The milk of human kindness becomes soured by repeated acts of ingratitude. This commonly induces an indifference to the well-being of others, from a hopelessness of adding to the stock of human virtue and human happiness. This uncomfortable disease is very fond of spreading its own contagion, which is a cruelty to the health of young and uninfected virtue. For this distemper, generated by a too sanguine disposition, and grown chronical from repeated disappointments, from having rated worldly generosity too highly, there is but one remedy, or rather one prevention: and this is a genuine principle of piety. He who is once convinced that he is to assist his fellow creatures, because it is the will of God; he who is persuaded that his forgiving his fellow-servant the hundred pence, is a condition annexed to the remission of his own ten thousand talents, will soon get above all uneasiness when the consequence does not answer his expectation. He will soon become only anxious to do his duty, humbly committing events to higher hands. Disappointments will then only serve to refine his motives, and purify his virtue. His charity will then become a sacrifice with which God is well pleased! His affections will be more spiritualized, and his devotions more intense. Nothing short of such a courageous piety growing on the stock of Christian principle, can preserve a heart hackneyed in the world from relaxed diligence or criminal despair.

People in general are not aware of the mischief of judging of the righteousness of any action by its prosperity, or of the excellence of any institution by the abuse of it.

We must never proportion our exertions to our success, but to our duty. If every laudable undertaking were to be dropped because it failed in some cases, or was abused in others, there would not be left an alms-house, a charity-school, or an hospital in the land. If every right practice were to be discontinued because it had been found not to be successful in every instance, and if every right principle were rejected because it had not been operative in all cases, this false reasoning pushed to the extreme, might at last be brought as an argument for shutting up our churches, and burning our Bibles.

But if, on the one hand, there is a proud and arrogant discretion which ridicules, as Utopian and romantic, every generous project of the active and the liberal; so there is on the other, a sort of popular bounty which arrogates to itself the exclusive name of *feeling*, and rejects with disdain the influence of an higher principle. I am far from intending to deprecate this humane and exquisitely tender sentiment which the beneficent Author of our nature gave us, as a stimulus to remove the distresses of the others, in order to get rid of our own uneasiness. I would only observe that where not strengthened by superior motives, it is a casual and precarious instrument of good, and ceases to operate, except in the immediate presence, and within the audible cry of misery. This sort of feeling forgets that any calamity exists which is out of its own sight; and though it would empty its purse for such an occasional object as rouses transient sensibility, yet it seldom makes any stated pro-

vision for miseries, which are not the less real because they do not obtrude upon the sight, and awaken the tenderness of immediate sympathy. This is a mechanical charity, which requires springs and wheels to set it a going; whereas real Christian charity does not wait to be acted upon by impressions and impulses.

Another cause which very much intimidates well-disposed people, is their terror lest the character of piety should derogate from their reputation as men of sense. Every man of the world naturally arrogates to himself the superiority of understanding over every religious man. He, therefore, who has been accustomed to set a high value on his intellectual powers, must have made very considerable advances in piety before he can acquire a magnanimous indifference to this usurped superiority of another: before he can submit to the parsimonious allotment of wit and learning, which is assigned him by the supercilious hand of worldly wisdom. But this attack upon his pride will be no bad touchstone of his sincerity. If his advances have not been so considerable, then by an hypocrisy of the least common kind, he will be industrious to appear less good than he really is, lest the detection of his serious propensities should draw on him the imputation of ordinary parts or low attainments. But the danger is, that while he is too sedulously intent on maintaining his pretensions as an ingenious man, his claims to piety should daily become weaker. That which is long suppressed is too frequently extinguished.

Nothing, perhaps, more plainly discovers the faint impression which religion has really made upon our hearts, than this disinclination, even of good people, to serious conversation. Let me not be misunderstood; I do not mean the wrangle of debate; I do not mean the gall of controversy; I do not mean the fiery strife of *opinions*, than which nothing can be less favourable to good nature, good manners, or good society. But it were to be wished, that it was not thought ill-bred and indiscreet that the escapes of the tongue should now and then betray the 'abundance of the heart;' that when such subjects are casually introduced, a discouraging coldness did not instantly take place of that sprightly animation of countenance which made common topics interesting. If these 'outward and visible signs were unequivocal, we should form but moderate ideas of the 'inward and spiritual grace.' It were to be wished, that such subjects were not thought dull *merely* because they are good; it were to be wished that they had the common chance of fair discussion; and that parts and learning were not ashamed to exert themselves on occasions where both might appear to so much advantage. If the heart were really interested, could the affections forbear now and then to break out into language? Artits, physicians, merchants, lawyers, and scholars keep up the spirit of their professions by mutual intercourse. New lights are struck out, improvements are suggested, emulation is kindled, love of the object is inflamed, mistakes of the judgment are rectified, and desire of excellence is excited by communication. And is piety alone so very easy of acquisition, so very natural to our corrupt hearts, as to require none of the helps which are indispensable on all other subjects? Travellers, who are to visit any particular country, are full of earnest inquiry, and diligent research; they think nothing indifferent by which their future pleasure or advantage may be affected. Every hint which may procure them any information, or caution them against any danger, is thankfully received; and all this, because they are really in *earnest* in their preparation for this journey; and do fully *believe*, not only that there is such a country, but that they themselves have a personal individual interest in the good or evil which may be found in it.

A farther danger to *good kind of people* seems to arise from a mistaken idea, that only great and actual sins are to be guarded against. Whereas, in effect, temptations to the grosser sins do not so frequently occur to those who are hedged in by the blessings of affluence, by a regard to reputation and the care of health; while sins of omission make up, perhaps, the most formidable part of *their* catalogue of offences. These generally supply in number what they want in weight, and are the more dangerous for being little ostensible. They continue to be repeated with less regret, because the remembrance of their predecessors does not, like the remembrance of formal, actual crimes, assume a body and a shape, and terrify by the impression of particular scenes and circumstances. While the memory of transacted evil haunts a tender conscience by perpetual apparition; omitted duty, having no local or personal existence, not being recorded by standing acts and deeds, and dates, and having no distinct image to which the mind may recur, sinks into quiet oblivion, without deeply wounding the conscience, or tormenting the imagination. These omissions were, perhaps, among the 'secret sins,' from which the royal penitent so earnestly desired to be cleansed: and it is worthy of the most serious consideration, that these are the offences against which the Gospel pronounces some of its very alarming denunciations. It is not less against negative than against actual evil, that affectionate exhortation, lively remonstrance, and pointed parable, are exhausted. It is against the tree which bore NO fruit, the lamp which had NO oil, the unprofitable servant who made NO use of his talent, that the severe sentence is denounced; as well as against *corrupt* fruit, *bad* oil, and talents *ill* employed. We are led to believe, from the same high authority, that omitted duties and neglected opportunities, will furnish no inconsiderable portion of our future condemnation. A very awful part of the decision, in the great day of account, seems to be reserved merely for carelessness, omissions, and negatives. Ye gave me NO meat; ye gave me NO drink; ye took me NOT in; ye visited me NOT. On the punishment attending positive crimes, as being more naturally obvious, it was not, perhaps, thought so necessary to insist.

Another cause, which still further impedes the reception of Religion even among the well-disposed, is, that garment of sadness in which people delight to suppose her dressed; and that life of hard austerity, and pining abstinence,

which they pretend she enjoins on her disciples. And it were well if this were only the misrepresentation of her declared enemies; but unhappily, it is the too frequent misconception of her injudicious friends. But such an overcharged picture is not more unamiable than it is unlike; for I will venture to affirm, that religion, with all her beautiful and becoming sanctity, imposes fewer sacrifices, not only of rational, but of pleasurable enjoyment, than the uncontrolled dominion of any one vice. Her service is not only safety hereafter, but freedom here. She is not so tyrannizing as appetite, so exacting as the world, nor so despotic as fashion. Let us try the case by a parallel, and examine it, not as affecting our virtue but our pleasure. Does Religion forbid the cheerful enjoyments of life as rigorously as Avarice forbids them? Does she require such sacrifices of our ease as Ambition, or such renunciation of our quiet as Pride? Does Devotion *murder sleep* like Dissipation? Does she destroy health like Intemperance? Does she annihilate Fortune like Gaming? Does she embitter Life like Discord; or abridge it like Duelling? Does Religion impose more vigilance than Suspicion? or inflict half as many mortifications as Vanity? Vice has her martyrs: and the most austere and self-denying Ascetic (who mistakes the genius of Christianity almost as much as her enemies mistake it) never tormented himself with such cruel and causeless severity as that with which Envy lacerates her unhappy votaries. Worldly honour obliges us to be at the trouble of resenting injuries; and worldly prudence obliges us to be at the expense of litigating about them: but Religion spares us the inconvenience of the one, and the cost of the other, by the summary command to forgive; and by this injunction she consults our happiness no less than our virtue, for the torment of constantly hating any one must be, at least, equal to the sin of it. And resentment is an evil so costly to our peace that we should find it more cheap to forgive even were it not more right. If this estimate be fairly made, then is the balance clearly on the side of Religion, even in the article of pleasure.

It is an infirmity not uncommon to *good kind of people*, to comfort themselves that they are living in the exercise of some one natural good quality, and to make a religious merit of a constitutional happiness. They have also a strong propensity to separate what God has joined, belief and practice; the creed and the commandments; actions and motives; moral duty and religious obedience. Whereas, you will hardly find, in all the new Testament, a moral, or a social virtue, that is not hedged in by some religious injunction: scarcely a good action enjoined towards others, but it is connected with some exhortation to personal purity. All the charities of benevolence are, in general, so agreeable to the natural make of the heart, that it is a very tender mercy of God to have made that a duty, which, to finer spirits would have been irresistible as an inclination, and to have annexed the highest future reward to the greatest present pleasure. But in order to give a religious sanction to a social virtue, the duty of 'visiting the fatherless and widow in their affliction,' is inseparably attached to the difficult and self-denying injunction of 'keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.' This adjunct is the more needful, as many are apt to make a kind of moral commutation, and to allow themselves so much pleasure in exchange for so much charity. But one good quality can never stand proxy for another. The Christian virtues derive their highest lustre from association: they have such a spirit of society, that they are weak and imperfect when solitary; their radiance is brightened by an intermingling of their beams, and their natural strength multiplied by their alliance with each other.

It cannot be denied that *good sort of people* sometimes use religion as the voluptuous use physic. As the latter employ medicine to make health agree with luxury, the former consider religion as a medium to reconcile peace of conscience with a life of pleasure. But no moral chemistry can blend natural contradictions. In all such unnatural mixtures the world will still be uppermost, and religion will disdain to coalesce with its antipathy.

Let me not be suspected of intending to insinuate that religion encourages men to fly from society, and hide themselves in solitudes; to renounce the generous and important duties of active life for the visionary, cold, and fruitless virtues of an hermitage or a cloister. No: the mischief arises not from our living in the world, but from the world living in us; occupying our hearts, and monopolizing our affections. Action is the life of virtue; and the world is the theatre of action. Perhaps some of the most perfect patterns of human conduct may be found in the most public stations, and among the busiest orders of mankind. It is, indeed, a scene of trial, but the glory of the triumph is proportioned to the peril of the conflict. A sense of danger quickens circumspection, and makes virtue more vigilant. Lot, perhaps, is not the only character, who maintained his integrity in a great city, proverbially wicked, and forfeited it in the bosom of retirement.

It has been said that worldly *good sort of people* are a greater credit to their profession, by exhibiting more cheerfulness, gayety, and happiness, than are visible in serious Christians. If this assertion be true, which I very much suspect, is it not probable that the apparent ease and gayety of the former may be derived from the same source of consolation which Mrs. Quickly recommends to Falstaff, in Shakspeare's admirable picture of the death-bed scene of that witty profligate? 'He wished for comfort, quoth mine hostess, and began to talk of God; now I, to comfort him, begged him he should not think of God; it was time enough to trouble himself with these things.' Do not many deceive themselves by drawing water from these dry wells of comfort? and patch up a precarious and imperfect happiness in this world, by diverting their attention from the concerns of the next.

Another obstruction to the growth of piety, is that unhappy prejudice which even good kind of people too often entertain against those who differ from them in opinion. Every man who is sincerely in earnest to advance the interests

of religion, will have acquired such a degree of candour, as to become indifferent by whom good is done, or who has the reputation of doing it, provided it be actually done. He will be anxious to increase the stock of human virtue and of happiness by every possible means. He will whet and sharpen every instrument of goodness, though it be not cast in his own mould, or fashioned after his own pattern. He will never consider whether the form suits his own particular taste, but whether the instrument itself be calculated to accomplish the work of his master.

I shall conclude these loose and immethodical hints with a plain though short address to those who content themselves with a decent profession of the doctrines, and a formal attendance on the offices, instead of a diligent discharge of the duties of Christianity. Believe, and forgive me!—you are the people who lower religion in the eyes of its enemies. The openly profane, the avowed enemies to God and goodness, serve to confirm the truths they mean to oppose, to illustrate the doctrines they deny, and to accomplish the very prediction they affect to disbelieve. But you, like an inadequate and faithless prop, overturn the edifice which you pretend to support.—When an acute and keen-eyed infidel measures your lives with the rule by which you profess to walk, he finds so little analogy between them, the copy is so unlike the pattern, that this inconsistency of your's is the pass through which his most dangerous attack is made. And I must confess, that, of all the arguments, which the malignant industry of infidelity has been able to muster, the negligent conduct of professing Christians seems to me to be the only one which is really capable of staggering a man of sense.—He hears of a spiritual and self-denying religion; he reads the beatitudes; he observes that the grand artillery of the gospel is planted against pride and sensuality. He then turns to the transcript of this perfect original; to the lives which pretend to be fashioned by it. There he sees, with triumphant derision that pride, self-love, luxury, self-sufficiency, unbounded personal expense, and an inordinate appetite for pleasure, are reputable vices in the eyes of many of those who acknowledge the truth of the Christian doctrines. He weighs that meekness to which a blessing is promised, with that arrogance which is too common to be very dishonourable. He compares that non-conformity to the world, which the Bible makes the criterion of a believer, with that rage for amusement which is not considered as disreputable in a Christian. He opposes the self-denying and lowly character of the Author of our faith with the sensual practices of his followers. He finds little resemblance between the restraints prescribed, and the gratifications indulged in. What conclusions must a speculative reasoning sceptic draw from such premises? Is it any wonder that such phrases as 'a broken spirit,' a 'contrite heart,' 'poverty of spirit,' 'refraining the soul,' 'keeping it low,' and 'casting down high imaginations,' should be to the unbeliever 'foolishness,' when such humiliating doctrines are a 'stumbling block' to professing Christians; to Christians who cannot cordially relish a religion which professedly tells them it was sent to stain the pride of human glory, and 'to exclude boasting?'

But though the passive and self-denying virtues are not high in the esteem of mere good sort of people, yet they are peculiarly the evangelical virtues. The world extols brilliant actions; the Gospel enjoins good habits and right motives: it seldom inculcates those splendid deeds which make heroes, or teaches those lofty sentiments which constitute philosophers; but it enjoins the harder task of renouncing self, of living uncorrupted in the world, of subduing besetting sins, and of 'not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought.' The *acquisition* of glory was the precept of other religions, the *contempt* of it is the perfection of Christianity.

Let us then be consistent, and we shall never be contemptible, even in the eyes of our enemies. Let not the unbeliever say that we have one set of opinions for our theory, and another for our practice, that to the vulgar

> We show the rough and thorny way to heav'n,
> While we the primrose path of dalliance tread.

Would it not become the character of a man of sense, of which consistency is a most unequivocal proof, to choose some rule and abide by it? An extempore Christian is a ridiculous character. Fixed principles, if they be really principles of the heart, and not merely opinions of the understanding, will be followed by a consistent course of action; while indecision of spirit will produce instability of conduct. If there be a model which we profess to admire, let us square our lives by it. If either the Koran of Mahomet, or the Revelations of Zoroaster, be a perfect guide, let us follow one of them. If either Epicurus, Zeno, or Confucius, be the peculiar object of our veneration and respect, let us avowedly fashion our conduct by the dictates of their philosophy; and then, though we may be wrong, we shall not be absurd; we may be erroneous, but we shall not be inconsistent; but if the Bible be in truth the word of God, as we profess to believe, we need look no farther for a consummate pattern. 'If the Lord be God, let us follow HIM.' If Christ he a sacrifice for sin; let Him be also to us the example of an holy life.

But I am willing to flatter myself that the moral and intellectual scene about us begins to brighten. I indulge myself in moments of the most enthusiastic and delightful vision, that things are beginning gradually to lead to the fulfilment of that promise, that 'all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.' I take encouragement that that glorious prophecy, that 'of the increase of his government there shall be no end,' seems to be gradually accomplishing; and in no instance more, perhaps, than in the noble attempt about to be made for the abolition of the African slave-trade.* For what event can human wisdom foresee more likely to contribute to 'give the SON the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,' than the success of such an

* This interesting question was then beginning to be agitated in parliament.

enterprise, which will restore the lustre of the British name, and cut off at a single stroke as large and disgraceful a portion of national guilt as ever impaired the virtue or dishonoured the councils of a Christian country.

A good spirit seems to be at work. A catholic temper is diffusing itself among all sects and parties: an enlightened candour, and a liberal toleration, were never more prevalent; good men combat each others opinions with less rancour, and better manners;* they hate each other less for those points in which they disagree, and love each other more for those points in which they join issue than they formerly did. We have many public encouragements; we have a pious king; a wise and virtuous minister; very many respectable, and not a few serious clergy. Their number I am willing to hope is daily increasing. Among these some of the first in dignity are the most exemplary in conduct. An increasing desire to instruct the poor, to inform the ignorant, and to reclaim the vicious, is spreading among us. The late royal proclamation affords an honourable sanction to virtuous endeavours, and lends nerves and sinews to the otherwise feeble exertions of individuals, by enforcing laws wisely planned, but hitherto feebly executed. In short, there is a good hope that we shall more and more become 'that happy people who have the Lord for their God:' that as prosperity is already within our walls, peace and virtue may abide in our dwellings.

But vain will be all endeavours after *partial* and *subordinate* amendment. Reformation must begin with the GREAT, or it will never be effectual. *Their* example is the fountain whence the vulgar draw their habits, actions, and characters. To expect to reform the poor while the opulent are corrupt is to throw odours into the stream while the springs are poisoned.

If, therefore, the rich and great will not, from a liberal spirit of doing right, and from a christian spirit of fearing God, abstain from those offences, for which the poor are to suffer fines and imprisonments, effectual good cannot be done. It will signify little to lay penalties on the horses of the drover, or the wagon of the husbandman, while the chariot wheels of the great roll with incessant motion; and while the sacred day on which the sons of industry are commanded by royal proclamation to desist from travelling, is for that very reason selected for the journeys of the great, and preferred because the road is incumbered with fewer interruptions But will it not strike every well-meaning Sunday traveller with a generous remorse, when he reflects that he owes the accommodation of an unobstructed road to the very obedience which is paid by others to that divine and human law which he is in the very act of violating?

Will not the common people think it a little inequitable that they are abridged of the diversions of the public house and the gaming yard on Sunday evening, when they shall hear that many houses of the first nobility are on that evening crowded with company, and such amusements carried on as are prohibited by human laws even on common days? As imitation, and a desire of being in the fashion, govern the lower orders of mankind, it is to be feared that they will not think reformation reputable, while they see it *recommended* only, and not *practised*, by their superiors. A precept counteracted by an example, is worse than fruitless; it is ridiculous; and the common people will be tempted to set an inferior value on goodness, when they find it is only expected from the lower ranks. They cannot surely but smile at the disinterestedness of their superiors, who, while they seem anxiously concerned to save others, are so little solicitous about their own state. The ambitious vulgar will hardly relish a salvation which is only intended for plebians; nor will they be apt to entertain very exalted notions of that promised future reward, the road to which they perceive their betters are so much more earnest to point out to *them*, than to walk in themselves.

It was not by inflicting pains and penalties that Christianity first made its way into the world: the divine truths it inculcated received irresistible confirmation from the LIVES, PRACTICES, and EXAMPLES of its venerable professors. These were arguments which no popular prejudice could resist, no Jewish logic refute, and no Pagan persecution discredit. Had the primitive Christians only *praised and promulgated* the most perfect religion the world ever saw, it would have produced but very slender effects on the faith and manners of the people. The astonishing consequences which followed the pure doctrines of the Gospel, would never have been produced, if the jealous and inquisitive eye of malice could have detected that the DOCTRINES the Christians recommended had not been illustrated by the LIVES they led.

* This was written before the French revolution!!

POSTSCRIPT TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE public favour having already brought this little essay to another edition, the author has been sedulous to discover any particular objections that have been made to it. Since the preceding sheets were printed off, it has been suggested by some very respectable persons who have honoured this slight performance with their notice, that it inculcates a too rigid austerity, and carries the point of observing Sunday much too far; that it takes away all the usual occupations of the day, without substituting any others in their stead; and that it only pulls down a wrong system, without so much as attempting to build up a right one. To these observations the author begs leave to reply, that whilst animadverting on error, the insisting on obvious duty was purposely omitted. To tell people what they already know to be right, was less the intention of this address, than to observe upon practices which long habit had prevented them from perceiving to be wrong. Sensible and well-meaning persons can hardly be at a loss on a subject which has exhausted precept and wearied exhortation. To have expatiated on it,

would only have been to repeat what is already known and acknowledged to be right, even by those whom the hurry of engagements will not allow to take breath one day in a week, that they may run the race of pleasure with more alacrity on the other six. But probably it is not the duties, but the amusements appropriated to the day about which the inquiry is made. It will, perhaps, be found, that the intervals of a Sunday regularly devoted to all its reasonable and obvious employments, are not likely to be so very tedious, but that they might be easily and pleasantly filled up by cheerful, innocent, and instructive conversation. Human delights would be very circumscribed indeed, if the practices here noticed as erroneous, included the whole circle of enjoyments. In addition to the appropriate pleasures of devotion, are the pleasures of retirement, the pleasures of friendship, the pleasures of intellect, and the pleasures of beneficence, to be estimated as nothing?

There will not be found, perhaps, a single person who shall honour these pages with a perusal, who has not been repeatedly told, with an air of imposing gravity, by those who produce cards on a Sunday evening, *that it is better to play than to talk scandal.*—Before this pithy axiom was invented, it was not perhaps suspected that Sunday gaming would ever be adduced as an argument in favour of morals. Without entering into the comparative excellence of these two occupations, or presuming to determine which has a claim to pre-eminence of piety, may we not venture to be thankful that these alternatives do not seem to empty the whole stock of human resource; but that something will still be left to occupy and to interest those who adopt neither the one nor the other?

People in the gay and elegant scenes of life are perpetually complaining that an extensive acquaintance, and the necessity of being constantly engaged in large circles and mixed assemblies, leaves them little leisure for family enjoyment, select conversation, and domestic delights. Others, with no less earnestness, lament that the hurry of public stations, and the necessary demands of active life, allow them no time for any but frivolous reading. Now the recurrence of one Sunday in every week seems to hold out an inviting remedy for both these evils. The sweet and delightful pleasures of family society might then be uninterruptedly enjoyed, by the habitual exclusion of trifling and idle visiters, who do not come to see their friends, but to get rid of themselves. Persons of fashion, living in the same house, and connected by the closest ties, whom business and pleasure keep asunder during the greatest part of the week, would then have an opportunity of spending a little time together, and of cultivating that friendship for each other, that affection for their children, and that intercourse with their Maker, to which the present manners are not *very* favourable. To the other set of complainers, those who can find no time to read, this interval naturally presents itself; and it so happens, that some of the most enlightened men the world ever saw, have, not unfrequently, devoted their rare talents to subjects peculiarly suited to this day; and that not merely in the didactic form of sermons, which men of the world affect to disdain, but in every alluring shape which human ingenuity could assume. It can be fortunately produced among a thousand other instances, that the deepest metaphysician,* the greatest astronomer, the sublimest poet, the acutest reasoner, the politest writer, the most consummate philosopher, and the profoundest investigator of nature, which this, or perhaps any country has produced, have all written on such subjects as are analogous to the business of the Lord's day. Such authors as these, even wits, philosophers, and men of the world, must acknowledge that it is not bigotry to read, nor enthusiasm to commend. Of this illustrious group only *one* was a clergyman, which to a certain class of readers will be a strong recommendation; though it is a little hard that the fastidiousness of modern taste should undervalue the learned and pious labours of divines, only because they are *professional.*—In every other function, a man's compositions are not the less esteemed because they peculiarly belong to his more immediate business. Blackstone's opinions in jurisprudence are in high reputation, though he was a lawyer; Sydenham is still consulted as oracular in fevers, in spite of his having been a physician; and the Commentaries of Cæsar are of established authority in military operations, notwithstanding he was a soldier.

* Locke, Newton, Milton, Butler, Addison, Bacon, Boyle.

AN ESTIMATE

OF THE RELIGION OF THE FASHIONABLE WORLD.

There was never found in any age of the world, either philosophy, or sect, or religion, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good as the Christian faith.—*Lord Bacon.*

INTRODUCTION.

The general design of these pages is to offer some cursory remarks, on the present state of religion among a great part of the polite and the fashionable; not only among that description of persons who, whether from disbelief or whatever other cause, avowedly neglect the duties of Christianity; but among that more decent class also, who, while they acknowledge their belief of its truth by a public profession, and are not inattentive to any of its forms, yet exhibit little of its spirit in their general temper and conduct. It is designed to show that Christianity, like its Divine Author, is not only *denied* by those who in so many words disown their submission to

its authority, but is *betrayed* by the still more treacherous disciple, even while he cries, *Hail, Master!*

For this visible declension of piety various reasons have been assigned, some of which however do not seem fully adequate to the effects ascribed to them. The author of a late popular pamphlet* has accounted for the increased profligacy of the *common people*, by ascribing it, very justly, to the increased dissoluteness of their superiors. And who will deny what he farther affirms—that the general conduct of high and low receives a deep tincture of depravity from the growing neglect of public worship? So far I most cordially agree with the noble author. Nothing can be more obvious than that the disuse of public worship is naturally followed by a neglect of all religious duties. Energies, which are not called out into action, almost necessarily die in the mind. The soul, no less than the body, requires its stated repairs, and regular renovations. And from the sluggish and procrastinating spirit of man, that religious duty to which no fixed time is assigned, is seldom, it is to be feared, performed at all.†

I must, however, take leave to dissent from the opinion of the noble author, that the too common desertion of persons of rank from the service of the establishment is occasioned in general, as he intimates, by their disapprobation of the Liturgy; as it may more probably be supposed, that the far greater part of them are deterred from going to church by motives widely removed from speculative objections and conscientious scruples.

It would be quite foreign to my present purpose to enter upon the question of the superior utility of a form of prayer for public worship. Most sincerely attached to the establishment myself, not, as far as I am able to judge, from prejudice, but from a fixed and settled conviction. I regard its institution with a veneration at once affectionate and rational. Never need a Christian, except when his own heart is strangely indisposed, fail to derive benefit from its ordinances, and he may bless the overruling providence of God, that, in this instance, the natural variableness and inconstancy of human opinion is, as it were fixed, and settled, and hedged in, by a stated service so pure, so evangelical, and which is enriched by such a large infusion of sacred Scripture.

If so many among us contemn the service as having been, individually, to *us* fruitless and unprofitable, let us inquire whether the blessing may not be withheld because we are not fervent in asking it. If we do not find a suitable humiliation in the *Confession*, a becoming earnestness in the *Petitions*, a congenial joy in the *Adoration*, a corresponding gratitude in the *Thanksgivings*, it is because our hearts do not accompany our words; it is because we rest in 'the form of godliness,' and are contented to remain destitute of its 'power.' If we are not duly interested when the select portions of Scripture are read to us, it is because we do not as 'new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby.'

Perhaps there has not been since the age of the Apostles, a church upon earth in which the public worship was so solemn and so cheerful; so simple, yet so sublime; so full of fervour, at the same time so free from enthusiasm; so rich in the gold of Christian antiquity, yet so astonishingly exempt from its dross. That it has imperfections we do not deny, but what are they compared with its general excellence? They are as the spots on the sun's disk, which a sharp observer may detect, but which neither diminish the warmth, nor obscure the brightness.

But if those imperfections which are inseparable from all human institutions, are to be alleged as reasons for abstaining to attend on the service of the established church, we must on the same principle, and on still stronger grounds, abstain from all public worship whatever; and indeed it must be confessed that the persons of whom we are now speaking are very consistent in this matter.

But the difference of opinion here intimated, is not so much about the Liturgy itself, as the imaginary effects attributed to it in thinning the pews of our people of fashion. The slightest degree of observation serves to contradict this assertion. Those, however, who, with the noble author, maintain the other opinion, may satisfy their doubts by inquiring, whether the regular and systematic absentees from church are chiefly to be found among the thinking, the reading the speculative, and the scrupulous part of mankind.

Even the most negligent attendant on public worship must know, that the obnoxious creed, to whose malignant potency this general desertion is ascribed, by the noble author, is never read above three or four Sundays in the year; and even allowing the validity of the objections brought against it, that does not seem a very adequate reason for banishing the most scrupulous and tender consciences from church on the remaining eight-and-forty Sundays of the calender.

Besides, there is one test which is absolutely unequivocal: this creed is never read at all in the afternoon, any more than the Litany, that other great source of offence and supposed desertion; and yet with all these multiplied reasons for their attendance do we see the conscientious crowds of the high born, who abstain from the morning service through their repugnance to subscribe to the dogmas of Athanasius, or the more orthodox clauses of the morning Litany, do we see them, I say, flocking to the evening service, impatient for the exercise of that devotion which had 'been obstructed by these two objectionable portions of the Liturgy? Do we see them eager to explain the cause of their morning absence, and zealous to vindicate their piety by assiduously attending when the reprobated portions are omitted? So far from it, is it not pretty evident that the general quarrel (with some few exceptions) of those who habitually absent themselves from public worship, is not with the Creed, but the commandments? With such, to reform the Prayer-book would go but a little way, unless

* Hints to an Association for preventing Vice and Immorality, written by a nobleman of the highest rank.

† On this subject see Dr. Johnson's Life of Milton.

the new Testament could be also abridged. Cut, and pare, and prune the service of the church ever so much, still Christianity itself will be found full of formidable objections. Should the church even give up her abstruse creeds, it would avail but little, unless the Bible would also expunge those rigorous laws which not only prohibit sinful actions, but corrupt inclinations. And to speak honestly, I do not see how such persons as habitually infringe the laws of virtue and sobriety, and who are yet men of acute sagacity, accustomed on other subjects to a consistent train of reasoning; who see consequences in their causes; who behold practical self-denial necessarily involved in the sincere habit of religious observances—I do not see how, with respect to such men, any doctrines reformed, any redundancies lopped, any obscurities brightened, could effect the object of this author's very benevolent and Christian wish.

Religious duties are often neglected upon more consistent grounds than the friends of Religion are willing to allow. They are often discontinued, not as repugnant to the understanding, not as repulsive to the judgment, but as hostile to a licentious life. And when a prudent man, after having entered into a solemn convention, finds that he is living in a constant breach of every article of the treaty he has engaged to observe, one cannot much wonder at his getting out of the hearing of the heavy artillery which he knows is planted against him, and against every one who lives in the allowed infraction of the covenant into which every Christian has entered.

For a man of sense who should acknowledge the truth of the doctrine, would find himself obliged to submit to the force of the precept. It is not easy to be a comfortable sinner, without trying, at least, to be a confirmed unbeliever. And as that cannot be achieved by a wish, the next expedient is to shun the recollection of that belief, and to forget that of which we cannot be ignorant. The smallest remains of faith would embitter a life of libertinism, and to be frequently reminded of the articles of that faith would disturb the ease induced by a neglect of all observances. While to him who retains any impression of Christianity, the wildest festivals of intemperance will be converted into the terrifying feast of Damocles.

That many a respectable non-conformist is kept out of the pale of the establishment by some of the causes noticed by the noble author, cannot be questioned, and a matter of regret it is. But these, however, are often sober thinkers, serious inquirers, conscientious reasoners, whose object we may charitably believe is truth, however they may be deceived as to its nature: but that the same objections banish the great and the gay, is not equally evident. Thanks to the indolence and indifference of the times, it is not dogmas or doctrines, it is not abstract reasonings, or puzzling propositions, it is not perplexed argument, or intricate metaphysics, which can now disincline from Christianity; so far from it they cannot even allure to unbelief. Infidelity itself, with all that strong and natural bias which selfishness and appetite entertain in its favour, if it appear in the grave and scholastic form of speculation, argument, or philosophical deduction may lie almost as quietly on the shelf, as the volumes of its most able antagonist; and the cobwebs are almost as seldom brushed from Hobbes as from Hooker. No: prudent scepticism hath wisely studied the temper of the times, and skilfully felt the pulse of this relaxed, and indolent, and selfish age. It prudently accommodated itself to the reigning character, when it adopted sarcasm instead of reasoning, and preferred a sneer to an argument. It discreetly judged, that, if it would now gain proselytes, it must show itself under the bewitching form of a profane bon-mot; must be interwoven in the texture of some amusing history, written with the levity of a romance, and the point and glitter of an epigram: it must embellish the ample margin with some offensive anecdote or impure allusion, and decorate impiety with every loose and meretricious ornament which a corrupt imagination can invent. It must break up the old flimsy system into little mischievous aphorisms, ready for practical purposes: it must divide the rope of sand into little portable parcels, which the shallowest wit can comprehend, and the shortest memory carry away.

Philosophy therefore (as Unbelief by a patent of its own creation, has been pleased to call itself) will not do nearly so much mischief to the present age as its primitive apostles intended, since it requires time, application, and patience to peruse the reasoning veterans of the sceptic school: and these are talents not now very severely devoted to study of any sort, by those who give the law to fashion; especially since, as it was hinted above, the same principles may be acquired on cheaper terms, and the reputation of being philosophers obtained without the sacrifices of pleasure for the severities of study; since the industry of our literary chemists has extracted the spirit from the gross substance of the old unvendible poison, and exhibited it in the volatile essence of a few sprightly sayings.

If therefore in this voluptuous age, when a frivolous and relaxing dissipation has infected our very studies, Infidelity will not be at the pains of deep research and elaborate investigation, even on such subjects as are congenial to its affections, and promotive of its object; it is in vain to expect that Christianity will be more engaging, either as an object of speculation, or as a rule of practice; since it demands a still stronger exertion of those energies which the gay world is not at the pains to exercise, even on the side they approve. For the evidences of Christianity require attention to be comprehended, no less than its doctrines require humility to be received, and its precepts self-denial to be obeyed.

Will it then be uncharitable to pronounce, that the leading mischief, not which thins our churches (for that is not the evil I propose to consider) but which pervades our whole character, and gives the colour to our general conduct, is *practical irreligion*? an irreligion not so much opposed to a speculative faith, not so much in hostility to the evidences of Christianity, as to that spirit, temper, and behaviour which Christianity inculcates.

On this practical irreligion it is proposed to

offer a few hints. After attempting to show, by a comparison with the religion of the great in preceding ages, that there is a visible decline of piety among the higher ranks—that even those more liberal spirits who neglect not many of the great duties of benevolence, yet hold the severer obligations of piety in no esteem—I shall proceed, though perhaps with too little method to remark on the notorious *effects* of the decay of this religious principle, as it corrupts our mode of education, infects domestic conduct, spreads the contagion downwards among servants and inferiors, and influences our general manners, habits, and conversation.

But what it is here proposed principally to insist on is, that this defect of religious principle is almost equally fatal as to all the ends and purposes of genuine piety, whether it appear in the open contempt and defiance of all sacred institutions, or under the more decent veil of external observances, unsupported by such a conduct as is analogous to the christian profession.

I shall proceed with a few remarks on a third class of fashionable characters, who profess to acknowledge Christianity as a perfect system of morals, while they deny its divine authority: and conclude with some slight animadversions on the opinion which these modish Christians maintain, that morality is the whole of religion.

It must be confessed, however, that manners and principles act reciprocally on each other; and are, by turns, cause, and effect. For instance—the increased relaxation of morals produces the increased neglect of infusing religious principle in the education of youth; which effect becomes, in its turn, a cause, and in due time, when that cause comes to operate, helps on the decline of manners.

CHAP. I.

Decline of Christianity shown by a comparative view of the religion of the great in preceding ages.

If the general position of this little tract be allowed, namely, that Religion is at present in no very flourishing state among those whose example, from the high ground on which they stand, guides and governs the rest of mankind, it will not be denied by those who are ever so superficially acquainted with the history of our country, that this has not always been the case. Those who make a fair comparison must allow, that however the present age may be improved in other important and valuable advantages, yet, that there is but little appearance remaining among the great and the powerful of that 'righteousness which exalteth a nation.'—They must confess that there has been a *moral revolution* in the national manners and principles, very little analogous to that great *political* one which we hear so much and so justly extolled. That our public virtues bear little proportion to our public blessings; and that our religion has decreased in pretty exact proportion to our having secured the means of enjoying it.

That the antipodes to wrong are hardly ever right, was very strikingly illustrated about the middle of the last century, when the fiery and indiscreet zeal of one party was made a pretext for the profligate impiety of the other; who to the bad principle which dictated a depraved conduct, added the bad taste of being proud of it:—when even the least abandoned were absurdly apprehensive that an appearance of decency might subject them to the charge of fanaticism, a charge in which they took care to involve real piety, as well as enthusiastic pretence, till it became the general fashion to avoid no sin but hypocrisy; to dread no imputation but that of seriousness, and to be more afraid of the virtues which procure a good reputation than of every vice which ever earned a bad one. Party was no longer confined to political distinctions, but became a part of morals, and was carried into religion. The more profligate of the court party began to connect the idea of devotion with that of republicanism; and to prove their aversion to the one, though they could never cast too much ridicule upon the other. The public taste became debauched, and to be licentious in principle, was thought by many to be the best way of making their court to the restored monarch, and of proving their abhorrence of the hypocritical side. And *Poems by a person of honour*, the phrase of the day to designate a fashionable author, were often scandalous offences against modesty and virtue.

It was not till piety was thus unfortunately brought into disrepute, that persons of condition thought it made their sincerity, their abilities, or their good breeding questionable, to appear openly on the side of Religion. A strict attachment to piety did not subtract from a great reputation. Men were not thought the worst lawyers, generals, ministers, legislators, or historians, for believing, and even defending, the religion of their country. The gallant Sir Philip Sidney, the rash but heroic Essex, the politic and sagacious Burleigh, the all-accomplished Falkland,* not only publicly owned their belief in Christianity, but even wrote some things of a religious nature.† These instances, and many others which might be adduced, are not, it will be allowed, selected from among contemplative recluses, grave divines, or authors by profession; but from the busy, the active, and the illustrious; from public characters, from men of strong passions, beset with great temptations; distinguished actors on the stage of life; and whose respective claims to the title of fine gentlemen, brave soldiers, or able statesmen, have never been called in question.

What would the Hales, and the Clarendons, and the Somersets,‡ have said, had they been told that the time was at no great distance when that sacred book, for which they thought it no derogation from their wisdom or their dignity to entertain the profoundest reverence; the book which they made the rule of their faith, the object of their most serious study, and the founda-

* Lord Faulkland assisted the great Chillingworth in his incomparable work, The Religion of a Protestant.

† See that equally elegant and authentic work, 'The Anecdotes of Royal and Noble Authors.'

‡ This consummate statesman was not only remarkable for a strict attendance on the public duties of religion, but for maintaining them with equal exactness in his family, at a period too when religion was most discountenanced.

tion of their eternal hope; that this book would one day be of little more use to men in high public stations, than to be the instrument of an oath; and that the sublimest rites of the christian religion would soon be considered as little more than a necessary qualification for a place, or the legal preliminary to an office.

This indeed is the boasted period of free inquiry and liberty of thinking: but it is the peculiar character of the present age, that its mischiefs often assume the most alluring forms; and that the most alarming evils not only look so like goodness as to be often mistaken for it, but are sometimes mixed up with so much real good, as often to disguise though never to counteract, their malignity. Under the beautiful mask of an enlightened philosophy, all religious restraints are set at nought; and some of the deadliest wounds have been aimed at Christianity, in works written in avowed vindication of the most amiable of all the christian principles!* Even the prevalence of a liberal and warm philanthropy is secretly sapping the foundation of christian morals, because many of its champions allow themselves to live in the open violation of the severer duties of justice and sobriety, while they are contending for the gentler ones of charity and beneficence.

The strong and generous bias in favour of universal toleration, noble as the principle itself is, has engendered a dangerous notion that all error is innocent. Whether it be owing to this, or to whatever other cause, it is certain that the discriminating features of the Christian religion are every day growing into less repute; and it is become the fashion, even among the better sort, to evade, to lower, or to generalize, its most distinguishing peculiarities.

There is so little of the Author of Christianity left in his own religion, that an apprehensive believer is ready to exclaim, with the woman at the sepulchre, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.' The locality of Hell and the existence of an Evil Spirit are annihilated, or considered as abstract ideas. When they are alluded to, it is periphrastically; or they are discontinued not on the ground of their being awful and terrible, but they are set aside as topics too vulgar for the polished, too liberal for the learned, and as savouring too much of credulity for the enlightened.

While we glory in having freed ourselves from the trammels of human authority, are we not turning our liberty into licentiousness, and wantonly struggling to throw off the *Divine* authority too? Freedom of thought is the glory of the human mind, while it is confined within its just and sober limits; but though we may think ourselves accountable for *opinions* at no earthly tribunal, yet it should be remembered that thoughts as well as actions are amenable at the bar of God; and though we may rejoice that the tyranny of the spiritual Procustes is so far annihilated, that we are in no danger of having our opinions lopped or lengthened till they are brought to fit the measure of human caprice, yet there is still a standard by which not only actions are weighed, but opinions are judged; and every sentiment which is clearly inconsistent with the revealed will of God, is as much as throwing off *his* dominion as the breach of any of his moral precepts. This cuts up by the roots that popular and independent phrase, that 'thoughts are free,' for in this view we are no more at liberty to indulge opinions in opposition to the express word of God, that we are at liberty to infringe practically on his commandments.

There is then surely one test by which it is no mark of intolerance to try the principles of men, namely, the *Law and the Testimony:* and on applying to this touchstone, it is impossible not to lament, that while a more generous spirit governs our judgment, a purer principle does not seem to regulate our lives. May it not be said, that while we are justly commended for thinking charitably of the opinions of others we seem, in return, as if we were desirous of furnishing them with an opportunity of exercising their candour by the laxity of principle in which we indulge ourselves? If the hearts of men were as firmly united to each other, by the bond of charity as some pretend, they could not fail of being united to God also by one common principle of piety. And christian piety furnishes the only certain source of all charitable judgment, as well as of all virtuous conduct.

Instead of abiding by the salutary precept of *judging no man*, it is the fashion to exceed our commission, and to fancy every body to be in a safe state. 'Judge not' is the precise limit of our rule. There is no more encouragement to judge falsely on the side of worldly candour, than there is to judge harshly on the side of Christian charity. In forming our notions we have to choose between the Bible and the world, between the rule and the practice. Where these do not agree it is left to the judgment of believers, at least, by which we are to decide. But we never act, in religious concerns, by the same rule of common sense and equitable judgment which governs us on other occasions. In weighing any commodity, its weight is determined by some generally allowed standard; and if the commodity be heavier or lighter than the standard weight, we add or take from it: but we never break, or clip, or reduce the weight to suit the thing we are weighing; because the common consent of mankind has agreed that the one shall be considered as the standard to ascertain the value of the other. But, in weighing our principles by the standard of the Gospel, we do just the reverse. Instead of bringing our opinions and actions to the *balance of the sanctuary*, to determine and rectify their comparative deficiencies, we lower and reduce the standard of the Scripture doctrines till we have accommodated them to our own purposes; so that instead of trying others and ourselves by

* See particularly Voltaire sur la Tolerance. This is a common artifice of that insidious author. In this instance he has made use of the popularity he obtained in the fanatical tragedy at Thoulouse, (the murder of Calais) to discredit, though in the most guarded manner Christianity itself; degrading martyrdoms, denying the truth of the Pagan persecutions, &c. &c. And by mixing some truths with many falsehoods, by assuming an amiable candour, and professing to serve the interest of goodness, he treacherously contrives to leave on the mind of the unguarded reader impressions the most unfavourable to Christianity,

God's unerring rule, we try the truth of God's rule by its conformity or non-conformity to our own depraved notions and corrupt practices.

CHAP. II.

Benevolence allowed to be the reigning virtue, but not exclusively *the virtue of the present age.—Benevolence not the whole of Religion, though one of its most characteristic features. Whether Benevolence proceeds from a religious principle, will be more infallibly known by the general disposition of time, fortune, and the common habits of life, than from a few occasional acts of bounty.*

To all the remonstrance and invective of the preceding chapter, there will not fail to be opposed that which we hear every day so loudly insisted on—the decided superiority of the present age in other and better respects. It will be said, that even those who neglect the outward forms of religion, exhibit, however, the best proofs of the best principles; that the unparalleled instances of charity of which we are continual witnesses; that the many striking acts of public bounty, and the various new and noble improvements in this shining virtue, justly entitle the present age to be called, by way of eminence, *the Age of Benevolence.*

It is with the liveliest joy I acknowledge the delightful truth. Liberality flows with a full tide through a thousand channels. There is scarcely a newspaper but records some meeting of men of fortune for the most salutary purposes. The noble and numberless structures for the relief of distress, which are the ornament and the glory of our metropolis, proclaim a species of munificence unknown to former ages. Subscriptions, not only to hospitals, but to various other valuable institutions, are obtained almost as soon as solicited. And who but must wish that these beautiful monuments of benevolence may become every day more numerous, and more extended!

Yet, with all these allowed and obvious excellences, it is not quite clear whether something too much has not been said of the liberality of the present age, in a comparative view with that of those ages which preceded it. A general alteration of habits and manners has at the same time multiplied public bounties and private distress; and it is scarcely a paradox, to say that there was probably less misery when there was less munificence.

If an increased benevolence now ranges through and relieves a wider compass of distress; yet still, if those examples of luxury and dissipation which promote that distress are still *more* increased, this makes the good done, bear little proportion to the evil promoted. If the miseries removed by the growth of charity fall, both in number and weight, far below those which are caused by the growth of vice and disorder; if we find that, though bounty is extended, yet those corruptions which make bounty so necessary are extended also, almost beyond calculation; if it appear that, though more objects are relieved by our money, yet incomparably more are debauched by our licentiousness—the balance perhaps will not turn out so decidedly in our favour of the times as we are willing to imagine.

If then the most valuable species of charity is that which prevents distress by preventing or lessening vice, the greatest and most inevitable cause of want—we ought not so highly to exalt the bounty of the great in the present day, in preference to that broad shade of protection, patronage, and maintenance, which the widespread bounty of their forefathers stretched out over whole villages, I had almost said whole provinces. When a few noblemen in a county, like their own stately oaks, (paternal oaks! which were not often set upon a card,) extended their sheltering branches to shield all the underwood of the forest—when there existed a kind of passive charity, a negative sort of benevolence, which did good of itself; and without effort, exertion, or expense, produced the effect of all, and performed the best functions of bounty, though it did not aspire to the dignity of its name—it was simply this:—*great people staid at home;* and the sober pomp and orderly magnificence of a noble family, residing at their own castle a great part of the year, contributed in the most natural way to the maintenance of the poor; and in a good degree prevented their distress, which it must however thankfully be confessed it is the laudable object of modern bounty to relieve. A man of fortune might not then, it is true, so often dine in public for the benefit of the poor; but the poor were more regularly and comfortably fed with the abundant crumbs which then fell from the rich man's table. Whereas it cannot be denied that the prevailing mode of living has pared real hospitality to the very quick; and, though the remark may be thought ridiculous, it is a material disadvantage to the poor, that the introduction of the modern style of luxury has rendered the remains of the most costly table but of small value.

But even allowing the boasted superiority of modern benevolence, still it would not be inconsistent with the object of the present design, to inquire whether the diffusion of this branch of charity, though the most lovely offspring of religion, be yet any positive proof of the prevalence of religious principle? and whether it be not the fashion rather to consider benevolence as a substitute for Christianity than as an evidence of it?

It seems to be one of the reigning errors among the better sort, to reduce all religion into benevolence, and all benevolence into alms-giving. The wide and comprehensive idea of christian charity is compressed into the slender compass of a little pecuniary relief. This species of benevolence is indeed a bright gem among the ornaments of a Christian; but by no means furnishes all the jewels of his crown, which derives its lustre from the associated radiance of every christian grace. Besides, the genuine virtues are all of the same family: and it is only by being seen in company with each other, and with Piety their common parent, that they are certainly known to be legitimate.

But it is the property of the *christian* virtues, that, like all other amiable members of the same

family, while each is doing its own particular duty, it is contributing to the prosperity of the rest; and the larger the family, the better they live together, as no one can advance itself without labouring for the advancement of the whole: thus, no man can be benevolent on Christian principles without self-denial; and so of the other virtues: each is connected with some other, and all with Religion.

I already anticipate the obvious and hackneyed reply, that, 'whoever be the instrument, and whatever be the motive of bounty, still the poor are equally relieved, and therefore the end is the same.' And it must be confessed that those compassionate hearts, who cannot but be earnestly anxious that the distressed should be relieved at any rate, should not too scrupulously inquire into any cause of which the effect is so beneficial. Nor indeed will candour scrutinize too curiously into the errors of any life of which benevolence will always be allowed to be the shining ornament, while it does not pretend to be the atoning virtue.

Let me not be misrepresented, as if I were seeking to detract from the value of this amiable feeling; we do not surely lower the practice by seeking to enoble the principle; the action will not be impaired by mending the motive; and no one will be likely to give the poor less because he seeks to please God more.

One cannot then help wishing that pecuniary bounty were not only not practised, but that it were not sometimes enjoined too, as a redeeming virtue. In many conversations, (I had almost said in many charity-sermons,) it is insinuated as if a little alms-giving could pay off old scores contracted by favourite indulgences. This, though often done by well-meaning men to advance the interests of some present pious purpose, yet has the mischievous effect of those medicines which, while they may relieve a local complaint, are yet undermining the general habit.

That great numbers who are not influenced by so high a principle as Christianity holds out, are yet truly compassionate without hypocrisy and without ostentation, who can doubt? But who that feels the beauty of benevolence can avoid being solicitous, not only that its offerings should comfort the receiver, but return in blessings to the bosom of the giver, by springing from such motives, and being accompanied by such a temper as shall redound to his eternal good? For that the benefit is the same to the object, whatever be the character of the benefactor, is but an uncomfortable view of things to a real Christian, whose compassion reaches to the souls of men. Such a one longs to see the charitable giver as happy as he is endeavouring to make the object of his bounty: but such a one knows that no happiness can be fully and finally enjoyed but on the solid basis of christian piety.

For as Religion is not, on the one hand, merely an opinion or a sentiment, so neither is it, on the other, merely an act or a performance; but it is a disposition, a habit, a temper: it is not a name, but a nature: it is a turning the whole mind to God: it is a concentration of all the powers and affections of the soul into one steady point, an uniform desire to please *Him*. This desire will naturally and necessarily manifest itself in our doing all the good we can to our fellow-creatures in every possible way; for it will be found that neither of the two parts into which practical religion is divided, can be performed with any degree of perfection but by those who unite both; as it may be questioned if any man really *does* 'love his neighbour as himself,' who does not first endeavour to 'love God with all his heart.' As genius has been defined to be strong general powers of mind, accidentally determined to some particular pursuit, so piety may be denominated a strong general disposition of the heart to every thing that is right, breaking forth into every excellent action, as the occasion presents itself. The temper must be ready in the mind, and the whole heart must be prepared and trained to every act of virtue to which it may be called out. For religious principles are like the military exercise; they keep up an habitual state of preparation for actual service; and, by never relaxing the discipline, the real Christian is ready for every duty to which he may be commanded. Right actions best prove the existence of religion of the heart; but they are evidences, not causes.

Whether therefore, a man's charitable actions proceed from religious principle, he will be best able to ascertain by scrutinizing into what is the general disposition of his time and fortune, and by observing whether his pleasures and expenses are habitually regulated with a view to enable him to be more or less useful to others.

It is in vain that he possesses what is called by the courtesy of fashion, *the best heart in the world*, (a character we every day hear applied to the libertine and the prodigal,) if he squander his time and estate in such a round of extravagant indulgences and thoughtless dissipation as leaves him little money, and less leisure for nobler purposes. It makes but little difference whether a man is prevented from doing good by hard-hearted parsimony or an unprincipled extravagance; the stream of usefulness is equally cut off by both.

The mere *casual* benevolence of any man can have little claim to solid esteem; nor does any charity deserve the name, which does not grow out of a tender conviction that it is his bounden duty; which does not spring from a settled propensity to obey the whole will of God; which is not therefore made a part of the general plan of his conduct; and which does not lead him to order the whole scheme of his affairs with an eye to it.

He therefore, who does not habituate himself to certain interior restraints, who does not live in a regular course of self-renunciation, will not be likely often to perform acts of beneficence, when it becomes necessary to convert to such purposes any of that time or money which appetite, temptation, or vanity solicit him to divert to other purposes.

And surely he who seldom sacrifices one darling indulgence, who does not subtract one gratification from the incessant round of his enjoyments, when the indulgence would obstruct his

capacity of doing good, or when the sacrifice would enlarge his power, does not deserve the name of *benevolent*. And for such an unequivocal criterion of charity, to whom are we to look, but to the conscientious Christian? No other spirit but that by which he is governed, can subdue self-love: and where self-love is the predominant passion, benevolence can have but a feeble, or an accidental dominion.

Now if we look around, and remark the excesses of luxury, the costly diversions, and the intemperate dissipation in which numbers of professing Christians indulge themselves, can any stretch of candour, can even that tender sentiment by which we are enjoined 'to hope' and to 'believe all things,' enable us to hope and believe that such are actuated by a spirit of christian benevolence, merely because we see them perform some casual acts of charity, which the spirit of the world can contrive to make extremely compatible with a voluptuous life; and the cost of which, after all, bears but little proportion to that of any one vice, or even vanity.

Men will not believe that there is hardly any one human good quality which will know and keep its proper bounds, without the restraining influence of religious principle. There is, for instance, great danger lest a constant attention to so right a practice as an invariable economy, should incline the heart to the love of money. Nothing can effectually counteract this natural propensity but the christian habit of devoting those retrenched expenses to some good purpose; and then economy instead of narrowing the heart, will enlarge it, by inducing a constant association of benevolence with frugality. An habitual attention to the wants of others is the only wholesome regulator of our own expenses; and carries with it a whole train of virtues, disinterestedness, sobriety, and temperance. And those who live in the custom of levying constant taxes on their vanities for such purposes, serve the poor still less than they serve themselves. For if they are charitable upon true christian principles, 'they are laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come.'

Thus when a vein of Christianity runs through the whole mass of a man's life, it gives a new value to all his actions, and a new character to all his views. It transmutes prudence and economy into christian virtues; and every offering that is presented on the altar of charity becomes truly consecrated, when it is the gift of obedience, and the price of self-denial. Piety is that fire from heaven that can alone kindle the sacrifice, which through the mediation and intercession of our great High Priest, 'will go up for a memorial before God.'

On the other hand, when any act of bounty is performed by way of composition with our Maker, either as a purchase or an expiation of unallowed indulgences; though, even in this case, God (who makes all passions of men subservient to his good purposes,) can make the gift equally beneficial to the receiver, yet it is surely not too severe to say, that to the giver such acts are an unfounded dependence, a deceitful refuge, a broken staff.

CHAP. III.

The neglect of religious education, both a cause and a consequence of the decline of Christianity.—No moral restraints.—Religion only incidentally taught, not as a principle of action.—A few of the many causes which dispose the young to entertain low opinions of Religion.

Let not the truly pious be offended, as if, in the present chapter, which is intended to treat of the notorious neglect of religious education, I meant to insinuate, that the principles and tempers of Christianity may be formed in the young mind, by the mere mechanical operation of early instruction, without the co-operating aid of the Holy Spirit of God. To imply this would be indeed to betray a lamentable ignorance of human nature, of the disorder that sin has introduced, of the inefficacy of mere human means; and entirely to mistake the genius, and overlook the most obvious and important truths of our holy religion.

It must however be allowed, that the Supreme Being works chiefly by means; and though it be confessed that no defect of education, no corruption of manners can place any out of the reach of the Divine influences (for it is under such circumstances, perhaps, that some of the most extraordinary instances of Divine grace have been manifested) yet it must be owned, that instructing children in principles of religion, and giving them early habits of temperance and piety, is the way in which we may most confidently expect the Divine blessing.—And that it is a work highly pleasing to God, and which will be most assuredly accompanied by his gracious energy, we may judge from what he says of his faithful servant Abraham; 'I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.'

But religion is the only thing in which we seem to look for the end, without making use of the means; and yet it would not be more surprising if we were to expect that our children should become artists and scholars without being bred to arts and languages, than it is to look for a christian world, without a christian education.

The noblest objects can yield no delight if there be not in the mind a disposition to relish them. There must be a congruity between the mind and the object, in order to produce any capacity of enjoyment. To the mathematician, demonstration is pleasure; to the philosopher, the study of nature; to the voluptuary, the gratification of his appetite; to the poet, the pleasures of the imagination. These objects they each respectively pursue, as pleasures adapted to that part of their nature which they have been accustomed to indulge and cultivate.

Now as men will be apt to act consistently with their general views and habitual tendencies, would it not be absurd to expect that the philosopher should look for his sovereign good at a ball, or the sensualist in the pleasures of intellect or piety? None of these ends are answerable to the general views of the respective pursuer; they are not correspondent to his ideas; they are not commensurate to his aims. The

sublimest pleasures can afford little gratification where a taste for them has not been previously formed. A clown, who should hear a scholar or an artist talk of the delights of a library, a picture gallery, or a concert, could not guess at the nature of the pleasures they afford; nor would his being introduced to them give him much clearer ideas; because he would bring to them an eye blind to proportion, an understanding new to science, and an ear deaf to harmony.

Shall we expect then, since men can only become scholars by diligent labour, that they shall become Christians by mere chance! Shall we be surprised if those do not fulfil the offices of religion who are not trained to an acquaintance with them? And will it not be obvious that it must be some other thing besides the abstruseness of creeds, which has tended to make Christianity unfashionable, and piety obsolete?

It probably will not be disputed, that in no age have the passions of our high-born youth been so early freed from all curb and restraint. In no age has the paternal authority been so contemptuously treated, or every species of subordination so disdainfully trampled upon. In no age have simple, and natural, and youthful pleasures so early lost their power over the mind; nor was ever one great secret of virtue and happiness, the secret of being *cheaply pleased*, so little understood.

A taste for costly, or artificial, or tumultuous pleasures cannot be gratified, even by their most sedulous pursuers, at every moment; and what wretched management is it in the economy of human happiness, so to contrive, as that the enjoyment shall be rare and difficult, and the intervals long and languid! Whereas real and unadulterated pleasures occur perpetually to him who cultivates a taste for truth and nature, and science and virtue. But these simple and tranquil enjoyments cannot but be insipid to him whose passions have been prematurely excited by agitating pleasures, or whose taste has been depraved by such as are debasing and frivolous; for it is of more consequence to virtue than some good people are willing to allow, to preserve the taste pure and the judgment sound. A vitiated intellect has no small connexion with depraved morals.

Since amusements of some kind are necessary to all ages (I speak now with an eye to mere human enjoyment) why should it be an object of early care, to keep a due proportion of them in reserve for those future seasons of life in which there will be so much more needed? Why should there not, even for this purpose, be adopted a system of salutary restriction, to be used by parents toward their children, by instructors toward their pupils, and in the progress of life by each man toward himself? In a word, why should not the same reasons, which have induced us to tether inferior animals, suggest the expediency of, in some sort, tethering man also? Since nothing but experience seems to teach him, that if he be allowed to anticipate his future possessions, and trample all the flowery fields of real, as well as those of imaginary and artificial enjoyment, he not only endures present disgust, but defaces and destroys all the rich materials of his future happiness; and leaves himself, for the rest of his life, nothing but ravaged fields and barren stubble.

But the great and radical defect, and that which comes more immediately within the present design, seems to be, that in general the characteristical principles of Christianity are not early and strongly infused into the mind: that religion, if taught at all, is rather taught incidentally, as a thing of subordinate value, than as the leading principle of human actions, the great animating spring of human conduct. Were the high influential principles of the christian religion anxiously and early inculcated, we should find that those lapses from virtue, to which passion and temptation afterwards too frequently solicit, would be more easily recoverable.

For though the evil propensities of fallen nature, and the bewitching allurements of pleasure, will too often seduce even those of the best education into devious paths, yet we shall find that men will seldom be *incurably* wicked unless that internal corruption of principle has taken place, which teaches them how to justify iniquity by argument, and to confirm evil conduct by the sanction of false reasoning; or where there is a total ignorance of the very nature and design of Christianity, which ignorance can only exist where early religious instruction has been entirely neglected.

The errors occasioned by the violence of passion may be reformed, but systematic wickedness will be only fortified by time; and no decrease of strength, no decay of appetite, can weaken the power of a pernicious principle. He who deliberately commits a bad action, puts himself indeed out of the path of safety; but he who adopts a false principle, not only throws himself into the enemy's country, but burns the ships, breaks the bridge, cuts off every retreat by which he might one day hope to return to his own.

It is remarkable that in almost all the celebrated characters of whom we have an account in former periods of the English history, we find a serious attention to religion discovering itself at the close of life, however the preceding years might have been misemployed. We meet with striking examples of this kind amongst statesmen, amongst philosophers, amongst men of business, and even amongst men of pleasure. We have on record the dying sentiments of *Walsingham*, of *Smith*, of *Hutton*, the favourites of queen Elizabeth. We see, in the following reign, *Raleigh* supporting himself by religion under the severity of his fate; *Bacon* seeking comfort in devotion amidst his disgraces; and *Wotton*, after having been ambassador to almost every court in Europe, taking refuge at last in a pious retirement at Eton college. But to enumerate instances would be endless, when, in fact, we scarcely discover a single instance to the contrary.—In those times it was considered as a matter even of common decency, that advanced age should possess, at least, the exterior of piety; and we have every reason to believe that an irreligious old man would have been pointed at as a sort of monster.

But is this the case in our day? Do we now commonly perceive in any rank that disposition

to close life religiously, which at the period to which I have alluded was so general even in the fashionable world? I fear it is so far the reverse, that if Pope had been our contemporary, and were now composing his famous Ethical Poem, he could not hazard even that light remark,

That beads and prayer-books are the toys of age,

without grossly violating probability.

But to what cause are we to ascribe that superannuated impiety, which seems to distinguish the present from the preceding generations? Is it not chiefly owing to the neglect of early religious instruction, which now for so many years has been gaining ground among us? In the last age even public schools were places, no less of christian than of classical instruction: and the omission of religious worship, whether public or private, was deemed, at least, as censurable a fault as the neglect of a lesson.—Parents had not yet imbibed that maxim of modern refinement, that religious instruction ought to be deferred until the mind be capable of choosing for itself—that is, until it be so preoccupied as to leave neither room nor relish for the articles of Christian faith, or the rules of Christian obedience. The advice of the wise king of Israel of 'training up a child in the way he should go,' had not then become obsolete; and the truth of his assertion in the remaining clause of the passage, was happily realized in the sincere, though late return of many a wanderer.

Even in the very laws of our nature, there seems to be a gracious provision for promoting the final efficacy of early religious instruction. When the old man has no longer any relish left for his accustomed gratifications, in what way does he endeavour to fill up the void? Is it not by sending back his thoughts to his early years, and endeavouring to live over again in idea those scenes which, in this distant retrospect, appear far more delightful than he had found them to be at the actual period of enjoyment? Disgusted at every thing around him, and disappointed in those pursuits to which he had once looked forward with all the ardour of hope; but to which he now feels he has sacrificed in vain, his quiet, and perhaps his integrity, he takes a pensive pleasure in reviewing the season when his mind was yet cheerful and innocent; and even the very cares and anxieties of that happy period appear to him now, in a more captivating form than any pleasures he can yet hope to enjoy. What then is more natural, I had almost said more certain, than that if the principles of religion were inculcated, and the feelings of devotion excited in his mind in that most susceptible season of life, they should now revive as well as other contemporary impressions, and present themselves in a point of view, the more interesting, because, while all other instances of youthful occupation can be only *recollected*, these may be called up into fresh existence, and be enjoyed even more perfectly than before.

The defects of memory also, which old age induces, will, in this instance, assist rather than obstruct. It almost universally happens, that the more recent transactions are those soonest forgotten, while the events of youth and childhood are remembered with accuracy. If therefore pious principles have been implanted, they will, even by the course of nature, be recollected, while those things which most contribute to hinder their growth are swept from the memory. What a powerful encouragement then does this consideration afford! or rather what an indispensable obligation does it lay upon parents, to store the minds of their children with the seeds of piety! And on the other hand, what unnatural barbarity is it, irretrievably to shut up the last refuge of the wretched, by a neglect of this duty; and to render it impossible for those who had 'stood all the day idle,' to be called (at least without a miracle) even at the eleventh hour.

No one surely will impute to bigotry or enthusiasm, the lamenting, or even remonstrating against such desperate negligence; nor can it be deemed illiberal to inquire, whether even a still greater evil does not exist? I mean, whether pernicious principles are not as strenuously inculcated as those of real virtue and happiness are discountenanced? Whether young men are not expressly taught to take custom and fashion as the ultimate and exclusive standard by which to try their principles and to weigh their actions! Whether some idol of false honour be not consecrated and set up for them to worship? Whether, even among the better sort, reputation be not held out as a motive of sufficient energy to produce virtue, in a world, where yet the greatest vices are every day practised openly, without at all obstructing the reception of those who practise them into the best company? Whether resentment be not ennobled; and pride, and many other passions, erected into honourable virtues—virtues not less repugnant to the genius and spirit of Christianity than obvious and gross vices? Will it be thought impertinent to inquire if the awful doctrines of a perpetually present Deity, and a future righteous judgment, are early impressed and lastingly engraved on the hearts and consciences of our high-born youth?

Perhaps if there be any one particular in which we fall remarkably below the politer nations of antiquity, it is in that part of education which has a reference to purity of mind and the discipline of the heart.

The great secret of religious education, which seems banished from the present practice, consists in training young men to an habitual interior restraint, an early government of the affections, and a course of self-controul over those tyrannizing inclinations which have so natural a tendency to enslave the human heart. Without this habit of moral restraint, which is one of the fundamental laws of christian virtue, though men may, from natural temper, often *do* good, yet it is impossible that they should ever *be* good. Without the vigorous exercise of this controling principle, the best dispositions and the most amiable qualities will go but a little way towards establishing a virtuous character. For the best dispositions will be easily overcome by the concurrence of passion and temptation, in a heart where the passions have not been accustomed to this wholesome discipline: and the most amiable qualities will but

more easily betray their possessor, unless the heart be fortified by repeated acts and long habits of resistance.

In this, as in various other instances, we may blush at the superiority of pagan instruction. Were the Roman youth taught to imagine themselves always in the awful presence of Cato, in order to habituate them betimes to suppress base sentiments, and to excite such as were generous and noble? and should not the christian youth be continually reminded, that a greater than Cato is here? Should they not be trained to the habit of acting under the constant impression, that *He* to whom they must one day be accountable for intentions, as well as words and actions, is witness to the one as well as the other? that he not only is 'about their path,' but 'understands their very thoughts.'

Were the disciples of a pagan* leader taught that it was a motive sufficient to compel their obedience to any rule, whether they liked it or not, that it had the authority of their teacher's name? Were the bare words, *the master hath said it*, sufficient to settle all disputes, and to subdue all reluctance? And shall the scholars of a more Divine teacher, who have a code of laws written by God himself, be contented with a lower rule, or abide by a meaner authority? And is any argument drawn from human considerations likely to operate more forcibly on a dependent being, than that simple but grand assertion, with which so many of the precepts of our religion are introduced—Because, THUS SAITH THE LORD?

It is doing but little, in the infusion of first principles, to obtain the bare assent of the understanding to the existence of one Supreme power, unless the heart and affections go along with the conviction, by our conceiving of that power as intimately connected with ourselves. A feeling temper will be but little affected with the cold idea of a *geometrical* God, as the excellent Pascal expresses it, who merely adjusts all the parts of matter, and keeps the elements in order. Such a mind will be but little moved, unless he be taught to consider his Maker under the interesting and endearing representation which revealed religion gives of him. That 'God is,' will be to him rather an alarming than a consolatory idea; till he be persuaded of the subsequent proposition, that 'he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Nay, if natural religion *does* even acknowledge one awful attribute, that 'God is just,' it will only increase the terror of a tender conscience, till it be learned from the fountain of truth, that he is 'the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.'

But if the great sanctions of our religion are not deeply engraven on the heart, where shall we look for any other adequate curb to the fiery spirit of youth? For, let the elements be ever so kindly mixed in a human composition, let the natural temper be ever so amiable, still whenever a man ceases to think himself an accountable being, what motive can he have for resisting a strong temptation to a present good, when he has no dread that he shall thereby forfeit a greater future good?

* Pythagoras.

It may perhaps be objected, that this deep sense of religion would interfere with the general purpose of education, which is designed to qualify men for the business of human life, and not train up a race of monks and ascetics.

There is however so little real solidity in this specious objection, that I am firmly persuaded, that if religious principles were more deeply impressed on the heart, even the things of this world would be much better carried on. For where are we to look for all the qualities; which constitute the man of business; for punctuality, diligence, and application, for such attention in doing every thing in its proper day (the great hinge on which business turns) as among men of principle? Economy of time, truth in observing his word, never daring to deceive or to disappoint—these form the very essence of an active and an useful character; and for these, to whom shall we most naturally look? Who is so likely to be 'slothful in business' as he who is 'fervent in spirit?' And will not he be most regular in dealing with men, who is most diligent in 'serving the Lord?'

But, it may be said, allowing that Religion does not necessarily spoil a man of *business*, yet it would effectually defeat those accomplishments, and counteract that fine breeding, which essentially constitute the *gentleman*.

This again is so far from being a natural consequence, that, supposing all the other real advantages of parts, education, and society, to be equally taken into the account, there is no doubt but that, in point of true politeness, a real Christian would beat the world at his own weapons, the world itself being judge.

It must be confessed, that in the present corrupt state of things, there is scarcely any one contrivance for which we are more obliged to the inventions of mankind than for that politeness, as there is perhaps no screen in the world which hides so many ugly sights, yet while we allow that there never was so admirable a substitute for real goodness as good breeding, it is certain that the principles of Christianity put into action, would of themselves produce more genuine politeness than any maxims drawn from motives of human vanity or worldly convenience. If love, peace, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, patience, goodness, and meekness, may be thought instruments to produce sweetness of manners, these we are expressly told are the 'fruits of the Spirit.' If mourning with the afflicted, rejoicing with the happy; if to 'esteem others better than ourselves;' if 'to take the lowest room;' if not to seek our own;' if 'not to behave ourselves unseemly;' if 'not to speak great swelling words of vanity'—if these are amiable, engaging, and polite parts of behaviour, then would the documents of Saint Paul make as true a fine gentleman as the *courtier of Castiglione*, or even the *Letters of lord Chesterfield* himself. Then would simulation, and dissimulation, and all the nice shades and delicate gradations of passive and active deceit, be rendered superfluous; and the affections of every heart be won by a shorter and a surer way than by the elegant obliquities of this late popular preceptor, whose mischiefs have outlived his reputation; and who notwith

standing the present just declension of his fame, greatly helped, during its transient meridian, to relax the general nerve of virtue, and has left a taint upon the public morals, of which we are still sensible.

That self-abasement then, which is inseparable from true Christianity, and the external signs of which good breeding knows so well how to assume; and those charities which suggest invariable kindness to others, even in the smallest things, would if left to their natural workings, produce that gentleness which it is one great object of a polite education to imitate. They would produce it too without effort and without exertion; for being inherent in the substance, it would naturally discover itself on the surface.

For however useful the institutions of polished society may be found, yet they can never alter the eternal difference between right and wrong, or convert appearances into realities; they cannot transform decency into virtue, nor make politeness pass for principle. And the advocates for fashionable breeding should be humbled to reflect that every convention of artificial manners was adopted not to *cure*, but to *conceal*, deformity; that though the superficial civilities of elegant life tend to make this corrupt world a more tolerable place than it would be without them, yet they never will be considered as a substitute for truth, nor a commutation for virtue, by HIM who is to pass the definitive sentence on the characters of men.

Among the many prejudices which the young and the gay entertain against religion, one is, that it is the declared enemy to wit and genius. But, says one of its wittest champions,* 'piety enjoins no man to be dull:' and it will be found, on a fair inquiry, that though it cannot be denied that irreligion has had able men for its advocates, yet they have never been the *most* able. Nor can any learned profession, any department in letters or in science, produce a champion on the side of unbelief, but Christianity has a still greater name to oppose to it; *philosophers* themselves being judges.

He who studied the book of nature with a scrutiny which has scarcely been permitted to any other mortal eye, was deeply learned in the book of God.† And the ablest writer on the intellect of man, has left one of the ablest treatises *on the Reasonableness of Christianity*. This essay of Mr. Locke, on the *Human Understanding*, will stand up to latest ages, as a monument of wisdom; while Hume's posthumous work, *the Essay on Suicide*, which had excited such large expectations, has been long since forgotten.‡

Pascal has proved that as much rhetoric and logic too may be shown in defending Revelation, as in attacking it. His geometrical spirit was not likely to take up with any proofs but such as came as near to demonstration as the nature of the subject would admit. *Erasmus* in his writings on the ignorance of the monks, and the Provincial Letters on the fallacies of the Jesuits, while they exhibit as entire a freedom from bigotry, exhibit also as much pointed wit, and as much sound reasoning, as can be found in the whole mass of modern philosophy.

But while the young adopt the opinion from one class of writers, that religious men are weak men, they acquire from another class a notion that they are ridiculous. And this opinion, by mixing itself with their common notions, and deriving itself from their very amusements, is the more mischievous, as it is imbibed without suspicion, and entertained without resistance.

One common medium through which they take this false view is, those favourite works of wit and humour, so captivating to youthful imaginations, where no small part of the author's success perhaps has been owing to his dexterously introducing a pious character with so many virtues, that it is impossible not to love him; yet tinctured with so many absurdities, that it is equally impossible not to laugh at him. The reader's memory will furnish him with too many instances of what is here meant. The slightest touches of a witty malice can make the best character ridiculous. It is effected by any little awkwardness; absence of mind, an obsolete phrase, a formal pronunciation, a peculiarity of gesture. Or if such a character be brought by unsuspecting honesty, and credulous goodness, into some foolish scrape, it will stamp on him an impression of ridicule so indelible, that all his worth shall not be able to efface it; and the young, who do not always separate their ideas very carefully, shall ever after, by this early and false association, conceive of piety as having something essentially ridiculous in itself.

But one of the most infallible arts by which the inexperienced are engaged on the side of irreligion, is that popular air of candour, goodnature, and toleration, which it so invariably puts on. While sincere piety is often accused of moroseness and severity, because it cannot hear the doctrines on which it founds its eternal hopes derided without emotion; indifference and unbelief purchase the praise of candor at an easy price, because they neither suffer grief nor express indignation at hearing the most awful truths ridiculed, or the most solemn obligations set at nought. They do not engage on equal terms. The infidel appears good-humoured from his very levity; but the Christian

* Dr. South.

† Sir Isaac Newton.

‡ The Essay on Suicide was published soon after Mr. Hume's death. It might mortify his liberal mind (if matter and motion were capable of consciousness) to learn that his dying legacy, the last concentrated effect of his genius and his principles, sent from the grave as it were, by a man so justly renowned in other branches of literature, produced no sensation on the public mind. And that the precious information that every man had a right to be his own executioner, was considered as a privilege so little desirable, that it probably had not the glory of converting one *cross road* into a cemetery. It is to the credit of this country that fewer copies of this work were sold than perhaps ever was the case with a writer of so much eminence. A more impotent act of wickedness has seldom been achieved, or one which has had the glory of making fewer persons wicked or miserable. That cold and cheerless oblivion which he held out as a refuge to beings who had solaced themselves with the soothing hope of immortality, has, by a memorable retribution, overshadowed his last labour; the Essay on Suicide being already as much forgotten as he promised the best men that they themselves would be. And this favourite work became at once a prey to that forgetfulness to which he had consigned the whole human race.

cannot jest on subjects which involve his everlasting salvation.

The scoffers whom young people hear talk, and the books they hear quoted, falsely charge their own injurious opinions on Christianity, and then unjustly accuse her of being the monster they have made. They dress her up with the sword of persecution in one hand, and the flames of intolerance in the other; and then ridicule the sober-minded for worshipping an idol which their misrepresentation has rendered as malignant as Moloch. In the mean-time they affect to seize on benevolence with exclusive appropriation as their own cardinal virtue, and to accuse of a bigotted cruelty that narrow spirit which points out the perils of licentiousness, and the terrors of a future account. And yet this benevolence, with all its tender mercies, is not afraid nor ashamed to endeavour at snatching away from humble piety the comfort of a present hope, and the bright prospect of a felicity that shall have no end. It does not however seem a very probable means of increasing the stock of human happiness, to plunder mankind of that principle, by the destruction of which friendship is robbed of its bond, society of its security, patience of its motive, morality of its foundation, integrity of its reward, sorrow of its consolation, life of its balm, and death of its support.*

It will not perhaps be one of the meanest advantages of a better state that, as the will shall be reformed, so the judgment shall be rectified; that 'evil shall no more be called good,' nor the 'churl liberal;' nor the plunderer of our best possession, our principles, *benevolent*. Then it will be evident that greater injury could not be done to truth, nor greater violence to language, than by attempting to wrest from Christianity that benevolence which is in fact her most appropriate and peculiar attribute. 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.' If benevolence be 'good will to men,' it was that which angelic messengers were not thought too high to announce, nor a much higher being than angels too great to teach by his example, and to illustrate by his death. It was the criterion, the very watch-word as it were, by which he intended his religion and his followers should be distinguished. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' Besides, it is the very genius of Christianity to extirpate all selfishness, on whose vacated ground benevolence naturally and necessarily plants itself.

But not to run through all the particulars which obstruct the growth of piety in young persons, I shall only name one more. They hear much declamation from the fashionable reasoners against the contracted and selfish spirit of Christianity—that it is of a sordid temper, works for pay, and looks for reward.

This jargon of French philosophy, which prates of pure disinterested goodness acting for its own sake, and equally despising punishment and disdaining recompence, indicates as little knowledge of human nature as of Christian revelation, when it addresses man as a being made up of pure intellect, without any mixture of passions, and who can be made happy without hope, and virtuous without fear. These philosophers affect to be more independent than Moses, more disinterested than Christ himself; for 'Moses had respect to the recompence of reward;' and Christ 'endured the cross and despised the shame, for the joy that was set before him.'

A creature hurried away by the impulse of some impetuous inclination, is not likely to be restrained (if he be restrained at all) by a cold reflection on the beauty of virtue. If the dread of offending God, and incurring his everlasting displeasure, cannot stop him, how shall a weaker motive do it? When we see that the powerful sanctions which Religion holds out are too often an ineffectual curb; to think of attaining the same end by feebler means, is as if one should expect to make a watch go the better by breaking the main-spring; nay, as absurd as if the philosopher who inculcates the doctrine should undertake, with one of his fingers, to lift an immense weight which had resisted the powers of the crane and lever.

On calm and temperate spirits indeed, in the hour of retirement, in the repose of the passions, in the absence of temptation, virtue does seem to be her own adequate reward: and very lovely are the fruits she bears in preserving health, credit, and fortune. But on how few will this principle act! and even on them how often will its operation be suspended? and though virtue for her own sake might have captivated a few hearts, which almost seem cast in a natural mould of goodness, yet no motive could at all times, be so likely to restrain even these, (especially under the pressure of temptation) as this simple assertion—*For all this, God will bring thee unto judgment.*

It is the beauty of our religion, that it is not held out exclusively to a few select spirits; that it is not an object of speculation, or an exercise of ingenuity, but a *rule of life* suited to every condition, capacity, and temper. It is the glory of the Christian religion to *be*, what it was the glory of every ancient philosophic system *not* to be, *the religion of the people;* and that which constitutes its characteristic value, is its suitableness to the genius, condition, and necessities of mankind.

For with whatsoever obscurities it has pleased God to shadow some parts of his written word, yet he has graciously ordered that whatever is necessary should be perspicuous also: and though, as to his adorable essence, 'clouds and darkness are round about him;' yet these are not the medium through which he has left us to discover our duty. In this, as in all other points, revealed religion has a decided superiority over all the ancient systems of philosophy, which were always in many respects impracticable

* Young persons are too liable to be misled by that extreme disingenuousness of the new philosophers, when writing on every thing and person connected with revealed religion. These authors often quote satirical poets as grave historical authorities; for instance, because Juvenal has said that the Jews were so narrow-minded that they refused to show a spring of water, or the right road, to an enquiring traveller who was not of their religion, I make little doubt but many an ignorant freethinker has actually gone away with the belief, that such good-natured acts of information were actually forbidden by the law of Moses.

and extravagant, because not framed from observations drawn from a perfect knowledge 'of what was in man.' Whereas the whole scheme of the Gospel is accommodated to real human nature; laying open its mortal disease, presenting its only remedy; exhibiting rules of conduct often difficult, indeed, but never impossible; and where the rule was so high that the practicability seemed desperate, holding out a living pattern, to elucidate the doctrine and to illustrate the precept; offering every where the clearest notions of what we have to hope, and what we have to fear; the strongest injunctions of what we are to believe, and the most explicit directions of what we are to do; with the most encouraging offers of Divine assistance for strengthening our faith and quickening our obedience.

In short, whoever examines the wants of his own heart, and the appropriate assistance which the Gospel furnishes, will find them to be two tallies which exactly correspond—an internal evidence, stronger perhaps than any other, of the truth of Revelation.

This is the religion with which the ingenuous hearts of youth should be warmed, and by which their minds, while pliant, should be directed. This will afford a 'lamp to their paths,' stronger, steadier, brighter, than the feeble and uncertain glimmer of a cold and comfortless philosophy.

Other symptoms of the decline of Christianity—No family religion—Corrupt or negligent example of superiors—The self-denying and evangelical virtues held in contempt—Neglect of encouraging and promoting religion among servants.

It was by no means the design of the present undertaking to make a general invective on the corrupt state of manners, or even to animadvert on the conduct of the higher ranks, but inasmuch as the corruption of that conduct, and the depravation of those manners appear to be a natural consequence of the visible decline of religion; and as operating in its turn, as a cause, on the inferior orders of society.

Of the other obvious causes which contribute to this decline of morals, little will be said. Nor is the present a romantic attempt to restore the simplicity of primitive manners. This is too literally an age of gold, to expect that it should be so in the poetical and figurative sense. It would be unjust and absurd not to form our opinions and expectations from the present general state of society. And it would argue great ignorance of the corruption which commerce, and conquest, and riches, and arts necessarily introduce into a state, to look for the same sobermindedness, simplicity, and purity among the *dregs of Romulus*, as the severe and simple manners of elder Rome presented.

But though it would be an attempt of desperate hardihood, to controvert that maxim of the witty bard, that

To mend the world 's a vast design!

a popular aphorism, by the way, which has done no little mischief, inasmuch, as under the mask of hopelessness it suggests an indolent acquiescence; yet to make the best of the times in which we live; to fill up the measure of our own actual, particular, and individual duties; and to take care that the age shall not be the worse for our having been cast into it, seems to be the bare dictate of common probity, and not a romantic flight of impracticable perfection.

Is it then so very chimerical to imagine that the benevolent can be sober-minded? Is it romantic to desire that the good should be consistent? Is it absurd to fancy that what has once been practised should not now be impracticable?

It is impossible not to help regretting that it should be the general temper of many of the leading persons of that age which arrogates to itself the glorious character of the *age of benevolence*, to be kind, considerate, and compassionate, every where rather than at home; that the rich and the fashionable should be zealous in promoting religious as well as charitable institutions abroad, and yet discourage every thing which looks like religion in their own families; that they should be at a considerable expense in instructing the poor at a distance, and yet discredit piety among their own servants—those more immediate objects of every man's attention, whom Providence has enabled to keep any; and for whose conduct he will be finally accountable, inasmuch as he may have helped to corrupt it.

Is there any degree of pecuniary bounty without doors which can counteract the mischief of a wrong example at home, or atone for that infectious laxity of principle which spreads corruption wherever its influence extends? Is not he the best benefactor to society who sets the best example, and who does not only the most good, but the least evil? Will not that man, however liberal, very imperfectly promote virtue in the world at large, who neglects to disseminate its principles within the immediate sphere of his own personal influence, by a correct conduct and a blameless behaviour? Can a generous but profligate person atone by his purse for the disorders of his life? Can he expect a blessing on his bounties, while he defeats their effect by a profane or even a careless conversation?

In moral as well as in political treatises, it is often asserted that it is a great evil to do no good; but it has not been perhaps enough insisted on, that it is a great deal to do no evil. This species of goodness is not ostentatious enough for popular declamation; and the value of this abstinence from vice is perhaps not well understood but by Christians, because it wants the ostensible brilliancy of actual performance.

But as the *principles* of Christianity are in no great repute, so their concomitant *qualities*, the evangelical virtues, are proportionably disesteemed. Let it, however, be remembered, that those secret habits of self-control, those interior and unobtrusive virtues, which excite no astonishment, kindle no emulation, and extort no praise, are at the same time the most difficult, and the most sublime; and if Christianity be true, will be the most graciously accepted by

Him who witnesses the secret combat and the silent victory: while the splendid deeds which have the world for their witness, and immortal fame for their reward, shall perhaps cost him who achieved them less than it costs a conscientious Christian to subdue one irregular inclination: a conquest which the world will never know, and, if it did, would probably despise.

Though great actions, performed on human motives, are permitted by the Supreme Disposer to be equally beneficial to society with such as are performed on purer principles; yet it is an affecting consideration, that, at the final adjustment of accounts, the politician who *raised* a state, or the hero who *preserved* it, may miss of that favour of God which, if it was not his motive, will certainly not be his reward. And it is awful to reflect, as we visit the monuments justly raised by public gratitude, or the statues properly erected by well-earned admiration; it is awful, I say, to reflect on what may now be the unalterable condition of the illustrious object of these deserved but unavailing honours; and that he who has saved a state may have lost his own soul!

A christian life seems to consist of two things almost equally difficult; the adoption of good habits, and the excision of such as are evil. No one sets out on a religious course with a stock of native innocence, or actual freedom from sin; for there is no such state in human life. The natural heart is not, as has been too often supposed, a blank paper, whereon the Divine Spirit has nothing to do but to stamp characters of goodness. No! many blots are to be erased, many defilements are to be cleansed, as well as fresh impressions to be made.

The vigilant Christian, therefore, who acts with an eye to the approbation of his Maker, rather than to that of mankind; to a future account, rather than to present glory; will find that diligently to cultivate the 'unweeded garden' of his own heart; to mend the soil; to clear the ground of indigenous vices, by practising the painful business of extirpation, will be that part of his duty which will cost him most labour, and bring him least credit: while the fair flower of one showy action, produced with little trouble, and of which the very pleasure is reward enough, shall gain him more praise than the eradication of the rankest weeds which overrun the natural heart.

But the Gospel judges not after the manner of men; for it never fails to make the abstinent virtues a previous step to the right performance of the operative ones; and the relinquishing what is wrong to be a necessary prelude to the performance of what is right. It makes 'ceasing to do evil' the indispensable preliminary to 'learning to do well.' It continually suggests that something is to be laid aside, as well as to be practised. We must 'hate vain thoughts' before we can 'love God's law.' We must lay aside 'malice and hypocrisy,' to *enable* us 'to receive the engrafted word.' Having 'a conscience void of offence;'—'abstaining from fleshly lusts;'—'bring every thought into obedience;'—these are actions, or rather negations, which, though they never will obtain immortality from the chisel of the statuary, the declamation of the historian, or the panegyric of the poet, will, however, be 'had in everlasting remembrance,' when the works of the statuary, the historian, and the poet will be no more.

And, for our encouragement, it is observable that a more difficult Christian virtue generally involves an easier one. A habit of self-denial in permitted pleasures, easily induces a victory over such as are unlawful. And to sit loose to our own possessions, necessarily includes an exemption from coveting the possessions of others: and so on of the rest.

Will it be difficult then to trace back to that want of early restraint noticed in the preceding chapter, that licence of behaviour which, having been indulged in youth, afterwards reigned uncontrolled in families: and which having infected education in its first springs, taints all the streams of domestic virtue? And will it be thought strange that that same want of religious principle which corrupted our children, should corrupt our servants?

We scarcely go into any company without hearing some invective against the increased profligacy of this order of men; and the remark is made with as great an air of astonishment, as if the cause of the complaint were not as visible as the truth of it. It would be endless to point out instances in which the increased dissipation of their *betters* (as they are oddly called) has contributed to the growth of this evil. But it comes only within the immediate design of the present undertaking to insist on the single circumstance of the almost total extermination of religion in fashionable families, as a cause adequate of itself to any consequence which depraved morals can produce.

Is there not a degree of injustice in persons who express strong indignation at those crimes which crowd our prisons, and furnish our incessant executions, and who yet discourage not an internal principle of vice: since those crimes are nothing more than that principle put into action? And it is no less absurd than cruel, in such of the great as lead disorderly lives, to expect to prevent vice by the laws they make to restrain or punish it, while their own example is a perpetual source of temptation to commit it. If, by their own practice, they demonstrate that they think a vicious life is the only happy one, with what colour of justice can they inflict penalties on others, who, by acting on the same principle, expect the same indulgence!

And indeed it is somewhat unreasonable to expect very high degrees of virtue and probity from a class of people whose whole life, after they are admitted into dissipated families, is one continued counteraction of the principles in which they have probably been bred.

When a poor youth is transplanted from one of those excellent institutions which do honor to the present age, and give some hope of reforming the next, into the family of his noble benefactor in town, who has, perhaps, provided liberally for his instruction in the country; what must be his astonishment at finding the manner of life to which he is introduced diametrically opposite to that life to which he has been taught that salvation is alone annexed! He has been taught that it was his bounden duty to be de-

voutly thankful for his own scanty meal, perhaps of barley-bread; yet he sees his noble lord sit down every day,

Not to a dinner, but a hecatomb:

to a repast of which every element is plundered, and every climate impoverished; for which nature is ransacked, and art is exhausted; without even the formal ceremony of a slight acknowledgment. It will be lucky for the master, if his servant does not happen to know that even the pagans never sat down to a repast without making a libation to their deities; and that the Jews did not eat a little fruit, or drink a cup of water, without an expression of devout thankfulness.

Next to the law of God, he has been taught to reverence the law of the land, and to respect an act of parliament next to a text of Scripture: yet he sees his honourable protector, publicly in his own house, engaged in the evening, in playing at a game expressly prohibited by the laws, and against which perhaps he himself had been assisting in the day to pass an act.

While the contempt of religion was confined to wits and philosophers, the effect was not so sensibly felt. But we cannot congratulate the ordinary race of mortals on their emancipation from old prejudices, or their indifference to sacred usages; as it is not at all visible that the world is become happier in proportion as it is become more enlightened. We might rejoice more in the boasted diffusion of light and freedom, were it not apparent that bankruptcies are grown more frequent, robberies more common, divorces more numerous, and forgeries more extensive—that more rich men die by their own hand, and more poor men by the hand of the executioner—than when Christianity was practised by the vulgar, and countenanced, at least, by the great.

It is not to be regretted, therefore, while the affluent are encouraging so many admirable schemes for promoting religion among the children of the poor, that they do not like to *perpetuate* the principle, by encouraging it in their own children and their servants also? Is it not a pity, since these last are so moderately furnished with the good things of this life, to rob them of that bright reversion, the bare hope of which is a counterpoise to all the hardships they undergo here—especially since by diminishing this future hope, we shall not be likely to add to their present usefulness?

Still allowing, what has been already granted, that absolute infidelity is not the reigning evil, and that servants will perhaps be more likely to see religion neglected than to hear it ridiculed—would it not be a meritorious kindness in families of a better stamp, to furnish them with more opportunities of learning and practising their duty? Is it not impolitic indeed, as well as unkind, to refuse them any means of having impressed on their consciences the operative principles of Christianity? It is but little, barely not to *oppose* their going to church, not to *prevent* their doing their duty at home, their opportunities of doing both ought to be facilitated, by giving them, at certain seasons, as few employments as possible that may interfere with both. Even when religion is by pretty general consent banished from our families at home, that only furnishes a stronger reason why our families should not be banished from religion in the churches.

But if these opportunities are not made easy and convenient to them, their superiors have no right to expect from them a zeal so far transcending their own, as to induce them to surmount difficulties for the sake of duty. Religion is never once represented in Scripture as a light attainment; it is never once illustrated by an easy, a quiet, or an indolent allegory.

On the contrary, it is exhibited under the active figure of a combat, a race; something expressive of exertion, activity, progress. And yet many are unjust enough to think that this warfare can be fought, though they themselves are perpetually weakening the vigour of the combatant; this race be run, though they are incessantly obstructing the progress of him who runs by some hard and interfering command. That our compassionate Judge, who 'knoweth whereof we are made, and remembereth that we are but dust,' is particularly touched with the feeling of *their* infirmities, can never be doubted; but what portion of forgiveness he will extend to those who lay on their virtue, hard burdens 'too heavy for them to bear' who shall say?

To keep an immortal being in a state of spiritual darkness, is a positive disobedience to *His* law, who when he bestowed the Bible, no less than when he created the material world, said *Let there be light.* It were well, both for the advantage of master and servant, that the latter should have the doctrines of the Gospel frequently impressed on his heart; that his conscience should be made familiar with a system which offers such clear and intelligible propositions of moral duty. The striking interrogation, 'how shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' will perhaps operate as forcibly on an uncultivated mind, as the most eloquent essay to prove that man is not an accountable being. That once credited promise, that 'they who have done well shall go into everlasting life,' will be more grateful to the spirit of a plain man, than that more elegant and disinterested sentiment, that *virtue is its own reward.* That, 'he that walketh uprightly walketh surely,' is not on the whole a dangerous, or a misleading maxim. And 'well done, good and faithful servant! I will make thee ruler over many things, though offensive to the liberal spirit of philosophic dignity, is a comfortable support to humble and suffering piety. That 'we should do to others as we would they should do to us,' is a portable measure of human duty, always at hand, as always referring to something within himself, not amiss for a poor man to carry constantly about with him, who has neither time nor learning to search for a better. It is an universal and compendious law, so universal as to include the whole compass of social obligation; so compendious as to be inclosed in so short and plain an aphorism, that the dullest mind cannot misapprehend, nor the weakest memory forget it. It is convenient for bringing out on all the ordinary occasions of life. We need not say, 'who shall go up to heaven and bring it unto

us, for this word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.'*

For it is a very valuable part of the gospel of Christ, that though it is an entire and perfect system in its design! though it exhibits one great plan from which complete trains of argument, and connected schemes of reasoning may be deduced; yet in compassion to the multitude, for whom this benevolent institution was in a good measure designed, and who could not have comprehended a long chain of propositions, or have embraced remote deductions, the most important truths of doctrine, and the most essential documents of virtue, are detailed in single maxims, and comprised in short sentences; independent of themselves, yet making a necessary part of a consummate whole; from a few of which principles the whole train of human virtues has been deduced, and many a perfect body of ethics has been framed.

If it be thought wonderful, that from so few letters of the alphabet, so few figures of arithmetic, so few notes in music, such endless combinations should have been produced in their respective arts how far more beautiful would it be to trace the whole circle of morals thus growing out of a few elementary principles of gospel truth.

All Seneca's arguments against the fear of death never yet reconciled one reader to its approach half so effectually as the humble believer is reconciled to it by that simple persuasion, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

While the modern philosopher is extending the boundaries of human knowledge, by undertaking to prove that matter is eternal; or enlarging the stock of human happiness, by demonstrating the extinction of spirit—it can do no harm to an unlettered man to believe, that 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's word shall not pass away.' While the former is indulging the profitable inquiry why the Deity made the world so late, or why he made it at all, it will not hurt the latter to believe that 'in the beginning God made the world,' and that in the end 'he shall judge it in righteousness.'

While the liberal scholar is usefully studying the law of nature and of nations, let him rejoice that his more illiterate brother possesses the plain conviction that 'love is the fulfilling of the law'—that 'love worketh no ill to his neighbour.' And let him be persuaded that he himself, though he know all Tully's Offices by heart, may not have acquired a more feeling and operative sentiment than is conveyed to the common Christian in the rule to 'bear each other's burthen.' While the wit is criticising the creed, he will be no loser by encouraging his dependants to keep the commandments; since a few such simple propositions as the above furnish a more practical and correct rule of life than can be gleaned from all the volumes of ancient philosophy, justly eminent as many of them are for wisdom and purity. For though they abound with passages of true sublimity, and sentiments of great moral beauty, yet the result is naturally defective, the conclusions necessarily contradictory.—This was no fault of the author, but of the system. The vision was acute, but the light was dim. The sharpest sagacity could not distinguish spiritual objects, in the twilight of natural religion, with that accuracy with which they are now discerned by every common Christian, in the diffusion of gospel light.

And whether it be that what depraves the principle darkens the intellect also, certain it is that an uneducated serious Christian reads his Bible with a clearness of intelligence, with an intellectual comment which no sceptic or mere worldling ever attains. The former has not prejudged the cause he is examining. He is not often led by his passions, still more rarely by his interest, to resist his convictions. While the 'secret of the Lord is (obviously) with them that fear him,' the mind of them who fear him *not*, is generally prejudiced by a retaining fee from the world, from their passions or their pride, before they enter on the inquiry.

With what consistency can the covetous man embrace a religion which so pointedly forbids him to lay up treasures on earth?' How will the man of spirit, as the world is pleased to call the duellist, relish a religion which allows not 'the sun to go down upon his wrath?' How can the ambitious struggle for 'a kingdom which is not in this world, and embrace a faith which commands him to lay down his crown at the feet of another?' How should the professed wit or the mere philosopher adopt a system which demands in a lofty tone of derision, 'Where is the scribe? Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world?' How will the self-satisfied Pharisee endure a religion which, while it peremptorily demands from him every useful action, and every right exertion, will not permit him to rest his hope of salvation on their performance? He whose affections are voluntarily riveted to the present world, will not much delight in a scheme whose avowed principles is to set him above it. The obvious consequence of these 'hard sayings,' is illustrated by daily instances. 'Have any of the rulers believed on him?' is a question not confined to the first age of his appearance. Had the most enlightened philosophers of the most polished nations, collected all the scattered wit and learning of the world into one point in order to invent a religion for the salvation of mankind, the doctrine of the cross is perhaps precisely the thing they would never have hit upon: precisely the thing which, being offered to them, they would reject. The intellectual pride of the philosopher relished it as little as the carnal pride of the Jew; for it flattered human wit no more than it gratified human grandeur. The pride of great acquirements, and of great wealth, equally obstructs the reception of divine truth into the heart; and whether the natural man be called upon to part either from 'great possessions,' or 'high imaginations,' he equally goes away sorrowing.

* Deut. xxx. 11 and 12.

CHAP. V.

The negligent conduct of Christians no real objection against Christianity.—The reason why

its effects are not more manifest to worldly men, is because believers do not lead Christian lives. Professors differ but little in their practice from unbelievers. Even real Christians are too diffident and timid, and afraid of acting up to their principles.—The absurdity of the charge commonly brought against religious people, that they are too strict.

It is, an objection frequently brought against Christianity, that if it exhibited so perfect a scheme, if its influences were as strong, if its effects were as powerful, as its friends pretend, it must have produced more visible consequences in the reformation of mankind. This is not the place fully to answer this objection, which (like all the other cavils against our religion) continues to be urged just as if it never had been answered.

That vice and immorality prevail in no small degree in countries professing Christianity, we need not go out of our own to be convinced. But that this is the case only because this benign principle is not suffered to operate in its full power, will be no less obvious to all who are sincere in their inquiries: For if we allow (and who that examines impartially can help allowing) that it is the natural tendency of Christianity to make men better, then it must be the aversion from receiving it, and not the fault of the principle, which prevents them from becoming so.

Those who are acquainted with the effects which Christianity actually produced in the first ages of the church, when it was received in its genuine purity, and when it did operate without obstruction, from its professors at least, will want no oth r proof of its inherent power and efficacy. At that period, its most decided and industrious enemy, the emperor Julian, could recommend the manners of Gallileans to the imitation of his pagan high priests; though he himself, at the same time, was doing every thing which the most inveterate malice, sharpened by the acutest wit, and backed by the most absolute power could devise, to discredit their doctrines.

Nor would the efficacy of Christianity be less visible now in influencing the conduct of its professors, if its principles were heartily and sincerely received. They would, were they of the true genuine cast operate on the conduct so effectually, that we should see morals and manners growing out of principles, as we see other consequences grow out of their proper and natural causes. Let but this great spring have its unobstructed play, and there would be little occasion to declaim against this excess or that enormity. If the same skill and care which are employed in curing symptoms, were vigorously levelled at the internal principle of the disease, the moral health would feel the benefit. If that attention which is bestowed in lopping the redundant and unsightly branches, were devoted to the cultivation of a sound and uncorrupt root, the effect of this labour would soon be discovered by the excellence of the fruits.

For though, even in the highest possible exertion of religious principle, and the most diligent practice of all its consequential train of virtues, man would still find evil propensities enough, in his fallen nature, to make it necessary that he should counteract them by keeping alive his diligence after higher attainments, and to quicken his aspirations after a better state; yet the prevailing temper would be in general right; the will would be in a great measure rectified; and the heart, feeling, and acknowledging its disease, would apply itself diligently to the only remedy. Thus though even the best men have infirmities enough to deplore, and commit sins enough to keep them deeply humble, and feel more sensibly than others the imperfections of that vessel in which their heavenly treasure is hid, they however have the internal consolation of knowing that they shall have to do with a merciful Father, who 'despiseth not the sighing of the contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful,' who has been witness to all their struggles against sin, and to whom they can appeal with Peter for the sincerity of their desires —'Lord! Thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love Thee.'

All the heavy charges which have been brought against religion have been taken from the abuses of it. In every other instance, the injustice of this proceeding would be notorious: but there is a general want of candour in the judgment of men on this subject, which we do not find them exercise on other occasions; that of throwing the fault of the erring or ignorant professor on the profession itself.

It does not derogate from the honourable profession of arms, that there are cowards and braggarts in the army. If any man lose his estate by the chicanery of an attorney, or his health by the blunder of a physician, it is commonly said that the one was a disgrace to his business, and the other was ignorant of it; but no one therefore concludes that law and physic are contemptible professions.

Christianity alone is obliged to bear all the obloquy incurred by the misconduct of its follow ers; to sustain all the reproach excited by ignorant, by fanatical, by superstitious, or hypocritical professors. But whoever accuses it of a tendency to produce the errors of these professors, must have picked up his opinion any where rather than in the New Testament; which book being the only authentic history of Christianity, is that which candour would naturally consult for information.

But as worldly and irreligious men do not draw their notions from that pure fountain, but from the polluted stream of human practice; as they form their judgment of Divine truth from the conduct of those who pretend to be enlightened by it; some charitable allowance must be made for the contempt which they entertain for Christianity, when they see what poor effects it produces in the lives of the generality of professing Christians. What do they observe there which can lead them to entertain very high ideas of the principles which give birth to such practices?

Do men of the world discover any marked, any decided difference between the conduct of nominal Christians and the rest of their neighbours who pretend to no religion at all? Do they see, in the daily lives of such, any great

abundance of those fruits by which they have heard believers are to be known? On the contrary, do they not discern in them the same anxious and unwearied pursuit after the things of the earth, as in those who do not profess to have any thought of heaven? Do not they see them labour as sedulously in the interests of a debasing and frivolous dissipation, as those who do not pretend to have any nobler object in view? Is there not the same eagerness to plunge into all sorts of follies themselves, and the same unrighteous speed in introducing their children to them, as if they had never entered into a solemn engagement to renounce them? Is there not the same self-indulgence, the same luxury, and the same passionate attachment to the things of this world in them, as is visible in those who do not look for another?

Do not thoughtless neglect, and habitual dissipation answer, as to society, all the ends of the most decided infidelity? Between the barely decent and the openly profane there is indeed this difference—That the one, by making no profession, deceives neither the world nor his own heart: while the other, by introducing himself in forms, fancies that he does something, and thanks God that 'he is not like this publican.' The one only shuts his eyes upon the danger which the other despises.

But these unfruitful professors would do well to recollect that, by a conduct so little worthy of their high calling, they not only violate the law to which they have vowed obedience, but occasion many to disbelieve or to despise it; that they are thus in a great measure accountable for the infidelity of others, and of course will have to answer for more than their own personal offences. For did they in any respect live up to the principles they profess; did they adorn the doctrines of Christianity by a life in any degree consonant to their faith; did they exhibit any thing of the 'beauty of holiness' in their daily conversation; they would then give such a demonstrative proof not only of the sincerity of their own obedience, but of the brightness of that divine light by which they profess to walk, that the most determined unbeliever would at last begin to think there must he *something* in a religion of which the effects were so visible, and the fruits so amiable; and in time be led to 'glorify,' not *them*, not the imperfect doers of these works, but 'their Father, which is in heaven.' Whereas, as things are at present carried on, the obvious conclusion must be, either that Christians do not believe in the religion they profess, or that there is no truth in the religion itself.

For will he not naturally say, that if its influences were so predominant, its consequences must be more evident! that, if the prize held out were really so bright, those who truly believed so, would surely *do* something, and *sacrifice something* to obtain it!

This effect of the carelessness of believers on the hearts of others, will probably be a heavy aggravation of their own guilt at the final reckoning:—and there is no negligent Christian can guess where the infection of his example may stop; or how remotely it may be pleaded as a palliation of the sins of others, who either may think themselves safe while they are only doing what Christian's allow themselves to do; or who may adduce a Christian's habitual violation of the divine law, as a presumptive evidence that there is no truth in Christianity.

This swells the amount of the actual mischief beyond calculation; and there is something terrible in the idea of this sort of definite evil, that the careless Christian can never know the extent of the contagion he spreads, nor the multiplied infections which *they* may communicate in *their* turn, whom *his* disorders first corrupted.

And there is this farther aggravation of his offence, that he will not only be answerable for all the positive evils of which his example is the cause; but for the omission of all the probable good which might have been called forth in others, had *his* actions been consistent with his profession. What a strong, what an almost irresistible conviction would it carry to the hearts of unbelievers, if they beheld that characteristic difference in the manner of Christians, which their profession gives one to expect, if they saw that disinterestedness, that humility, sober-mindedness, temperance, simplicity, and sincerity, which are the unavoidable fruits of a genuine faith! and which the Bible has taught them to expect in every Christian.

But, while a man talks like a saint, and yet lives like a sinner; while he professes to believe like an apostle, and yet leads the life of a sensualist; talks of ardent faith, and yet exhibits a cold and low practice; boasts himself the disciple of a meek Master, and yet is as much a slave to his passions as they who acknowledge no such authority; while he appears the proud professor of an humble religion, or the intemperate champion of a self-denying one—such a man brings Christianity into disrepute, confirms those in error who might have been awakened to conviction, strengthens doubt into disbelief, and hardens indifference into contempt.

Even among those of a better cast and a purer principle, the excessive restraints of timidity, caution, and that 'fear of man, which bringeth a snare,' confine, and almost stifle the generous spirit of an ardent exertion in the cause of religion. Christianity may pathetically expostulate, that it is not always 'an open enemy which dishonours her,' but her 'familiar friend.' And 'what dost thou more than others?' is a question which even the good and worthy should often ask themselves, in order to quicken their zeal; to prevent the total stagnation of unexerted principles, on the one hand or the danger, on the other, of their being driven down the gulf of ruin by the unresisted and confluent tides of temptation, fashion, and example.

In a very strict and mortified age, of which a scrupulous severity was the predominant character, precautions against an excessive zeal might, and doubtless would, be a wholesome and prudent measure. But in these times of relaxed principle and frigid indifference, to see people so vigilantly on their guard against the imaginary mischiefs of enthusiasm, while they run headlong into the real opposite perils of a destructive licentiousness, reminds us of the one-eyed animal in the fable; who, living on the banks of the ocean, never fancied he could be

destroyed any way but by drowning: but, while he kept that one eye constantly fixed on the sea, on which side he concluded all the peril lay, he was devoured by an enemy on the dry land, from which quarter he never suspected any danger.

Are not the mischiefs of an enthusiastic piety insisted on with as much earnestness as if an extravagant devotion were the prevailing propensity? Is not the necessity of moderation as vehemently urged as if an intemperate zeal were the epidemic distemper of the great world? as if all our apparent danger and natural bias lay on the side of a too rigid austerity, which required the discreet and constant counteraction of an opposite principle? Would not a stranger be almost tempted to imagine, from the frequent invectives against extreme strictness, that abstraction from the world, and a monastic rage for retreat, were the ruling temper? that we were in some danger of seeing our places of diversion abandoned, and the enthusiastic scenes of the *Holy Fathers of the desert* acted over again by the frantic and uncontrollable devotion of our young persons of fashion?

It is not to be denied, that enthusiasm is an evil to which the more religious of the lower class are peculiarly exposed; and this from a variety of causes, upon which this is not the place to enlarge. But who will be hardy enough to assert that the class we are now addressing, commonly fall into the same error. In order to establish or to overthrow this assertion, let each fashionable reader confess whether, within the sphere of his own observation, the fact be realized. Let each bring this vague charge specifically home to his own acquaintance. Let him honestly declare what proportion of noble enthusiasts, what number of honourable fanatics his own personal knowledge of the great world supplies. Let him compare the list of his enthusiastic with that of his luxurious friends, of his fanatical with his irreligious acquaintance, of 'the righteous overmuch' with such as 'care for none of these things;' of the strict and precise with that of the loose and irregular, of those who beggar themselves by their pious alms, with those who injure their fortune by extravagance; of those who 'are lovers of God,' with those who are lovers of pleasure. Let him declare whether he sees more of his associates swallowed up in gloomy meditation or immersed in sensuality; whether more are the slaves of superstious observances or of ambition. Surely those who address the rich and great in the way of exhortation and reproof, would do particularly well to define exactly what is indeed the prevailing character; lest, for want of such discrimination they should heighten the disease they might wish to cure, and increase the bias they would desire to counteract, by addressing to the voluptuary cautions which belong to the hermit, and thus aggravate his already inflamed appetites by invectives against an evil of which he is in little danger.

If, however, superstition, where it really does exist, injures religion, and we grant that it greatly injures it, yet we insist that scepticism injures it no less, for to deride, or to omit any of the component parts of Christian faith, is surely not a less fatal evil than making uncommanded additions to it.

It is seriously to be regretted in an age like the present, remarkable for indifference in religion and levity in manners, and which stands so much in need of lively patterns of firm and resolute piety, that many who really are Christians on the soberest conviction, should not appear more openly and decidedly on the side they have espoused; that they assimilate so very much with the manners of those about them (which manners they yet scruple not to disapprove) and, instead of an avowed but prudent steadfastness, which might draw over the others, appear evidently fearful of being thought precise and overscrupulous; and actually seem to disavow their right principles, by concessions and accommodations not strictly consistent with them. They often seem cautiously afraid of *doing too much*, and *going too far;* and the dangerous plea, the necessity of *living like other people*, of *being like the rest of the world*, and the propriety of *not being particular*, is brought as a reasonable apology for a too yielding and indiscriminate conformity.

But, at a time when almost all are sinking into the prevailing corruption, how beautiful, a rare, a single integrity is, let the instances of Lot and Noah declare! And to those with whom a poem is an higher authority than the Bible, let me recommend the most animated picture of a righteous singularity that ever was delineated in

> ——The Seraph Abdiel, faithful found
> Among the faithless, faithful only he
> Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
> Unshaken, unseduc'd, unterrify'd,
> His loyalty he kept, his love and zeal:
> Nor numbers, nor example with him wrought
> To swerve from truth or change his constant mind,
> Though single. PAR. LOST, B. iv.

Few indeed of the more orderly and decent have any objection to that degree of Religion which is compatible with their general acceptance with others, or the full enjoyment of their own pleasures. For a formal and ceremonious exercise of the outward duties of Christianity may not only be kept up without exciting censure, but will even procure a certain respect and confidence; and is not quite irreconcilable with a voluptuous and dissipated life. So far many go; and so far as 'godliness is profitable to the life that *is*,' it passes without reproach.

But as soon as men begin to consider religious exercises not as a decency, but a duty; not as a commutation for a self-denying life, but as a means to promote a holy temper and a virtuous conduct; as soon as they feel disposed to carry the effect of their devotion into their daily life; as soon as their principles discover themselves, by leading them to withdraw from those scenes and abstain from those actions in which the gay place their supreme happiness; as soon as something is to be *done*, and something is to be *parted with*, then the world begins to take offence, and to stigmatize the *activity* of that piety which had been commended as long as it remained *inoperative*, and had only evaporated in *words*.

When religion, like the vital principle, takes its seat in the heart and sends out supplies of

life and heat to every part; diffuses motion, soul, and vigour through the whole circulation, and informs and animates the whole man; when it operates on the practice, influences the conversation, breaks out into a lively zeal for the honour of God, and the best interest of mankind, then the sincerity of heart or the sanity of mind, of that person, will become questionable; and it must be owing to a very fortunate combination of circumstances indeed, if he can at once preserve the character of parts and piety, and retain the reputation of a man of sense after he has acquired that of a Christian.

It is surely a folly to talk of being too holy, too strict, or too good. When there really happens to appear some foundation for the charge of enthusiasm (as there are indeed sometimes in good people eccentricities which justify the censure) we may depend upon it, that it proceeds from some defect in the judgment, and not from any excess in the piety: for in goodness there is no excess: and it is as preposterous to say that any one is too good, or too pious, as that he is too wise, too strong, or too healthy: since the highest point in all these is only the perfection of that quality which we admired in a lower degree. There may be an *imprudent*, but there cannot be a *superabundant* goodness. An ardent imagination may mislead a rightly turned heart: and a weak intellect may incline the best intentioned to ascribe too much value to things of comparatively small importance. Such a one not having discernment enough to perceive where the force and stress of duty lie, may inadvertently discredit religion by a too scrupulous exactness in points of small intrinsic value.—And even well-meaning men as well as hypocrites may think they have done a meritorious service when their 'mint' and 'anise' are rigorously tithed.

But in observing the 'weightier matters of the law,' in the practice of universal holiness, in the love of God, there can be no possibility of exceeding, while there is no limitation in the command. We are in no danger of loving our neighbour *better* than ourselves; and let us remember that we do not go beyond, but fall short of our duty, while we love him *less*. If we were commanded to love God with *some* of our heart, with *part* of our soul, and a *portion* of our strength, there would then be some colour for those perpetual cavils about the *proportion* of love and the *degree* of obedience which are due to him. But as the command is so definite, so absolute, so comprehensive, so entire, nothing can be more absurd than that unmeaning, but not unfrequent charge brought against religious persons, that *they are too strict*. It is in effect saying, that they love God too much, and serve him too well.

The foundation of this silly censure is commonly laid in the first principles of education, where an early separation is systematically made between duty and pleasure. One of the first baits held out for the encouragement of children, is that when they have done their *duty* they will be entitled to some *pleasure;* thus forcibly disjoining what should be considered as inseparable. And there is not a more common justification of that idle and dissipated manner in which the second half of the Sunday is commonly spent, even by those who make a conscience of spending the former part properly, than that, 'now they have done their duty, they may take their pleasure.'

But while Christian observances are considered as tasks, which are to be got over to entitle us to something more pleasant; as a burthen which we must endure in order to propitiate an inexorable judge, who makes a hard bargain with his creatures, and allows them just so much amusement in pay for so much drudgery —we must not wonder that such low views are entertained of Christianity, and that a religious life is reprobated as strict and rigid.

But to him who acts from the nobler motive of love, and the animating power of the christian hope, the exercise is the reward, the permission is the privilege, the work is the wages. *He* does not carve out some miserable pleasure, and stipulate for some meagre diversion, to pay himself for the hard performance of his duty who in that very performance experiences the highest pleasure; and feels the truest gratification of which his nature is capable, in devoting the noblest part of that nature to *His* service, to whom he owes all, because from Him he has received all.

This reprobated strictness, therefore, so far from being the source of discomfort and misery, as is pretended, is in reality the true cause of actual enjoyment, by laying the axe to the root of all those turbulent and uneasy passions, the unreserved and yet imperfect gratification of which does so much more tend to disturb our happiness, than that self-government which Christianity enjoins.

But all precepts seem rigorous, all observances are really hard, where there is not an entire conviction of God's right to our obedience and an internal principle of faith and love to make that obedience pleasant. A religious life is indeed a hard bondage to one immersed in the practices of the world, and under the dominion of its appetites and passions. To a real Christian it is 'perfect freedom.' He does not now abstain from such and such things, merely because they are forbidden (as he did in the first stages of his progress) but because his soul has no longer any pleasure in them. And it would be the severest of all punishments to oblige him to return to those practices, from which he once abstained with difficulty, and through the less noble principle of fear.

There is not, therefore, perhaps, a greater mistake than that common notion entertained by the more orderly part of the fashionable world, that a little religion will make people happy, but that a high degree of it is incompatible with all enjoyment. For surely *that* religion can add little to a man's happiness which restrains him from the commission of a wrong action, but which does not pretend to extinguish the bad principle from which the act proceeded. A religion which ties the hands, without changing the heart; which, like the hell of Tantalus, subdues not the desire, yet forbids the gratification, is indeed an uncomfortable religion: and such a religion, though it may gain a man something on the side of reputation, will give

him but little inward comfort. For what true peace can that heart enjoy which is left a prey to that temper which produced the evil, even though terror or shame may have prevented the outward act.

That people devoted to the pursuits of a dissipated life should conceive of religion as a difficult and even unattainable state, it is easy to believe. That they should conceive of it as an unhappy state, is the consummation of their error and their ignorance: for that a *rational* being should have his understanding enlightened; that an *immortal* being should have his views extended and enlarged; that a *helpless* being should have a consciousness of assistance; a *sinful* being the prospect of a pardon, or a *fallen* one the assurance of restoration, does not seem a probable ground of unhappiness: and on any other subject but religion, such reasoning would not be admissible.

CHAP. VI.

A stranger, from observing the fashionable mode of life, would not take this to be a Christian country.—Lives of professing Christians examined by a comparison with the Gospel.—Christianity not made the rule of life, even by those who profess to receive it as an object of faith.—Temporizing writers contribute to lower the credit of Christianity. Loose harangues on morals not calculated to reform the heart.

The Christian religion is not intended, as some of its fashionable professors seem to fancy, to operate as a charm, a talisman, or incantation, and to produce its effect by our pronouncing certain mystical words, attending at certain consecrated places, and performing certain hallowed ceremonies; but it is an active, vital, influential principle, operating on the heart, restraining the desires, affecting the general conduct, and as much regulating our commerce with the world, our business, pleasures, and enjoyments, our conversations, designs, and actions, as our behaviour in public worship, or even in private devotion.

That the effects of such a principle are strikingly visible in the lives and manners of the generality of those who give the law to fashion, will not perhaps be insisted on. And indeed, the whole present system of fashionable life is utterly destructive of seriousness. To instance only in the growing habit of frequenting great assemblies, which is generally thought insignificant, and is in effect so vapid, that one almost wonders how it can be dangerous;—it would excite laughter, because we are so broken into the habit, were I to insist on the immorality of passing one's whole life in a crowd.—But those promiscuous myriads which compose the society, falsely so called, of the gay world; who are brought together without esteem, remain without pleasure, and part without regret; who live in a round of diversions, the possession of which is so joyless, though the absence is so insupportable; these, by the mere force of incessant and indiscriminate association weaken, and in time wear out, the best feelings and affections of the human heart. And the mere spirit of dissipation, thus contracted from invariable habit, even detached from all its concomitant evils, is in itself as hostile to a religious spirit, as more positive and actual offences. Far be it from me to say that it is as criminal; I only insist that it is as opposite to that heavenly mindedness which is the essence of the Christian temper.

Let us suppose an ignorant and unprejudiced spectator, who should have been taught the theory of all the religions on the globe, brought hither from the other hemisphere. Set him down in the politest part of our capital, and let him determine, if he can, except from what he shall see interwoven in the texture of our laws, and kept up in the service of our churches, to what particular religion we belong. Let him not mix entirely with the most flagitious, but only with the most fashionable; at least, let him keep what they themselves call the *best company*. Let him scrutinize into the manners, customs, habits, and diversions, most in vogue, and then infer from all he has seen and heard, what is the established religion of the land.

That it could not be the Jewish he would soon discover: for of rites, ceremonies, and external observances, he would trace but slender remains. He would be equally convinced that it could not be the religion of old Greece and Rome; for that enjoined reverence to the gods, and inculcated obedience to the laws. His most probable conclusion would be in favour of the Mahometan faith, did not the excessive indulgence of some of the most distinguished in an article of intemperance prohibited even by the sensual prophet of Arabia, defeat that conjecture.

How would the petrified inquirer be astonished, if he were told that all these gay, thoughtless, luxurious, dissipated persons, professed a religion, meek, spiritual, self-denying; of which humility, poverty of spirit, a renewed mind, and non-conformity to the world, were specific distinctions!

When he saw the sons of men of fortune, scarcely old enough to be sent to school, admitted to be spectators of the turbulent and unnatural diversions of racing and gaming; and the almost infant daughters, even of wise and virtuous mothers (an innovation which fashion herself forbade till now) carried with most unthrifty anticipation to the frequent and late protracted ball—would he believe that we were of a religion which has required from those very parents a solemn vow that these children should be bred up 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?' That they should constantly 'believe God's holy word and keep his commandments?'

When he observed the turmoils of ambition, the competitions of vanity, the ardent thirst for the possession of wealth, and the wild misapplication of it when possessed; how could he persuade himself that all these anxious pursuers of present enjoyment were the disciples of a master who exhibited the very character and essence of his religion, as it were in a motto—'My kingdom is not of this world!'

When he beheld those nocturnal clubs, so

subversive of private virtue and domestic happiness, would he conceive that we were of a religion which in express terms 'exhorts young men to be sober-minded?'

When he saw those magnificent and brightly illuminated structures which decorate and disgrace the very precincts of the royal residence, (so free itself from all these pollutions) when he beheld the nightly offerings made to the demon of play, on whose cruel altar the fortune and happiness of wives and children are offered up without remorse; would he not conclude that we were of some of those barbarous religions which enjoins unnatural sacrifices, and whose horrid deities are appeased with nothing less than human victims?

Now ought we not to pardon our imaginary spectator, if he should not at once conclude that all the various descriptions of persons above noticed professed the Christian religion; supposing him to have no other way of determining but by the conformity of their manners to that rule by which he had undertaken to judge them? We indeed must judge with a certain latitude, and candidly take the present state of society into the account; which in some few instances, perhaps, must be allowed to dispense with that literal strictness, which more peculiarly belonged to the first ages of the Gospel.

But as this is really a Christian country, professing to enjoy the purest faith in the purest form, it cannot be unreasonable to go a little farther, and inquire whether Christianity, however firmly established and generally professed in it, is really practised by that order of fashionable persons, who, while they are absorbed in the delights of the world, and their whole souls devoted to the pursuit of pleasure, yet still arrogate to themselves the honourable name of Christians, and occasionally testify their claim to this high character, by a general profession of their belief in, and a decent occasional compliance with the forms of religion, and the ordinances of our church?

This inquiry must be made, not by a comparison with the state of Christianity in other countries (a mode always fallacious, whether adopted by nations or individuals, is that of comparing themselves with those who are still worse) nor must it be made from any notions drawn from custom, or any other human standard; but from a scripture view of what real religion is; from any one of those striking and comprehensive representations of it, which may be found condensed in so many single passages of the sacred writings.

Whoever then looks into the Book of God, and observes its prevailing spirit, and then looks into that part of the world under consideration, will not surely be thought very censorious, if he pronounce that the conformity between them does not seem to be *very* striking; and the manners of the one do not very evidently appear to be dictated by the spirit of the other. Will he discover that the Christian religion is so much as pretended to be made the *rule of life* even by that decent order who profess not to have discarded it as an object of faith? Do even the more regular, who neglect not public observances, consider Christianity as the *measure of their actions!* Do even what the world calls religious persons, employ their time, their abilities, and their fortune, as talents for which they however confess they believe themselves accountable: or do they, in any respect live, I will not say up to their profession (for what human being does so?) but in any consistency with it, or even with an eye to its predominant tendencies? Do persons in general of this description seem to consider the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, as any thing more than a form of words necessary indeed to be repeated, and proper to be believed? But do they consider them as necessary to be adopted into a governing principle of action?

Is it acting a consistent part to declare in the solemn assemblies that they are 'miserable offenders,' and that 'there is no health in them,' and yet never in their daily lives to discover any symptom of that humility and self-abasement, which should naturally be implied in such a declaration?

Is it reasonable or compatible, I will not say with piety, but with good sense, earnestly to lament having 'followed the devices and desires of their own hearts,' and then deliberately to plunge into such a torrent of dissipations as clearly indicates that they do not struggle to oppose *one* of these devices, to resist *one* of these desires? I dare not say this is hypocrisy, I do not believe it is, but surely it is inconsistency.

'Be ye not conformed to this world,' is a leading principle in the book they acknowledge as their guide. But after unresistingly assenting to this as a doctrinal truth, at church—how absurd would they think any one who should expect them to adopt it into their practice! Perhaps the whole law of God does not exhibit a single precept more expressly, more steadily, and more uniformly rejected by the class in question. If it mean any thing, it can hardly be consistent with that mode of life emphatically distinguished by the appellation of *fashionable.*

Now, would it be much more absurd (for any other reason but because it is not the custom) if our legislators were to meet one day in every week, gravely to read over all the obsolete statutes, and rescinded acts of parliament, than it is for the order of persons of the above description to assemble every Sunday, to profess their belief in and submission to a system of principles, which they do not so much as *intend* shall be binding on their practice?

But to continue our inquiry.—There is not a more common or more intelligible definition of human duty, than that of 'Fear God, and keep his commandments.' Now, as to the first of these inseparable precepts, can we, with the utmost stretch of charity, be very forward to conclude that God is really 'very greatly feared' in secret, by those who give too manifest indications that they live 'without him in the world?' And as to the latter precept, which naturally grows out of the other—without noticing any of the flagrant breaches of the moral law, let us only confine ourselves to the allowed, general, and notorious violation of the third and fourth commandments, by the higher as well as by the lower orders; breaches so flagrant, that they force themselves on the observation of the most

inattentive, too palpably to be either unnoticed or palliated.

Shall we have reason to change our opinion if we take that Divine representation of the sum and substance of religion, and apply it as a touchstone in the present trial—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy mind, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself?' Now, judge by inference, do we see many public proofs of that heavenly-mindedness which would be the inevitable effect of such a fervent and animated dedication of all the powers, faculties, and affections of the soul to Him who gave it? And, as to the great rule of social duty expressed in the second clause, do we observe as much of that considerate kindness, that pure disinterestedness, that conscientious attention to the comfort of others, especially of dependents and inferiors, as might be expected from those who enjoyed the privilege of so unerring a standard of conduct? a standard, which, if impartially consulted, must make our kindness to others bear an exact proportion to our self-love; a rule in which christian principle, operating on human sensibility, could not fail to decide aright in every supposeable case. For no man can doubt how he ought to act towards another, while the inward corresponding suggestions of conscience and feeling concur in letting him know how he would wish, in a change of circumstances, that others should act towards him.

Or suppose we take a more detailed survey, by a third rule, which indeed is not so much the principle as the effect of piety—'True religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself *unspotted from the world.*' Now, if Christianity insists that obedience to the latter injunction be the true evidence of the sincerity of those who fulfil the former, is the beneficence of the fashionable world *very* strikingly illustrated by this spotless purity, this exemption from the pollutions of the world, which is here declared to be its invariable concomitant?

But if I were to venture to take my estimate with a view more immediately evangelical; if I presumed to look for that genuine Christianity which consists in repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' to insist, that whatever *natural* religion and *fashionable* religion may teach, it is the peculiarity of the *Christian* religion to humble the sinner and exalt the Saviour; to insist that not only the grossly flagitious, but that *all* have sinned; that *all* are by nature in a state of condemnation; that *all* stand in need of mercy, of which there is no hope but on the Gospel terms; that eternal life is promised to those *only* who accept it on the offered conditions of 'faith, repentance, and renewed obedience;'—if I were to insist on such evidences of our Christianity as these; if I were to express these doctrines in plain scriptural terms without lowering, qualifying, disguising, or doing them away; if I were to insist on this belief, and its implied and corresponding practices; I am aware that, with whatever condescending patience this little tract might have been so far perused, many a fashionable reader would here throw it aside, as having now detected the palpable enthusiast, the abettor of 'strange doctrines,' long ago consigned over by the liberal and the polite to bigots and fanatics. And yet, if the Bible be true, this is a simple and faithful description of Christianity.

Surely men forget that we are urging them upon their own principles; that while we are urging them with motives drawn from Christianity, they seem to have as little concern in these motives as if they themselves were of another religion. It is not a name that will stand us instead. It is not merely glorying in the title of Christians, while we are living in the neglect of its precepts; it is not in valuing ourselves on the profession of religion as creditable, while we reject the power of it as fanatical, that will save us! In any other circumstances of life it would be accounted absurd to have a set of propositions, principles, statutes, or fundamental articles, and not to make them the ground of our acting as well as of our reasoning. In these supposed instances the blame would lie in the contradiction, in religion it lies in the agreement. Strange! that to act in consequence of received and acknowledged principles, should be accounted weakness! Strange, that what alone is truly consistent, should be branded as absurd! Strange, that men must really forbear to act rationally, only that they may not be reckoned mad! Strange, that they should be commended for having prayed in the excellent words of the Bible and of our church, for 'a clean heart, and a right spirit;' and yet, if they gave any sign of such a transformation of heart, they should be accounted, if not fanatical, at least, singular, weak, or melancholy men.

After having, however, just ventured to hint at what are indeed the humbling doctrines of the gospel, the doctrines to which alone eternal life is promised, I shall in deep humility forbear to enlarge on this part of the subject, which has been exhausted by the labours of wise and pious men in all ages. Unhappily, however, the most awakening of these writers are not the favourite guests in the closets of the more fashionable Christians; who, when they happen to be more seriously disposed than ordinary, are fond of finding out some middle kind of reading, which recommends some half-way state, something between Paganism and Christianity, suspending the mind, like the position of Mahomet's tomb, between earth and heaven: a kind of reading which, while it quiets the conscience by being on the side of morals, neither awakens fear, nor alarms security. By dealing in generals, it comes home to the hearts of none: it flatters the passions of the reader, by ascribing high merits to the performance of certain right actions, and the forbearance from certain wrong ones; among which, that reader must be very unlucky indeed who does not find some performances and some forbearances of his own. It at once enables him to keep heaven in his eye, and the world in his heart. It agreeably represents the readers to themselves as amiable persons, guilty indeed of a few faults, but never as condemned sinners under sentence of death. It commonly abounds with high encomiums on the dignity of human

nature ; the good effects of virtue on health, fortune, and reputation : the dangers of a blind zeal, the mischiefs of enthusiasm, and the folly of singularity, with various other kindred sentiments ; which, if they do not fall in of themselves with the corruptions of our nature, may, by a little warping, be easily accommodated to them.

These are the too successful practices of certain luke-warm and temporizing divines, who have become popular by blunting the edge of the heavenly tempered weapon, whose salutary keenness, but for their 'deceitful handling,' would often 'pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.'

But those severer preachers of righteousness, who disgust by applying too closely to the conscience ; who probe the inmost heart and lay open all its latent peccancies ; who treat of principles as the only certain source of manners ; who lay the axe at the root, oftener than the pruning knife to the branch ; who insist much and often on the great leading truths, that man is a fallen creature, who must be restored, if restored at all, by means very little flattering to human pride——such heart-searching writers as these will seldom find access to the houses and hearts of the more modish Christians, unless they happen to owe their admission to some subordinate quality of style ; unless they can captivate, with the seducing graces of language, those well-bred readers, who are childishly amusing themselves with the garnish, when they are perishing for want of food ; who are searching for polished periods when they should be in quest of alarming truths : who are looking for elegance of composition when they should be anxious for eternal life.

Whatever comparative praise may be due to the former class of writers, when viewed with others of a less decent order, yet I am not sure whether so many books of frigid morality, exhibiting such inferior motives of action, such moderate representations of duty, and such a low standard of principle ; have not done religion much more harm than good ; whether they do not lead many a reader to inquire what is the lowest degree in the scale of virtue with which he may content himself, so as barely to escape eternal punishment ; how much indulgence he may allow himself, without absolutely forfeiting his chance of safety : what is the uttermost verge to which he may venture of this world's enjoyment, and yet just keep within a possibility of hope for the next : adjusting the scales of indulgence and security with such a scrupulous equilibrium, as not to lose much pleasure, yet not incur much penalty.

This is hardly an exaggerated representation ; and to these low views of duty is partly owing so much of that bare-weight virtue with which even Christians are apt to content themselves ; fighting for every inch of ground which may possibly be taken within the pales of permission, and stretching those pales to the utmost edge of that limitation about which the world and the Bible contend.

But while the nominal Christian is persuading himself that there can be no harm in going *a little farther*, the real Christian is always afraid of going too far. While the one is debating for a little more disputed ground, the other is so fearful of straying into the regions of unhallowed indulgence, that he keeps at a prudent distance from the extremity of his permitted limits ; and is anxious in restricting as the other is desirous of extending them. One thing is clear, and it may be no bad indication by which to discover the state of man's heart to himself ; while he is contending for this allowance, and stipulating for the other indulgence, it will show him that, whatever change there may be in his life, there is none in his heart ; the temper remains as it did ; and it is by the inward frame rather than the outward act that he can best judge of his *own* state, whatever may be the rule by which he undertakes to judge of that of another.

It is less wonderful that there are not more Christians, than that Christians, as they are called, are not better men ; for if Christianity be not true, the motives of virtue are not high enough to quicken ordinary men to very extraordinary exertions. We see them do and suffer every day for popularity, for custom, for fashion, for the point of honour, not only more than good men do and suffer for religion, but a great deal more than religion requires them to do. For her *reasonable service* demands no sacrifices but what are sanctioned by good sense, sound policy, right reason, and uncorrupt judgment.

Many of these fashionable professors even go so far as to bring their right faith as an apology for their wrong practice. They have a commodious way of intrenching themselves within the shelter of some general position of unquestionable truth : even the great Christian hope becomes a snare to them. They apologize for a life of offence, by taking refuge in the extreme goodness they are abusing. That 'God is all merciful,' is the common reply to those who hint to them their danger. This is a false and fatal application of a divine and comfortable truth. Nothing can be more certain than the proposition, nor more delusive than the inference : for their deduction implies, not that he is merciful to sin repented of, but to sin continued in. But it is a most fallacious hope to expect that God will violate his own covenant, or that he is indeed, 'all mercy,' to the utter exclusion of his other attributes of perfect holiness, purity and justice.

It is a dangerous folly to rest on these vague and general notions of indefinite mercy ; and nothing can be more delusive than this indefinite trust in being forgiven in our *own* way, after God has clearly revealed to us that he will only forgive us in *his* way. Besides, is there not something singularly base in sinning against God *because* he is merciful ?

But the truth is no one does truly trust in God, who does not endeavour to obey him. For to break his laws, and yet to depend on his favour ; to live in opposition to his will, and yet in expectation of his mercy ; to violate his commands, and yet to look for his acceptance, would not, in any other instance, be thought a reasonable ground of conduct ; and yet it is by no means as uncommon as it is inconsistent.

CHAP. VII.

View of those who acknowledge Christianity as a perfect system of morals, but deny its divine authority.—Morality not the whole of Religion.

As in the preceding chapter notice was taken of that description of persons who profess to receive Christianity with great reverence as a matter of faith, who yet do not pretend to adopt it as a rule of conduct; I shall conclude these slight remarks with some short animadversions on another set of men, and that not a small one among the decent and fashionable, who profess to think it exhibits an admirable system of morals, while they deny its divine authority; though that authority alone can make the necessity of obeying its precepts binding on the consciences of men.

This is a very discreet scheme; for such persons at once save themselves from the discredit of having their understanding imposed upon by a supposed blind submission to evidences and authorities; and yet, prudently enough, secure to themselves, in no small degree, the reputation of good men. By steering this middle kind of course, they contrive to be reckoned liberal by the *philosophers*, and decent by the believers.

But we are not to expect to see the pure morality of the Gospel very carefully transfused into the lives of such objectors. And indeed it would be unjust to imagine that the precepts *should* be most scrupulously observed by those who reject the authority. The influence of divine truth must necessarily best prepare the heart for an unreserved obedience to its laws. If we do not depend on the offers of the Gospel, we shall want the best motives to the actions and performances which it enjoins. A lively belief *must* therefore precede a hearty obedience. Let those who think otherwise, hear what the Saviour of the world has said: 'For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth.' Those who reject the Gospel, therefore, reject the *power* of performing good actions. That command, for instance, to 'set our affections on things above,' will operate but faintly, till that Spirit from which the command proceeds, touches the heart, and convinces that no human good is worthy of the entire affection of an immortal creature. An unreserved faith in the promiser *must* precede our acceptable performance of any duty to which the promise is annexed.

But as to a set of duties enforced by no other motive than a bare acquiescence in their beauty, and a cold conviction of their propriety, but impelled by no obedience to his authority who imposes them; though we know not how well they might be performed by pure and impeccable beings, yet we know how they commonly *are* performed by frail and disorderly creatures, fallen from their innocence, and corrupt in their very natures.

Nothing but a conviction of the truth of Christianity can reconcile thinking beings to the extraordinary appearances of things in the Creator's moral government of the world. The works of God are an enigma, of which his word alone is the solution. The dark veil which is thrown over the divine dispensations in this lower world must naturally shock those who consider only the single scene which is acting on the present stage; but is reconcilable to him who, having learnt from Revelation the nature of the laws by which the great Author acts, trusts confidently that the catastrophe will set all to rights. The confusion which sin and the passions have introduced; the triumph of wickedness; the seemingly arbitrary disproportion of human conditions, accountable on no scheme but that which the Gospel has opened to us—have all a natural tendency to withdraw from the love of God, the hearts of those who erect themselves into critics on the Divine conduct, and yet will not study the plan, and get acquainted with the rules, so far as it has pleased the Supreme Disposer to reveal them.

Till therefore the word of God is used 'as a lamp to their paths,' men can neither truly discern the crookedness of their own ways, nor the perfection of that light by which they are directed to walk. And this light can only be seen by its own proper brightness; it has no other medium. Until therefore, 'the secret of the Lord' is with men, they will not truly 'fear him;' until he has 'enlarged their hearts' with the knowledge and belief of his word, they will not very vigorously run 'the way of his commandments.' Until they have acquired that 'faith, without which it is impossible to please God,' they will not attain that 'holiness, without which no man can see him.'

And indeed if God has thought fit to make the Gospel an instrument of salvation, we must own the necessity of receiving it as a divine institution, before it is likely to operate very effectually on the human conduct. The great Creator, if we may judge by analogy from natural things, is so just and wise an economist, that he always adapts, with the most accurate precision, the instrument to the work; and never lavishes more means than are necessary to accomplish the proposed end. If therefore Christianity had been intended for nothing more than a mere system of ethics, such a system surely might have been produced at an infinitely less expense. The long chain of prophecy, the succession of miracles, the labours of apostles, the blood of the saints, to say nothing of the great costly sacrifice which the Gospel records, might surely have been spared. Lessons of mere human virtue might have been delivered by some suitable instrument of human wisdom, strengthened by the visible authority of human power. A bare system of morals might have been communicated to mankind with a more reasonable prospect of advantage, by means not so repugnant to human pride. A mere scheme of conduct might have been delivered with far greater probability of the success of its reception by Antoninus the emperor, or Plato the philosopher, than by Paul the tent-maker, or Peter the fisherman.

Christianity, then, must be embraced entirely, if it be received at all. It must be taken without mutilation, as a perfect scheme, in the way in which God has been pleased to reveal it. It must be accepted, not as exhibiting beautiful

parts, but as presenting one consummate whole, of which the perfection arises from coherence and dependence, from relation and consistency. Its power will be weakened, and its energy destroyed, if every caviller pulls out a pin, or obstructs a spring with the presumptuous view of new modelling the Divine work, and making it go to his own mind. There must be no breaking the system into portions of which we are at liberty to choose one and reject another. There is no separating the evidences from the doctrines, the doctrines from the precepts, belief from obedience, morality from piety, the love of our neighbour from the love of God. If we allow Christianity to be any thing, we must allow it to be every thing: if we allow the Divine Author to be indeed unto us 'wisdom and righteousness,' he must be also sanctification and redemption.'

Christianity then is assuredly something more than a mere set of rules; and faith, though it never pretended to be the substitute for an useful life, is indispensably necessary to its acceptance with God. The Gospel never offers to make religion supersede morality, but every where clearly proves that morality is not the whole of religion. Piety is not only necessary as a *means*, but is itself a most important *end*. It is not only the best principle of moral conduct, but is an indispensable and absolute duty in itself. It is not only the highest motive to the practice of virtue, but is a prior obligation, and absolutely necessary, even when detached from its immediate influence on outward actions. Religion will survive all the virtues of which it is the source; for we shall be living in the noblest exercises of piety when we shall have no objects on which to exercise many human virtues. When there will be no distress to be relieved, no injuries to be forgiven, no evil habits to be subdued, there will be a Creator to be blessed and adored, a Redeemer to be loved and praised.

To conclude, a real Christian is not such merely by habit, profession, or education; he is not a Christian in order to acquit his sponsors of the engagements they entered into in his name; but he is one who has embraced Christianity from a conviction of its truth, and an experience of its excellence. He is not only confident in matters of faith by evidences suggested to his understanding, or reasons which correspond to his inquiries; but all these evidences of truth, all these principles of goodness are working into his heart, and exhibit themselves in his practice. He sees so much of the body of the great truths and fundamental points of religion, that he has a satisfactory trust in those lesser branches which ramify to infinity from the parent stock; though he may not individually and completely comprehend them all. He is so powerfully convinced of the general truth, and so deeply impressed by the general spirit of the Gospel, that he is not startled by every little difficulty; he is not staggered by every 'hard saying.' Those depths of mystery which surpass his understanding do not shake his faith, and this, not because he is credulous, and given to take things upon trust, but because, knowing that his foundations are right, he sees how one truth of Scripture supports another like the bearings of a geometrical building; because he sees the aspect one doctrine has upon another; because he sees the consistency of each with the rest, and the place, order, and relation of all. The real Christian by no means rejects reason from his religion; so far from it, he most carefully exercises it in furnishing his mind with all the evidences of its truth. But he does not stop here. Christianity furnishes him with a living principle of action, with the vital influences of the holy Spirit, which, while it enlightens his faculties, rectifies his will, turns his knowledge into practice, sanctifies his heart, changes his habits, and proves that when faithfully received, the word of truth 'is life indeed, and is spirit indeed!'

REMARKS ON THE SPEECH OF M. DUPONT,

MADE IN THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF FRANCE.

ON THE SUBJECTS OF RELIGION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION.

A PREFATORY ADDRESS

TO THE LADIES, &C. OF GREAT BRITAIN,—IN BEHALF OF THE FRENCH EMIGRANT CLERGY.

If it be allowed that there may arise occasions so extraordinary that all the lesser motives of delicacy ought to vanish before them, it is presumed that the present emergency will be considered as presenting one of those occasions, and will in some measure justify the hardiness of this address from a private individual, who, stimulated by the urgency of the case, sacrifices inferior considerations to the ardent desire of raising further supplies towards relieving a distress as pressing as it is unexampled.

We are informed by public advertisement, that the large sums already so liberally subscribed for the emigrant clergy are almost exhausted. Authentic information adds, that multitudes of distressed exiles in the island of Jersey, are on the point of wanting bread.

Very many to whom this address is made have

NOTE.—The profits of this publication, which were considerable, were given to the French emigrant clergy.

already contributed. O let them not be weary in well-doing! I know that many are making generous exertions for the just and natural claims of the widows and children of our own brave seamen and soldiers. Let it not be said, that the present is an interfering claim. Those to whom I write, have bread enough, and to spare. You, who fare sumptuously every day, and yet complain that you have little to bestow, let not this bounty be subtracted from another bounty, but subtract it rather from some superfluous expense.

The beneficent and right-minded want no arguments to be pressed upon them; but it is not those alone who I address; I write to persons of every description. Luxurious habits of living, which really furnish the distressed with the fairest grounds for application, are too often urged by those who practise them as a motive for withholding assistance, and produced as a plea for having little to spare. Let her who indulges such habits, and pleads such excuses in consequence, reflect, that by retrenching one costly dish from her abundant table, by cutting off the superfluities of one expensive desert, omitting one evening's public amusement, she may furnish at least a week's subsistence to more than one person,* as liberally bred perhaps as herself, and who, in his own country, may have often tasted how much more blessed it is to give than to receive—to a once affluent minister of religion, who has been long accustomed to bestow the necessaries he is now reduced to solicit.

Even your young daughters, whom maternal prudence has not yet furnished with the means of bestowing, may be cheaply taught the first rudiments of charity, together with an important lesson of economy: they may be taught to sacrifice a feather, a set of ribands, an expensive ornament, an idle diversion. And if they are on this occasion instructed, that there is no true charity without self-denial, they will gain more than they are called upon to give: for the suppression of one luxury for a charitable purpose, is the exercise of two virtues, and this without any pecuniary expense.--An indulgence is abridged and christian charity is exercised.

Let the sick and afflicted remember how dreadful it must be, to be exposed to the sufferings they feel without one of the alleviations which mitigate their affliction. How dreadful it is to be without comfort, without necessaries, without a home—without a country! While the gay and prosperous would do well to recollect, how suddenly and terribly those unhappy persons for whom we plead, were, by the surprising vicissitudes of life, thrown down from heights of gayety and prosperity equal to what *they* are now enjoying. And let those who have husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, or friends, reflect on the uncertainties of war, and the revolution of human affairs. It is only by imagining the possibility that those who are dear to us may be placed by the instability of human events in the same calamitous circumstances, that we can obtain an adequate feeling of the woes we are called upon to commiserate.

In a distress so wide and comprehensive as the present, many are prevented from giving by that popular excuse, 'That it is but a drop of water in the ocean.' But let them reflect, that if all the individual drops were withheld, there would be no ocean at all; and the inability to give much ought not, on any occasion, to be converted into an excuse for giving nothing. Even moderate circumstances need not plead an exemption. The industrious tradesman will not, even in a political view, be eventually a loser by his small contribution. The money now raised is neither carried out of our country, nor dissipated in luxuries, but returns again to the community; returns to our shops and to our markets, to procure the bare necessaries of life.

Some have objected to the difference of religion of those for whom we solicit. Such an objection hardly deserves a serious answer. Surely if the superstitious Tartar hopes to become possessed of the courage and talents of the enemy he slays, the Christian is not afraid of catching, or of propagating the error of the sufferer he relieves.—Christian charity is of no party. We plead not for their faith, but for their wants. But while we affirm that it is not for their popery but their poverty which we solicit; yet let the more scrupulous, who look for desert as well as distress in the objects of their bounty, bear in mind, that if these men could have sacrificed their conscience to their convenience, they had not now been in this country; and if we wish for proselytes, who knows but it may be the first step towards their conversion, if we show them the purity of our religion, by the beneficence of our actions.

If you will permit me to press upon you such high motives (and it were to be wished that in every action we were to be influenced only by the highest) perhaps no act of bounty to which you may be called out, can ever come so immediately, and so literally under that solemn and affecting description, which will be recorded in the great day of account—*I was a stranger, and ye took me in.*

* Mr. Bowdler's letter states, that about six shillings a week includes the expenses of each priest at Winchester,

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SPEECH OF MR. DUPONT.

The following is an exact Translation from a Speech made in the National Convention at Paris, on Friday, the 14th of December, 1792, in a debate on the subject of establishing Public Schools for the education of Youth, by citizen Dupont, a member of considerable weight; and as the doctrines contained in it were received with unanimous applause, except from two or three of the clergy, it may be fairly considered as an exposition of the creed of that enlightened assembly. Translated from Le Moniteur, of Sunday, the 16th of December, 1792.

What! Thrones are overturned! Sceptres broken! Kings expire! And yet the altars of God remain! (Here there is a murmur from some members; and the abbe Ichon demands that the person speaking may be called to order.) Tyrants in outrage to nature, continue to burn an impious incense on those altars! (Some murmurs arise, but they are lost in the applauses from the majority of the assembly.) The thrones that have been reversed, have left these altars naked, unsupported, and tottering. A single breath of enlightened reason will now be sufficient to make them disappear; and if humanity is under obligations to the French nation for the first of these benefits, the fall of kings, can it be doubted but that the French people now sovereign, will be wise enough, in like manner, to overthrow those altars and *those idols* to which those kings have hitherto made them subject? *Nature* and *Reason*, these ought to be the gods of men! These are my gods! (Here the abbe Audrein cried out, 'there is no bearing this;' and rushed out of the assembly.—A great laugh.) Admire *nature*—cultivate *reason*. And you, legislators, if you desire that the French people should be happy, make haste to propagate these principles, and to teach them in your primary schools, instead of those fanatical principles which have hitherto been taught. The tyranny of kings was confined to make their people miserable in this life—but those other tyrants, the priests, extend their dominion into another, of which they have no other idea than of eternal punishments; a doctrine which some men have hitherto had the good nature to believe. But the moment of the catastrophe is come—all these prejudices must fall at the same time. *We must destroy them, or they will destroy us.* For myself, I honestly avow to the convention, *I am an atheist!* (Here there is some noise and tumult. But a great number of members cry out, 'what is that to us—you are an honest man!) But I defy a single individual amongst the twenty-four millions of Frenchmen, to make any well-grounded reproach. I doubt whether the Christians or the Catholics, of which the last speaker, and those of his opinion, have been talking to us, can make the same challenge. (Great applauses.) There is another consideration—Paris has had great losses. It has been deprived of the commerce of luxury; of that factitious splendour which was found at courts, and invited strangers hither. Well! We must repair these losses. Let me then represent to you the times, that are fast approaching, when our philosophers, whose names are celebrated throughout Europe, Petion, Syeyes, Condorcet, and others—surrounded in our Pantheon, as the Greek Philosophers were at Athens, with a crowd of disciples coming from all parts of Europe, walking like the peripatetics, and teaching—this man, the system of the universe, and developing the progress of all human knowledge; that, perfectioning the social system, and showing in our decree of the 17th of June, 1789, the seeds of the insurrections of the 14th of July, and the 10th of August, and of all those insurrections which are spreading with such rapidity throughout Europe—so that these young strangers, on their return to their respective countries, may spread the same lights, and may operate *for the happiness of mankind*, similar revolutions throughout the world.

(Numberless applauses arose, almost throughout the whole assembly, and in the galleries.)

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REMARKS ON THE SPEECH OF MR. DUPONT,

ON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION.

It is presumed that it may not be thought unseasonable at this critical time to offer to the public, and especially to the more religious part of it, a few slight observations, occasioned by the late famous speech of Mr. Dupont, which exhibits the confession of faith of a considerable member of the French national convention. Though the speech itself has been pretty generally read, yet it was thought necessary to prefix it to these remarks, lest such as have not already perused it, might, from an honest reluctance to credit the existence of such principles, dispute its authenticity, and accuse the remarks, if unaccompanied by the speech, of a spirit of invective, and unfair exaggeration. At the same time it must be confessed that its impiety is so monstrous, that many good men were of opinion that it ought not to be made familiar to the minds of Englishmen; for there are crimes with which even the imagination should never come in contact, and which it is almost safer not to controvert than to detail.

But as an ancient nation intoxicated their slaves, and then exposed them before their children, in order to increase their horror of intemperance; so it is hoped that this piece of impiety may be placed in such a light before the eyes of the Christian reader, that, in proportion as his detestation is raised, his faith, instead of being shaken, will be only so much the more strengthened.

This celebrated speech, though delivered in an assembly of politicians, is not on a question of politics, but on one as superior to all political considerations as the soul is to the body, as eternity is to time. The object of this oration is not to dethrone kings, but him by whom kings reign, It does not excite the cry of indignation in the orator that *Louis* the Sixteenth reigns, but that *the Lord God omnipotenth reigneth!*

Nor is this the declaration of some obscure and anonymous person, but it is an exposition of the creed of a public leader. It is not a sentiment hinted in a journal, hazarded in a pamphlet, or thrown out at a disputing club; but it is the implied faith of the rulers of a great nation.

Little notice would have been due to this fa-

mous speech, if it conveyed the sentiments of only *one* vain orator; but it should be observed, that it was heard, received, *applauded*, with two or three exceptions only—a fact, which you, who have scarcely believed in the existence of atheism, will hardly credit, and which, for the honour of the eighteenth century, it is hoped that our posterity will reject as totally incredible.

A love of liberty, generous in its principle, inclines some well-meaning but mistaken men still to favour the proceedings of the national convention of France. They do not perceive that the licentious wildness which has been excited in that country, is destructive of all true happiness, and no more resembles liberty, than the tumultuous joys of the drunkard resemble the cheerfulness of a sober and well-regulated mind.

To those who do not know of what strange inconsistencies man is made up; who have not considered how some persons' having at first been hastily and heedlessly drawn in as approvers, by a sort of natural progression, soon become principals:—to those who have never observed by what a variety of strange associations in the mind, opinions that seem the most irreconcilable meet at some unsuspected turning, and come to be united in the same man;—to all such it may appear quite incredible, that well meaning and even pious people should continue to applaud the principles of a set of men who have publicly made known their intention of abolishing Christianity, as far as the demolition of altars, priests, temples, and institutions, *can* abolish it. As to the religion itself, this also they may traduce and reject, but we know from the comfortable promise of an authority still sacred in this country at least, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Let me not be misunderstood by those to whom these slight remarks are principally addressed; by that class of well-intentioned but ill-judging people, who favour at least, if they do not adopt, the prevailing sentiments of the new republic. You are not here accused of being the wilful abettors of infidelity. God forbid! 'We are persuaded better things of you; and things which accompany salvation.' But this *ignis fatuus* of liberty and universal brotherhood, which the French are madly pursuing, with the insignia of freedom in one hand, and the bloody bayonet in the other, has bewitched your senses, is misleading your steps, and betraying you to ruin. You are gazing at a meteor raised by the vapours of vanity, which these wild and infatuated wanderers are pursuing to their destruction; and though for a moment you mistake it for a heaven born light, which leads to the perfection of human freedom, you will, should you join in the mad pursuit, soon discover that it will conduct you over dreary wilds and sinking bogs, only to plunge you in deep and inevitable destruction.

Much, very much is to be said in vindication of your favouring in the *first instance* their political projects. The cause they took in hand seemed to be the great cause of human kind. Its very name insured its popularity. What English heart did not exult at the demolition of the Bastile? What lover of his species did not triumph in the warm hope, that one of the finest countries in the world would soon be one of the most free? Popery and despotism, though chained by the gentle influence of Louis the Sixteenth, had actually slain their thousands. Little was it then imagined, that Anarchy and Atheism, the monsters who were about to succeed them, would soon slay their ten thousands. If we can not regret the defeat of the two former tyrants, what must they be who can triumph in the mischiefs of the two latter? Who, I say, that had a head to reason, or a heart to feel, did not glow with the hope, that from the ruins of tyranny, and the rubbish of popery, a beautiful and finely framed edifice would in time have been constructed, and that ours would not have been the only country in which the patriot's fair idea of well-understood liberty, the politician's view of a perfect constitution, together with the establishment of a pure and reasonable, a sublime and rectified Christianity, might be realized?

But, alas! it frequently happens that the wise and good are not the most adventurous in attacking the mischiefs which they are the first to perceive and lament. With a timidity in some respects virtuous, they fear attempting any thing which may possibly aggravate the evils they deplore, or put to hazard the blessings they already enjoy. They dread plucking up the wheat with the tares, and are rather apt, with a spirit of hopeless resignation,

> 'To bear the ills they have,
> 'Than fly to others that they know not of.'

While sober-minded and considerate men, therefore, sat mourning over this complicated mass of error, and waited till God, in his own good time, should open the blind eyes; the vast scheme of reformation was left to that set of rash and presumptuous adventurers who are generally watching how they may convert public grievances to their own personal account. It was undertaken, not upon the broad basis of a wise and well-digested scheme, of which all the parts should contribute to the perfection of one consistent whole: it was carried on, not by those steady measures, founded on rational deliberation, which are calculated to accomplish so important an end; not with a temperance which indicated a sober love of law, or a sacred regard for religion; but with the most extravagant lust of power, with the most inordinate vanity which perhaps ever instigated human measures—a lust of power, which threatens to extend its desolating influence over the whole globe;—a vanity of the same destructive species with that which stimulated the celebrated incendiary of Ephesus, who being weary of his native obscurity and insignificance, and preferring infamy to oblivion, could contrive no other road to fame and immortality, than that of setting fire to the exquisite temple of Diana. He *was* remembered indeed, as he desired to be, but it was only to be execrated; while the seventh wonder of the world lay prostrate through his crime.

But too often that daring boldness which excites admiration, is not energy, is not virtue, is not genius. It is blindness in the judgment, is vanity in the heart. Strong and unprecedented measures, plans instantaneously conceived, and

as rapidly executed, argue not ability but arrogance. A mind continually driven out in quest of presumptuous novelties, is commonly a mind void of real resources within, and incapable of profiting from observation without. Sure principles cannot be ascertained without experiment, and experiment requires more time than the sanguine can spare, and more patience than the vain possess. In the crude speculations of these rash reformists, few obstructions occur. It is like taking a journey, not on a road, but on a map. Difficulties are unseen, or are kept in the back ground. Impossibilities are smothered, or rather they are not suffered to be born. Nothing is felt but the ardour of enterprise, nothing is seen but the certainy of success. Whereas if difficulties grow out of sober experiment, the disappointments attending them generate humility; the failures inseparable from the best concerted human undertakings, serve at once to multiply resources, and to excite self-distrust; while ideal projectors, and actual demolishers, are the most conceited of mortals. It never occurs to them that those defects of old institutions, on which they frame their objections, are equally palpable to all other men. It never occurs to them that frenzy can demolish faster than wisdom can build; that pulling down the strongest edifice is far more easy than the reconstruction of the meanest, that the most ignorant labourer is competent to the one, while for the other the skill of the architect, and the patient industry of the workman must unite. That a sound judgment will profit by the errors of our predecessors, as well as by their excellences. That there is a retrospective wisdom to which much of our prospective wisdom owes its birth; and that after all, neither the perfection pretended, nor the pride which accompanies the pretension, 'is made for man.'

It is the same over-ruling vanity which operates in their politics, and in their religion which makes Kersaint* boast of carrying his destructive projects from the Tagus to the Brazils, and from Mexico to the shores of the Ganges; which makes him menace to outstrip the enterprise of the most extravagant hero of romance, and almost undertake with the marvellous celerity of the nimble-footed Puck,

> 'To put a girdle round about the earth
> In forty minutes.'—

It is the same vanity, still the master-passion in the bosom of a Frenchman, which leads Dupont and Manuel to undertake in their orations to abolish the Sabbath, to exterminate the priesthood, to erect a pantheon for the world, to restore the peripatetic philosophy, and in short to revive every thing of ancient Greece, except the pure taste, the profound wisdom, the love of virtue, the veneration of the laws, and that high degree of reverence which even virtuous Pagans profess for the Deity.

It is the same spirit of novelty, and the same hostility to established opinions, which dictate the preposterous and impious doctrine that *death is an eternal sleep*. The prophets and apostles assert the contrary. David expressly says, 'when I *awake* up after thy likeness I shall be satisfied;' implying that our true life will begin at our departure out of this world. The destruction or dissolution of the body will be the revival, not the death, of the soul.—It is to the *living* the apostle says, '*awake* thou that *sleepest*, and arise from the DEAD, and Christ shall give thee light.'

It is surely to be charged to the inadequate and wretched hands into which the work of reformation fell, and not to the impossibility of amending the civil and religious institutions of France, that all has succeeded so ill. It cannot be denied perhaps, that a reforming spirit was wanted in that country; their government was not more despotic, than their church was superstitious and corrupt.

But though this is readily granted, and though it may be unfair to blame those who in the *first outset* of the French revolution, rejoiced even on religious motives: yet it is astonishing, how any pious person, even with all the blinding power of prejudice, can think without horror of the *present* state of France. It is no less wonderful how any rational man could, even in the beginning of the revolution, transfer that reasoning, however just it might be, when applied to France, to the case of England. For what can be more unreasonable, than to draw from different and even opposite premises, the same conclusion? Must a revolution be equally necessary in the case of two sorts of government, and two sorts of religion, which are the very reverse of each other?—opposite in their genius, unlike in their fundamental principles, and completely different in each of their component parts.

That despotism, priestcraft, intolerance, and superstition are terrible evils, no candid Christian it is presumed will deny; but, blessed be God, though these mischiefs are not yet entirely banished from the face of the earth, they have scarcely any existence in this happy country.

To guard against a real danger, and to cure actual abuses, of which the existence has been first plainly proved, by the application of a suitable remedy, requires diligence as well as courage; observation as well as genius; patience and temperance as well as zeal and spirit. It requires the union of that clear head and sound heart which constitute the true patriot. But to conjure up fancied evils; or even greatly to aggravate real ones; and then to exhaust our labour in combating them, is the characteristic of a distempered imagination and an ill governed spirit.

Romantic crusades, the ordeal trial, drowning of witches, the torture, and the inquisition, have been justly reprobated as the foulest stains of the respective periods in which, to the disgrace of human reason, they existed; but would any man be rationally employed, who should now stand up gravely to declaim against these as the predominating mischiefs of the present century? Even the whimsical knight of La Mancha himself, would not fight wind-mills that were pulled down; yet I will venture to say, that the above-named evils are at present little more chimerical than some of those now so bitterly complained of among us

* See his speech enumerating their intended projects.

It is not as Dryden said, when one of his works was unmercifully abused, that the piece has not faults enough in it, but the critics have not had the wit to fix upon the right ones.

It is allowed that, as a nation, we do not want faults; but our political critics err in the objects of their censure. They say little of those real and pressing evils resulting from our own corruption, of that depravity which constitutes the actual miseries of life; while they gloomily speculate upon a thousand imaginary political grievances, and fancy that the reformation of our rulers and our legislatures is all that is wanting to make us a happy people. Alas!

> How small, of all that human hearts endure,
> That part, which kings or laws can cause or cure.

The principles of just and equitable government were, perhaps, never more fully established, nor was public justice ever more exactly administered. Pure and undefiled religion was never laid more open to all, than at this day. I wish I could say we were a religious people; but this at least may be safely asserted, that the great truths of religion were never better understood; that Christianity was never more completely stripped from all its incumbrances and disguises, or more thoroughly purged from human infusions, and from whatever is debasing in human institutions, than it is at this day in this country.

In vain we look around us to discover the ravages of religious tyranny, or the triumphs of priestcraft or superstition. Who attempts to impose any yoke upon our reason? Who seeks to put any blind on the eyes of the most illiterate? Who fetters the judgment or enslaves the conscience of the meanest of our Protestant brethren? Nay, such is the power of pure Christianity, that genuine Christianity, which is exhibited in our liturgy to enlighten the understanding, as well as to reform the heart, and such are the advantages which the most abject in this country possess for enjoying its privileges, that the poorest peasant among us, if he be as religious as multitudes of his station really are, has clear ideas of God and his own soul, purer notions of that true liberty wherewith Christ has made him free, than the mere disputer of this world, though he possess every splendid advantage which education, wisdom, and genius can bestow. I am not speaking either of a *perfect* form of government, or of a *perfect* church establishment, because I am speaking of institutions which are human; and the very idea of their being human involves also the idea of imperfection. But I am speaking of the best constituted government, and the best constituted national church, with which the history of mankind is yet acquainted. Time, that silent instructor, and experience, that great rectifier of the judgment, will more and more discover to us what is wanting to the perfection of both. And if we may trust to the active genius of Christian liberty, and to that liberal and candid spirit which is the characteristic of the age we live in, there is little doubt but that a temperate and well regulated zeal will, at a convenient season, correct whatsoever sound policy shall suggest as wise and expedient to be corrected.

If there are errors in the church, and it does not perhaps require the sharp-sightedness of a keen observer to discover that there are, there is at least nothing like fierce intolerance, or spiritual usurpation. A fiery zeal and uncharitable bigotry might have furnished matter for a well deserved ecclesiastical philipic in other times; but thanks to the temper of the present day, unless we conjure up a spirit of religious chivalry, and sally forth in quest of imaginary evils, we shall not apprehend any danger from persecution or enthusiasm. If grievances there are, they do not appear to be those which result from polemic pride, and rigid bigotry, but are of a kind far different.

If the warm sun of prosperity has unhappily produced its too common effect, in relaxing the vigour of religious exertion; if, in too many instances, security has engendered sloth, and affluence produced dissipation; let us implore the Divine grace, that the present alarming crisis may rouse the careless, and quicken the supine; that our pastors may be convinced that the Church has less to fear from external violence, than from internal decay; nay, that even the violence of attack is often really beneficial, by exciting that activity which enables us to repel danger, and that increase of diligence is the truest accession of strength. May they be convinced that the love of power, with which their enemies perhaps unjustly accuse them, is not more fatal than the love of pleasure; that no stoutness of orthodoxy in opinion can atone for a too close assimilation with the manners of the world; that heresy without, is less to be dreaded than indifference from within; that the most regular clerical education, the most scrupulous attention to forms, and even the strictest conformity to the established discipline and opinions of the Church, will avail but little to the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, without a strict spirit of personal watchfulness, habitual self-denial, and laborious exertion.

Though it is not here intended to animadvert on any political complaint which is not in some sort connected with religion; yet it is presumed it may not be thought quite foreign to the present purpose to remark, that among the reigning complaints against our civil administration, the most plausible seems to be that excited by the supposed danger of an invasion on the liberty of the press.—Were this apprehension well founded, we should indeed be threatened by one of the most grievous misfortunes that can befall a free country. The liberty of the press is not only a most noble privilege itself, but the guardian of all our other liberties and privileges, and, notwithstanding the abuse which has lately been made of this valuable possession, yet every man of a sound unprejudiced mind is well aware that true liberty of every kind is scarcely inferior in importance to any object for which human activity can contend. Nay, the very abuse of a good, often makes us more sensible of the value of the good itself. Fair and well-proportioned freedom will ever retain all her native beauty to a judicious eye, nor will the genuine loveliness of her form be the less prized

for our having lately contemplated the distorted features and false colouring of her caricature, as presented to us by the daubing hand of Gallic patriots.

But highly as the freedom of the press ought to be valued, would it really be so very heavy a misfortune, if corrupt and inflaming publications, calculated to destroy that virtue which every good man is anxious to preserve, that peace which every honest man is struggling to secure, should, just at this alarming period, be somewhat difficult to be obtained? Would it be so very grievous a national calamity, if the crooked progeny of treason and blasphemy should find it a little inconvenient to venture forth from their lurking holes, and range abroad in open day? Is the cheapness of poison, or the facility with which it may be obtained, to be reckoned among the real advantages of medicinal repositories? And can the easiness of access to seditious or atheistical writings, be seriously numbered among the substantial blessings of any country? Would France, at this day, have had much solid cause of regret, if most of the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and d'Alembert (the prolific seed of their wide-spreading tree) had found more difficulty in getting into the world, or been less profusely circulated when in it? And might not England at this moment have been just as happy in her ignorance, if the famous orations of citizen Dupont and citizen Manuel, had been confined to their own enlightened and philosophical countries?*

To return to these orations:—We have too often, in our own nation, seen and deplored the mischiefs of irreligion, arising incidentally from a neglected or an abused education. But what mischiefs will not irreligion produce, when, in the projected schools of France, as announced to us by the two metaphysical legislators above mentioned, impiety shall be taught by system? When out of the mouths of babes and sucklings the monstrous opinions, exhibited by Dupont and Manuel, shall be perfected? When the fruits of atheism dropping from their newly planted tree of liberty, shall pollute the very fountains of knowledge? When education being poisoned in all her springs, the rising generation shall be taught to look on atheism as decorous, and Christianity as eccentric? When atheism shall be considered as a proof of accomplished breeding, and religion as the stamp of a vulgar education? When the regular course of obedience to masters and tutors will consist in renouncing the hope of everlasting happiness, and in deriding the idea of future punishment? When every man and every child, in conformity with the principles professed in the convention, shall presume to say with his tongue, what hitherto even the fool has only dared to say in heart, *That there is no God.**

Christianity, which involves the whole duty of man, divides that duty into two portions—the love of God and the love of our neighbour. Now, as these two principles have their being from the same source, and derive their vitality from the union; so impiety furnishes the direct converse—That atheism which destroys all belief in, and of course cuts off all love of, and communion with God, disqualifies for the due performance of the duties of civil and social life. There is, in its way, the same consistency, agreement and uniformity, between the principles which constitute an infidel and a bad member of society, as there is between giving 'glory to God in the highest,' and exercising 'peace and good will to men.'

My fellow Christians! This is not a strife of words; this is not a controversy about opinions of comparatively small importance, such as you have been accustomed at home to hear even good men dispute upon, when perhaps they would have acted a more wise and amiable part had they remained silent, sacrificing their mutual differences on the altar of Christian charity: But this bold renunciation of the first great fundamental article of faith, this daring rejection of the Supreme Creator and Ruler of the world, is laying the axe and striking with a vigorous stroke at the root of all human happiness. It is tearing up the very foundation of human hope, and extirpating every true principle of human excellence. It is annihilating the very existence of virtue, by annihilating its motives, its sanctions, its obligations, its object, and its end.

That atheism will be the favoured and the popular tenet in France seems highly probable; whilst in the wild contempt of all religion, which has lately had the arrogance to call itself toleration, it is not improbable that christianity itself may be tolerated in that country, as a sect not persecuted perhaps, but derided. It is, however, far from clear, that this will be the case, if the new doctrines should become generally

* Extract from Mons. Manuel's Letter to the National Convention, dated January 26, 1793.

'The priests of a republic are its magistrates, the law its gospel. What mission can be more august than that of the instructors of youth, who having themselves escaped from the hereditary prejudice of all sects, point out to the human race their inalienable rights, founded upon that sublime wisdom which pervades all nature. Religious faith impressed on the mind of an infant seven years old, will lead to perfect slavery: or dogmas at that age are only arbitrary commands. Ah! what is belief without examination, without conviction. It renders men either melancholy or mad, &c.

'Legislators! Virtue wants neither temples nor synagogues. It is not from priests we learn to do good or noble actions. No religion must be taught in schools which are to be national ones. To prescribe one would be to prefer it to all others.—There history must speak of sects, as she speaks of other events. It would become your wisdom, perhaps, to order that the pupils of the republic should not enter the temples before the age of seventeen. Reason must be taken by surprise, &c. Hardly were children born before they fell into the hands of priests, who first blinded their eyes, and then delivered them over to kings. Wherever kings cease to govern, priests must cease to educate'

* It is a remarkable circumstance, that though the French are continually binding themselves by oaths, they have not mentioned the name of God in any oath which has been invented since the revolution. It may also appear curious to the English readers, that though in almost all the addresses of congratulation, which were sent by the associated clubs from this country to the National Convention, the success of the French arms was in part ascribed to Divine providence, yet in none of the answers was the least notice ever taken of this. And to show how the same spirit spreads itself among every description of men in France, their admiral Latouche, after having described the dangers to which his ship was exposed in a storm, says, 'we owe our existence to the tutelary Genius which watches over the destiny of the French republic, and the defenders of liberty and equality.'

prevalent. Atheists are not without their bigotry; they too have their spirit of exclusion and monopoly in a degree not inferior to the most superstitious monks. And that very spirit of intolerance which is now so much the object of their invective, would probably be no less the rule of their practice, if their will should ever be backed by power. It is true that Voltaire and the other great apostles of infidelity have employed all the acuteness of their wit to convince us that irreligion never persecutes. To prove this, every art of false citation, partial extract, suppressed evidence, and gross misrepresentation, has been put in practice. But if this unsupported assertion were true, then Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin, Cyprian, and Basil, did not suffer for the faith once delivered to the saints. Then the famous Christian apologists, most of them learned converts from the pagan philosophy, idly employed their zeal to abate a clamour which did not exist, and to propitiate emperors who did not persecute. Then Tacitus, Trajan, Pliny, and Julian, those bitter enemies to Christianity, are suborned witnesses on her side. Then ecclesiastical history is a series of falsehoods, and the book of martyrs a legend of romance.*

That one extravagant mischief should produce its opposite, is agreeable to the ordinary course of human events. That to the credulity of a dark and superstitious religion, a wanton contempt of all decency, and an unbridled profaneness should succeed, that to a government absolutely despotic, an utter abhorrence of all restraint and subordination should follow, though it is deplorable, yet it is not strange. The human mind in flying from the extreme verge of one error, seldom stops till she has reached the opposite extremity. She generally passes by with a lofty disdain the obvious truth which lies directly in her road, and which is indeed commonly to be found in the midway, between the error she is flying from, and the error she is pursuing.

Is it a breach of Christian charity to conclude, from a view of the present state of the French, that since that deluded people have given up GOD, GOD, by a righteous retribution, seems to have renounced them for a time, and to have given them over to their own heart's lust, *to work iniquity with greediness?* If such is their present career, what is likely to be their appointed end? How fearfully applicable to them seems that awful denunciation against an ancient, offending people—'The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart.'

It is no part of the present design to enter into a detail of their political conduct; but I cannot omit to remark, that the very man in their long list of kings who seemed best to have deserved their assumed application of *most Christian*, was also most favourable to their acquisition of liberty:* his moderation and humanity facilitated their plans and increased their power, which, with unparalleled ingratitude, they employed to degrade his person and character in the eyes of mankind, by the blackest and most detestable arts, and at length to terminate his calamities by a crime which has excited the grief and indignation of all Europe.

On the trial and murder of that most unfortunate king, and on the inhuman proceedings which accompanied them, I shall purposely avoid dwelling, for it is not the design of these remarks to excite the passions. I will only say, that so monstrous has been the inversion of all order, law, humanity, justice, received opinion, good faith, and religion, that the conduct of his bloody executioners seems to have exhibited the most scrupulous conformity with the principles announced in the speeches we have been considering. In this one instance we must not call the French an inconsequent people. Savage brutality, rapine, treason and murder have been the noxious fruit gathered from these thorns; the baneful produce of these thistles. An overturn of all morals has been the well-proportioned offspring of a subversion of all principle.

But, notwithstanding the consistency, in this instance, between cause and consequence; so new and surprising have been the turns in their extraordinary projects, that to forctell what their next enterprize would be from what their last has been, has long baffled all calculation, has long bid defiance to all conjecture. Analogy from history, the study of past events, and an investigation of present principles and passions judgment, memory, comparison, combination and deduction, afford human sagacity but very slender assistance in its endeavours to develope their future plans. We have not even the data of consistent wickedness on which to build rational conclusions. Their crimes, though visibly connected by uniform depravity, are yet so surprisingly diversified by interfering absurdities, as to furnish no ground on which reasonable argument can be founded. Nay, such is their incredible eccentricity, that it is hardly extravagant to affirm, that improbability is become rather an additional reason for expecting any given event to take place.

But let us, in this yet happy country, learn at least one great and important truth from the errors of this distracted people. Their conduct has always illustrated a position, which is not the less sound for having been often controverted—That no degree of wit and learning, no progress in commerce, no advances in the knowledge of nature, or in the embellishments of art, can ever thoroughly tame that savage, the *natural human heart*, without RELIGION. The arts of social life may give sweetness to manners, and grace to language, and induce, in some degree, a respect for justice, truth, and humanity; but attainments derived from such inferior causes are no more than the semblance and the shadow of the qualities derived from pure Christianity. Varnish is an extraneous ornament, but true

* It may be objected here, that this is not applicable to the state of France; for that the Roman emperors were not atheists or deists, but polytheists, with an established religion. To this it may be answered, that modern infidels not only deny the ten pagan persecutions, but accuse Christianity of being the only persecuting religion; and affirm that only those who refuse to embrace it discover a spirit of toleration.

* Of this the French themselves were so well persuaded, that the title of *Restorateur de la liberte Francoise*, was solemnly given to Louis XVIth by the Constituent Assembly.

polish is a proof of the solidity of the body on whose surface it is produced. It depends greatly on the nature of the substance, is not superinduced by accidental causes, but in a good measure proceeds from internal soundness.

The poets of that classic country, whose style, sentiments, manners, and religion, the French so affectedly labour to imitate, have left keen and biting satires on the Roman vices. Against the late proceedings in France, no satirist need employ his pen; that of the historian will be quite sufficient. Truth will be the severest satire; fact will put fable out of countenance; and the crimes which are usually held up to our abhorrence, and are rejected for their exaggeration in works of invention, will be regarded as flat and feeble by those who shall peruse the records of the tenth of August, of the second and third of September, and of the twenty-first of January.

If the same astonishing degeneracy in taste, principle, and practice, should ever come to flourish among *us*, Britain may still live to exult in the desolation of her cities, and in the destruction of her finest monuments of art; she may triumph in the peopling of the fortresses of her rocks and her forests; may exult in being once more restored to that glorious state of *liberty and equality*, when all subsisted by rapine and the chase; when all, O enviable privilege! were equally savage, equally indigent, and equally naked; her sons may extol it as the restoration of reason, the triumph of nature, and the consummation of liberty, that they are again brought to feed on acorns, instead of bread! Groves of consecrated misletoe may happily succeed to useless cornfields; and Thor and Woden may hope once more to be invested with all their bloody honours

Let not any serious reader feel indignation, as if pains were ungenerously taken to involve their religious with their political opinions. Far be it from me to wound, unnecessarily, the feelings of a people, many of whom are truly estimable: but it is much to be suspected, that certain opinions in politics have a tendency to lead to certain opinions in religion. Where so much is at stake, they will do well to keep their consciences tender, in order to which they should try to keep their discernment acute. They will do well to observe, that the same restless spirit of innovation is busily operating under various, though seemingly unconnected forms; to observe, that the same impatience of restraint, the same contempt of order, peace, and subordination, which makes men bad citizens, makes them bad Christians; and that to this secret and almost infallible connexion between religious and political sentiment, does France owe her present unparalleled anarchy and impiety.

There are doubtless in that unhappy country multitudes of virtuous and reasonable men, who rather silently acquiesce in the authority of their present turbulent government, than embrace its principles or promote its projects from the sober conviction of their own judgment. These, together with those conscientious exiles whom this nation so honourably protects, may yet live to rejoice in the restoration of true liberty and solid peace to their native country, when light and order shall spring from the present darkness and confusion, and the reign of chaos shall be no more.

May I be permitted a short digression on the subject of the conduct of Great Britain to these exiles? It shall only be to remark, that all the boasted conquests of our Edwards and our Henrys over the French nation, do not confer such substantial glory on our own country, as she derives from having received, protected, and supported among innumerable multitudes of other sufferers, at a time and under circumstances so peculiarly disadvantageous to herself, *three thousand priests*, of a nation habitually her enemy, and of a religion intolerant and hostile to her own. This is the solid triumph of true Christianity; and it is worth remarking, that the deeds which poets and historians celebrate as rare and splendid actions; which they record as sublime instances of greatness of soul, in the heroes of the pagan world, are but the ordinary and habitual virtues which occur in the common course of action among Christians; quietly performing without effort or exertion, and with no view to renown or reward; but resulting naturally and consequently from the religion to which they belong.

So predominating is the power of an example we have once admired, and set up as a standard of imitation, and so fascinating has been the ascendency of the convention over the minds of those whose approbation of French politics commenced in the earlier periods of the revolution, that it extends to the most trivial circumstances. I cannot forbear to notice this in an instance which, though inconsiderable in itself, yet ceases to be so when we view it in the light of a prevailing symptom of the reigning disease.

While the fantastic phraseology of the new republic is such, as to be almost as disgusting to sound taste as their doctrines are to sound morals, it is curious to observe how deeply the addresses, which have been sent to it from the clubs* in this country, have been infected with it, as far at least as phrases and terms are objects of imitation. In the more leading points it is but justice to the French convention to confess, that they are hitherto without rivals and without imitators; for who can aspire to emulate that compound of anarchy and atheism which in their debates is mixed up with the pedantry of a school-boy, the jargon of a cabal, and the vulgarity and ill-breeding of a mob? One instance of the prevailing cant may suffice, where a hundred might be adduced, and it is not the most exceptionable. To demolish every existing law and establishment; to destroy the fortunes and ruin the principles of every country into which they are carrying their destructive arms and their frantic doctrines; to untie or cut asunder every bond which holds society together; to impose their own arbitrary shackles where they succeed, and to demolish every thing where they fail. This desolating system, by a most unaccountable perversion of language, they are pleased to call by the endearing name of *fraternization*; and fraternization is one of the favourite terms which their admirers in this country have adopted. Little would a simple

* See the collection of addresses from England

stranger, uninitiated in this new and surprising dialect, uninstructed by the political lexicographers of modern France, imagine that the peaceful terms of *fellow-citizen* and of *brother*, the winning offer of *freedom* and *happiness*, and the warm embrace of *fraternity*, were only watch-words by which they, in effect,

Cry havoc,
And let slip the dogs of war.

In numberless other instances, the fashionable language of France at this day would be as unintelligible to the correct writers of the age of Louis the XIV. as their fashionable notions of liberty would be irreconcilable with those of the true revolution patriots of his great contemporary and victorious rival William the Third.

Such is indeed their puerile rage for novelty in the invention of new words, and the perversion of their taste in the use of old ones, that the celebrated Vossius, whom Christiana of Sweden oddly complimented by saying, that he was so learned as not only to know whence all words came, but whither they were going, would, *were he admitted to the honour of a sitting*, be obliged to confess, that he was equally puzzled to tell the one, as to foretel the other.

If it shall please the Almighty in his anger to let loose this infatuated people, as a scourge for the iniquities of the human race; if they are delegated by infinite justice to act 'as storm and tempest fulfilling his word,' if they are commissioned to perform the errand of the destroying lightning or the avenging thunderbolt, let us try at least to extract personal benefit from a national calamity; let every one of us, high and low, rich and poor, enter upon this serious and humbling inquiry, how much his own individual offences have contributed to that awful aggregate of public guilt, which has required such a visitation. Let us carefully examine in what proportion we have separately added to that common stock of abounding iniquity, the description of which formed the character of an ancient nation, and is so peculiarly applicable to our own—*Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness.* Let every one of us humbly inquire, in the self-suspecting language of the disciples of their Divine Master—*Lord, is it I?* Let us learn to fear the fleets and armies of the enemy, much less than those iniquities at home, which this alarming dispensation may be intended to chastise.

The war which the French had declared against us, is of a kind altogether unexampled in every respect; insomuch that human wisdom is baffled when it would pretend to conjecture what may be the event. But this at least we may safely say, that it is not so much the force of French bayonets, as the contamination of French principles, that ought to excite our apprehensions. We trust, that through the blessing of God we shall be defended from their open hostilities, by the temperate wisdom of our rulers, and the bravery of our fleets and armies; but the domestic danger arising from licentious and irreligious principles among ourselves, can only be guarded against by the personal care and vigilance of every one of us who values religion and the good order of society in this world and an eternity of happiness in the next.

God grant that those who go forth to fight our battles, instead of being intimidated by the number of their enemies, may bear in mind, that 'there is no restraint with God to save by many or by few.' And let the meanest among us who remains at home remember also, that even he may contribute to the internal safety of the country, by the integrity of his private life, and to the success of her defenders, by following them with his fervent prayers. And in what war can the sincere Christian ever have stronger inducements and more reasonable encouragement to pray for the success of his country, than in this? Without entering far into any political principles, the discussion of which would be in a great measure foreign to the design of this little tract, it may be remarked, that the unchristian principle of *revenge* is not our motive to this war; *conquest* is not our object; nor have we had recourse to hostility in order to effect a change in the internal government of France.* The present war is undoubtedly undertaken entirely on defensive principles. It is in defence of our king, our constitution, our religion, our laws, and consequently our *liberty*, in the sound, sober, and rational sense of that term. It is to defend ourselves from the savage violence of a crusade, made against all religion, as well as all government. If ever therefore a war was undertaken on the ground of self-defence and necessity—if ever men might be *liberally* said to fight *pro* ARIS *et* FOCIS, this seems to be the occasion.

The ambition of conquerors has been the source of great and extensive evils: religious fanaticism, of still greater. But little as I am disposed to become the apologist of either the one principle or the other, there is no extravagance in asserting, that they have seemed incapable of producing, even in ages, that extent of mischief, that variety of ruin, that comprehensive desolation, which *philosophy, falsely so called*, has produced in three years.

Christians! it is not a small thing—*it is your life!* The pestilence of irreligion which you detest, will insinuate itself imperceptibly with those manners, phrases, and principles which you admire and adopt. It is the humble wisdom of a Christian, to shrink from the most distant approaches of sin: to abstain from the very appearance of evil. If we would fly from the deadly contagion of atheism, let us fly from those seemingly remote but not very indirect paths which lead to it. Let France choose this day whom she will serve; *but as for us and our houses, we will serve the Lord.*

And, O gracious and long-suffering God! before that awful period arrives, which shall exhibit the dreadful effects of such an education as the French nation are instituting; before a race of men can be trained up, not only without the knowledge of Thee, but in the contempt of Thy most holy law, do Thou, in great mercy change the heart of this people as the heart of one man. Give them not finally over to their own corrupt imaginations, to their own heart's lusts. But after having made them a fearful

* See the report of Mr. Pitt's speech in the House of Commons, on February 12, 1793, published by Woodfall.

example to all the nations of the earth, what a people *can* do, who have cast off the fear of Thee, do Thou graciously bring them back to a sense of that law which they have violated, and to a participation of that mercy which they have abused; so that they may happily find, while the discovery can be attended with hope and consolation, that *doubtless there is a reward for the righteous; verily, there is a God who judgeth the earth.*

STRICTURES

ON THE MODERN SYSTEM OF FEMALE EDUCATION

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT PREVALENT AMONG WOMEN OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

May you so raise your character that you may help to make the next age a better thing, and leave posterity in your debt, for the advantage it shall receive by your example.—*Lord Halifax.*

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the Fall!
Thou art not known where PLEASURE is ador'd,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist.
Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!—*Cowper.*

INTRODUCTION.

IT is a singular injustice which is often exercised towards women, first to give them a very defective education, and then to expect from them the most undeviating purity of conduct—to train them in such a manner as shall lay them open to the most dangerous faults, and then to censure them for not proving faultless. Is it not unreasonable and unjust to express disappointment if our daughters should, in their subsequent lives, turn out precisely that very kind of character for which it would be evident to an unprejudiced by-stander that the whole scope and tenor of their instruction had been systematically preparing them?

Some reflections on the present erroneous system are here with great deference submitted to public consideration. The author is apprehensive that she shall be accused of betraying the interests of her sex by laying open their defects: but surely an earnest wish to turn their attention to objects calculated to promote their true dignity, is not the office of an enemy. So to expose the weakness of the land as to suggest the necessity of internal improvement, and to point out the means of effectual defence, is not treachery, but patriotism.

Again, it may be objected to this little work, that many errors are here ascribed to women which by no means belongs to them *exclusively*, and that it seems to confine to the sex those faults which are common to the species: but this is in some measure unavoidable. In speaking on the qualities of one sex, the moralist is somewhat in the situation of the geographer, who is treating on the nature of one country: the air, soil, and produce of the land which he is describing, cannot fail in many essential points to resemble those of other countries under the same parallel; yet it is his business to descant on the one without adverting to the other; and though in drawing the map he may happen to introduce some of the neighbouring coast, yet his principal attention must be confined to that country which he proposes to describe, without taking into account the resembling circumstances of the adjacent shores.

It may be also objected that the opinion here suggested on the state of manners among the higher classes of our countrywomen, may seem to controvert the just encomiums of modern travellers, who generally concur in ascribing a decided superiority to the ladies of this country over those of every other. But such is, in general, the state of foreign manners, that the comparative praise is almost an injury to *English* women. To be flattered for excelling those whose standard of excellence is very low, is but a degrading kind of commendation; for the value of all praise derived from superiority, depends on the worth of the competitor. The character of British ladies, with all the unparalleled advantages they possess, must never be determined by comparison with the women of other nations, but by comparing them with what they themselves might be if all their talents and unrivalled opportunities were turned to the best account.

Again, it may be said, that the author is less disposed to expatiate on excellence than error: but the office of the historian of human manners is delineation rather than panegyric. Were the end in view eulogium and not improvement, eulogium would have been far more gratifying, nor would just objects for praise have been difficult to find. Even in her own limited sphere of observation, the author is acquainted with much excellence in the class of which she treats—with women who, possessing learning which would be thought extensive in the other sex, set an example of deep humility to their own—women who, distinguished for wit and genius, are eminent

for domestic qualities—who, excelling in the fine arts, have carefully enriched their understandings—who, enjoying great influence, devote it to the glory of God—who, possessing elevated rank, think their noblest style and title is that of a Christian.

That there is also much worth which is little known, she is persuaded; for it is the modest nature of goodness to exert itself quietly, while a few characters of the opposite cast seem, by the rumour of their exploits, to fill the world; and by their noise to multiply their numbers. It often happens that a very small party of people, by occupying the foreground, by seizing the public attention and monopolizing the public talk, contrive to appear to be the great body: a few active spirits, provided their activity take the wrong turn, and support the wrong cause, seem to fill the scene; and a few disturbers of order, who have the talent of thus exciting a false idea of their multitudes by their mischiefs, actually gain strength, and swell their numbers, by this fallacious arithmetic.

But the present work is no more intended for a panegyric on those purer characters who seek not human praise because they act from a higher motive, than for a satire on the avowedly licentious, who, urged by the impulse of the moment, resist no inclination; and led away by the love of fashion, dislike no censure, so it may serve to rescue them from neglect or oblivion.

There are, however, multitudes of the young and the well disposed, who have as yet taken no decided part, who are just launching on the ocean of life, just about to lose their own right convictions, virtually preparing to counteract their better propensities, and unreluctantly yielding themselves to be carried down the tide of popular practices: sanguine, thoughtless, and confident of safety.—To these the author would gently hint, that when once embarked, it will be no longer easy to say to their passions, or even to their principles, 'Thus far shall ye go, and no further.' Their struggles will grow fainter, their resistance will become feebler, till borne down by the confluence of example, temptation, appetite, and habit, resistance and opposition will soon be the only things of which thy will learn to be ashamed.

Should any reader revolt at what is conceived to be unwarranted strictness in this little book, let it not be thrown by in disgust before the following short consideration be weighed.—If in this christian country we are actually beginning to regard the solemn office of Baptism as merely furnishing an article to the parish register—if we are learning from our indefatigable teachers, to consider this Christian rite as a legal ceremony retained for the sole purpose of recording the *age* of our children;—then, indeed, the prevaling system of education and manners of which these pages presume to animadvert may be adopted with propriety, and persisted in with safety, without entailing on our children or on ourselves the peril of broken promises or the guilt of violated vows—But, if the obligation which christian Baptism imposes be really binding—if the ordinance have, indeed, a meaning beyond a mere secular transaction, beyond a record of names and dates—if it be an institution by which the child is solemnly devoted to God as his Father, to Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit as his sanctifier; if there be no definite period assigned when the obligation of fulfilling the duties it enjoins shall be superseded—if, having once dedicated our offspring to their Creator, we no longer dare to mock Him by bringing them up in ignorance of His will and neglect of His laws—if, after having enlisted them under the banners of Christ, to fight manfully against the three great enemies of mankind, we are no longer at liberty to let them lay down their arms; much less to lead them to act as if they were in alliance, instead of hostility with these enemies—if, after having promised that they shall renounce the vanities of the world, we are not allowed to invalidate the engagement—if, after such a covenant we should tremble to make these renounced vanities, the supreme object of our own pursuit or of *their* instruction—if all this be really so, then the Strictures on Modern Education, and on the Habits of Polished Life, will not be found so repugnant to truth, and reason, and common sense, as may on a first view be supposed.

But if on candidly summing up the evidence, the design and scope of the author be fairly judged, not by the customs or opinions of the worldly (for every English subject has a right to object to a suspected or prejudiced jury) but by an appeal to that divine law which is the only infallible rule of judgment; if on such an appeal her views and principles shall be found censurable for their rigour, absurd in their requisitions, or preposterous in their restrictions, she will have no right to complain of such a verdict, because she will then stand condemned by that court to whose decision she implicitly submits.

Let it not be suspected that the author arrogantly conceives *herself* to be exempt from that natural corruption of the heart which it is one chief object of this slight work to exhibit; that she superciliously erects herself into the implacable censor of her sex and of the world, as if from the critic's chair she were coldly pointing out the faults and errors of another order of beings, in whose welfare she had not that lively interest which can only flow from the tender and intimate participation of fellow-feeling.

With a deep self-abasement, arising from a strong conviction of being indeed a partaker in the same corrupt nature; together with a full persuasion of the many and great defects of these pages, and a sincere consciousness of her inability to do justice to a subject which, however, a sense of duty impelled her to undertake, she commits herself to the candour of that public, which has so frequently, in her instance, accepted a right intention as a substitute for a powerful performance.

Bath, March 14, 1799.

STRICTURES

ON THE MODERN SYSTEM OF FEMALE EDUCATION.

CHAP. I.

Address to women of rank and fortune, on the effects of their influence on society.—Suggestions for the exertion of it in various instances.

Among the talents for the application of which women of the higher class will be peculiarly accountable, there is one, the importance of which they can scarcely rate too highly. This talent is influence. We read of the greatest orator of antiquity, that the wisest plans which it had cost him years to frame, a woman could overturn in a single day; and when we consider the variety of mischiefs which an ill-directed influence has been known to produce, we are led to reflect with the most sanguine hope on the beneficial effects to be expected from the same powerful force when exerted in its true direction.

The general state of civilized society depends, more than those are aware who are not accustomed to scrutinize into the springs of human action, on the prevailing sentiments and habits of women, and on the nature and degree of the estimation in which they are held. Even those who admit the power of female elegance on the manners of men, do not always attend to the influence of female principles on their character. In the former case, indeed, women are apt to be sufficiently conscious of their power, and not backward in turning it to account. But there are nobler objects to be effected by the exertion of their powers, and unfortunately, ladies, who are often unreasonably confident where they ought to be diffident, are sometimes capriciously diffident just when they ought to feel where their true importance lies; and feeling to exert it. To use their boasted power over mankind to no higher purpose than the gratification of vanity or the indulgence of pleasure, is the degrading triumph of those fair victims to luxury, caprice, and despotism, whom the laws and the religion of the voluptuous prophet of Arabia exclude from light, and liberty, and knowledge: and it is humbling to reflect, that in those countries in which fondness for the mere persons of women is carried to the highest excess, *they are slaves;* and that their moral and intellectual degradation increases in direct proportion to the adoration which is paid to mere external charms.

But I turn to the bright reverse of this mortifying scene; to a country where our sex enjoys the blessings of liberal instruction, of reasonable laws, of a pure religion, and all the endearing pleasures of an equal, social, virtuous, and delightful intercourse. I turn, with an earnest hope, that women thus richly endowed with the bounties of Providence, will not content themselves with polishing when they are able to reform; with entertaining when they may awaken; and with captivating for a day, when they may bring into action powers of which the effects may be commensurate with eternity.

In this moment of alarm and peril, I would call on them with a 'warning voice,' which should stir up every latent principle in their minds, and kindle every slumbering energy in their hearts: I would call on them to come forward, and contribute their full and fair proportion towards the saving of their country. But I would call on them to come forward, without departing from the refinement of their character, without derogating from the dignity of their rank, without blemishing the delicacy of their sex; I would call them to the best and most appropriate exertion of their power, to raise the depressed tone of public morals, and to awaken the drowsy spirit of religious principle. They know too well how arbitrarily they give the law to manners, and with how despotic a sway they fix the standard of fashion. But this is not enough; this is a low mark, a prize not worthy of their high and holy calling. For, on the use which women of the superior class may now be disposed to make of that power delegated to them by the courtesy of custom, by the honest gallantry of the heart, by the imperious control of virtuous affections, by the habits of civilized states, by the usages of polished society; on the use, I say, which they shall hereafter make of this influence, will depend, in no low degree, the well-being of those states, and the virtue and happiness, nay perhaps the very existence, of that society.

At this period when our country can only hope to stand by opposing a bold and noble *unanimity* to the most tremendous confederacies against religion, and order, and governments, which the world ever saw, what an accession would it bring to the public strength, could we prevail on beauty, and rank, and talents, and virtue, confederating their several powers, to exert themselves with a patriotism at once firm and feminine, for the general good! I am not sounding an alarm to female warriors, or exciting female politicians: I hardly know which of the two is the most disgusting and unnatural character. Propriety is to a woman what the great Roman critic says action is to an orator; it is the first, the second, the third requisite. A woman may be knowing, active, witty and amusing; but without propriety she cannot be amiable. Propriety is the centre in which all the lines of duty and of agreeableness meet. It is to character what proportion is to figure, and grace to attitude. It does not depend on any one perfection, but it is the result of general excellence. It shows itself by a regular, orderly, undeviating course; and never starts from its sober orbit into any splendid eccentricities; for it would be ashamed of such praise as it might extort by any deviations from its proper path. It renounces all commendation but what is characteristic; and I would make it the criterion of true taste, right principle, and genuine feeling, in a woman, whether she would be less touched with all the flattery of romantic and exaggerated panegyric than

with that beautiful picture of correct and elegant propriety which Milton draws of our first mother, when he delineates

> 'Those thousand *decencies* which daily flow
> From all her words and actions.'

Even the influence of religion is to be exercised with discretion. A female Polemic wanders nearly as far from the limits prescribed to her sex, as a female Machiavel or warlike Thalestris. Fierceness has made almost as few converts as the sword, and both are peculiarly ungraceful in a female. Even *religious* violence has human tempers of its own to indulge, and is gratifying itself when it would be thought to be serving God. Let not the bigot place her natural passions to the account of Christianity, or imagine she is pious when she is only passionate. Let her bear in mind that a Christian doctrine is always to be defended with a Christian spirit, and not make herself amends by the stoutness of her orthodoxy for the badness of her temper. Many, because they defend a religious opinion with pertinacity, seem to fancy that they thereby acquire a kind of right to withhold the meekness and obedience which should be necessarily involved in the principle.

But the character of a consistent Christian is as carefully to be maintained as that of a fiery disputant is to be avoided; and she who is afraid to avow her principles, or ashamed to defend them, has little claim to that honourable title. A profligate who laughs at the most sacred institutions and keeps out of the way of every thing which comes under the appearance of formal instruction, may be disconcerted by the modest, but spirited rebuke of a delicate woman, whose life adorns the doctrines which her conversation defends: but she who administers reproof with ill-breeding, defeats the effect of her remedy. On the other hand, there is a dishonest way of labouring to conciliate the favour of a whole company, though of characters and principles irreconcilably opposite. The words may be so guarded as not to shock the believer, while the eye and voice may be so accommodated, as not to discourage the infidel. She who, with a half-earnestness trims between the truth and the fashion; who while she thinks it creditable to defend the cause of religion, yet does it in a faint tone, a studied ambiguity of phrase, and a certain expression in her countenance, which proves that she is not displeased with what she affects to censure, or that she is afraid to lose her reputation for wit, in proportion as she advances her credit for piety, injures the cause more than he who attacked it, for she proves either that she does not believe what she professes, or that she does not reverence what fear compels her to believe. But this is not all: she is called on, not barely to repress impiety, but to excite, to encourage, and to cherish every tendency to serious religion.

Some of the occasions of contributing to the general good which are daily presenting themselves to ladies are almost too minute to be pointed out. Yet of the good which right minded women, anxiously watching these minute occasions, and adroitly seizing them, might accomplish we may form some idea by the ill effects which we actually see produced, through the mere levity, carelessness, and inattention (to say no worse) of some of those ladies who are looked up to as standards in the fashionable world.

I am persuaded if many a woman of fashion, who is now disseminating unintended mischief, under the dangerous notion that there is no harm in any thing short of positive vice, and under the false colours of that indolent humility, 'what good can *I* do?' could be brought to see in its collected force the annual aggregate of the random evil she is daily doing, by constantly throwing a *little* casual weight into the wrong scale, by a mere inconsiderate and unguarded chat, she would start from her self-complacent dream. If she could conceive how much she may be diminishing the good impressions of *young* men; and if she could imagine how little amiable levity or irreligion makes her appear in the eyes of those who are older and abler (however loose their own principles may be) she would correct herself in the first instance, from pure good nature; and in the second, from worldly prudence and mere self-love.—But on how much higher principles would she restrain herself, if she habitually took into account the important doctrine of consequences: and if she reflected that the lesser but more habitual corruptions make up by their number, what they may seem to come short of by their weight: then perhaps she would find, that among the higher class of women, *inconsideration* is adding more to the daily quantity of evil than almost all other causes put together.

There is an instrument of inconceivable force, when it is employed against the interest of Christianity: it is not reasoning, for that may be answered; it is not learning, for luckily the infidel is not seldom ignorant; it is not invective, for we leave so coarse an engine to the hands of the vulgar; it is not evidence, for happily we have that all on our side: it is RIDICULE, the most deadly weapon in the whole arsenal of impiety, and which becomes an almost unerring shaft when directed by a fair and fashionable hand. No maxim has been more readily adopted, or is more intrinsically false, than that which the fascinating eloquence of a noble sceptic of the last age contrived to render so popular, that 'ridicule is the test of truth.'* It is no test of truth itself; but of their firmness who assert the cause of truth, it is indeed a severe test. This light, keen, missile weapon, the irresolute, unconfirmed Christian will find it harder to withstand, than the whole heavy artillery of infidelity united.

A young man of the better sort, has perhaps just entered upon the world, with a certain share of good dispositions and right feelings; neither ignorant of the evidences, nor destitute of the principles of Christianity: without parting with his respect for religion, he sets out with the too natural wish of making himself a reputation and of standing well with the fashionable part of the female world. He preserves for a time a horror of vice, which makes it not difficult for him to resist the grosser corruptions of society; he can as yet repel profaneness; nay he can

* Lord Shaftesbury.

withstand the banter of a club. He has sense enough to see through the miserable fallacies of the new philosophy, and spirit enough to expose its malignity. So far he does well, and you are ready to congratulate him on his security. You are mistaken: the principles of the ardent, and hitherto promising adventurer, are shaken, just in that very society where, while he was looking for pleasure, he doubted not of safety. In the company of certain women of good fashion and no ill fame, he makes shipwreck of his religion. He sees them treat with levity or derision subjects which he has been used to hear named with respect. He could confute an argument, he could unravel a sophistry; but he cannot stand a laugh. A sneer, not at the truth of religion, for that perhaps is by none of the party disbelieved, but at its gravity, its unseasonableness, its dulness, puts all his resolution to flight. He feels his mistake, and struggles to recover his credit; in order to which he adopts the gay affectations of trying to seem worse than he really is; he goes on to say things which he does not believe, and to deny things which he does believe; and all to efface the first impression, and to recover a reputation which he has committed to *their* hands, on whose report he knows he shall stand or fall, in those circles in which he is ambitious to shine.

That cold compound of irony, irreligion, selfishness, and sneer, which make up what the French (from whom we borrow the thing as well as the word) so well express by the term *persiflage*, has of late years made an incredible progress in blasting the opening buds of piety in young persons of fashion. A cold pleasantry, a temporary cant word, the jargon of the day (for the 'great vulgar' have their jargon) blights the first promise of seriousness. The ladies of *ton* have certain watch-words, which may be detected as indications of this spirit. The clergy are spoken of under the contemptuous appellation of *The Parsons*. Some ludicrous association is infallibly combined with the very idea of religion. If a warm hearted youth has ventured to name with enthusiasm some eminently pious character, his glowing ardour is extinguished with a laugh: and a drawling declaration, that the person in question is really a mighty *harmless* good creature, is uttered in a tone which leads the youth secretly to vow, that whatever else he may be, he will never be a good harmless creature.

Nor is ridicule more dangerous to true piety than to true taste. An age which values itself on parody, burlesque, irony, and caricature, produces little that is sublime, either in genius or in virtue; but they *amuse* and we live in an age which *must* be amused, though genius, feeling, truth, and principle be the sacrifice. Nothing chills the ardours of devotion like a frigid sarcasm; and, in the season of youth the mind should be kept particularly clear of all light associations. This is of so much importance, that I have known persons who, having been early accustomed to certain ludicrous combinations, were never liable to get their minds cleansed from the impurities contracted by this habitual levity, even after thorough reformation in their hearts and lives had taken place: their principles became reformed, but their imaginations were indelibly soiled. They could desist from sins which the strictness of Christianity would not allow them to commit, but they could not dismiss from their minds images which her purity forbade them to entertain.

There was a time when a variety of epithets were thought necessary to express various kinds of excellence, and when the different qualities of the mind were distinguished by appropriate and discriminating terms: when the words venerable, learned, sagacious, profound, acute, pious, worthy, ingenious, valuable, elegant, agreeable, wise, or witty, were used as specific marks of distinct characters. But the legislators of fashion have of late years thought proper to comprise all merit in one established epithet; an epithet which, it may be confessed, is a very desirable one as far as it goes. This term is exclusively and indiscriminately applied whenever commendation is intended. The word *pleasant* now serves to combine and express all moral and intellectual excellence. Every individual, from the gravest professors, of the gravest professions, down to the trifler who is of no profession at all, must earn the epithet of *pleasant*, or must be contented to be nothing; and must be consigned over to ridicule, under the vulgar and inexpressive cant word of a *bore*. This is the mortifying designation of many a respectable man, who, though of much worth and much ability, cannot perhaps clearly make out his letters patent to the title of *pleasant*. For according to this modern classification there is no intermediate state, but all are comprised within the ample bounds of one or other of these two comprehensive terms.

We ought to be more on our guard against this spirit of ridicule, because whatever may be the character of the present day, its faults do not spring from the redundancies of great qualities, or the overflowing of extravagant virtues. It is well if more correct views of life, a more regular administration of laws, and a more settled state of society, have helped to restrain the excesses of the heroic ages, when love and war were considered as the great and sole business of human life. Yet, if that period was marked by a romantic extravagance, and the present is distinguished by an indolent selfishness, our superiority is not so triumphantly decisive, as, in the vanity of our hearts we may be ready to imagine.

I do not wish to bring back the frantic reign of chivalry, nor to reinstate women in that fantastic empire in which they then sat enthroned in the hearts, or rather in the imaginations of men. Common sense is an excellent material of universal application, which the sagacity of latter ages has seized upon, and rationally applied to the business of common life. But let us not forget, in the insolence of acknowledged, superiority, that it was *religion* and *chastity*, operating on the romantic spirit of those times, which established the despotic sway of woman; and though in this altered scene of things, she now no longer looks down on her adoring votaries from the pedestal to which an absurd idolatry had lifted her: yet let her remember

that it is the same religion and the same chastity which once raised her to such an elevation, that must still furnish the noblest energies of her character, must still attract the admiration, still retain the respect of the other sex.

While we lawfully ridicule the absurdities which we have abandoned, let us not plume ourselves on that spirit of novelty which glories in the opposite extreme. If the manners of the period in question were affected, and if the gallantly was unnatural, yet the tone of virtue was high: and let us remember that constancy, purity, and honour, are not ridiculous in themselves, though they may unluckily be associated with qualities which are so: and women of delicacy would do well to reflect, when descanting on those exploded manners, how far it be decorous to deride with too broad a laugh, attachments which could subsist on remote gratifications; or grossly to ridicule the taste which led the admirer to sacrifice pleasure to respect, and inclination to honour; how far it be delicate to sneer at that purity which made self-denial a proof of affection; to call in question the sound understanding of him who preferred the fame of his mistress to his own indulgence; to burlesque that antiquated refinement which considered dignity and reserve as additional titles to affection and reverence.

We cannot but be struck with the wonderful contrast exhibited to our view, when we contemplate the opposite manners of the two periods in question. In the former all the flower of Europe smit with a delirious gallantry; all that was young, and noble, and brave, and great, with a frantic frenzy, and preposterous contempt of danger, traversed seas and scaled mountains and compassed a large portion of the globe, at the expense of ease, and fortune, and life, for the unprofitable project of rescuing, by force of arms, from the hands of infidels, the sepulchre of that Saviour, whom, *in the other period*, their posterity would think it the height of fanaticism so much as to name in good company. That Saviour, whose altars they desert, whose temples they neglect; and though in more than one country at least they still call themselves by his name, yet too many, it is to be feared, contemn his precepts, still more are ashamed of his doctrines, and not a few reject his sacrifice. Too many consider Christianity rather as a political than a religious distinction; too many claim the appellation of Christians, in mere opposition to that democracy with which they conceive infidelity to be associated, rather than from an abhorrence of impiety for its own sake; too many deprecate the charge of irreligion, as the supposed badge of a reprobated party, more than on account of that moral corruption which is its inseparable concomitant!

On the other hand, in an age when inversion is the character of the day, the modern idea of improvement does not consist in altering, but extirpating. We do not reform, but subvert. We do not correct old systems but demolish them, fancying that when every thing shall be new it will be perfect. Not to have been wrong, but to have been at all, is the crime. Existence is sin. Excellence is no longer considered as an experimental thing which is to grow gradually out of observation and practice, and to be improved by the accumulating additions brought by the wisdom of successive ages. *Our wisdom* is not a creature slowly brought by ripening time and gradual growth to perfection; but is an instantaneously created goddess, which starts at once, full grown, mature, armed cap-a-pee, from the heads of our modern thunderers. Or rather, if I may change the allusion, a perfect saystem is *now* expected inevitably to spring spontaneously at once, like the fabled bird of Arabia, from the ashes of its parent; and, like that, can receive its birth no other way but by the destruction of its predecessor.

Instead of clearing away what is redundant, pruning what is cumbersome, supplying what is defective, and amending what is wrong, we adopt the indefinite rage for radical reform of Jack, who, in altering lord Peter's* coat, showed his zeal by crying out, 'Tear away, brother Martin, for the love of heaven; never mind, so you do but tear away.'

This tearing system has unquestionably rent away some valuable parts of that strong, rich native stuff, which formed the ancient texture of British manners. That we have gained much I am persuaded; that we have lost nothing I dare not therefore affirm. But though it fairly exhibits a mark of our improved judgment to ridicule the fantastic notions of love and honour in the heroic ages; let us not rejoice that the spirit of generosity in sentiment, and of ardour in piety, the exuberances of which were then so inconvenient, are now sunk as unreasonably low. That revolution of taste and manners which the unparalleled wit and genius of Don Quixote so happily effected throughout all the polished countries of Europe, by abolishing extravagancies the most absurd and pernicious, was so far imperfect, that some virtues which he never meant to expose, unjustly fell into disrepute with the absurdities which he did: and it is become the turn of the present taste inseparably to attach in no small degree that which is ridiculous to that which is serious and heroic. Some modern works of wit have assisted in bringing piety and some of the noblest virtues into contempt, by studiously associating them with oddity, childish simplicity, and ignorance of the world: and unnecessary pains have been taken to extinguish that zeal and ardour, which however liable to excess and error, are yet the spring of whatever is great and excellent in the human character. The novel of Cervantes is incomparable; the Tartuffe of Moliere is unequalled; but true generosity and true religion will never lose any thing of their intrinsic value, because knight-errantry and hypocrisy are legitimate objects for satire.

But to return from this too long digression, to the subject of female influence. Those who have not watched the united operation of vanity and feeling on a youthful mind, will not conceive how much less formidable the ridicule of all his own sex will be to a very young man, than that of those women to whom he has been taught to look up as the arbiters of elegance. Such a youth, I doubt not, might be able to work him-

* Swift's Tale of a Tub

self up, by the force of genuine Christian principle, to such a pitch of true heroism, as to refuse a challenge (and it requires more real courage to refuse a challenge than to accept one) who would yet be in danger of relapsing into the dreadful pusillanimity of the world, when he is told that no woman of fashion will hereafter look on him but with contempt. While we have cleared away the rubbish of the Gothic ages, it were to be wished we had not retained the most criminal of all their institutions. Why chivalry should indicate a madman, while its leading object, the *single combat*, should designate a gentleman, has not yet been explained. Nay, the plausible original motive is lost, while the sinful practice is continued; for the fighter of the duel no longer *pretends* to be a glorious redresser of the wrongs of strangers; no longer considers himself as piously appealing to heaven for the justice of his cause; but from the slavish fear of unmerited reproach, often selfishly hazards the happiness of his nearest connexions, and always comes forth in direct defiance of an acknowledged command of the Almighty. Perhaps there are few occasions on which female influence might be exerted to a higher purpose than on this, in which laws and conscience have hitherto effected so little. But while the duellist (who perhaps becomes a duellist only because he was first a seducer) is welcomed with smiles; the more hardy dignified youth, who, not because he fears man but God, declines a challenge, who is resolved to brave disgrace rather than commit sin, would be treated with cool contempt by those very persons to whose esteem he might reasonably have looked, as one of the rewards of his true and substantial fortitude.

How then is it to be reconciled with the decisions of principle, that delicate women should receive with complacency the successful libertine, who has been detected by the wretched father or the injured husband in a criminal commerce, the discovery of which has too justly banished the unhappy partner of his crime from virtuous society? Nay, if he happens to be very handsome, or very brave, or very fashionable, is there not sometimes a kind of dishonourable competition for his favour? Is there not a sort of bad popularity attached to his attentions? But, whether his flattering reception be derived from birth, or parts, or person, or (what is often a substitute for all) from his having made his way into *good company*, women of distinction sully the sanctity of virtue by the too visible pleasure they sometimes express at the attentions of such a popular libertine, whose voluble small-talk they admire, whose sprightly nothings they quote, whose vices they justify or extenuate, and whom perhaps their very favour tends to prevent from becoming a better character, because he finds himself more acceptable as he is.

May I be allowed to introduce a new part of my subject, by remarking that it is a matter of inconceivable importance, though not perhaps sufficiently considered, when any popular work, not on a religious topic, but on any common subject, such as politics, history or science, has happened to be written by an author of sound Christian principles? It may not have been necessary; nor prudently practicable, to have a single page in the whole work professedly religious; but still, when the living principle informs the mind of the writer, it is almost impossible but that something of its spirit will diffuse itself even into subjects with which it should seem but remotely connected. It is at least a comfort to the reader, to feel that honest confidence which results from knowing that he has put himself into safe hands; that he has committed himself to an author, whose known principles are a pledge that his reader need not be driven to watch himself at every step with anxious circumspection; that he need not be looking on the right hand and on the left, as if he knew there were pitfalls under the flowers which are delighting him. And it is no small point gained, that on subjects in which you do not look to *improve* your religion, it is at least secured from deterioration. If the Athenian laws were so delicate that they disgraced any one who showed an inquiring traveller the wrong road, what disgrace among Christians, should attach to that author, who when a youth is inquiring the road to history or philosophy, directs him to blasphemy and unbelief?*

In animadverting farther on the reigning evils which the times more particularly demand that women of rank and influence should repress, Christianity calls upon them to bear their decided testimony against every thing which is notoriously contributing to the public corruption. It calls upon them to banish from their dressing rooms (and oh, that their influence could banish from the libraries of their sons and husbands) that sober and unsuspected mass of mischief, which, by assuming the plausible names of science, of philosophy, of arts, of belles lettres, is gradually administering death to the principles of those who would be on their guard, had the poison been labelled with its own pernicious title. Avowed attacks upon revelation are more easily resisted, because the malignity is advertised. But who suspects the destruction which lurks under the harmless or instructive names of *general history*, *natural history*, *travels*, *voyages*, *lives*, *encyclopedias*, *criticism*, and *romance*? Who will deny that many of these works contain much admirable matter; brilliant passages; important facts, just descriptions, faithful pictures of nature, and valuable illustrations of science? But while 'the dead fly lies at the bottom,' the whole will exhale a corrupt and pestilential stench.

* The author has often heard it mentioned as matter of regret, that Mr. Gibbon should have blemished his elegant history with the two notoriously offensive chapters against Christianity. But does not this regret seem to imply that the work would, by this omission, have been left safe and unexceptionable? May we not rather consider these chapters as a fatal rock indeed; but as a rock enlightened by a beacon, fairly and unequivocally warning us of the surrounding perils? To change the metaphor—Had not the mischiefs of these chapters been rendered thus conspicuous, the incautious reader would have been still left exposed to the fatal effects of the more disguised poison which is infused through almost all parts of the volumes. Is it not obvious that a spirit so virulent against revealed religion as these two chapters indicate, would be incessantly pouring out some of its infectious matter on every occasion; and would even industriously make the opportunities which it did not find?

Novels, which chiefly used to be dangerous in one respect, are now become mischievous in a thousand. They are continually shifting their ground, and enlarging their sphere, and are daily becoming vehicles of wider mischief. Sometimes they concentrate their force, and are at once employed to diffuse destructive politics, deplorable profligacy, and impudent infidelity. Rousseau was the first popular dispenser of this complicated drug, in which the deleterious infusion was strong, and the effect proportionably fatal. For he does not attempt to seduce the affections but through the medium of the principles. He does not paint an innocent woman ruined, repenting, and restored; but with a far more mischievous refinement, he annihilates the value of chastity, and with pernicious subtlety attempts to make this heroine appear almost more amiable without it. He exhibits a virtuous woman the victim, not of temptation, but of reason; not of vice, but of sentiment; not of passion, but of conviction; and strikes at the very root of honour, by elevating a crime into a principle. With a metaphysical sophistry the most plausible, he debauches the heart of woman, by cherishing her vanity in the erection of a system of male virtues, to which, with a lofty dereliction of those that are her more peculiar and characteristic praise, he tempts her to aspire; powerfully insinuating, that to this splendid system chastity does not necessarily belong: thus corrupting the judgment, and bewildering the understanding, as the most effectual way to inflame the imagination and deprave the heart. The rare mischief of this author, consists in his power of seducing by falsehood those who love truth, but whose minds are still wavering, and whose principles are not yet formed. He allures the warm-hearted to embrace vice, not because they prefer vice, but because he gives to vice so natural an air of virtue: and ardent and enthusiastic youth, too confidently trusting in their integrity and in their teacher, will be undone, while they fancy they are indulging in the noblest feelings of their nature. Many authors will more infallibly complete the ruin of the loose and ill-disposed: but perhaps there never was a net of such exquisite art, and inextricable workmanship, spread to entangle innocence, and ensnare inexperience, as the writings of Rousseau; and, unhappily, the victim does not even struggle in the toils, because part of the delusion consists in his imagining that he is set at liberty.

Some of our recent popular publications have adopted and enlarged all the mischiefs of this school; and the principal evil arising from them is, that the virtues they exhibit are almost more dangerous than the vices. The chief materials out of which these delusive systems are framed, are characters who practice superfluous acts of generosity, while they are trampling on obvious and commanded duties, who combine inflated sentiments of honour with actions the most flagitious; a high tone of self-confidence, with a perpetual neglect of self-denial; pathetic apostrophes to the passions, but no attempt to resist them. They teach that chastity is only individual attachment; that no duty exists which is not prompted by feeling; that impulse is the main-spring of virtuous actions, while laws and religion are only unjust restraints; the former imposed by arbitrary men, the latter by the absurd prejudices of timorous and unenlightened conscience. Alas! they do not know that the best creature of impulse that ever lived, is but a wayward, unfixed, unprincipled being! That the best *natural* man requires a curb; and needs that balance to the affections which Christianity alone can furnish, and without which benevolent propensities are no security to virtue. And perhaps it is not too much to say, in spite of the monopoly of benevolence to which the new philosophy lays claim, that the *human* duties of the second table have never once been well performed by any of the rejectors of that previous portion of the decalogue which enjoins duty to *God*.

In some of the most splendid of these characters compassion is erected into the throne of justice, and justice degraded into the rank of plebian virtues. It is considered as a noble exemplification of sentiment that creditors should be defrauded, while the money due to them is lavished in dazzling acts of charity to some object that affects the senses; which paroxysms of charity are made the sponge of every sin, and the substitute of every virtue: the whole indirectly tending to intimate how very *benevolent people are who are not Christians*. From many of these compositions, indeed, Christianity is systematically, and always virtually, excluded; for the law, and the prophets, and the gospel, *can* make no part of a scheme in which this world is looked upon as all in all; in which want and misery are considered as evils arising solely from the defects of human governments, and not as making part of the dispensations of God; in which poverty is represented as merely a political evil, and the restraints which tend to keep the poor honest, are painted as the most flagrant injustice. The Gospel *can* make no part of a system in which the absurd idea of perfectibility is considered as applicable to fallen creatures; in which the chimerical project of consummate earthly happiness, (founded on the mad pretence of loving the poor better than God loves them) would defeat the divine plan, which meant this world for a scene of discipline, not of remuneration. The Gospel *can* have nothing to do with a system in which sin is reduced to a little human imperfection, and Old Baily crimes are softened down to a few engaging weaknesses; and in which the turpitude of all the vices a man himself commits, is done away by his *candour* in tolerating all the vices committed by others.*

But the part of the system the most fatal to that class whom I am addressing is, that even in those works which do not go all the length of treating marriage as an unjust infringement on liberty, and a tyrannical deduction from general happiness; yet it commonly happens that

* It is to be lamented that some, even of those more virtuous novel writers, who *intend* to espouse the cause of religion, yet exhibit such false views of it. I have lately seen a work of some merit in this way, which was meritoriously designed to expose the impieties of the new philosophy. But the writer betrayed his own imperfect knowledge of the Christianity he was defending, by making his hero, whom he proposed as a pattern, *fight a du* [illegible]

the hero or heroine, who has particularly violated the letter of the seventh commandment, and continues to live in the allowed violation of its spirit, is painted as so amiable, and so benevolent, so tender or so brave; and the temptation is represented as so *irresistible*, (for all these philosophers are fatalists) the predominant and cherished sin is so filtered and defected of its pollutions, and is so sheltered and surrounded, and relieved with shining qualities, that the innocent and impressible young reader is brought to lose all horror of the awful crime in question, in the complacency she feels for the engaging virtues of the criminal.

There is another object to which I would direct the exertion of that power of female influence of which I am speaking. Those ladies who take the lead in society, are loudly called upon to act as the guardians of the public taste, as well as of the public virtue. They are called upon, therefore, to oppose with the whole weight of their influence, the irruption of those swarms of publications now daily issuing from the banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with far other and more fatal arms, are overrunning civilized society. Those readers, whose purer taste has been formed on the correct models of the old classic school, see with indignation and astonishment the Huns and Vandals once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans. They behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid motion, hurried back to the reign of 'chaos and old night,' by distorted and unprincipled compositions, which, in spite of strong flashes of genius, unite the taste of the Goths with the morals of Bagshot;*

Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire!

These compositions terrify the weak, and amaze and enchant the idle; while they disgust the discerning, by wild and misshapen superstitions, in which, with that *consistency* which forms so striking a feature of the new philosophy, those who most earnestly deny the immortality of the soul, are most eager to introduce the machinery of ghosts.

The writings of the French infidels were some years ago circulated in England with uncommon industry, and with some effect: but the plain sense and good principles of the far greater part of our countrymen, resisted the attack, and rose superior to the trial. Of the doctrines and principles here alluded to, the dreadful consequences, not only in the unhappy country where they originated, and were almost universally adopted, but in every part of Europe where they have been received, have been such as to serve as a beacon to surrounding nations, if any warning can preserve them from destruction. In this country the subject is now so well understood, that every thing which issues from the *French* press is received with jealousy; and a work, on the first appearance of its exhibiting the doctrines of Voltaire and his associates, is rejected with indignation.

* The newspapers announce that Schiller's tragedy of the Robbers, which inflamed the young nobility of Germany to enlist themselves into a band of highwaymen to rob in the forests of Bohemia, is now acting in England by persons of quality!

But let us not on account of this victory repose in confident security. The modern apostles of infidelity and immorality, little less indefatigable in dispersing their pernicious doctrines than the first apostles were in propagating Gospel truths, have indeed changed their weapons, but they have by no means desisted from the attack. To destroy the principles of Christianity in this island, appears at the present moment to be their grand aim. Deprived of the assistance of the French press, they are now attempting to attain their object under the close and more artificial veil of German literature. Conscious that religion and morals will stand or fall together, their attacks are sometimes levelled against the one, and sometimes against the other. With strong occasional professions of general attachment to both of these, they endeavour to interest the feelings of the reader, sometimes in favour of some one particular vice, at other times on the subject of some one objection to revealed religion. Poetry as well as prose, romance as well as history, writings on philosophical as well as on political subjects, have thus been employed to instil the principles of *Illuminism*, while incredible pains have been taken to obtain able translations of every book which was supposed likely to be of use in corrupting the heart or misleading the understanding. In many of these translations, certain bolder passages, which, though well received in Germany, would have excited disgust in England, are wholly omitted, in order that the mind may be more certainly, though more slowly, prepared for the full effect of the same poison to be administered in a stronger degree at another period.

Let not those to whom these pages are addressed deceive themselves, by supposing this to be a fable; and let them inquire most seriously whether I speak truth, in asserting that the attacks of infidelity in Great Britain are at this moment principally directed against the female breast. Conscious of the influence of women in civil society, conscious of the effect which female infidelity produced in France, they attribute the ill success of their attempts in this country to their having been hitherto chiefly addressed to the male sex. They are now sedulously labouring to destroy the religious principles of women, and in too many instances have fatally succeeded. For this purpose, not only novels and romances have been made the vehicles of vice and infidelity, but the same allurement has been held out to the women of our country, which was employed by the first philosophists to the first sinner—Knowledge. Listen to the precepts of the new German enlighteners, and you need no longer remain in that situation in which Providence has placed you! Follow their example, and you shall be permitted to indulge in all those gratifications which custom, and not religion has tolerated in the male sex.

Let us jealously watch every deepening shade in the change of manners; let us mark every step, however inconsiderable, whose tendency is downwards. Corruption is neither stationary nor retrograde; and to have departed from modesty, simplicity, and truth, is already to have made a progress. It is not only awfully true,

that since the new principles have been afloat, *women* have been too eagerly inquisitive after these monstrous compositions; but it is true also, that with a new and offensive renunciation of their native delicacy, *many women of character* make little hesitation in avowing their familiarity with works abounding with principles, sentiments, and descriptions, 'which should not be so much as named among them. By allowing their minds to come in contact with such contagious matter, they are irrecoverably tainting them; and by acknowledging that they are actually conversant with such corruptions (with whatever reprobation of the author they may qualify their perusal of the book) they are exciting in others a most mischievous curiosity for the same unhallowed gratification. Thus they are daily diminishing in the young and timid those wholesome scruples, by which, when a tender conscience ceases to be intrenched, all the subsequent stages of ruin are gradually facilitated.

We have hitherto spoken only of the German *writings;* but because there are multitudes who seldom read, equal pains have been taken to promote the same object through the medium of the stage: and this weapon is, of all others, that against which it is, at the present moment, the most important to warn the more inconsiderate of my countrywomen.

As a specimen of the German drama, it may not be unseasonable to offer a few remarks on the admired play of the *Stranger*. In this piece the character of an *adultress*, which, in all periods of the world, ancient as well as modern, in all countries, heathen as well as christian, has hitherto been held in detestation, and has never been introduced but to be reprobated, is for the first time presented to our view in the most pleasing and fascinating colours. The heroine is a woman who forsook a husband the most affectionate and the most amiable, and lived for some time in a criminal commerce with her seducer. Repenting at length of her crime, she buries herself in retirement.—The talents of the poet during the whole piece are exerted in attempting to render this woman the object not only of the compassion and forgiveness, but of the esteem and affection of the audience. The injured husband, convinced of his wife's repentance, forms a resolution which every man of true feeling and christian piety will probably approve. He forgives her offence, and promises her through life, his advice, protection and fortune, together with every thing which can alleviate the misery of her condition, but refuses to replace her in the situation of his wife! But this is not sufficient for the *German* author. His efforts are employed, and it is to be feared but too successfully, in making the audience consider the husband as an unrelenting savage, while they are led by the art of the poet anxiously to wish to see an adultress restored to that rank of women who have not violated the most solemn covenant that can be made with man, nor disobeyed one of the most positive laws which has been enjoined by God.

About the same time that this first attempt at representing an adultress in an exemplary light was made by a German dramatist, which forms an æra in manners, a direct vindication of adultery was for the first time attempted by a *woman*, a professed admirer and imitator of the German suicide Werter. *The female Werter*, as she is styled by her biographer, asserts in a work entitled, 'The Wrongs of Women,' that adultery is justifiable, and that the restrictions placed on it by the laws of England, constitute one of the *Wrongs of Women.*

This leads me to dwell a little longer on this most destructive class in the whole wide range of modern corrupters, who effect the most desperate work of the passions without so much as pretending to urge their violence, in extenuation of the guilt of indulging them. They solicit this very indulgence with a sort of cold blooded speculation, and invite the reader to the most unbounded gratifications, with all the saturnine coolness of a geometrical calculation. Theirs is an iniquity rather of phlegm than of spirit: and in the pestilent atmosphere they raise about them, as in the infernal climate described by Milton—

> The parching air*
> Burns frore, and frost performs th' effects of fire.

This cool, calculating, intellectual wickedness eats out the very heart and core of virtue, and like a deadly mildew blights and shrivels the blooming promise of the human spring. Its benumbing touch communicates a torpid sluggishness which paralyses the soul. It descants on depravity as gravely, and details its grossest acts as frigidly as if its object were to *allay* the tumult of the passions, while it is letting them loose on mankind, by 'plucking off the muzzle of present restraint and future accountableness.' The system is a dire infusion, compounded of bold impiety, brutish sensuality, and exquisite folly, which creeping fatally about the heart, checks the moral circulation, and totally stops the pulse of goodness by the extinction of the vital principle: thus not only choking the stream of actual virtue, but drying up the very fountain of future remorse and remote repentance.

The ravages which some of the old offenders against purity made in the youthful heart, by the exercise of fervid but licentious imagination on the passions, resembled the mischief effected by floods, cataracts, and volcanos. The desolation indeed was terrible, and the ruin was tremendous; yet it was a train which did not *infallibly* preclude the possibility of recovery. The country, though deluged, and devastated, was not utterly put beyond the power of restoration. The harvests indeed were destroyed, and all was wide sterility. But though the crops were lost, the *seeds* of vegetation were not absolutely eradicated; so that, after a long and barren blank, fertility *might* finally return.

But the heart once infected with this newly medicated venom, subtile though sluggish in its operation, resembles what travellers relate of that blasted spot the dead sea, where those devoted cities once stood, which for their pollutions were burnt with fire from heaven. It continues a stagnant lake of putrifying waters. No whole-

* 'When the north wind bloweth it devoureth the mountains, and burneth the wilderness, and consumeth the grass as fire!' Eccles. xl. 20.

some blade ever more shoots up; the air is so tainted that no living thing subsists within its influence. Near the sulphureous pool the very principle of being is annihilated. All is death,

Death, unrepealable, eternal death!

But let us take comfort, These projects are not yet generally realized. These atrocious principles are not yet adopted into common practice. Though corruption seems with a confluent tide to be pouring in upon us from every quarter, yet there is still left among us a discriminating judgment. Clear and strongly marked distinctions between right and wrong still subsist. While we continue to cherish this sanity of mind, the case is not desperate. Though that crime, the growth of which always exhibits the most irrefragable proof of the dissoluteness of public manners; though that crime, which cuts up order and virtue by the roots, and violates the sanctity of vows, is awfully increasing,

'Till senates seem,
For purposes of empire less conven'd
Than to release the adult'ress from her bonds:

yet, thanks to the surviving efficacy of a holy religion, to the operation of virtuous laws, and to the energy and unshaken integrity with which these laws are *now* administered; and, most of all, perhaps, to a standard of morals which continues in force, when the principles which sanctioned it are no more; this crime, in the female sex at least, is still held in just abhorrence. If it be practised, it is not honourable; if it be committed, it is not justified; we do not yet affect to palliate its turpitude; as yet it hides its abhorred head in lurking privacy; and reprobation *hitherto* follows its publicity.

But on your exerting your influence, with just application and increasing energy, may in no small degree, depend whether this corruption shall still continue to be resisted. For the abhorrence of a practice will too probably diminish, of which the theory is perused with enthusiasm. From admiring to adopting, the step is short, and the progress rapid; and it is in the moral as in the natural world; the motion, in the case of minds as well as of bodies, is accelerated as they approach the centre to which they are tending.

O ye to whom this address is particularly directed! an awful charge is, in this instance, committed to your hands; as you discharge it or shrink from it, you promote or injure the honour of your daughters and the happiness of your sons, of both of which you are the depositories. And, while you resolutely persevere in making a stand against the encroachments of this crime, suffer not your firmness to be shaken by that affectation of charity, which is growing into a general substitute for principle. Abuse not so noble a quality as Christian candour, by misemploying it in instances to which it does not apply. Pity the wretched woman you dare not countenance; and bless Him who has 'made you to differ.' If unhappily she be your relation or friend, anxiously watch for the period when she shall be deserted by her betrayer; and see if, by your Christian offices, she can be snatched from a perpetuity of vice. But if, through the Divine blessing on your patient endeavours, she should ever be awakened to remorse, be not anxious to restore the forlorn penitent to that society against whose laws she has so grievously offended; and remember that her soliciting such a restoration, furnishes but too plain a proof that she is not the penitent your partiality would believe; since penitence is more anxious to make its peace with heaven than with the world. Joyfully would a truly contrite spirit commute an earthly for an everlasting reprobation! To restore a criminal to public society, is perhaps to tempt her to repeat her crime, or to deaden her repentance for having committed it, as well as to insult and to injure that society; while to restore a strayed soul to God will add lustre to your Christian character, and brighten your eternal crown.

In the mean time, there are other evils, ultimately perhaps tending to this, into which we are falling, through that sort of fashionable candour, which, as was hinted above, is among the mischievous characteristics of the present day; of which period perhaps it is not the smallest evil, that vices are made to look so like virtues and are so assimilated to them, that it requires watchfulness and judgment sufficient to analyze and discriminate. There are certain women of good fashion who practice irregularities not consistent with the strictness of virtue; while their good sense and knowledge of the world make them at the same time keenly alive to the value of reputation. They want to retain their indulgences, without quite forfeiting their credit; but finding their fame fast declining, they cling, by flattery and marked attentions, to a few persons of more than ordinary character; and thus, till they are driven to let go their hold, continue to prop a falling fame.

On the other hand, there are not wanting women of distinction of very correct general conduct, and of no ordinary sense and virtue, who confiding with a high mind on what they too confidently call *the integrity of their own hearts*, anxious to deserve a good fame on the one hand, by a life free from reproach, yet secretly too desirous on the other of securing a worldly and fashionable reputation; while their general associates are persons of honour, and their general resort places of safety; yet allow themselves to be occasionally present at the midnight orgies of revelry and gaming, in houses of no honourable estimation; and thus help to keep up characters, which without their sustaining hand, would sink to their just level of contempt and reprobation. While they are holding out this plank to a drowning reputation, rather, it is to to be feared, showing their own strength than assisting another's weakness, they value themselves, perhaps, on not partaking of the worse parts of the amusements which may be carrying on; but they sanction them by their presence; they lend their countenance to corruptions they should abhor, and their example to the young and inexperienced, who are looking about for some such sanction to justify them in that to which they were before inclined, but were too timid to have ventured upon without the protection of such unsullied names. Thus these respectable characters, without looking to

the general consequences of their indiscretion, are thoughtlessly employed in breaking down, as it were, the broad fence which should ever separate two very different sorts of society, and are becoming a kind of unnatural link between vice and virtue.

There is a gross deception which even persons of reputation practise on themselves. They loudly condemn vice and irregularity as an abstract principle, nay, they stigmatise them in persons of an opposite party, or in those from whom they themselves have no prospect of personal advantage or amusement, and in whom therefore they have no particular interest to tolerate evil. But the same disorders are viewed without abhorrence when practised by those who in any way minister to *their* pleasures. Refined entertainments, luxurious decorations, select music; whatever furnishes any delight rare and exquisite to the sense, these soften the severity of criticism; these palliate sins; these varnish over the flaws of a broken character, and extort not pardon merely but justification, countenance, intimacy! The more respectable will not, perhaps, go all the length of vindicating the disreputable vice, but they affect to disbelieve its existence in the individual instance; or, failing in this, they will bury its acknowledged turpitude in the seducing qualities of the agreeable delinquent. Talents of every kind are considered as a commutation for a few vices; and such talents are made a passport to introduce into honourable society, characters whom their profligacy ought to exclude from it.

But the great object to which YOU, who are or may be mothers, are more especially called, is the education of your children. If we are responsible for the use of influence in the case of those over whom we have no immediate control, in the case of our children we are responsible for the exercise of acknowledged *power;* a power wide in its extent, indefinite in its effects, and inestimable in its importance. On YOU depend in no small degree the principles of the whole rising generation. To your direction the daughters are almost exclusively committed; and until a certain age, to you also is consigned the mighty privilege of forming the hearts and minds of your infant sons. To YOU is made over the awfully important trust of infusing the first principles of piety into the tender minds of those who may be one day called to instruct, not families merely, but districts; to influence, not individuals, but senates. Your private exertions may at this moment be contributing to the future happiness, your domestic neglect, to the future ruin of your country. And may you never forget, in this your early instruction of your offspring, nor they, in their future application of it, that religion is the only sure ground of morals; that private principle is the only solid basis of public virtue. O think that they both may be fixed or forfeited for ever according to the use you are now making of that power which God has delegated to you, and of which he will demand a strict account. By his blessing on your pious labours may both sons and daughters hereafter 'arise and call you blessed.' And in the great day of general account, may every Christian mother be enabled through divine grace to say, with humble confidence, to her Maker and Redeemer, 'Behold the children whom thou hast given me!'

Christianity, driven out from the rest of the world, has still, blessed be God! a 'strong hold' in this country. And though it be the special duty of the appointed 'watchman *now* that he seeth the sword come upon the land, to blow the trumpet and warn the people, which if he neglect to do, their blood shall be required of the watchman's hand:'* yet, in this sacred garrison, *impregnable but by neglect*, YOU too have an awful post, that of arming the minds of the rising race with the 'shield of faith, whereby they shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked;' 'that of girding them with that sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.' Let that very period which is desecrated in a neighbouring country, by a formal renunciation of religion, be solemnly marked by YOU to purposes diametrically opposite. Let that dishonoured æra in which *they* avowed their resolution to exclude Christianity from the national education, be the precise moment seized upon by YOU for its more sedulous inculcation. And while *their* children are systematically trained to live without God in the world,' let YOURS, with a more decided emphasis, be consecrated to promote his glory in it.

If you neglect this your bounden duty, you will have effectually contributed to expel Christianity from her last citadel. And remember, that the dignity of the work to which you are called, is no less than that of 'preserving the ark of the Lord.'

CHAP. II.

On the education of women.—The prevailing system tends to establish the errors which it ought to correct.—Dangers arising from an excessive cultivation of the arts.

IT is far from being the object of this slight work to offer a regular plan of female education, a task which has been often more properly assumed by far abler writers; but it is intended rather to suggest a few remarks on the reigning mode, which though it has had many panegyrists, appears to be defective, not only in certain particulars, but as a general system. There are indeed numberless honourable exceptions to an observation which will be thought severe; yet the author would ask, whether it be not the natural tendency of the prevailing and popular mode to excite and promote those very evils which it ought to be the main end and objects of christian instruction to remove? whether the reigning system does not tend to weaken the principles it ought to strengthen, and to dissolve the heart it should fortify? whether, instead of directing the grand and important engine of education to attack and destroy *vanity, selfishness, and inconsideration*, that triple alliance in strict and constant league against female virtue; the combined powers of instruction are not sedulously confederated in confirming their strength and establishing their empire?

* Ezekiel, xxxiii. 6.

If indeed the *material* substance; if the body and limbs, with the organs and senses, be really the more valuable objects of attention, then there is little room for animadversion and improvement: but if the immaterial and immortal mind; if the heart, 'out of which are the issues of life,' be the main concern; if the great business of education be to implant right ideas, to communicate useful knowledge, to form a taste and a sound judgment, to resist evil propensities, and above all to seize the favourable season for infusing principles and confirming habits; if education be a school to fit us for life, and life be a school to fit us for eternity; if such, I repeat it, be the chief work and grand ends of education, it may then be worth enquiring how far these ends are likely to be effected by the prevailing system.

Is it not a fundamental error to consider children as innocent beings, whose little weaknesses may perhaps want some correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions, which it should be the great end of education to rectify? This appears to be such a foundation-truth, that if I were asked what quality is most important in an instructor of youth, I should not hesitate to reply, *such a strong impression of the corruption of our nature, as should insure a disposition to counteract it; together with such a deep view and thorough knowledge of the human heart, as should be necessary for developing and controlling its most secret and complicated workings.* And let us remember that to *know the world*, as it is called, that is to know its local manners, temporary usages and evanescent fashions, is not to *know human nature:* and that where this prime knowledge is wanting, those natural evils which ought to be counteracted will be fostered.

Vanity, for instance, is reckoned among the light and venial errors of youth; nay, so far from being treated as a dangerous enemy, it is often called in as an auxiliary. At worst, it is considered as a harmless weakness, which subtracts little from the value of a character; as a natural effervescence, which will subside of itself, when the first ferment of the youthful passions shall have done working. But those persons know little of the conformation of the human, and especially of the female heart, who fancy that vanity is ever exhausted, by the mere operation of time and events. Let those who maintain this opinion look into our places of public resort, and there behold if the ghost of departed beauty is not to its last flitting, fond of haunting the scenes of its past pleasures. The soul, unwilling (if I may borrow an allusion from the Platonic mythology) to quit the spot in which the body enjoyed its former delights, still continues to hover about the same place, though the same pleasures are no longer to be found there. Disappointments indeed may divert vanity into a new direction; prudence may prevent it from breaking out into excesses, and age may prove that it is 'vexation of spirit;' but neither disappointment, prudence, nor age can *cure* it: for they do not correct the principle. Nay, the very disappointment itself serves as a painful evidence of its protracted existence.

Since then there is a season when the youthful must cease to be young, and the beautiful to excite admiration, to learn how to grow old gracefully is perhaps one of the rarest and most valuable arts which can be taught to woman. And it must be confessed it is a most severe trial for those women to be called to lay down beauty, who have nothing else to take up. It is for this sober season of life that education should lay up its rich resources. However disregarded they may hitherto have been, they will be wanted now. When admirers fall away, and flatterers become mute, the mind will be driven to retire into itself, and if it find no entertainment at home, it will be driven back again upon the world with increased force. Yet forgetting this, do we not seem to educate our daughters exclusively for the transient period of youth, when it is to maturer life we ought to advert? Do we not educate them for a crowd, forgetting that they are to live at home? for the world, and not for themselves? for show, and not for use? for time, and not for eternity?

Vanity (and the same may be said of selfishness) is not to be resisted like any other vice, which is sometimes busy and sometimes quiet; it is not to be attacked as a single fault which is indulged in opposition to a single virtue; but it is uniformly to be controlled, as an active, a restless, a growing principle, at constant war with all the christian graces; which not only mixes itself into all our faults, but insinuates into all our virtues too; and will, if not checked effectually, rob our best actions of their rewards. Vanity, if I may use the analogy, is with respect to the other vices, what feeling is in regard to the other senses; it is not confined in its operation to the eye, or the ear, or any single organ, but is diffused through the whole being, alive in every part, awakened and communicated by the slightest touch.

Not a few of the evils of the present day arise from a new and perverted application of terms. among these, perhaps, there is not one more absurd, misunderstood, or misapplied, than the term *accomplishments.* This word in its original meaning signifies *completeness*, *perfection.* But I may safely appeal to the observation of mankind, whether they do not meet with swarms of youthful females, issuing from our boarding schools, as well as emerging from the more private scenes of domestic education, who are introduced into the world, under the broad and universal title of *accomplished young ladies*, of *all* of whom it cannot very truly and correctly be pronounced, that they illustrate the definition, by a completeness which leaves nothing to be added, and a perfection which leaves nothing to be desired.

This frenzy of accomplishments, unhappily, is no longer restricted within the usual limits of rank and fortune; the middle orders have caught the contagion, and it rages downward with increasing and destructive violence, from the elegantly dressed but slenderly portioned curate's daughter to the equally fashioned daughter of the little tradesman, and of the more opulent but not more judicious farmer. And is it not obvious, that as far as this epidemical mania has spread, this very valuable part of society is declining in usefulness, as it rises in

its ill-founded pretensions to elegance? till this rapid revolution of the manners of the middle class has so far altered the character of the age, as to be in danger of rendering obsolete the heretofore common saying, 'that most worth and virtue are to be found in the middle station.' For I do not scruple to assert, that in general, as far as my little observation has extended, this class of females, in what relates both to religious knowledge and to practical industry, falls short both of the very high and the very low. Their new course of education, and the indolent habits of life and elegance of dress connected with it, peculiarly unfits them for the active duties of their own very important condition; while, with frivolous eagerness, and second-hand opportunities, they run to snatch a few of those showy acquirements which decorate the great. This is done apparently with one or other of these views; either to make their fortunes by marriage, or if that fail, to qualify them to become teachers of others: hence the abundant multiplication of superficial wives, and of incompetent and illiterate governesses. The use of the pencil, the performance of exquisite but unnecessary works, the study of foreign languages and of music, require (with some exceptions which should always be made in favour of great natural genius) a degree of leisure which belongs exclusively to affluence.* One use of learning languages is, not that we may know what the terms which express the articles of our dress and our table are called in French or Italian; nor that we may think over a few ordinary phrases in English, and then translate them, without one foreign idiom; for he who cannot *think* in a language cannot be said to understand it: but the great use of acquiring any foreign language is, either that it enables us occasionally to converse with foreigners, unacquainted with any other, or that it is a key to the literature of the country to which it belongs. Now those humbler females, the chief part of whose time is required for domestic offices, are little likely to fall in the way of foreigners; and so far from enjoying opportunities for the acquisition of foreign literature, they have seldom time to possess themselves of much of the valuable knowledge which the books of their own country so abundantly furnish; and the acquisition of which would be so much more useful and honourable than the paltry accessions they make by hammering out the meaning of a few passages in a tongue they but imperfectly understand, and of which they are never likely to make any use.

It would be well if the reflection, how eagerly this redundancy of accomplishments is seized on by their inferiors, were to operate as in the case of other absurd fashions; the rich and great being seldom brought to renounce any mode of custom, from the mere consideration that it is preposterous, or that it is wrong; while they are frightened into its immediate relinquishment, from the pressing consideration that the *vulgar* are beginning to adopt it.

* Those among the class in question, whose own good sense leads them to avoid these mistaken pursuits, cannot be offended at a reproof which does not belong to them.

But to return to that more elevated, and on account of their more extended influence only, that more important class of females, to whose use this little book is more immediately dedicated. Some popular authors, on the subject of female instruction, had for a time established a fantastic code of artificial manners. They had refined elegance into insipidity, frittered down delicacy into frivolousness, and reduced manner into *minauderie*. 'But to lisp, and to amble, and to nick-name God's creatures,' has nothing to do with true gentlenses of mind; and to be silly makes no necessary part of softness. Another class of contemporary authors turned all the force of their talents to excite *emotions*, to inspire *sentiment*, and to reduce all mental and moral excellence into *sympathy* and *feeling*. These softer qualities were elevated at the expense of principle; and young women were incessantly hearing unqualified sensibility extolled as the perfection of their nature; till those who really possessed this amiable quality, instead of directing, and chastising, and restraining it, were in danger of fostering it to their hurt, and began to consider themselves as deriving their excellence from its excess; while those less interesting damsels, who happened not to find any of this amiable sensibility in their *hearts*, but thought it creditable to have it somewhere, fancied its seat was in the *nerves;* and here indeed it was easily found or feigned; till a false and excessive display of feeling became so predominant, as to bring in question the actual existence of that true tenderness, without which, though a woman may be worthy, she can never be amiable.

Fashion then, by one of her sudden and rapid turns, instantaneously struck out both real sensibility and the affectation of it from the standing list of female perfections; and, by a quick touch of her magic wand, shifted the scene, and at once produced the bold and independent beauty, the intrepid female, the hoyden, the huntress, and the archer; the swinging arms, the confident address, the regimental, and the four-in-hand. Such self-complacent heroines made us ready to regret their softer predecessors, who had aimed only at *pleasing* the other sex, while these aspiring fair ones struggled for the bolder renown of *rivalling* them: the project failed; for, whereas the former had sued for admiration, the latter challenged, seized, compelled it; but the men, as was natural, continued to prefer the more modest claimant to the sturdy competitor.

It would be well if we, who have the advantage of contemplating the errors of the two extremes, were to seek for truth where she is commonly to be found, in the plain and obvious middle path, equally remote from each excess; and while we bear in mind that helplessness is not delicacy, let us also remember that masculine manners do not necessarily include strength of character, nor vigour of intellect. Should we not reflect also, that we are neither to train up Amazons nor Circassians, but that it is our business to form Christians? that we have to educate not only rational, but accountable beings? and, remembering this, should we not be solicitous to let our daughters learn of the well-taught, and associate with the well-bred? In

training them, should we not carefully cultivate intellect, implant religion, and cherish modesty? Then, whatever is engaging in manners would be the natural result of whatever is just in sentiment, and correct in principle; softness would grow out of humility, and external delicacy would spring from purity of heart. Then the decorums, the proprieties, the elegances, and even the graces, as far as they are simple, pure, and honest, would follow as an almost inevitable consequence; for to follow in the train of the christian virtues, and not to take the lead of them, is the proper place which religion assigns to the graces.

Whether we have made the best use of the errors of our predecessors, and of our own numberless advantages, and whether the prevailing system be really consistent with sound policy, true taste, or Christian principle, it may be worth our while to inquire.

Would not a stranger be led to imagine by a view of the reigning mode of female education, that human life consisted of one universal holiday, and that the grand contest between the several competitors was, who should be most eminently qualified to excel, and carry off the prize, in the various shows and games which were intended to be exhibited in it? And to the exhibitors themselves, would he not be ready to apply sir Francis Bacon's observations on the Olympian victors, that they were so excellent in these unnecessary things, that their perfection must needs have been acquired by the neglect of whatever was necessary?

What would the polished Addison who thought that one great end of a lady's learning to dance was, that she might know how to sit still gracefully; what would even the pagan historian* of the great Roman conspirator, who could commemorate it among the defects of this hero's *accomplished* mistress, 'that she was too good a singer and dancer for a virtuous woman;'—what would these refined critics have said, had they lived as we have done, to see the art of dancing lifted into such importance that it cannot with any degree of safety be confided to one instructor; but a whole train of successive masters are considered as absolutely essential to its perfection? What would these accurate judges of female manners have said, to see a modest young lady first delivered into the hands of a military sergeant to instruct her in the *feminine* art of marching? and when this delicate acquisition is attained, to see her transferred to a professor, who is to teach her the Scotch steps; which professor, having communicated his indispensable portion of this indispensable art, makes way for the professor of French dances: and all, perhaps, in their turn, either yield to, or have the honour to co-operate with, a finishing master; each probably receiving a stipend which would make the pious curate or the learned chaplain rich and happy?

The science of music, which used to be communicated in so competent a degree to a young lady by one able instructor, is now distributed among a whole band. She now requires, not a master, but an orchestra. And my country readers would accuse me of exaggeration, were I to hazard enumerating the variety of musical teachers who attend at the same time in the same family; the daughters of which are summoned by at least as many instruments as the subjects of Nebuchadnezzar, to worship the idol which fashion has set up. They would be incredulous were I to produce real instances, in which the delighted mother has been heard to declare, that the visits of masters of every art, and the different masters for various gradations of the same art, followed each other in such close and rapid succession during the whole London residence, that her girls had not a moment's interval to look into a book; nor could she contrive any method to introduce one, till she happily devised the scheme of reading to them herself for half an hour while they were drawing, by which means no time was lost.*

Before the evil has past redress, it will be prudent to reflect that in all polished countries an entire devotedness to the fine arts has been one grand source of the corruption of the women, and so justly were these pernicious consequences appreciated by the Greeks, among whom these arts were carried to the highest possible perfection, that they seldom allowed them to be cultivated to a very exquisite degree by women of great purity of character. And if the ambition of an elegant British lady should be fired by the idea that the accomplished females of those polished states were the admired companions of the philosophers, the poets, the wits, and the artists of Athens; and their beauty or talents, so much the favourite subjects of the muse, the lyre, the pencil, and the chissel, that their pictures and statues furnished the most consummate models of Grecian art: if, I say, the accomplished females of our day are panting for similar renown, let their modesty chastise their ambition, by recollecting that these celebrated women are not to be found among the chaste wives and the virtuous daughters of the Aristideses, the Agises, and the Phocions; but that they are to be looked for among the Phrynes, the Laises, the Aspasias, and the Glyceras. I am persuaded the truly Christian female, whatever be her taste or talents, will renounce the desire of any celebrity when attached to impurity of character, with the same noble indignation with which the virtuous biographer of the above-named heroes renounced any kind of fame which might be dishonestly attained, by exclaiming, 'I had rather it should be said there never was a Plutarch, than that they should say Plutarch was malignant, unjust, or envious.'†

* Sallust.

* Since the first edition of this work appeared the author has received from a person of great eminence the following statement, ascertaining the *time* employed in the acquisition of music, in one instance. As a *general* calculation, it will perhaps be found to be so far from exaggerated, as to be below the truth. The statement concludes with remarking, that the individual who is the subject of it is now married to a man who *dislikes music!*

Suppose your pupil to begin at six years of age, and to continue at the average of four hours a-day *only*, Sunday excepted, and thirteen days allowed for travelling annually, till she is eighteen, the statement stands thus; 300 days multiplied by four, the number of hours amount to 1200; that number multiplied by twelve, which is the number of years, amounts to 14,400 hours!

† No censure is levelled at the exertions of real genius, which is as valuable as it is rare; but at the absurdity of that system which is erecting *the whole* sex into artists.

And while this corruption brought on by an excessive cultivation of the arts, has contributed its full share to the decline of states, it has always furnished an infallible symptom of their impending fall. The satires of the most penetrating and judicious of the Roman poets, corroborating the testimonies of the most accurate of their historians, abound with invectives against the general depravity of manners introduced by the corrupt habits of female education. The bitterness and gross indelicacy of some of these satirists (too gross to be either quoted or referred to) make little against their authority in these points; for how shocking must those corruptions have been, and how obviously offensive their causes, which could have appeared so highly disgusting to minds so coarse as not likely to be scandalized by slight deviations from decency! The famous ode of Horace, attributing the vices and disasters of his degenerate country to the same cause, might, were it quite free from the above objections, be produced, I will not presume to say as an exact picture of the existing manners of this country; but may I not venture to say, as a prophecy, the fulfilment of which cannot be very remote? It may however be observed, that the modesty of the Roman matron, and the chaste demeanour of her virgin daughters, which amidst the stern virtues of the state were as immaculate and pure as the honour of the Roman citizen, fell a sacrifice to the luxurious dissipation brought in by their Asiatic conquests; after which the females were soon taught a complete change of character. They were instructed to accommodate their talents of pleasing to the more vitiated tastes of the other sex; and began to study every grace and every art, which might captivate the exhausted hearts and excite the wearied and capricious inclinations of the men; till by a rapid and at length complete enervation, the Roman character lost its signature, and through a quick succession of slavery, effeminacy, and vice, sunk into that degeneracy of which some of the modern Italian states serve to furnish a too just specimen.

It is of the essence of human things that the same objects which are highly useful in their season, measure, and degree, become mischievous in their excess, at other periods and under other circumstances. In a state of barbarism, the arts are among the best reformers; and they go on to be improved themselves, and improving those who cultivate them, till having reached a certain point, those very arts which were the instruments of civilization and refinement, become instruments of corruption and decay; enervating and depraving in the second instance, by the excess and universality of their cultivation, as certainly as they refined in the first. They become agents of voluptuousness.—They excite the imagination; and the imagination thus excited, and no longer under the government of strict principle, becomes the most dangerous stimulant of the passions; promotes a too keen relish for pleasure, teaching how to multiply its sources, and inventing new and pernicious modes of artificial gratification.

May we not rank among the present corrupt consequences of this unbounded cultivation, the unchaste *costume*, the impure style of dress, and that indelicate statue-like exhibition of the female figure, which by its artfully disposed folds, its seemingly wet and adhesive drapery, so defines the form as to prevent covering itself from becoming a veil? This licentious mode, as the acute Montesquieu observed on the dances of the Spartan virgins, has taught us 'to strip chastity itself of modesty.'

May the author be allowed to address to our own country and our own circumstances, to both of which they seem peculiarly applicable, the spirit of that beautiful apostrophe of the most polished poet of antiquity to the most victorious nation? 'Let us leave to the inhabitants of *conquered countries* the praise of carrying to the very highest degree of perfection, sculpture and the sister arts; but let *this* country direct her own exertions to the art of governing mankind in equity and peace, of showing mercy to the submissive, and of abasing the proud among surrounding nations.'*

CHAP. III.

External improvement. Children's balls. French governesses.

Let me not however be misunderstood.—The customs which fashion has established, when they are not in opposition to what is right, when they are not hostile to virtue, should unquestionably be pursued in the education of ladies. Piety maintains no natural war with elegance, and Christianity would be no gainer by making her disciples unamiable. Religion does not forbid that the exterior be made to a certain degree the object of attention. But the admiration bestowed, the sums expended, and the time lavished on arts, which add little to the intrinsic value of life, should have limitations. While these arts should be admired, let them not be admired above their just value: while they are practised, let it not be to the exclusion of higher employments: while they are cultivated, let it be to amuse leisure, not to engross life.

But it happens unfortunately, that to ordinary observers, the girl who is really receiving the worst instruction often makes the best figure; while in the more correct but less ostensible education, the deep and sure foundations to which the edifice will owe its strength and stability lie out of sight. The outward accomplishments have the dangerous advantage of addressing themselves more immediately to the senses, and

* Let me not be suspected of bringing into any sort of comparison the gentleness of British government with the rapacity of Roman conquests, or the tyrannical principles of Roman dominion. To spoil, to butcher, and to commit every kind of violence, they call, says one of the ablest of their historians, by the lying name of *government*, and when they have spread a general desolation, they call it *peace*. (1)

With such dictatorial, or as we might now read, *directorial*, inquisitors, we can have no point of contact; and if I have applied the servile flattery of a delightful poet to the purpose of English happiness, it was only to show wherein true national grandeur consists, and that every country pays too dear a price for those arts and embellishments of society which endanger the loss of its morals and manners.

(1) Tacitus' Life of Agricola, speech of Galgaous to his soldiers!

of course meet every where with those who can in some measure appreciate as well as admire them; for all can see and hear, but all cannot scrutinize and discriminate, External acquirements too recommend themselves the more because they are more rapidly, as well as more visibly progressive; while the mind is led on to improvement by slow motions and imperceptible degrees; while the heart must now be admonished by reproof, and now allured by kindness; its liveliest advances being suddenly impeded by obstinacy, and its brightest prospects often obscured by passion; it is slow in its acquisitions of virtue, and reluctant in its approaches to piety; and its progress, when any progress is made, does not obtrude itself to vulgar observation.—The unruly and turbulent propensities of the mind are not so obedient to the forming hand as defects of manner or awkwardness of gait. Often when we fancy that a troublesome passion is completely crushed, we have the mortification to find that we have 'scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it.' One evil temper starts up before another is conquered. The subduing hand cannot cut off the ever-sprouting heads so fast as the prolific hydra can reproduce them, nor fell the stubborn Antæus so often as he can recruit his strength, and rise in vigorous and repeated opposition.

Hired teachers are also under a disadvantage resembling tenants at rack-rent; it is their interest to bring in an immediate revenue of praise and profit; and, for the sake of a present rich crop, those who are not strictly conscientious, do not care how much the ground is impoverished for future produce. But parents, who are the lords of the soil, must look to permanent value, and to continued fruitfulness. The best effects of a careful education are often very remote; they are to be discovered in future scenes, and exhibited in as yet untried connexions. Every event of life will be putting the heart into fresh situations, and making new demands on its prudence, its firmness, its integrity, or its forbearance. Those whose business it is to form and model it, cannot foresee those contingent situations specifically and distinctly: yet, as far as human wisdom will allow, they must enable it to prepare for them all by general principles, correct habits, and an unremitted sense of dependence on the Great Disposer of events. As the soldier must learn and practise all his evolutions, though he do not know on what service his leader may command him, by what particular foe he shall be most assailed, nor what mode of attack the enemy may employ; so must the young Christian militant be prepared by previous discipline for actual duty.

But the contrary of all this is the case with external acquisitions. The master, it is his interest, will industriously instruct his young pupil to set all her improvements in the most immediate and conspicuous point of view. To attract admiration is the great principle sedulously inculcated into her young heart; and is considered as the fundamental maxim: and, perhaps, if we were required to condense the reigning system of the brilliant education of a lady into an aphorism, it might be comprised into this short sentence, *To allure and to shine.* This system however is the fruitful germ, from which a thousand yet unborn vanities, with all their multiplied ramifications, will spring. A tender mother cannot but feel an honest triumph in contemplating those talents in her daughter, which will necessarily excite admiration; but she will also shudder at the vanity that admiration may excite, and at the new ideas it will awaken: and, startling as it may sound, the labours of a wise mother, anxious for her daughter's best interests, will seem to be at variance with those of all her teachers. She will indeed rejoice at her progress, but she will rejoice with trembling; for she is fully aware that if all possible accomplishments could be bought at the price of a single virtue, of a single principle, the purchase would be infinitely dear, and she would reject the dazzling but destructive acquisition. She knows that the superstructure of the accomplishments can be alone safely erected on the broad and solid basis of Christian humility: nay more, that as the materials of which that superstructure is to be composed, are in themselves of so unstable and tottering a nature, the foundation must be deepened and enlarged with more abundant care, otherwise the fabric will be overloaded with its own ornaments, and what was intended only to embellish the building, will prove the occasion of its fall.

'To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven,' said the wise man; but he said it before the invention of BABY-BALLS; an invention which has formed a kind of æra, and a most inauspicious one, in the annals of polished education. This modern device is a sort of triple conspiracy against the innocence, the health, and the happiness of children. Thus by factitious amusements, to rob them of a relish for the simple joys, the unbought delights, which naturally belong to their blooming season, is like blotting out spring from the year. To sacrifice the true and proper enjoyments of sprightly and happy children, is to make them pay a dear and disproportionate price for their artificial pleasures. They step at once from the nursery to the ball-room; and, by a change of habits as new as it is preposterous, are thinking of dressing themselves, at an age when they used to be dressing their dolls. Instead of bounding with the unrestrained freedom of little wood-nymphs over hill and dale, their cheeks flushed with health, and their hearts overflowing with happiness, these *gay* little creatures are shut up all the morning, demurely practising the *pas grave*, and transacting the serious business of acquiring a new step for the evening, with more cost of time and pains than it would have taken them to acquire twenty new ideas.

Thus they lose the amusements which properly belong to their smiling period, and unnaturally anticipate those pleasures (such as they are) which would come in, too much of course, on their introduction into fashionable life. The true pleasures of childhood are cheap and natural: for every object teems with delight to eyes and hearts new to the enjoyment of life; nay, the hearts of healthy children abound with a general disposition to mirth and joyfulness, even without a specific object to excite it: like our

first parent, in the world's first spring, when all was new and fresh, and gay about him,

they live and move,
And feel that they are happier than they know.

Only furnish them with a few simple and harmless materials, and a little, but not too much, leisure, and they will manufacture their own pleasure with more skill and success, and satisfaction, than they will receive from all that your money can purchase. Their bodily recreations should be such as will promote their health, quicken their activity, enliven their spirits, whet their ingenuity, and qualify them for their mental work. But, if you begin thus early to create wants, to invent gratifications, to multiply desires, to waken dormant sensibilities, to stir up hidden fires, you are studiously laying up for your children a store of premature caprice and irritability, of impatience and discontent.

While childhood preserves its native simplicity, every little change is interesting, every gratification is a luxury. A ride or a walk, a garland of flowers of her own forming, a plant of her own cultivating, will be a delightful amusement to a child in her natural state; but these harmless and interesting recreations will be dull and tasteless to a sophisticated little creature, nursed in such forced, and costly, and vapid pleasures. Alas! that we should throw away this first grand opportunity of working into a practical habit the moral of this important truth, that the chief source of human discontent is to be looked for, not in our real, but in our factitious wants; not in the demands of nature, but in the insatiable cravings of artificial desire!

When we see the growing zeal to crowd the midnight ball with these pretty fairies, we should be almost tempted to fancy it was a kind of pious emulation among the mothers to cure their infants of a fondness for vain and foolish pleasures, by tiring them out by this premature familiarity with them. And we should be so desirous to invent an excuse for a practice so inexcusable, that we should be ready to hope that they were actuated by something of the same principle which led the Spartans to introduce their sons to scenes of riot, that they might conceive an early disgust at vice! or possibly, that they imitated those Scythian mothers who used to plunge their new-born infants into the flood, thinking none to be worth saving who could not stand this early struggle for their lives; the greater part, indeed, as might have been expected, perished; but the parents took comfort, that if they were lost, the few who escaped would be the stronger for having been thus exposed!

To behold Lilliputian coquettes, projecting dresses, studying colours, assorting ribands, mixing flowers, and choosing feathers; their little hearts beating with hopes about partners and fears about rivals; to see their fresh cheeks pale after the midnight supper, their aching heads and unbraced nerves, disqualifying the little languid beings for the next day's task; and to hear the grave apology, 'that it is owing to the wine, the crowd, the heated room of the last night's ball;' all this, I say, would really be as ludicrous, if the mischief of the thing did not take off from the merriment of it, as any of the ridiculous and preposterous disproportions in the diverting travels of captain Lemuel Gulliver.

Under a just impression of the evils which we are sustaining from the principles and the practices of *modern* France, we are apt to lose sight of those deep and lasting mischiefs which so long, so regularly, and so systematically we have been importing from the same country, though in another form, and under another government. In one respect, indeed, the first were the more formidable, because we embraced the ruin without suspecting it; while we defeat the malignity of the latter, by detecting the turpitude, and defending ourselves against its contagion. This is not the place to descant on that levity of manners, that contempt of the sabbath, that fatal familiarity with loose principles, and those relaxed notions of conjugal fidelity, which have often been transplanted into this country by women of fashion, as a too common effect of a long residence in a neighbouring nation; but it is peculiarly suitable to my subject to advert to another domestic mischief derived from the same foreign extraction; I mean the risks that have been run, and the sacrifices which have been made, in order to furnish our young ladies with the means of acquiring the French language in the greatest possible purity. Perfection in this accomplishment has been so long established as the supreme object; so long considered as the predominant excellence to which all other excellencies must bow down, that it would be hopeless to attack a law which fashion has immutably decreed, and which has received the stamp of long prescription. We must, therefore, be contented with expressing a wish, that this indispensable perfection could have been attained at the expense of sacrifices less important. It is with the greater regret I animadvert on this and some other prevailing practices as they are errors into which the wise and respectable have through want of consideration, or rather through want of firmness to resist the tyranny of fashion, sometimes fallen. It has not been unusual when mothers of rank and reputation have been asked how they ventured to intrust their daughters to foreigners, of whose principles they knew nothing, except that they were Roman Catholics, to answer, 'That they had taken care to be secure on that subject; for that it had been stipulated that *the question of religion should never be agitated between the teacher and the pupil.*' This, it must be confessed, is a most desperate remedy; it is like starving to death to avoid being poisoned. And who can help trembling for the event of that education, from which religion, as far as the governess is concerned, is thus formally and systematically excluded. Surely it would not be exacting too much, to suggest at least that an attention no less scrupulous should be exerted to insure the character of our children's instructor, for piety and knowledge, than is thought necessary to ascertain that she has nothing *patois* in her dialect.

I would rate a correct pronunciation and an elegant phraseology at their just price, and I would not rate them low; but I would not offer up piety and principle as victims to sounds and

accents. And the matter is now made more easy; for whatever disgrace it might once have brought on an English lady to have had it suspected from her accent that she had the misfortune not to be born in a neighbouring country; some recent events may serve to reconcile her to the suspicion of having been bred in her own. A country, to which, (with all its sins, which are many!) the whole world is looking up with envy and admiration, as the seat of true glory and of comparative happiness! A country, in which the exile, driven out by the crimes of his own, finds a home! A country, to obtain the protection of which it was claim enough to be unfortunate; and no impediment to have been the subject of her direst foe! A country, which, in this respect, humbly imitating the Father of compassion, when it offered mercy to a suppliant enemy, never conditioned for merit, nor insisted on the virtues of the miserable as a preliminary to its own bounty!

'England! with all thy faults, I love thee still.'

CHAP. IV.

Comparison of the mode of female education in the last age with the present.

To return, however, to the subject of general education. We admit that a young lady may excel in speaking French and Italian; may repeat a few passages from a volume of extracts; play like a professor, and sing like a syren; have her dressing-room decorated with her own drawings, tables, stands, flower-pots, screens and cabinets; nay, she may dance like Sempronia* herself, and yet we shall insist that she may have been very badly educated. I am far from meaning to set no value whatever on these qualifications; they are all of them elegant, and many of them properly tend to the perfecting of a polite education. These things in their measure and degree may be done, but there are others which should not be left undone. Many things are becoming, but 'one thing is needful.' Besides, as the world seems to be fully apprised of the value of whatever tends to embellish life, there is less occasion here to insist on its importance.

But though a well-bred young lady may lawfully learn most of the fashionable arts; yet, let me ask, does it seem to be the true end of education to make women of fashion *dancers*, *singers*, *players*, *painters*, *actresses*, *sculptors*, *gilders*, *varnishers*, *engravers*, and *embroiderers*? Most *men* are commonly destined to some profession, and their minds are consequently turned each to its respective object. Would it not be strange if they were called out to exercise their profession, or to set up their trade, with only a little general knowledge of the trades and professions of all other men, and without any previous definite application to their own peculiar calling? The professions of ladies, to which the bent of *their* instruction should be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers, and mistresses of families. They should be therefore trained with a view to these several conditions, and be furnished with a stock of ideas, and principles, and qualifications and habits, ready to be applied and appropriated, as occasion may demand, to each of these respective situations. For though the arts which merely embellish life must claim admiration; yet when a man of sense comes to marry, it is a companion whom he wants, and not an artist. It is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and sing, and draw, and dress, and dance; it is a being who can comfort and counsel him; one who can reason, and reflect, and feel and judge, and discourse and discriminate; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his cares, sooth his sorrows, purify his joys, strengthen his principles, and educate his children.

Almost any ornamental acquirement is a good thing, when it is not the best thing a woman has; and talents are admirable when not made to stand proxy for virtues. The writer of these pages is intimately acquainted with several ladies who, excelling most of their sex in the art of music, but excelling them also in prudence and piety, find little leisure or temptation amidst the delights and duty of a large and lovely family, for the exercise of this charming talent; they regret that so much of their own youth was wasted in acquiring an art which can be turned to so little account in married life, and are now conscientiously restricting their daughters in the portion of time allotted to its acquisition.

Far be it from me to discourage the cultivation of any existing talent; but may it not be questioned of the fond believing mother, whether talents like the spirits of Owen Glendower, though conjured by parental partiality with ever so loud a voice,

Yet will they come when you do call for them?

That injudicious practice, therefore, cannot be too much discouraged of endeavouring to create talents which do not exist in nature. *That their daughters shall learn every thing*, is so general a maternal maxim, that even unborn daughters, of whose expected abilities and conjectured faculties, it is presumed, no very accurate judgment can previously be formed, are yet predestined to this universality of accomplishments. This comprehensive maxim, thus almost universally brought into practice, at once weakens the general powers of the mind, by drawing off its strength into too great a variety of directions; and cuts up time into too many separate portions, by splitting it into such an endless multiplicity of employments. I know that I am treading on tender ground; but I cannot help thinking that the restless pains we take to cram up every little vacuity of life, by crowding one new thing upon another, rather creates a thirst for novelty than knowledge; and is but a well disguised contrivance to anticipate the keeping us in after-life more effectually from conversing with ourselves. The care taken to prevent *ennui* is but a creditable plan for promoting self-ignorance. We run from one occupation to another (I speak of those arts to which little intellect is applied) with a view to lighten the pressure of time; above all we fly to them to save us from our own thoughts; we fly to them to rescue us from ourselves; whereas we were

* See Cataline's Conspiracy.

thrown a little more on our own hands, we might at last be driven, by way of something to do, to try to get acquainted with our own hearts. But it is only one part of the general inconsistency of the human character, that with the person of all others we best love, we least like to converse and to form an intimacy; I mean ourselves. But though our being less absorbed by this busy trifling, which dignifies its inanity with the imposing name of occupation, might render us somewhat more sensible of the tedium of life; yet might not this very sensation tend to quicken our pursuit of a better? For an awful thought here suggests itself. If life be so long that we are driven to set at work every engine to pass away the tediousness of time; how shall we do to get rid of the tediousness of eternity? an eternity in which not one of the acquisitions which life has been exhausted in acquiring, will be of the least use? Let not then the soul be starved by feeding it on such unsubstantial aliment, for the mind can be no more nourished by these empty husks than the body can be fed with ideas and principles.

Among the boasted improvements of the present age, none affords more frequent matter of peculiar exultation, than the manifest superiority in the employment of the young ladies of our time over those of the good house-wives of the last century. It is matter of general triumph that they are at present employed in learning the polite arts, or in acquiring liberal accomplishments; while it is insisted that their forlorn predecessors wore out their joyless days in adorning the mansion-house with hideous hangings of sorrowful tapestry and disfiguring tent-stitch. Most cheerfully do I allow to the reigning modes their just claim of boasted superiority, for certainly there no piety in bad taste. Still, granting all the deformity of the exploded ornaments, one advantage attended them, the walls and the floors were not vain of their decorations; and it is to be feared, that the little person sometimes is. The flattery bestowed on the obsolete employments, for probably even *they* had their flatterers, furnished less aliment to selfishness, and less gratification to vanity: and the occupation itself was less likely to impair the delicacy and modesty of the sex, than the exquisite cultivation of personal accomplishments or personal decorations; and every mode which keeps down vanity and keeps back *self*, has at least a moral use. For while we admire the rapid movement of the elegant fingers of a young lady busied in working or painting her ball dress, we cannot help suspecting that her alacrity may be a little stimulated by the animating idea *how very well she shall look in it.* Nor was the industrious matron of Ithaca more soothed at her solitary loom with the sweet reflection that by her labour she was gratifying her filial and conjugal feelings, than the industrious but pleasure-loving damsel of Britain is gratified by the anticipated admiration which her ingenuity is procuring for her beauty.

Might not this propensity be a little checked, and an interesting feeling combined with her industry, were the fair artist habituated to exercise her skill in adorning some one else rather than herself? For it will add no lightness to the lightest head, nor vanity to the vainest heart, to solace her labours in reflecting how exceedingly the gown she is working will become her mother. This suggestion, trifling as it may seem, of habituating young ladies to exercise their taste and devote their leisure, not to the decoration of their own persons, but to the service of those to whom they are bound by every tender tie of love and duty, would not only help to repress vanity, but by thus associating the idea of industry with that of filial tenderness, would promote, while it gratified some of the best affections of the heart. The Romans (and it is mortifying on the subject of Christian education to be driven so often to refer to the superiority of pagans) were so well aware of the importance of keeping up a sense of family fondness and attachment by the very same means which promoted simple and domestic employment, that no citizen of note ever appeared in public in any garb but what was spun by his wife and daughter; and this virtuous passion was not confined to the early days of republican severity, but even in all the pomp and luxury of imperial power. Augustus preserved in his own family this simplicity of private manners.

Let me be allowed to repeat, that I mean not with preposterous praise to descant on the ignorance or the prejudices of past times, nor absurdly to regret the vulgar system of education which rounded the little circle of female acquirements within the limits of the sampler and the receipt book. Yet if a preference almost exclusive was then given to what was merely useful, a preference almost equally exclusive also is now assigned to what is merely ornamental. And it must be owned, that if the life of a young lady, formerly too much resembled the life of a confectioner, it now too much resembles that of an actress: the morning is all rehearsal, and the evening is all performance. And those who are trained in this regular routine, who are instructed in order to be exhibited, soon learn to feel a sort of impatience in those societies in which *their* kind of talents are not likely to be brought into play; the task of an auditor becomes dull to her who has been used to be a performer. Esteem and kindness become but cold substitutes to one who has been fed on plaudits and pampered with acclamations: and the excessive commendation which the visiter is expected to pay for his entertainment not only keeps alive the flame of vanity in the artist by constant fuel, but is not seldom exacted at a price which a veracity at all strict would grudge. The misfortune is, when a whole circle are obliged to be competitors who shall flatter most, it is not easy to be at once very sincere and very civil. And unfortunately, while the age is become so knowing and so fastidious, that if a young lady does not play like a public performer, no one thinks her worth attending; yet if she does so excel, some of the sobcrest of the admiring circle feel a strong alloy to their pleasure, on reflecting at what a vast expense of time this perfection probably must have been acquired.*

* That accurate judge of the human heart, madame de Maintenon, was so well aware of the danger resulting from some kinds of excellence, that after the young

The study of the fine arts, indeed, is forced on young persons, with or without genius (fashion, as was said before, having swallowed up that distinction) to such excess, as to vex, fatigue, and disgust those who have no talents, and to determine them, as soon as they become free agents, to abandon all such tormenting acquirements. While by this incessant compulsion still more pernicious effects are often produced on those who actually possess genius; for the natural constant reference in the mind to that public performance for which they are sedulously cultivating this talent, excites the same passions of envy, vanity, and competition in the dilettanti performers, as might be supposed to stimulate professional candidates for fame and profit at public games and theatrical exhibitions. Is this emulation, is this spirit of rivalry, is this hunger after public praise the temper which prudent parents would wish to excite and foster? Besides, in *any* event the issue is not favourable if the young performers are timid; they disgrace themselves and distress their friends; if courageous, their boldness offends still more than their bad performance. Shall they then be studiously brought into situations in which failure discredits and success disgusts?

May I venture, without being accused of pedantry, to conclude this chapter with another reference to pagan examples? The Hebrews, Egyptians, and Greeks, believed that they could more effectually teach their youth maxims of virtue, by calling in the aid of music and poetry; these maxims, therefore, they put into verses, and these verses were set to the most popular and simple tunes, which the children sang; thus was their love of goodness excited by the very instrument of their pleasure; and the senses, the taste, and the imagination, as it were, pressed into the service of religion, and morals. Dare I appeal to christian parents, if these arts are commonly used by *them*, as subsidiary to religion, and to a system of morals much more worthy of every ingenious aid and association, which might tend to recommend them to the youthful mind? Dare I appeal to Christian parents, whether music, which fills up no trifling portion of their daughter's time, does not fill it without any moral end, or even without any specific object? Nay, whether some of the favourite songs of polished societies are not amatory, are not Anacreontic, more than quite become the modest lips of innocent youth and delicate beauty?

CHAP. V.

On the religious employment of time.—On the manner in which holydays are passed.—Selfishness and inconsideration considered.—Dangers arising from the world.

THERE are many well-disposed parents, who, while they attend to these fashionable acquirements, do not neglect to infuse religious knowledge into the minds of their children; and having done this, are but too apt to conclude that they have done all, and have fully acquitted themselves of the important duties of education. For having, as they think, sufficiently grounded their daughters in religion, they do not scruple to allow them to spend almost the whole of their time exactly like the daughters of worldly people. Now, though it be one great point gained, to have imbued their young minds with the best knowledge, the work is not therefore by any means accomplished. 'What do ye more than others?' is a question which in a more extended sense, religious parents must be prepared to answer.

Such parents should go on to teach children the religious use of time, the duty of consecrating to God every talent, every faculty, every possession, and of devoting their whole lives to his glory. People of piety should be more peculiarly on their guard against a spirit of idleness, and a slovenly habitual wasting of time, because this practice, by not assuming a palpable shape of guilt, carries little alarm to the conscience. Even religious characters are in danger on this side; for not allowing themselves to follow the world in its excesses and diversions, they have consequently more time upon their hands; and instead of dedicating the time so rescued to its true purposes, they sometimes make as it were compensation to themselves for their abstinence from dangerous places of public resort, by an habitual frivolousness at home; by a superabundance of unprofitable small-talk, idle reading, and a quiet and dull frittering away of time. Their day perhaps has been more free from actual evil: but it will often be discovered to have been as unproductive as that of more worldly characters; and they will be found to have traded to as little purpose with their master's talents. But a Christian must take care to keep his conscience peculiarly alive to the unapparent, though formidable perils of unprofitableness.

To these, and to all, the author would earnestly recommend to accustom their children to pass at once from serious business to active and animated recreation; they should carefully preserve them from those long and torpid intervals between both, that languid indolence and spiritless trifling that merely getting rid of the day without stamping on it any characters of active goodness or of intellectual profit, that inane drowsiness which wears out such large portions of life in both young and old. It has, indeed, passed into an aphorism, that activity is necessary to virtue, even among those who are not apprised that it is also indispensable to happiness. So far are many parents from being sensible of this truth, that vacations from school are not merely allowed, but appointed to pass away in wearisome sauntering and indeterminate idleness, and this is done by erring tenderness, by way of converting the holydays into pleasure! Nay the idleness is specifically made over to the child's mind, as the strongest expression of the fondness of the parent! A dislike to learning is thus systematically excited by preposterously erecting indolence into a reward for application!

ladies of the court of Louis Quatorze had distinguished themselves by the performance of some dramatic pieces of Racine, when her friends told her how admirably they had played their parts; 'Yes,' answered this wise woman, 'so admirably that they shall never play again.'

And the promise of doing nothing is held out as the strongest temptation, as well as the best recompence, for having done well!

These, and such like errors of conduct arise from the latent, but very operative, principle of selfishness. This principle is obviously promoted by many habits and practice seemingly of little importance; and indeed selfiishness is so commonly interwoven with vanity and inconsideration that I have not always thought it necessary to mark the distinction. They are alternately cause and effect; and are produced and reproduced by reciprocal operation. They are a joint confederacy, who are mutually promoting each other's strength and interest; they are united by almost inseparable ties, and the indulgence of either is the gratification of all. Ill-judging tenderness is in fact only a concealed self-love, which cannot bear to be a witness to the uneasiness which a present disappointment, or difficulty, or vexation, would cause to a darling child; but which yet does not scruple by improper gratification to store up for it future miseries, which the child will infallibly suffer, though it may be at a distant period, which the selfish mother does not disturb herself by anticipating, because she thinks she may be saved the pain of beholding.

Another principle, something different from this, though it may probably fall under the head of selfishness, seems to actuate some parents in their conduct towards their children: I mean a certain slothfulness of mind, a love of ease which imposes a voluntary blindness, and makes them not choose to see what will give them the trouble to combat. From the persons in question we frequently hear such expressions as these: 'Children will be children.'—'My children, I suppose are much like those of other people,' &c. Thus we may observe this dangerous and delusive principle frequently turning off with a smile from the first indications of those tempers, which from their fatal tendency ought to be very seriously taken up. I would be understood now as speaking to conscientious parents, who consider it as a general duty to correct the faults of their children, but who, from this indolence of mind, are extremely backward in *discovering* such faults, and are not very well pleased when they are pointed out by others. Such parents will do well to take notice, that whatever they consider it is a duty to *correct*, must be equally a duty to endeavour to *find out*. And this indolent love of ease is the more to be guarded against, as it not only leads parents into erroneous conduct towards their children, but is peculiarly dangerous to themselves. It is a fault frequently cherished from ignorance of its real character; for not bearing on it the strong features of deformity which mark many other vices, but on the contrary bearing some resemblance to virtue, it is frequently mistaken for Christian graces of patience, meekness, and forbearance, than which nothing can be more opposite; these proceeding from that Christian principle of self-denial, the other from self-indulgence.

In this connexion may I be permitted to remark on the practice at the tables of many families when the children are at home for the holydays? Every delicacy is forced upon them, with the tempting remark, 'that they cannot have this or that dainty at school.' They are indulged in irregular hours for the same motive, 'because they cannot have that indulgence at school.' Thus the natural seeds of idleness, sensuality, and sloth, are at once cherished, by converting the periodical visit at home into a season of intemperance, late hours, and exemption from learning. So that children are habituated, at an age when lasting associations are formed in the mind, to connect the idea of study with that of hardship, of happiness with gluttony, and of pleasure with loitering, feasting, or sleeping. Would it not be better, would it not be kinder, to make them combine the delightful idea of home, with the gratification of the social affections, the fondness of maternal love, the kindness, and warmth, and confidence of the sweet domestic attachments,

> —And all the charities
> Of father, son and brother?

I will venture to say, that those listless and vacant days, when the thoughts have no precise object; when the imagination has nothing to shape; when industry has no definitive pursuit; when the mind and the body have no exercise: and the ingenuity has no acquisition either to anticipate or to enjoy, are the longest, the dullest, and the least happy, which children of spirit and genius ever pass. Yes! it is a few short but keen and lively intervals of animated pleasure, snatched from between the successive labours and duties of a well-ordered, busy day, looked forward to with hope, enjoyed with taste, and recollected without remorse, which, both to men and to children, yield the truest portions of enjoyment. O snatch your offspring from adding to the number of those objects of supreme commiseration, who seek their happiness in doing nothing! The animal may be gratified by it, but the man is degraded. Life is but a short day; but it is a working day. Activity *may* lead to evil; but inactivity *cannot* be led to good.

Young ladies should also be accustomed to set apart a fixed portion of their time, as sacred to to the poor,* whether in relieving, instructing, or working for them; and the performance of this duty must not be left to the event of contingent circumstances, or operation of accidental impressions; but it must be established into a principle, and wrought into a habit. A specific portion of the day must be allotted to it, on which no common engagement must be allowed to intrench. Those periods of time, which are not *stated*, are seldom turned to their proper use; and nothing short of a regular plan (which must however be sometimes made to give way to cir-

* It would be a noble employment, and well becoming the tenderness of their sex, if ladies were to consider the superintendance of the poor as their immediate office. They are peculiarly fitted for it, for from their own habits of life they are more intimately acquainted with domestic wants than the other sex; and in certain instances of sickness and sufferings peculiar to themselves, they should be expected to have more sympathy; and they have obviously more leisure. There is a certain religious society, distinguished by simplicity of dress, manners, and language, whose poor are perhaps better taken care of than any other; and one reason may be, that they are immediately under the inspection of the women.

cumstances) insures the conscientious discharge of any duty. This will help to furnish a powerful remedy for that selfishness, whose strong holds (the truth cannot be too often repeated) it is the grand business of Christian education perpetually to attack. If we were but aware how much better it makes ourselves to wish to see others better and to assist in making them so, we should find that the good done would be of as much importance by the habit of doing good, which it would induce in our own minds, as by its beneficial effects on the objects of our kindness.*

In what relates to pecuniary bounty, it will be requiring of young persons a very small sacrifice, if you teach them merely to give that money to the poor which properly belongs not to the child but to the parent; this sort of charity commonly subtracts little from their own pleasures, especially when what they have bestowed is immediately made up to them as a reward for their little fit of generosity. They will, on this plan, soon learn to give, not only for praise but for profit. The sacrifice of an orange to a little girl, or feather to a great one, given at the expense of their own gratification, would be a better lesson of charity on its right ground, than a considerable sum of money to be presently replaced by the parent. And it would be habituating them early to combine two ideas, which ought never to be separated, charity and self-denial.

As an antidote to selfishness, as well as to pride and indolence, they should also very early be taught to perform all the little offices in their power for themselves; they should be accustomed not to be insolently exercising their supposed prerogative of rank and wealth, by calling for servants where there is no real occasion; above all they should be accustomed to consider the domestics' hours of meals and rest as almost sacred, and the golden rule should be practicably and uniformly enforced, even on so trifling an occasion as ringing a bell, through mere wantonness, or self-love, or pride.

To check the growth of inconsiderateness, young ladies should early be taught to discharge their little debts with punctuality. They should be made sensible of the cruelty of obliging trades-people to call often for the money due to them; and of hindering and detaining those whose time is the source of their subsistence, under the pretence of some frivolous engagement, which ought to be made to bend to the comfort and advantage of others. They should conscientiously allow sufficient time for the execution of their orders; and with a Christian circumspection be careful not to drive work-people, by needless hurry, into losing their rest, or breaking the Sabbath. I have known a lady give her gown to a mantua-maker on the Saturday night, to whom she would not for the world say in so many words, 'You must work through the whole of Sunday,' while she was virtually compelling her to do so, by an injunction to bring the gown home finished on the Monday morning, on pain of her displeasure. To these hardships numbers are continually driven by good natured but inconsiderate employers. As these petty exactions of inconsideration furnish only a constant aliment to selfishness, let not a desire to counteract them be considered as leading to too minute details; nothing is too frivolous for animadversion, which tends to fix a bad habit in the superior, or to wound the feelings of the dependant.

Would it not be turning those political doctrines, which are now so warmly agitating, to a truly moral account, and give the best practical answer to the popular declamations on the inequality of human conditions, were the rich carefully to instruct their children to soften that inevitable inequality by the mildness and tenderness of their behaviour to their inferiors? This dispensation of God, which excites so many sinful murmurs, would, were it thus practically improved, tend to establish the glory of that Being who is now so often charged with injustice; for God himself is covertly attacked in many of the invectives against laws, governments, and the supposed arbitrary and unjust disproportion of ranks and riches.

This dispensation, thus properly improved, would, at once call into exercise the generosity, kindness, and forbearance of the superior; and the patience, resignation, and gratitude of the inferior; and thus, while we were vindicating the *ways* of Providence, we should be accomplishing his *plan*, by bringing into action those virtues of both classes, which would have little exercise had there been no inequality in station and fortune. Those more exalted persons who are so zealously contending for the privileges of rank and power, should never lose sight of the religious duties and considerate virtues which the possession of rank and power imposes on themselves; duties and virtues which should ever be inseparable from those privileges. As the inferior classes have little real right to complain of *laws* in this respect, let the great be watchful to give them as little cause to complain of *manners*. In order to this, let them carefully train up their children to supply by individual kindness those cases of hardship which laws cannot reach; let them obviate, by an active and well-directed compassion, those imperfections of which the best constructed human institutions must unavoidably partake; and, by the exercise of private bounty, early inculcated, soften those distresses which can never come under the cognizance of even the best government. Let them teach their offspring, that the charity of the rich should ever be subsidiary to the public provision in those numberless instances to which the most equal laws cannot apply. By such means every lesson of politics may be converted into a lesson of piety; and a spirit of condescending love might win over some whom a spirit of invective will only inflame.

Among the instances of negligence into which even religiously disposed parents and teachers are apt to fall, one is, that they are not sufficiently attentive in finding interesting employ-

* In addition to the instruction of the individual poor, and the superintendance of charity schools, ladies might be highly useful in assisting the parochial clergy in the adoption of that excellent plan for the instruction of the ignorant, suggested by the bishop of Durham in his last admirable charge to his clergy. It is with pleasure the author is enabled to add that the scheme has actually been adopted with good effect in that extensive diocese.

ment for the Sunday. They do not make a scruple of sometimes allowing their children to fill up the intervals of public worship with their ordinary employments and common school exercises. They are not aware that they are training their offspring to an early and a systematic profanation of the Sabbath by this custom; for to children, their tasks are their business; to them a French or Latin exercise is as serious an occupation as the exercise of a trade or profession is to a man; and if they are allowed to think the one right *now*, they will not be brought hereafter to think that the other is wrong: for the opinions and practices fixed at this important season are not easily altered: and an early habit becomes rooted into an inveterate prejudice. By this oversight even the friends of religion may be contributing eventually to that abolition of the Lord's day, so devoutly wished and so indefatigably laboured after by its enemies, as the desired preliminary to the destruction of whatever is most dear to christians. What obstruction would it offer to the general progress of youth, if all their Sunday exercises (which, with reading, composing, transcribing and getting by heart, might be extended to an entertaining variety) were adapted to the peculiar nature of the day?

Those whose own spirits and vigour of mind are exhausted by the amusements of the world, and who therefore grow faint and languid under the continuance of serious occupation, are not aware how different the case is with lively young people, whose spring of action has not been broken by habitual indulgence. They are not aware that a firm and well disciplined intellect wants, comparatively, little amusement. The mere change from one book to another, is a relief almost amounting to pleasure. But then the variation must be judiciously made, so that to novelty must be superadded comparative amusement; that is, the gradation should be made from the more to the less serious book. If care be thus taken that greater exertion of the mental powers shall not be required, when, through length of application, there is less ability or disposition to exert them; such a well ordered distinction, will produce on the mind nearly the same effect as a new employment.

It is not meant to impose on them such rigorous study as shall convert the day they should be taught to love into a day of burdens and hardships, or to abridge them of such innocent enjoyments as are compatable with a season of holy rest. It is intended merely to suggest that there should be a marked distinction in the nature of their employments and studies; for on the observance or neglect of this, as was before observed, their future notions and principles will in a good degree be formed. The Gospel, in rescuing the Lord's day from the rigorous bondage of the Jewish sabbath, never lessened the obligation to keep it holy, nor meant to sanction any secular occupation.* Christianity in lightening its austerities has not defeated the end of its institution; in purifying its spirit, it has not abolished its object.

* The strongest proof of this observation is the *conduct* of the first christians who had their instructions immediately from the Apostles.

Though the author, chiefly writing with a view to domestic instruction, has purposely avoided entering on the disputed question, whether a school or home education be best; a question which perhaps must generally be decided by the state of the individual home, and the state of the individual school; yet she begs leave to suggest one remark, which peculiarly belongs to a school education; namely, the general habit of converting the Sunday into a visiting day, by way of gaining time; as if the appropriate instructions of the Lord's day were the cheapest sacrifice which could be made to pleasure. Even in those schools in which religion is considered as an indispensable part of instruction, this kind of instruction is almost exclusively limited to Sundays: how then are girls ever to make any progress in this most important article, if they are habituated to lose the religious advantages of the school, for the sake of having more dainties for dinner abroad? This remark cannot be supposed to apply to the visits which children make to religious parents, and indeed it only applies to those cases where the school is a conscientious school, and the visit a trifling visit.

Among other subjects which engross a good share of worldly conversation, one of the most attracting is beauty. Many ladies have often a random way of talking rapturously on the general importance and the fascinating power of beauty, who are yet prudent enough to be very unwilling to let their own daughters find out they are handsome. Perhaps the contrary course might be safer. If the little listener were not constantly hearing that beauty is the best gift, she would not be so vain from fancying herself to be the best gifted. Be less solicitous, therefore, to conceal from her a secret, which, with all your watchfulness, she will be sure to find out, without your telling; but rather seek to lower the general value of beauty in her estimation. Use your daughter in all things to a different standard from that of the world. It is not by vulgar people and servants only that she will be told of her being pretty. She will be hearing it not only from gay ladies, but from grave men; she will be hearing it from the whole world around her. The antidote to the present danger is not now to be searched for; it must be already operating; it must have been provided for in the foundation laid in the general principle she has been imbibing before this particular temptation of beauty came in question. And this general principle is an habitual indifference to flattery. She must have learnt not to be intoxicated by the praise of the world. She must have learnt to estimate things by their intrinsic worth, rather than by the world's estimation. Speak to her with particular kindness and commendation of plain but amiable girls; mention with compassion such as are handsome but ill-educated; speak casually of some who were once thought pretty, but have ceased to be good; make use of the arguments arising from the shortness and uncertainty of beauty, as strong additional reasons for making that which is little valuable in itself, still less valuable. As it is a *new* idea which is always dangerous, you may thus break the force of this danger by al-

lowing her an early introduction to this inevitable knowledge, which would become more interesting, and of course more perilous by every additional year; and if you can guard against that fatal and almost universal error of letting her see that she is more loved on account of her beauty, her familiarity with the idea may be less dangerous than its novelty afterwards would prove.

But the great and constant peril to which young persons in the higher walks of life are exposed, is the prevailing turn and spirit of general conversation. Even the children of better families, who are well-instructed when at their studies, are yet at other times continually beholding the WORLD set up in the highest and most advantageous point of view. Seeing the world! knowing the world! standing well with the world! making a figure in the world! is spoken of as including the whole sum and substance of human advantages. They hear their education almost exclusively alluded to with reference to the *figure* it will enable them to make in the world. In almost all companies they hear all that the world admires spoken of with admiration; rank flattered, fame coveted, power sought, beauty idolized, money considered as the one thing needful, and as the atoning substitute for the want of all other things; profit held up as the reward of virtue, and worldly estimation as the just and highest prize of laudable ambition; and after the very spirit of the world has been thus habitually infused into them all the week, one cannot expect much effect from their being coldly and customarily told now and then on Sundays, that they must not 'love the world, nor the things of the world.' To tell them once in seven days that it is a sin to gratify an appetite which you have been whetting and stimulating the preceding six, is to require from them a power of self-control, which our knowledge of the impetuosity of the passions, especially in early age, should have taught us is impossible.

This is not the place to animadvert on the usual misapplication of the phrase, 'knowing the world;' which term is commonly applied, in the way of panegyric, to keen, designing, selfish, ambitious men, who study mankind in order to turn them to their own account. But in the true sense of the expression, the sense which christian parents would wish to impress on their children, to know the world is to know its emptiness, its vanity, its futility, and its wickedness. To know it is to despise it, to be on our guard against it, to labour to live above it; and in this view an obscure Christian in a village may be said to know the world better than a hoary courtier or wily politician. For how can they be said to *know* it who go on to love it, to be led captive by its allurements, to give their soul in exchange for its lying promises?

But while so false an estimate is often made in fashionable society of the real value of things; that is, while Christianity does *not* furnish the standard, and human opinion *does*; while the multiplying our desires is considered as a symptom of elegance, though to subdue those desires is the grand criterion of religion; while moderation is beheld as indicating a poorness of spirit, though to that very poverty of spirit the highest promise of the gospel is assigned; while worldly wisdom is sedulously enjoined by worldly friends, in contradiction to that assertion, 'that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God;' while the praise of man is to be anxiously sought in opposition to that assurance, that 'the fear of man worketh a snare;' while they are taught all the week, that 'the friendship of the world' is the wisest pursuit; and on Sundays that 'it is enmity with God;' while these things are so (and that they are so in a good degree who will undertake to deny?) may we not venture to affirm that a Christian education, though it be not an impossible, is yet a very difficult work?

CHAP. VI.

ON THE EARLY FORMING OF HABITS.

On the necessity of forming the Judgment to direct those Habits.

IT can never be too often repeated, that one of the great objects of education is the forming of habits. I may be suspected of having recurred too often, though hitherto only incidentally, to this topic. It is, however, a topic of such importance, that it will be useful to consider it somewhat more in detail; as the early forming of right habits on sound principles seems to be one of the grand secrets of virtue and happiness.

The forming of any one good habit seems to be effected rather by avoiding the opposite bad habit, and resisting every temptation to the opposite vice, than by the mere occasional practice of the virtue required.—*Humility*, for instance, is less an act than a disposition of the mind. It is not so much a single performance of some detached humble deed, as an incessant watchfulness against every propensity to pride. *Sobriety*, is not a prominent ostensible thing; it evidently consists in a series of negations, and not of actions. It is a conscientious habit of resisting every incentive to intemperance.—*Meekness* is best attained and exemplified by guarding against every tendency to anger, impatience and resentment. A habit of *attention* and application is formed by early and constant vigilance against a trifling spirit and a wandering mind. A habit of *industry*, by watching against the blandishments of pleasure, the waste of small portions of time, and the enchroachment of small indulgences.

Now, to stimulate us to an earnest desire of working any or all of these habits into the minds of children, it will be of importance to consider what a variety of uses each of them involves.

To take, for example, the case of moderation and temperance. It would seem to a superficial observer of no very great importance to acquire a habit of self-denial in respect either to the elegancies of decoration, or to the delicacies of the table, or to the common routine of pleasure; that there can be no occasion for an indifference to luxuries harmless in themselves; and no need of daily moderation in those persons who are possessed of affluence, and to whom there

fore, as the expense is no object, so the forbearance is thought of no importance. Those acts of self-denial, I admit, when contemplated by themselves, appear to be of no great value, yet they assume high importance, if you consider what it is to have, as it were, dried up the spring of only one importunate passion; if you reflect after any one such conquest is obtained, how easily, comparatively speaking, it is followed up by others.

How much future virtue and self-government, in more important things, may a mother therefore be securing to that child, who should always remain in as high a situation as she is in when the first foundations of this quality are laying; but should any reverse of fortune take place in the daughter, how much integrity and independence of mind also may be prepared for her, by the early excision of superfluous desires. She, who has been trained to subdue these propensities, will, in all probability be preserved from running into worthless company, merely for the sake of the splendor which may be attached to it. She will be rescued from the temptation to do wrong things for the sake of enjoyments from which she cannot abstain. She is delivered from the danger of flattering those whom she despises; because her moderate mind and well ordered desires do not solicit indulgences which could only be procured by mean compliances. For she will have been habituated to consider the *character* as the leading circumstance of attachment, and the splendor as an accident, which may or may not belong to it; but which, when it does, as it is not a ground of merit in the possessor, so it is not to be the ground of her attachment. The habit of self-control, in small as well as in great things involves in the aggregate less loss of pleasure, than will be experienced by disappointments in the mind ever yielding itself to the love of present indulgences, whenever those indulgences should be abridged or withdrawn.

She who has been accustomed to have an early habit of restraint exercised over all her appetites and temper; she who has been used to set bounds to her desires as a general principle, will have learned to withstand a passion for dress and personal ornaments; and the woman who has conquered this propensity has surmounted one of the most domineering temptations which assail the sex. While this seemingly little circumstance, if neglected, and the opposite habit formed, may be the first step to every successive error, and every consequent distress. Those women who are ruined by seduction in the lower classes, and those who are made miserable by ambitious marriages in the higher, will be more frequently found to owe their misery to an ungoverned passion for dress and show, than to motives more apparently bad. An habitual moderation in this article, growing out of a pure self-denying principle, and not arising from the affectation of a singularity, which may have more pride in it, than others feel in the indulgence of any of the things which this singularity renounces, includes many valuable advantages. Modesty, simplicity, humility, economy, prudence, liberality, charity, are almost inseparably, and not very remotely, connected with an habitual victory over personal vanity and a turn to personal expense. The inferior and less striking virtues are the smaller pearls, which serve to string and connect the great ones.

An early and unremitting zeal in forming the mind to a habit of attention not only produces the outward expression of good breeding, as one of its incidental advantages, but involves, or rather creates, better qualities than itself; while vacancy and inattention not only produce vulgar manners, but are usually the indication, if not of an ordinary, yet of a neglected understanding. To the habitually inattentive, books offer little benefit; company affords little improvement; while a self-imposed attention sharpens observation, and creates a spirit of inspection and inquiry, which often lifts a common understanding to a degree of eminence in knowledge, sagacity, and usefulness, which indolent or negligent genius does not always reach. A habit of attention exercises intellect, quickens discernment, multiplies ideas, enlarges the power of combining images and comparing characters, and gives a faculty of picking up improvement from circumstances the least promising; and gaining instruction from those slight but frequently recurring occasions, which the absent and the negligent turn to no account. Scarcely any thing or person is so unproductive as not to yield some fruit to the attentive and sedulous collector of ideas. But this is far from being the highest praise of such a person; she, who early imposes on herself a habit of strict attention to whatever she is engaged in, begins to wage early war with wandering thoughts, useless reveries, and that disqualifying train of busy, but unprofitable imaginations, by which the idle are occupied, and the absent are absorbed. She who keeps her intellectual powers in action, studies with advantage, herself, her books, and the world. Whereas they, in whose undisciplined minds vagrant thoughts have been suffered to range without restriction on ordinary occasions, will find they cannot easily call them home, when wanted to assist in higher duties. Thoughts, which are indulged in habitual wandering, will not be readily restrained in the solemnities of public worship or of private devotion.

But in speaking of the necessary habits, it must be noticed that the habit of unremitting *industry*, which is indeed closely connected with those of which we have just made mention, cannot be too early or too sedulously formed. Let not the sprightly and the brilliant reject industry as a plebian quality, as a quality to be exercised only by those who have their bread to earn, or their fortune to make. But let them respect it, and adopt it as an habit to which many elevated characters have, in a good measure, owed their distinction. The masters in science, the leaders in literature, legislators, and statesmen, even apostles and reformers would not, at least in so eminent a degree, have enlightened, converted, and astonished the world, had they not been eminent possessors of this sober and unostentatious quality. It is the quality to which the immortal Newton modestly ascribed his own vast attainments; who, when he was asked by what means he had been enabled to make that

successful progress which struck mankind with wonder, replied, that it was not so much owing to any superior strength of genius, as to an habit of patient thinking, laborious attention, and close application. We must, it is true, make some deductions for the humility of the speaker. Yet it is not overrating its value, to assert that industry is the sturdy and hard working pioneer, who by persevering labour removes obstructions, overcomes difficulties, clears intricacies, and thus facilitates the march, and aids the victories of genius.

An exact habit of *economy* is of the same family with the two foregoing qualities; and like them is the prolific parent of a numerous offspring of virtues. For want of the early ingrafting of this practice on its only legitimate stock —a sound principle of integrity—may we not, in too many instances in subsequent life, almost apply to the fatal effects of domestic profuseness, what Tacitus observes of a lavish profligacy in the expenditure of public money—that an exchequer which is exhausted by prodigality will probably be replenished by crimes.

Those who are early trained to scrupulous punctuality in the division of time, and an exactness to the hours of their childish business, will have learnt how much the economy of time is promoted by habits of punctuality, when they shall enter on the more important business of life. By getting one employment cleared away, exactly as the succeeding employment shall have a claim to be despatched, they will learn two things: that one business must not trench on the time which belongs to another business, and to set a value on those odd quarters of an hour, and even minutes which are so often lost between successive duties, for want of calculation, punctuality and arrangement.

A habit of *punctuality* is perhaps one of the earliest which the youthful mind may be made capable of receiving; and it is so connected with truth, with morals, and with the general good government of the mind, as to render it important that it should be brought into exercise on the smallest occasions. But I refrain from enlarging on this point as it will be discussed in another part of this work.*

It requires perhaps still more sedulity to lay early the first foundation of those interior habits which are grounded on watchfulness against such faults as do not often betray themselves by breaking out into open excess; and which there would therefore be less discredit in judging. It should more particularly make a part of the first elements of education, to try to infuse into the mind that particular principle which stands in opposition to those evil tempers, to which the individual pupil is more immediately addicted. As it cannot be followed up too closely, so it can hardly be set about too early. May we not borrow an important illustration of this truth from the fabulous hero of the Grecian story? He who was one day to perform exploits, which should fill the earth with his renown, began by conquering in his infancy; and it was a preliminary to his delivering the world from monsters in his riper years, that he should set out by strangling the serpents in his cradle.

* See Chapter on Definitions.

It must however be observed that diligent care is to be exercised, that, together with the gradual formation of these and other useful *habits*, an adequate attention be employed to the forming of the *judgment;* to the framing such a sound constitution of mind, as shall supply the power of directing all the faculties of the understanding, and all the qualities of the heart, to keep their proper places and due bounds, to observe their just proportions, and maintain their right station, relation, order, and dependence.

For instance, while the young person's mind is trained to those habits of attention and industry, which we have been recommending; great care must be used that her judgment be so enlightened as to enable her to form sound notions with regard to what is really worthy her attentive pursuit, without which discriminating power, application would only be actively misemployed; and ardour and industry would but serve to lead her more widely from the right road of truth. Without a correct judgment she would be wasting her activity on what was frivolous, or exhausting it on what was mischievous. Without that ardour and activity we have been recommending she might only be 'weaving spiders' webs;' with it, if destitute of judgment, she would be 'hatching cockatrices' eggs.'

Again, if the judgment be not well informed as to the nature and true ends of temperance, the ill-instructed mind might be led into a superstitious reliance on the merits of self-denial; and resting in the letter of a few outward observances, without any consideration of the spirit of this christian virtue, might be led to infer that the kingdom of heaven was the *abstinence* from 'meat and drink,' and not 'peace, and righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost.'

The same well ordered judgment will also be required in superintending and regulating the habit of economy; for extravagance being rather a relative than a positive term, the true art of regulating expense, is not to proportion it to the fashion, or to the opinion or practice of others, but to our own station and to our own circumstances. Aristippus being accused of extravagance by one who was not rich, because he had given six crowns for a small fish, said to him, 'Why what would you have given?'—'Twelve pence,' answered the other. 'Then,' replied Aristippus, 'our economy is equal; for six crowns are no more to me than twelve pence are to you.'

It is the more important to enlighten the judgment in this point, because so predominant is the control of custom and fashion, that men of unfixed principle are driven to borrow other peoples' judgment of them, before they can venture to determine whether they themselves are rich or happy. These vain slaves to human opinion do not so often say, How ought I to act? or, What ought I to spend? as, What does the world think I ought to do? What do others think I ought to spend?

There is also a perpetual call for the interference of the judgment in settling the true notion of what meekness is, before we can adopt the practice without falling into error. We must apprize those on whose minds we are inculcating this amiable virtue, of the broad line of dis-

tinction between Christian meekness and that well-bred tone and gentle manner which passes current for it in the world. We must teach them also to distinguish between an humble opinion of our own ability to judge, and servile dereliction of truth and principle, in order to purchase the poor praise of indiscriminate compliance and and yielding softness. We must lead them to distinguish accurately between honesty and obstinacy, between perseverance and perverseness, between firmness and prejudice. We must convince them that it is not meekness, but baseness, when through a dishonest dread of offending the prosperous, or displeasing the powerful, we forbear to recommend, or refuse to support, those whom it is our duty to recommend or to support. That it is selfishness and not meekness, when through fear of forfeiting any portion of our reputation, or risking our own favour with others, we refuse to bear our testimony to suspected worth or discredited virtue.*

CHAP. VII.

Filial obedience not the character of the age.—A comparison with the preceding age in this respect.—Those who cultivate the mind advised to study the nature of the soil.—Unpromising children often make strong characters.—Teachers too apt to devote their pains almost exclusively to children of parts.

Among the real improvements of modern times, and they are not a few, it is to be feared that the growth of filial obedience cannot be included. Who can forbear observing and regretting in a variety of instances, that not only sons but daughters have adopted something of that spirit of independence, and disdain of control, which characterize the times? And is it not too generally obvious that domestic manners are not slightly tinctured with the prevailing hue of public principles? The *rights of man* have been discussed, till we are somewhat wearied with the discussion. To these have been opposed, as the next stage in the progress of illumination, and with more presumption than prudence, *the rights of women*. It follows, according to the natural progression of human things, that the next influx of that irradiation which our enlighteners are pouring in upon us, will illuminate the world with grave descants on the *rights of youth*, *the rights of children*, *the rights of babies!*

This revolutionary spirit in families suggests the remark, that among the faults with which it had been too much the fashion of recent times to load the memory of the incomparable Milton, one of the charges brought against his private character (for with his political character we have here nothing to do) has been, that he was so severe a father as to have compelled his daughters, after he was blind, to read aloud to him, for his sole pleasure, Greek and Latin authors, of which they did not understand a word. But this is in fact nothing more than an instance of the strict domestic regulations of the age in which Milton lived; and should not be brought forward as a proof of the severity of his individual temper. Nor indeed in any case should it ever be considered as an hardship for an affectionate child to amuse an afflicted parent, even though it should be attended with a heavier sacrifice of her own pleasure than that produced in the present instance.*

Is the author then inculcating the harsh doctrine of paternal austerity? By no means. It drives the gentle spirit to artifice, and the rugged to despair. It generates deceit and cunning, the most hopeless and hateful in the whole catalogue of female failings. Ungoverned anger in the teacher, and inability to discriminate between venial errors and premeditated offence, though they may lead a timid creature to hide wrong tempers, or to conceal bad actions, will not help her to subdue the one or correct the other. The dread of severity will drive terrified children to seek, not for reformation, but for impunity. A readiness to forgive them promotes frankness: and we should, above all things, encourage them to be frank, in order to come at their faults. They have not more faults for being open, they only *discover* more; and to know the worst of the character we have to regulate will enable us to make it better.

Discipline, however, is not cruelty, and restraint is not severity. A discriminating teacher will appreciate the individual character of each pupil, in order to appropriate her management. We must strengthen the feeble, while we repel the bold. We cannot educate by a *receipt;* for after studying the best rules, and after digesting them into the best system, much must depend on contingent circumstances, for that which is good may yet be inapplicable. The cultivator of the human mind must, like the gardener, study diversities of soil, or he may plant diligently and water faithfully with little fruit. The skilful labourer knows that even where the surface is not particularly promising, there is often a rough strong ground which will amply repay the trouble of breaking it up; yet we are often most taken with a soft surface, though it conceal a shallow depth, because it promises present reward and little trouble. But strong and pertinacious tempers, of which per-

* To this criminal timidity, madame de Maintenon, a woman of parts and piety, sacrificed the ingenious and amiable Racine; whom, while she had taste enough to admire, she had not the generosity to defend, when the royal favour was withdrawn from him. A still darker cloud hangs over her fame, on account of the selfish neutrality she maintained in not interposing her good offices between the resentments of the king and the sufferings of the Hugunots. It is a heavy aggravation of her fault, that she herself had been educated in the faith of these persecuted people

* In spite of this too prevailing spirit, and at a time when, by an inverted state of society, sacrifices of ease and pleasure are rather exacted by children from parents, than required by parents from children, numberless instances might be adduced of filial affection truly honourable to the present period. And the author records with pleasure, that she has seen amiable young ladies of high rank conducting the steps of a blind but illustrious parent with true filial fondness; and has often contemplated, in another family, the interesting attentions of daughters who were both hands and eyes to an infirm and nearly blind father. It is but justice to repeat that these examples are not taken from that middle rank of life which Milton filled, but from the daughters of the highest officers in the state.

haps obstinacy is the leading vice, under skilful management often turn out steady and sterling characters; while from softer clay a firm and vigorous virtue is but seldom produced. Pertinacity is often principle, which wants nothing but to be led to its true object; while the uniformly yielding, and universally accommodating spirit, is not seldom the result of a feeble tone of morals, of a temper eager for praise and acting for reward.

But these revolutions in character cannot be effected by a mere education. Plutarch had observed that the medical science would never be brought to perfection till poisons should be converted into physic. What our late improvers in natural science have done in the medical world, by converting the most deadly ingredients into instruments of life and health, Christianity with a sort of divine alchymy has effected in the moral world, by that transmutation which makes those passions which have been working for sin become active in the cause of religion. The violent temper of Saul of Tarsus, which was 'exceedingly mad' against the saints of God, did God see fit to convert into that burning zeal which enabled Paul the apostle to labour so unremittingly for the conversion of the gentile world. Christianity indeed does not so much give us new affections or faculties, as give a new direction to those we already have. She changes that sorrow of the world which worketh death into 'godly sorrow which worketh repentance.' She changes our anger against the persons we dislike into hatred of their sins. 'The fear of man which worketh a snare,' she transmutes into 'that fear of God which worketh salvation.' That religion does not extinguish the passions, but only alters their object, the animated expressions of the fervid apostle confirm—'Yea, what *fearfulness;* yea, what *clearing of yourselves;* yea, what *indignation;* yea, what *fear;* yea, what *vehement desire;* yea, what *zeal;* yea, what *revenge.**

Thus, by some of the most troublesome passions of our nature being converted by the blessing of God on a religious education to the side of virtue, a double purpose is effected. Because it is the character of the passions never to observe a neutrality. If they are no longer rebels, they become auxiliaries; and the accession of strength is doubled, because a foe subdued is an ally obtained. For it is the effect of religion on the passions, that when she siezes the enemy's garrison, she does not content herself with defeating its future mischiefs, she does not destroy the works, she does not burn the arsenal and spike the cannon; but the artillery she seizes, she turns to her own use; she attacks in her turn, and plants its whole force against an enemy from whom she has taken it.

But while I would deprecate harshness, I would enforce discipline; and that not merely on the ground of religion, but of happiness also. One reason, not seldom brought forward by tender but mistaken mothers as an apology for an unbounded indulgence, especially to weakly children, is, that they probably will not live to enjoy the world when grown up, and that therefore they would not abridge the little pleasure they may enjoy at the present, lest they should be taken out of the world without having tasted any of its delights. But a slight degree of observation would prove that this is an error in judgment as well as in principle. For omitting any considerations respecting their future welfare, and entering only into their immediate interests; it is an indisputable fact that children who know no control, whose faults encounter no contradiction, and whose humours experience constant indulgence, grow more irritable and capricious, invent wants, create desires, lose all relish for the pleasures which they know they may reckon upon; and become perhaps more miserable than even those unfortunate children who labour under the more obvious and more commiserated misfortune of suffering under the tyranny of unkind parents.

An early habitual restraint is peculiarly important to the future character and happiness of women. A judicious, unrelaxing, but steady and gentle curb on their tempers and passions can alone insure their peace and establish their principles. It is a habit which cannot be adopted too soon, nor persisted in too pertinaciously. They should when very young be inured to contradiction. Instead of hearing their *bon mots* treasured up and repeated till the guests are tired, and till the children begin to think it dull, when they themselves are not the little heroines of the theme, they should be accustomed to receive but moderate praise for their vivacity or their wit, though they should receive just commendation for such qualities as have more worth than splendour.

Patience, diligence, quiet, and unfatigued perseverance, industry, regularity, and economy of time, as these are the dispositions I would labour to excite, so these are the qualities I would warmly commend. So far from admiring genius, or extolling its prompt effusions, I would rather intimate that excellence, to a certain degree, is in the power of every competitor: that it is the vanity of over-valuing herself for supposed original powers, and slackening exertion in consequence of that vanity, which often leave the lively ignorant, and the witty superficial.—A girl who overhears her mother tell the company that she is a genius, and is so quick, that she never thinks of applying to her task till a few minutes before she is to be called to repeat it, will acquire such a confidence in her own abilities, that she will be advancing in conceit as she is falling short in knowledge. Whereas, if she were made to suspect that her want of application rather indicated a deficiency than a superiority in her understanding, she would become industrious in proportion as she became modest; and by thus adding the diligence of the humble to the talents of the ingenious, she might really attain a degree of excellence, which mere quickness of parts, too lazy, because too proud to apply, seldom attains.

Girls should be led to distrust their own judgment; they should learn not to murmur at expostulation; they should be accustomed to expect and to endure opposition. It is a lesson with which the world will not fail to furnish them; and they will not practise it the worse for having learnt it the sooner. It is of the last im-

* 2 Corinthians, vii. 1.

portance to their happiness, even in this life, that they should early acquire a submissive temper and a forbearing spirit. They must endure to be thought wrong sometimes, when they cannot but feel they are right. And while they should be anxiously aspiring to do well, they must not expect always to obtain the praise of having done so. But while a gentle demeanour is inculcated, let them not be instructed to practise gentleness merely on the low ground of its being decorous, and feminine, and pleasing, and calculated to attract human favour: but let them be carefully taught to cultivate it on the high principle of obedience to Christ; on the practical ground of labouring after conformity to HIM, who, when he proposed himself as a perfect pattern of imitation, did not say, learn of me, for I am great, or wise, or mighty, but 'learn of me, for I am meek and lowly:' and who graciously promised that the reward should accompany the practice, by encouragingly adding, 'and ye shall find rest to your souls.' Do not teach them humility on the ordinary ground that vanity is *unamiable*, and that no one will *love* them if they are proud; for that will only go to correct the exterior, and make them soft and smiling hypocrites. But inform them, that 'God resisteth the proud,' while 'them that are meek he shall guide in judgment, and such as are gentle, them shall he teach his way.' In these as in all other cases, an habitual attention to the *motives* should be carefully substituted in their young hearts, in the place of too much anxiety about the *event* of actions. Principles, aims, and intentions should be invariably insisted on, as the only true ground of right practice, and they should be carefully guarded against too much solicitude for that human praise which attaches to appearances as much as to realities, to success more than to desert.

Let me repeat, without incurring the censure of tautology, that it will be of vast importance not to let slip the earliest occasions of working gentle manners into an habit on their only true foundation, Christian meekness. For this purpose I would again urge your calling in the example of our Redeemer in aid of his precepts. Endeavour to make your pupil feel that all the wonders exhibited in his life do not so overwhelm the awakened heart with rapture, love, and astonishment, as the perpetual instances of his humility and meekness, with which the Gospel abounds. Stupendous miracles, exercises of infinite power prompted by infinite mercy, are actions which we should naturally enough conceive as growing out of omnipotence and divine perfection: but silence under cruel mockings, patience under reproach, gentleness of demeanor under unparalleled injuries; these are perfections of which unassisted nature not only has no conception in a Divine Being, but at which it would revolt, had not the reality been exemplified by our perfect pattern. Healing the sick, feeding the multitude, restoring the blind, raising the dead, are deeds of which we could form some adequate idea, as necessarily flowing from Almighty goodness: but to wash his disciples' feet—to preach the Gospel to the *poor*—to renounce not only ease, for that heroes have done on human motives—but to renounce praise, to forgive his persecutors, to love his enemies, to pray for his murderers with his last breath;—these are things which, while they compel us to cry out with the centurion, 'Truly this was the Son of God,' should remind us, that they are not only *adorable* but *imitable* parts of his character. These are not speculative and barren doctrines which he came to preach to Christians, but living duties which he meant to entail on them; symbols of their profession; tests of their discipleship. These are perfections which we are not barely to contemplate with holy awe and distant admiration, as if they were restricted to the *divine* nature of our Redeemer; but we must consider them as suited to the human nature also, which he condescended to participate. In *contemplating*, we must *imitate;* in admiring we must practise; and in our measure and degree go and do likewise. Elevate your thoughts for one moment to this standard (and you should never allow yourself to be contented with a lower) and then go, if you can, and teach your children to be mild, and soft, and gentle on worldly grounds, on human motives, as an external attraction, as a decoration to their sex, as an appendage to their rank, as an expression of their good breeding.

There is a custom among teachers, which is not the more right for being common; they are apt to bestow an undue proportion of pains on children of the best capacity, as if only geniuses were worthy of attention. They should reflect that in moderate talents, carefully cultivated, we are perhaps to look for the chief happiness and virtue of society. If superlative genius had been generally necessary, its existence would not have been so rare; for Omnipotence could easily have made those talents common which we now consider as extraordinary, had they been necessary to the perfection of his plan. Besides, while we are conscientiously instructing children of moderate capacity, it is a comfort to reflect, that if no labour will raise them to a high degree in the scale of intellectual distinction, yet they may be led on to perfection in that road in which 'a wayfaring man, though simple shall not err.' And when a mother feels disposed to repine that her family is not likely to exhibit a group of future wits and growing beauties, let her console herself by looking abroad into the world, where she will quickly perceive that the monopoly of happiness is not engrossed by beauty, nor that of virtue by genius.

Perhaps mediocrity of parts was decreed to be the ordinary lot, by way of furnishing a stimulus to industry, and strengthening the motives to virtuous application. For is it not obvious that moderate abilities, carefully carried to that measure of perfection of which they are capable, often enables their possessors to outstrip, in the race of knowledge and of usefulness, their more brilliant but less persevering competitors? It is with mental endowments, as with other rich gifts of Providence; the inhabitant of the luxuriant southern clime, where nature has done every thing in the way of vegetation, indolently lays hold on this very plea of fertility which should animate his exertions, as a reason for doing nothing himself; so that the soil which teems with such encouraging abun

dance leaves the favoured possessor idle, and comparatively poor: whilst the native of the less genial region, supplying by his labours the deficiencies of his lot, overtakes his more favoured competitor; by substituting industry for opulence, he improves the riches of his native land beyond that which is blessed with warmer suns, and thus vindicates Providence from the charge of partial distribution.

A girl who has docility will seldom be found to want understanding sufficient for all the purposes of an useful, a happy, and a pious life. And it is as wrong for parents to set out with too sanguine a dependence on the figure their children are to make in life, as it is unreasonable to be discouraged at every disappointment. Want of success is so far from furnishing a motive for relaxing their energy that it is a reason for redoubling it. Let them suspect their own plans, and reform them; let them distrust their own principles, and correct them. The generality of parents do too little; some do much, and miss their reward, because they look not to any strength beyond their own: after much is done, much will remain undone: for the entire regulation of the heart and affections is not the work of education alone, but is effected by the operation of divine grace. Will it be accounted enthusiasm to suggest, 'that the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous *parent* availeth much?' and to observe that perhaps the reason why so many anxious mothers fail of success is, because they repose with confidence in their own skill and labour, neglecting to look to Him without whose blessing they do but labour in vain?

On the other hand, is it not to be feared that some pious parents have fallen into an error of an opposite kind? From a full conviction that human endeavours are vain, and that it is God alone who can change the heart, they are earnest in their prayers, but not so earnest in their endeavours.—Such parents should be reminded, that if they do not add their exertions to their prayers, their children are not likely to be more benefited than the children of those who do not add their prayers to their exertions. What God has joined, let no man presume to separate. It *is* the work of God, we readily acknowledge, to implant religion in the heart, and to maintain it there as a ruling principle of conduct. And is it not the same God which causes the corn to grow? Are not our natural lives constantly preserved by His power? Who will deny that in Him we live, and move, and have our being? But how are these works of God carried on? By *means* which he has appointed. By the labour of the husbandman the corn is made to grow; by food the body is sustained; and by religious instruction God is pleased to work upon the human heart. But unless we diligently plough, and sow, and weed, and manure, have we any right to depend on the refreshing showers and ripening suns of heaven for the blessing of an abundant harvest? As far as *we* see the ways of God, all his works are carried on by *means*. It becomes, therefore, our duty to use the means, and trust in God; to remember that God will not work without the means; and that the means can effect nothing without his blessing. 'Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God must give the increase. But to what does he give the increase? To the *exertions* of Paul and Apollos. It is never said, because God only can give the increase, that Paul and Apollos may spare their labour.

It is one grand object to give the young probationer just and sober views of the world on which she is about to enter. Instead of making her bosom bound at the near prospect of emancipation from her instructors; instead of teaching her young heart to dance with premature flutterings as the critical winter draws near in which *she is to come out;* instead of raising a tumult in her busy imagination at the approach of her first *grown up ball*, an event held out as forming the first grand epocha of a female life, as the period from which a fresh computation, fixing the pleasures and independence of womanhood, is to be dated; instead of this, endeavour to convince her, the world will not turn out to be that scene of unvarying and never-ending delights which she has perhaps been led to expect, not only from the sanguine temper and warm spirits natural to youth, but from the value she has seen put on those showy accomplishments which have too probably been fitting her for her exhibition in life. Teach her that this world is not a stage for the display of superficial or even of shining talent, but for the strict and sober exercise of fortitude, temperance, meekness, faith, diligence, and self-denial; of her due performance of which Christian graces, angels will be spectators, and God the judge. Teach her that human life is not a splendid romance, spangled over with brilliant adventures, and enriched with extraordinary occurrences, and diversified with wonderful incidents; lead her not to expect that it will abound with scenes which will call extraordinary qualities and wonderful powers into perpetual action; and for which, if she acquit herself well, she will be rewarded with proportionate fame and certain commendation. But apprize her that human life is a true history, many passages of which will be dull, obscure, and uninteresting; some perhaps tragical; but that whatever gay incidents and pleasing scenes may be interspersed in the progress of the piece, yet, finally 'one event happeneth to all:' to all there is one awful and infallible catastrophe. Apprize her that the estimation which mankind forms of merit is not always just, nor is its praise very exactly proportioned to desert; tell her that the world weighs actions in far different scales from 'the balance of the sanctuary,, and estimates worth by a far different standard from that of the Gospel. Apprize her that while her purest intentions may be sometimes calumniated, and her best actions misrepresented, she will on the other hand, be liable to receive commendation on occasions wherein her conscience will tell her she has not deserved it; and that she may be extolled by others for actions for which, if she be honest, she will condemn herself.

Do not, however, give her a gloomy and discouraging picture of the world, but rather seek to give her a just and sober view of the part she will have to act in it. And restrain the impetuosity or hope, and cool the ardour of expec-

tation, by explaining to her, that this part, even in her best estate, will probably consist in a succession of petty trials, and a round of quiet duties, which, if well performed, though they will make little or no figure in the book of fame, will prove of vast importance to her in that day when *another* 'book is opened, and the judgment is set, and every one will be judged according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad.'

Say not that these just and sober views will cruelly wither her young hopes, blast her budding prospects, and deaden the innocent satisfactions of life. It is not true. There is, happily, an active spring in the mind of youth which bounds with fresh vigour and uninjured elasticity from any such temporary depression. And though her feelings, tastes and passions, will all be against you, if you set before her a faithful delineation of life, yet it will be something to get her judgment on your side. It is no unkind office to assist the short view of youth with the aids of long-sighted experience; to enable them to discover spots in the brightness of that world which dazzles them in prospect, though it is probable they will after all choose to believe their own eyes, rather than the offered glass.

CHAP. VIII.

On female study, and initiation into knowledge. —Error of cultivating the imagination to the neglect of the judgment.—Books of reasoning recommended.

As this little work by no means assumes the character of a general scheme of education, the author has purposely avoided expatiating largely on any kind of instruction, but as it happens to be connected, either immediately or remotely with objects of a moral or religious nature. Of course she has been so far from thinking it necessary to enter into the enumeration of those popular books which are used in general instruction, that she has purposely forborn to mention any. With such books the rising generation is far more copiously and ably furnished than any that has preceded it; and out of an excellent variety the judicious instructor can hardly fail to make such a selection as shall be beneficial to the pupil.

But while due praise ought not to be withheld from the improved methods of communicating the elements of general knowledge; yet is there not some danger that our very advantages may lead us into error, by causing us to repose so confidently on the multiplied helps which facilitate the entrance into learning, as to render our pupils superficial through the very facility of acquirement? Where so much is done for them, may they not be led to do too little for themselves? and besides that exertion may slacken for want of a spur, may there not be a moral disadvantage in possessing young persons with the notion that learning may be acquired without diligence, and knowledge be attained without labour? Sound education never can be made a 'primrose path of dalliance.' Do what we will we cannot cheat children into learning, or play them into knowledge, according to the conciliating smoothness of the modern creed, and the selfish indolence of the modern habits. There is no idle way to any acquisitions which really deserve the name. And as Euclid, in order to repress the impetuous vanity of greatness, told his sovereign that there was no royal way to geometry, so the fond mother may be assured that there is no short cut to any other kind of learning; no privileged by-path cleared from the thorns and briars of repulse and difficulty, for the accommodation of opulent inactivity or feminine weakness. The tree of knowledge, as a punishment, perhaps, for its having been at first unfairly tasted cannot now be claimed without difficulty; and this very circumstance serves afterwards to furnish not only literary pleasures, but moral advantages. For the knowledge which is acquired by unwearied assiduity, is lasting in the possession, and sweet to the possessor; both perhaps in proportion to the cost and labour of the acquisition. And though an able teacher ought to endeavour, by improving the communicating faculty in himself (for many know what they cannot teach) to soften every difficulty; yet in spite of the kindness and ability with which he will smooth every obstruction, it is probably among the wise institutions of Providence that great difficulties should still remain. For education is but an initiation into that life of trial to which we are introduced on our entrance into this world. It is the first breaking into that state of toil and labour to which we are born, and to which sin has made us liable; and in this view of the subject the pains taken in the acquisition of learning may be converted to higher uses than such as are purely literary.

Will it not be ascribed to a captious singularity, if I venture to remark that real knowledge and real piety, though they may have gained in many instances, have suffered in, others from that profusion of little, amusing, sentimental books with which the youthful library overflows? Abundance has its dangers as well as scarcity. In the first place may not the multiplicity of these alluring little works increase the natural reluctance to those more dry and uninteresting studies of which, after all, the rudiments of every part of learning *must* consist? And secondly, is there not some danger (though there are many honourable exceptions) that some of those engaging narratives may serve to infuse into the youthful heart a sort of spurious goodness, a confidence of virtue, a parade of charity? And that the benevolent actions with the recital of which they abound, when they are not made to flow from any source but feeling, may tend to inspire a self-complacency, a self-gratulation, 'a stand by, for I am holier than thou!' May not the success with which the good deeds of the little heroes are uniformly crowned; the invariable reward which is made the instant concomitant of well doing, furnish the young reader with false views of the condition of life, and the nature of the divine dealings with men? May they not help to suggest a false standard of morals, to infuse a

love of popularity and an anxiety for praise, in the place of that simple and unostentatious rule of doing whatever good we do, *because it is the will of God?* The universal substitution of this principle would tend to purify the worldly morality of many a popular little story. And there are few dangers which good parents will more carefully guard against than that of giving their children a mere political piety; that sort of religion which just goes to make people more respectable, and to stand well with the world; a religion which is to save appearances without inculcating realities; a religion which affects to 'preach peace and good will to men,' but which forgets to give 'glory to God in the highest.'*

There is a certain precocity of mind which is much helped on by these superficial modes of instruction; for frivolous reading will produce its correspondent effect, in much less time than books of solid instruction; the imagination being liable to be worked upon, and the feelings to be set a-going, much faster than the understanding can be opened and the judgment enlightened. A talent for conversation should be the result of instruction, not its precursor; it is a golden fruit when suffered to ripen gradually on the tree of knowledge; but if forced in the hot-bed of a circulating library, it will turn out worthless and vapid in proportion as it was artificial and premature. Girls who have been accustomed to devour a multitude of frivolous books will converse and write with a far greater appearance of skill as to style and sentiment at twelve or fourteen years old, than those of a more advanced age, who are under the discipline of severer studies: but the former having early attained to that low standard which had been held out to them, become stationary; while the latter, quietly progressive, are passing through just gradations to a higher strain of mind; and those who early begin with talking and writing like women commonly end with thinking and acting like children.

I would not however prohibit such works of imagination as suit this early period. When moderately used they serve to stretch the faculties and expand the mind: but I should prefer works of vigorous genius and pure unmixed fable to many of those tame and more affected moral stories, which are not grounded on Christian principle. I should suggest the use on the one hand of original and acknowledged fictions: and on the other, of accurate and simple facts; so that truth and fable may ever be kept separate and distinct in the mind. There is something that kindles fancy, awakens genius and excites new ideas in many of the bold fictions of the east. And there is one peculiar merit in the Arabian and some other Oriental tales, which is, that they exhibit striking, and in many respects faithful views of the manners, habits, customs, and religion of their respective countries; so that some tincture of real local information is acquired by the perusal of the wildest fable, which will not be without its use in aiding the future associations of the mind in all that relates to eastern history and literature.

The irregular fancy of women is not sufficiently subdued by early application, nor tamed by labour, and the kind of knowledge they commonly do acquire is early attained; and being chiefly some slight acquisition of the memory, something which is given them to get off by themselves, and not grounded in their minds by comment and conversation, it is easy lost. The superficial *question*-and-*answer*-way for instance, in which they often learn history, furnishes the mind with little to lean on: the events being detached and separated, the actions having no links to unite them with each other; the characters not being interwoven by mutual relation: the chronology being reduced to disconnected dates, instead of presenting an unbroken series; of course, neither events, actions, characters, nor chronology, fasten themselves on the understanding, but rather float in the memory as so many detached episodes, than contribute to form the mind and to enrich the judgment of the reader, in the important science of men and manners.

The swarms of *Abridgments*, *Beauties*, and *Compendiums*, which form too considerable a part of a young lady's library, may be considered in many instances as an infallible receipt for making a superficial mind. The *names* of the renowned characters in history thus become familiar in the mouths of those who can neither attach to the ideas of the person, the series of his actions, nor the peculiarities of his character. A few fine passages from the poets (passages perhaps which derived their chief beauty from their position and connexion) are huddled together by some extract-maker, whose brief and disconnected patches of broken and discordant materials, while they inflame young readers with the vanity of reciting, neither fill the mind nor form the taste, and it is not difficult to trace back to their shallow sources the hackneyed quotations of certain *accomplished* young ladies, who will be frequently found not to have come legitimately by any thing they know. I mean not to have drawn it from its true spring, the original works of the author from which some *beauty-monger* has severed it. Human inconsistency in this, as in other cases, wants to combine two irreconcileable things; it strives to unite the reputation of knowledge with the pleasures of knowledge, forgetting that nothing that is valuable can be obtained without sacrifices, and that if we would purchase knowledge, we must pay for it the fair and lawful price of time and industry. For this extract-reading, while it accommodates itself to the convenience, illustrates the character of the age in which we live. The appetite for pleasure, and that love of ease and indolence which is generated by it, leave little time or taste for sound improvement; while the vanity, which is equally a characteristic of the existing period, puts in its claim also for indulgence, and contrives to figure away by these little snatches of ornamental reading, caught in the short intervals of successive amusements

* An ingenious (and in many respects useful) French Treatise on Education, has too much encouraged this political piety, by considering religion as a thing of human invention, rather than of divine institution; as a thing creditable, rather than commanded; by erecting the doctrine of expediency in the room of Christian simplicity; and wearing away the spirit of truth, by the substitution of occasional deceit, equivocation subterfuge and mental reservation.

Besides, the taste, thus pampered with delicious morsels, is early vitiated. The young reader of these *clustered beauties* conceives a disrelish for every thing which is plain, and grows impatient, if obliged to get through those equally necessary though less showy parts of a work, in which perhaps the author gives the best proof of his judgment by keeping under that occasional brilliancy and incidental ornament, of which these superficial students are in constant pursuit. In all well-written books, there is much that is good which is not dazzling; and these shallow critics should be taught, that it is for the embellishment of the more tame and uninteresting parts of his work, that the judicious poet commonly reserves those flowers, whose beauty is defaced when they are plucked from the garland into which he had so skilfully woven them.

The remark, however, as far as it relates to abridgments, is by no means of general application; there are many valuable works which from their bulk would be almost inaccessible to a great number of readers, and a considerable part of which may not be generally useful. Even in the best written books there is often superfluous matter; authors are apt to get enamoured of their subject, and to dwell too long on it: every person cannot find time to read a longer work on any subject, and yet it may be well for them to know something on almost every subject; those, therefore, who abridge voluminous works judiciously, render service to the community. But there seems, if I may venture the remark, to be a mistake in the *use* of abridgments. They are put systematically into the hands of *youth*, who have, or ought to have, leisure for the works at large; while abridgments seem more immediately calculated for persons in more advanced life, who wish to recall something they had forgotten; who want to restore old ideas rather than acquire new ones; or they are useful for persons immersed in the business of the world; who have little leisure for voluminous reading: they are excellent to refresh the mind, but not competent to form it; they serve to bring back what had been formerly known, but do not supply a fund of knowledge.

Perhaps there is some analogy between the mental and bodily conformation of women. The instructor therefore should imitate the physician. If the latter prescribe bracing medicines for a body of which delicacy is the disease, the former would do well to prohibit relaxing reading for a mind which is already of too soft a texture, and s ould strengthen its feeble tone by invigorating reading.

By softness, I cannot be supposed to mean imbecility of understanding, but natural softness of heart, and pliancy of temper, together with that indolence of spirit which is fostered by indulging in seducing books, and in the general habits of fashionable life.

I mean not here to recommend books which are immediately religious, but such as exercise the reasoning faculties, teach the mind to get acquainted with its own nature, and to stir up its own powers. Let not a timid young lady start if I should venture to recommend to her, after a proper course of preparatory reading, to swallow and digest such strong meat as Watts's or Duncan's little book of Logic, some part of Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and bishop Butler's Analogy. Where there is leisure, and capacity, and an able friend to comment and to counsel, works of this nature might be profitably substituted in the place of so much English sentiment, French philosophy, Italian love-songs, and fantastic German imagery and magic wonders.—While such enervating or absurd books sadly disqualify the reader for solid pursuit or vigorous thinking, the studies here recommended would act upon the constitution of the mind as a kind of alterative, and, if I may be allowed the expression, would help to brace the intellectual stamina.

This suggestion, is, however, by no means intended to exclude works of taste and imagination, which must always make the ornamental part, and of course a very considerable part, of female studies. It is only intimated, that they should not form them entirely and exclusively. For what is called dry, tough reading, independent of the knowledge it conveys, is useful as an habit, and wholesome as an exercise. Serious study serves to harden the mind for more trying conflicts; it lifts the reader from sensation to intellect; it abstracts her from the world and its vanities; it fixes a wandering spirit, and fortifies a weak one; it divorces her from matter; it corrects the spirit of trifling which she naturally contracts from the frivolous turn of female conversation and the petty nature of female employments; it concentrates her attention, assists her in a habit of excluding trivial thoughts, and thus even helps to qualify her for religious pursuits.—Yes, I repeat it, there is to woman a Christian use to be made of sober studies; while books of an opposite cast, however unexceptionable they may be sometimes found in point of expression, however free from evil in its more gross and palpable shapes, yet from their very nature and constitution they excite a spirit of relaxation, by exhibiting scenes and suggesting ideas which soften the mind and set the fancy at work; they take off wholesome restraints, diminish sober-mindedness, impair the general powers of resistance, and at best feed habits of improper indulgence, and nourish a vain and visionary indolence, which lays the mind open to error and the heart to seduction.

Women are little accustomed to close reasoning on any subject; still less do they inure their minds to consider particular parts of a subject; they are not habituated to turn a truth round, and view it in all its varied aspects and positions, and this perhaps is one cause (as will be observed in another place*) of the too great confidence they are disposed to place in their own opinions. Though their imagination is already too lively, and their judgment naturally incorrect; in educating them we go on to stimulate the imagination, while we neglect the regulation of the judgment. They already want ballast, and we make their education consist in continually crowding more sail than they can carry. Their intellectual powers being so little strengthened by exercise, makes every petty business appear

* See Chapter on Conversations.

a hardship to them: whereas serious study would be useful, were it only that it leads the mind to the habit of conquering difficulties. But it is peculiarly hard to turn at once from the indolent repose of light reading, from the concerns of mere animal life, the objects of sense, or the frivolousness of female chit chat; it is peculiarly hard, I say, to a mind so softened, to rescue itself from the dominion of self-indulgence, to resume its powers, to call home its scattered strength, to shut out every foreign intrusion, to force back a spring so unnaturally bent, and to devote itself to religious reading, to active business, to sober reflection, to self-examination. Whereas to an intellect accustomed to think at all, the difficulty of thinking seriously is obviously lessened.

Far be it from me to desire to make scholastic ladies or female dialecticians; but there is little fear that the kind of books here recommended, if thoroughly studied, and not superficially skimmed, will make them pedants or induce conceit; for by showing them the possible powers of the human mind, you will bring them to see the littleness of their own; and surely to get acquainted with the mind, to regulate, to inform it; to show it its own ignorance and its own nature, does not seem the way to puff it up.—But let her who is disposed to be elated with her literary acquisitions, check the rising vanity by calling to mind the just remark of Swift, 'that after all her boasted acquirements, a woman will, generally speaking, be found to possess less of what is called learning than a common school-boy.'

Neither is there any fear that this sort of reading will convert ladies into authors.—The direct contrary effect will be likely to be produced by the perusal of writers who throw the generality of readers at such an unapproachable distance as to check presumption, instead of exciting it. Who are those ever multiplying authors that with unparalleled fecundity are overstocking the world with their quick succeeding progeny? They are NOVEL-WRITERS; the easiness of whose productions is at once the cause of their own fruitfulness, and of the almost infinitely numerous race of imitators to whom they give birth. Such is the frightful facility of this species of composition, that every raw girl, while she reads, is tempted to fancy that she can also write. And as Alexander, on perusing the Iliad, found by congenial sympathy the image of Achilles stamped on his own ardent soul, and felt himself the hero he was studying; and as Corregio, on first beholding a picture which exhibited the perfection of the graphic art, prophetically felt all his own future greatness, and cried out in rapture, 'And I too am a painter!' so a thorough-paced novel-reading miss, at the close of every tissue of hackneyed adventures, feels within herself the stirring impulse of corresponding genius, and triumphantly exclaims, 'And I too am an author!' The glutted imagination soon overflows with the redundance of cheap sentiment and plentiful incident, and by a sort of arithmetical proportion, is enabled by the perusal of any three novels, to produce a fourth; till every fresh production, like the prolific progeny of Banquo, is followed by—

Another, and another, and another!

Is a lady, however destitute of talents, education, or knowledge of the world, whose studies have been completed by a circulating library, in any distress of mind? the writing a novel suggests itself as the best soother of her sorrows! Does she labour under any depression of circumstances? writing a novel occurs, as the readiest receipt for mending them! And she solaces her imagination with the conviction that the subscription which has been extorted by her importunity, or given to her necessities, has been offered as an homage to her genius. And this confidence instantly levies a fresh contribution for a succeeding work. Capacity and cultivation are so little taken into the account, that writing a book seems to be now considered as the only sure resource which the idle and the illiterate have always in their power.

May the author be indulged in a short digression while she remarks, though rather out of its place, that the corruption occasioned by these books has spread so wide, and descended so low, as to have become one of the most universal, as well as most pernicious sources of corruption among us. Not only among milliners, mantuamakers, and other trades where numbers work together, the labour of one girl is frequently sacrificed, that she may be spared to read those mischievous books to the others; but she has been assured by clergymen who have witnessed the fact, that they are procured and greedily read in the wards of our hospitals! an awful hint, that those who teach the poor to read, should not only take care to furnish them with principles which will lead them to abhor corrupt books, but that they should also furnish them with such books as shall strengthen and confirm their principles.* And let every Christian remember, that there is no other way of entering truly into the spirit of that divine prayer, which petitions that the name of God may be 'hallowed,' that his 'kingdom (of grace) may come,' and that 'his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven,' that by each individual contributing according to his measure to accomplish the work for which he prays; for to pray that these

* The above facts furnish no argument on the side of those who would keep the poor in ignorance. Those who cannot *read* can *hear*, and are likely to hear to worse purpose than those who have been better taught. And that ignorance furnishes no security for integrity either in morals or politics, the late revolts in more than one country, remarkable for the ignorance of the poor fully illustrate. It is earnestly hoped that the above facts may tend to impress ladies with the importance of superintending the instruction of the poor, and of making it an indispensable part of their charity to give them moral and religious books.

The late celebrated Henry Fielding (a man not likely to be suspected of over-strictness) assured a particular friend of the author, that during his long administration of justice in Bow-street, only six Scotchmen were brought before him. The remark did not proceed from any national partiality in the magistrate, but was produced by him in proof of the effect of a sober and religious education among the lower ranks, on their morals and conduct.

See farther the sentiments of a still more celebrated cotemporary on the duty of instructing the poor.—'We have been taught that the circumstance of the Gospels being preached to the poor was one of the surest tests of its mission. We think, therefore, that those do not believe it who do not take care it should be preached to the poor.—*Burke on the French Revolution.*

great objects may be promoted, without contributing to their promotion by our exertions, our money, and our influence, is a palpable inconsistency.

CHAP. IX.

On the religious and moral use of history and geography.

While every sort of useful knowledge should be carefully imparted to young persons, it should be imparted not merely for its own sake, but also for the sake of its subserviency to higher things. All human learning should be taught, not as an end, but a means; and in this view even a lesson of history or geography may be converted into a lesson of religion. In the study of history, the instructor will accustom the pupil not merely to store her memory with facts and anecdotes, and to ascertain dates and epochs: but she will accustom her also to trace effects to their causes, to examine the secret springs of action, and accurately to observe the operations of the passions. It is only meant to notice here some few of the moral benefits which may be derived from judicious perusal of history; and from among other points of instruction, I select the following:*

The study of history may serve to give a clearer insight into the corruption of human nature:

It may help to show the *plan* of Providence in the direction of events, and in the use of unworthy instruments:

It may assist in the *vindication* of Providence, in the common failure of virtue, and the frequent success of vice:

It may lead to a distrust of our own judgment:

It may contribute to our improvement in self-knowledge.

But to prove to the pupil the important doctrine of human corruption from the study of history, will require a truly Christian commentator in the friend with whom the work is perused. For, from the low standard of right established by the generality of historians, who erect so many persons into good characters who fall short of the true idea of Christian virtue, the unassisted reader will be liable to form very imperfect views of what is real goodness; and will conclude, as his author sometimes does, that the true idea of human nature is to be taken from the medium between his best and his worst characters; without acquiring a just notion of that prevalence of evil; which, in spite of those few brighter luminaries that here and there just serve to gild the gloom of history, tends abundantly to establish the doctrine. It will indeed be continually establishing itself by those who, in perusing the history of mankind, carefully mark the rise and progress of sin, from the first timid irruption of an evil thought, to the fearless accomplishment of the abhorred crime in which that thought has ended: from the indignant question, 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?'* to the perpetration of that very enormity of which the self-acquitting delinquent could not endure the slightest suggestion.

In this connexion may it not be observed, that young persons should be put on their guard against a too implicit belief in the flattering accounts which many voyage writers are fond of exhibiting of the virtue, amiableness, and benignity, of some of the countries newly discovered by our circumnavigators; that they should learn to suspect the superior goodness ascribed to the Hindoos, and particularly the account of the inhabitants of the Pelew Islands? These last indeed have been represented as having almost escaped the universal taint of our common nature, and would seem by their purity to have sprung from another ancestor than Adam.

We cannot forbear suspecting that these pleasing, but somewhat overcharged portraits of man in his natural state, are drawn with the invidious design, by counteracting the doctrine of human corruption, to degrade the value and even destroy the necessity of the Christian sacrifice; by insinuating that uncultivated man is so disposed to rectitude as to supersede the occasion for that redemption which is professedly designed for sinners. That in countries professing Christianity, very many are not Christians will be too readily granted. Yet to say nothing of the vast superiority of goodness in the lives of those who are really governed by Christianity, is there not something even in her reflex light which guides to greater purity many of those who do not profess to walk by it; I doubt much, if numbers of the unbelievers of a Christian country, from the sounder views and better habits derived incidentally and collaterally, as it were from the influence of a Gospel, the truth of which however they do not acknowledge, would not start at many of the actions which these *heathen perfectionists* daily commit without hesitation.

The religious reader of general history will observe the controlling hand of Providence in the direction of events; in turning the most unworthy actions and instruments to the accomplishment of his own purposes. She will mark infinite Wisdom directing what appears to be casual occurrences, to the completion of his own plan. She will point out how causes seemingly the most unconnected, events seemingly the most unpromising, circumstances seemingly the most incongruous, are all working together for some final good. She will mark how national

* It were to be wished that more historians resembled the excellent Rollin in the religious and moral turn given to his writings of this kind.—But here may I be permitted to observe incidentally (for it is not immediately analogous to my subject) that there is one disadvantage which attends the common practice of setting young ladies to read ancient history and geography in French or Italian, who have not been previously well grounded in the pronunciation of classical names of persons and places in our own language. The foreign termination of Greek and Roman names are often very different from the English, and where they are first acquired are frequently retained and adopted in their stead, so as to give an illiterate appearance to the conversation of some women who are not really ignorant. And this defective pronunciation is the more to be guarded against in the education of ladies who are not taught *quantity* as boys are.

* 2 Kings, viii 13.

as well as individual crimes are often overruled to some hidden purpose far different from the intention of the actors: how Omnipotence can, and often does, bring about the best purposes by the worst instruments: how the bloody and unjust conqueror is but 'the rod of his wrath,' to punish or to purify his offending children: how 'the fury of the oppressor,' and the sufferings of the oppressed, will one day, when the whole scheme shall be unfolded, vindicate his righteous dealings. She will explain to the less enlightened reader, how infinite Wisdom often mocks the insignificance of human greatness, and the shallowness of human ability, by setting aside instruments the most powerful and promising, while He works by agents comparatively contemptible. But she will carefully guard this doctrine of Divine Providence, thus working out his own purposes through the sins of his creatures, and by the instrumentality of the wicked, by calling to mind, while the offender is but a tool in the hands of the great Artificer, 'the wo denounced against him by whom the offence cometh! She will explain how those mutations and revolutions in states which appear to us so unaccountable, and how those operations of Providence which seem to us so entangled and complicated, all move harmoniously and in perfect order: that there is not an event but has its commission; not a misfortune which breaks its allotted rank; not a trial which moves out of its appointed track. While calamities and crimes seem to fly in casual confusion, all is commanded or permitted; all is under the control of a wisdom which cannot err, of a goodness which cannot do wrong.

To explain my meaning by a few instances. When the spirit of the youthful reader rises in honest indignation at that hypocritical piety which divorced an unoffending queen to make way for the lawful crime of our eighth Henry's marriage with Ann Boleyn, and when that indignation is increased by the more open profligacy which brought about the execution of the latter; the instructor will not lose so fair an occasion for unfolding how in the councils of the Most High the crimes of the king were overruled to the happiness of the country; and how, to this inauspicious marriage, from which the heroic Elizabeth sprang, the protestant religion owed its firm stability. This view of the subject will lead the reader to justify the Providence of God without diminishing her abhorrence of the vices of the tyrant.

She will explain to her how even the conquest of ambition, after having deluged a land with blood, involved the perpetrator in guilt, and the innocent victim in ruin, may yet be made the instrument of opening to future generations the way to commerce, to civilization, to Christianity, She may remind her, as they are following Cæsar in his invasion of Britain, that whereas the conqueror fancied he was only gratifying his own inordinate ambition, extending the flight of the Roman Eagle, immortalizing his own name, and proving that 'this world was made for Cæsar;' he was in reality becoming the effectual though unconscious instrument of leading a land of barbarians to civilization and to science: and was in fact preparing an island of pagans to embrace the religion of Christ. She will inform her, that when afterwards the victorious country of the same Cæsar had made Judea a Roman province, and the Jews had become its tributaries, the Romans did not know, nor did the indignant Jews suspect, that this circumstance was operating to the confirmation of an event the most important the world ever witnessed.

For when 'Augustus sent forth a decree that all the world should be taxed;' he vainly thought he was only enlarging his own imperial power, whereas he was acting in unconscious subservience to the decree of a higher Sovereign, and was helping to ascertain by a public act the exact period of Christ's birth, and furnishing a record of his extraction from that family from which it was predicted by a long line of prophets that he should spring. Herod's atrocious murder of the innocents, has added an additional circumstance for the confirmation of *our* faith; the incredulity of Thomas has strengthened our belief; nay, the treachery of Judas, and the injustice of Pilate, were the human instruments employed for the salvation of the world.

The youth that is not thoroughly armed with Christian principles, will be tempted to mutiny not only against the justice, but the very existence of a superintending Providence, in contemplating those frequent instances which occur in history of the ill success of the more virtuous cause, and the prosperity of the wicked. He will see with astonishment that it is Rome which triumphs, while Carthage, which had clearly the better cause, falls. Now and then indeed a Cicero prevails, and a Cataline is subdued: but often, it is Cæsar successful against the somewhat juster pretensions of Pompey, and against the still clearer cause of Cato. It is Octavius who triumphs, and it is over Brutus that he triumphs. It is Tiberius who is enthroned, while Germanicus falls!

Thus his faith in a righteous Providence at first view is staggered, and he is ready to say, 'Surely it is not God that governs the earth! But on a fuller consideration (and here suggestions of a Christian instructor are peculiarly wanted) there will appear great wisdom in this very confusion of vice and virtue; for it is calculated to send our thoughts forward to a world of retribution, the principle of retribution being so imperfectly established in this. It is indeed so far common for virtue to have the advantage here, in point of happiness at least, though not of glory, that the course of Providence is still calculated to prove that God is on the side of virtue; but still virtue is so often unsuccessful, that clearly the God of virtue, in order that his work may be perfect, must have in reserve a world of retribution. This confused state of things therefore is just that state which is most of all calculated to confirm the deeply considerate mind in the belief of a future state; for if all here were even or very nearly so, should we not say, 'Justice is already satisfied, and there *needs* no other world.' On the other hand, if vice always triumphed, should we not then be ready to argue in favour of vice rather than virtue, and to *wish* for no other world.

It seems so very important to ground young

persons in the belief that they will not inevitably meet in this world with reward and success according to their merit, and to habituate them to expect even the most virtuous attempts to be often, though not always disappointed, that I am in danger of tautology on this point. This fact is precisely what history teaches. The truth should be plainly told to the young reader; and the antidote to that evil, which mistaken and worldly people would expect to arise from divulging this discouraging doctrine is *faith*. The importance of faith therefore, and the necessity of it to real, unbending, and persevering virtue, is surely made plain by profane history itself. For the same thing which happens to states and kings, happens to private life and to individuals. Thus there is scarcely a page, even of pagan history, which may not be made instrumental to the establishing of the truth of revelation; and it is only by such a guarded mode of instruction that some of the evils attending on the study of ancient literature can be obviated.

Distrust and diffidence in our own judgment seems to be also an important instruction to be learnt from history. How contrary to all expectation do the events therein recorded commonly turn out! How continually is the most sagacious conjecture of human penetration baffled! and yet we proceed to foretel this consequence, and to predict that event from the appearances of things under our own observation, with the same arrogant certainty as if we had never been warned by the monitory annals of successive ages.

There is scarcely one great event in history which does not in the issue, produce effects upon which human foresight could never have calculated. The success of Augustus against his country produced peace in many distant provinces, who thus ceased to be harassed and tormented by this oppressive republic. Could this effect have been foreseen, it might have sobered the despair of Cato, and checked the vehemence of Brutus. In politics, in short in every thing except in morals and religion, all is to a considerable degree uncertain.—This reasoning is not meant to show that Cato ought not to have *fought*, but that he ought not to have *desponded* even after the last battle; and certainly, even upon his own principles, ought not to have killed himself. It would be departing too much from my object to apply this argument, however obvious the application, against those who were driven to unreasonable distrust and despair by the late successes of a neighbouring nation.

But all knowledge will be comparatively of little value, if we neglect self-knowledge; and of self-knowledge history and biography may be made successful vehicles. It will be to little purpose that our pupils become accurate critics on the characters of others, while they remain ignorant of themselves; for while to those who exercise a habit of self-application a book of profane history may be made an instrument of improvement in this difficult science; so without such an habit the Bible itself may, in this view, be read with little profit.

It will be to no purpose that the reader weeps over the fortitude of the Christian hero, or the constancy of the martyr, if she do not bear in mind that she herself is called to endure her own common trials with something of the same temper: if she do not bear in mind that, to controul irregular humours, and to submit to the daily vexations of life, will require, though in a lower degree, the exertion of the same principle, and supplication for the aid of the same spirit which sustained the Christian hero in the trying conflicts of life; or the martyr in his agony at the stake.

May I be permitted to suggest a few instances, by way of specimen, how both sacred and common history may tend to promote self-knowledge? And let me again remind the warm admirer of suffering piety under *extraordinary trials*, that if she now fail in the petty occasions to which she is actually called out, she would not be likely to have stood in those more trying occasions which excite her admiration.

While she is applauding the self-denying saint who renounced his ease, or chose to embrace death, rather than violate his duty, let her ask herself if she has never refused to submit to the paltry inconvenience of giving up her company, or even altering her dinner-hour on a Sunday, though by this trifling sacrifice her family might have been enabled to attend the public worship in the afternoon.

While she reads with horror that Belshazzar was rioting with his thousand nobles at the very moment when the Persian army was bursting through the brazen gates of Babylon; is she very sure that she herself, in an almost equally imminent moment of public danger, has not been nightly indulging in every species of dissipation?

When she is deploring the inconsistency of the human heart, while she contrasts in Mark Anthony his bravery and contempt of ease at one period, with his licentious indulgences at another; or while she laments over the intrepid soul of Cæsar, whom she had been following in his painful marches, or admiring in his contempt of death, now dissolved in dissolute pleasures with the ensnaring queen of Egypt: let her examine whether she herself has never, though in a much lower degree, evinced something of the same inconsistency? whether she who lives perhaps an orderly, sober, and reasonable life during her summer residence in the country, does not plunge with little scruple in the winter into all the most extravagant pleasures of the capital? whether she never carries about with her an accommodating kind of religion, which can be made to bend to places and seasons, to climates and customs, to times and circumstances; which takes its tincture from the fashion without, and not its habits from the principle within; which is decent with the pious, sober with the orderly, and loose with the licentious?

While she is admiring the generosity of Alexander in giving away kingdoms and provinces, let her, in order to ascertain whether she could imitate this magnanimity, take heed if she herself is daily seizing all the little occasions of doing good, which every day presents to the affluent? *Her* call is not to sacrifice a province; but does she sacrifice an opera ticket? She who

is not doing all the good she can under her present circumstances, would not do all she foresees she should, in imaginary ones, were her power enlarged to the extent of her wishes.

While she is inveighing with patriotic indignation, that in a neighbouring metropolis, thirty theatres were open every night in time of war and public calamity, is she very clear that in a metropolis which contains only three, she was not almost constantly at one of them in time of war and public calamity also? For though in a national view it may make a wide difference whether there be in the capital three theatres or thirty, yet, as the same person can only go to one of them at once, it makes but little difference as to the quantum of dissipation in the individual. She who rejoices at successful virtue in a history, or at the prosperity of a person whose interests do not interfere with her own, may exercise her self-knowledge by examining whether she rejoices equally at the happiness of every one about her: and let her remember she does not rejoice at it in the true sense, if she does not labour to promote it. She who glows with rapture at a virtuous character in history, should ask her own heart, whether she is equally ready to do justice to the fine qualities of her acquaintance, though she may not particularly love them; and whether she takes unfeigned pleasure in the superior talents, virtues, fame and fortune of those whom she professes to love, though she is eclipsed by them?

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In like manner, in the study of geography and natural history, the attention should be habitually turned to the goodness of Providence, who commonly adapts the various productions of climates to the peculiar wants of the respective inhabitants. To illustrate my meaning by one or two instances out of a thousand. The reader may be led to admire the considerate goodness of Providence in having caused the spiry fir, whose slender foliage does not obstruct the beams of the sun, to grow in the dreary regions of the north, whose shivering inhabitants could spare none of its scanty rays; while in the torrid zone, the palm-tree, the plantain, and the banana, spread their umbrella leaves to break the almost intolerable fervor of a vertical sun. How the camel, who is the sole carrier of all the merchandise of Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Arabia, and Barbary, who is obliged to transport his incredible burthens through countries in which pasture is so rare, can subsist twenty-four hours without food, and can travel loaded, many days without water, through dry and dusty deserts, which supply none; and all this, not from the habit, but from the conformation of the animal: for naturalists make this conformity of powers to climates a rule of judgment in ascertaining the native countries of animals, and always determine it to be that to which their powers and properties are most appropriate.

Thus the writers of natural history are perhaps unintentionally magnifying the operations of Providence, when they insist that animals do not modify and give way to the influence of other climates; but here they too commonly stop; neglecting, or perhaps refusing, to ascribe to infinite goodness this wise and merciful accommodation. And here the pious instructor will come in, in aid of their deficiency: for philosophers too seldom trace up causes, and wonders, and blessings to their Author. And it is peculiarly to be regretted that a late justly celebrated French naturalist, who, though not famous for his accuracy, possessed such diversified powers of description that he had the talent of making the driest subjects interesting; together with such liveliness of delineation, that his characters of animals are drawn with a spirit and variety rather to be looked for in an historian of men than of beasts: it is to be regretted, I say that this writer, with all his excellencies, is absolutely inadmissible into the library of a young lady, both on account of his immodesty and his impiety; and if in wishing to exclude him, it may be thought wrong to have given him so much commendation, it is only meant to show that the author is not led to reprobate his principles from insensibility to his talents. The remark is rather made to put the reader on remembering that no brilliancy of genius, no diversity of attainments, should ever be allowed as a commutation for defective principles and corrupt ideas.*

CHAP. X.

On the use of definitions, and the moral benefits of accuracy in langnage.

Persons having been accustomed from their cradles to learn words before they knew the ideas for which they stand, usually continue to do so all their lives, never taking the pains to settle in their minds, the determined ideas which belong to them. This want of a precise signification of their words, when they come to reason, *especially in moral matters*, is the cause of very obscure and uncertain notions. They use these undetermined words confidently, without much troubling their heads about a certain fixed meaning, whereby, besides the ease of it, they obtain this advantage, that as in such discourse they are seldom in the right, so they are seldom to be convinced that they are in the wrong, it being just the same to go about to draw those persons out of their mistakes, who have no settled notions, as to dispossess a vagrant of his habitation who has no settled abode.—The chief end of language being to be understood, words serve not for that end when they do not excite in the hearer the same idea which they stand for in the mind of the speaker.'†

I have chosen to shelter myself under the broad sanction of the great author here quoted, with a view to apply this rule in philology to a moral purpose; for it applies to the veracity of conversation as much as to its correctness; and as strongly recommends unequivocal and simple truth, as accurate and just expression. Scarcely any one perhaps has an adequate conception

* Goldsmith's History of Animated Nature has many references to a Divine Author. It is to be wished that some judicious person would publish a new edition of this work, purified from the indelicate and offensive parts.

† Locke.

how much clear and correct expression favours the elucidation of truth; and the side of truth is obviously the side of morals; it is in fact one and the same cause; and it is of course the same cause with that of true religion also.

It is therefore no worthless part of education, even in a religious view, to study the precise meaning of words, and the appropriate signification of language. To this end I know no better method than to accustom young persons very early to a habit of *defining* common words and things; for, as definition seems to lie at the root of correctness, to be accustomed to define English words in English, would improve the understanding more than barely to know what these words are called in French, Italian, or Latin. Or rather, one use of learning other languages is, because definition is often involved in etymology; that is, since many English words take their derivation from foreign or ancient languages, they cannot be so accurately understood without some knowledge of those languages: but precision of any kind, either moral or philological, too seldom finds its way into the education of women.

It is perhaps going out of my province to observe, that it might be well if young *men* also before they entered on the world, were to be furnished with correct definitions of certain words, the use of which is become rather ambiguous; or rather they should be instructed in the *double sense* of modern phraseology. For instance; they should be provided with a good definition of the word *honour* in the fashionable sense, showing what vices it includes, and what virtues it does not include; the term *good company*, which even the courtly Petronius of our days has defined as sometimes including not a few immoral and disreputable characters: *religion*, which in the various senses assigned it by the world, sometimes means superstition, sometimes fanaticism, and sometimes a mere disposition to attend on any kind of form of worship: the word *goodness*, which is made to mean every thing that is not notoriously bad; and sometimes even that too, if what is notoriously bad be accompanied by good humour, pleasing manners, and a little alms-giving. By these means they would go forth armed against many of the false opinions which, through the abuse or ambiguous meaning of words, pass so current in the world.

But to return to the youthful part of that sex which is the more immediate object of this little work. With correct definition they should also be taught to study the shades of words, and this not merely with a view to accuracy of expression, though even that involves both sense and elegance, but with a view to moral truth.

It may be thought ridiculous to assert that morals have any connexion with the purity of language, or that the precision of truth may be violated through defect of critical exactness in the three degrees of comparison: yet how frequently do we hear from the dealers in superlatives, of 'most admirable, superexcellent, and quite perfect' people, who, to plain persons, not bred in the school of exaggeration, would appear mere common characters, not rising above the level of mediocrity! By this negligence in the ust application of words, we shall be as much misled by these trope and figure ladies, when they degrade as when they panegyrize; for to a plain and sober judgment, a tradesman may not be 'the most good-for-nothing fellow that ever existed,' merely because it was impossible for him to execute in an hour, an order which required a week; a lady may not be 'the most hideous fright the world ever saw,' though the make of her gown may have been obsolete for a month; nor may one's young friend's father be a 'monster of cruelty,' though he may be a quiet gentleman who does not choose to live at watering-places, but likes to have his daughter stay at home with him in the country.

Of all the parts of speech, the interjection is the most abundantly in use with the hyperbolical fair ones. Would it could be added that these emphatical expletives (if I may make use of a contradictory term,) were not sometimes tinctured with profaneness! Though I am persuaded that idle habit is often more at the bottom of this deep offence than intended impiety, yet there is scarcely any error of youthful talk which merits severer castigation. And an habit of exclamation should be rejected by polished people as vulgar, even if it were not abhorred as profane.

The habit of exaggerating trifles, together with the grand female failing of excessive mutual flattery, and elaborate general professions of fondness and attachment, is inconceivably cherished by the voluminous private correspondences in which some girls are indulged. In vindication of this practice it is pleaded that a facility of style, and an easy turn of expression, are acquisitions to be derived from an early interchange of sentiments by letter-writing; but even if it were so, these would be dearly purchased by the sacrifice of that truth, and sobriety of sentiment, that correctness of language, and that ingenuous simplicity of character and manners so lovely in female youth.

Next to pernicious reading, imprudent and violent friendships are the most dangerous snares to this simplicity. And boundless correspondences with different confidants, whether they live in a distant province, or, as it often happens, in the same street, are the fuel which principally feeds this dangerous flame of youthful sentiment. In those correspondences the young friends often encourage each other in the falsest notions of human life, and the most erroneous views of each other's character. Family affairs are divulged, and family faults aggravated. Vows of everlasting attachment and exclusive fondness are in a pretty just proportion bestowed on every friend alike. These epistles overflow with quotations from the most passionate of the dramatic poets; and passages wrested from their natural meaning, and pressed into the service of sentiment, are, with all the violence of misapplication, compelled to suit the case of the heroic transcriber.

But antecedent to this *epistolary period* of life they should have been accustomed to the most scrupulous exactness in whatever they relate. They should maintain the most critical accuracy in *facts*, in *dates*, in *numbering*, in *describing*, in short, in whatever pertains, either directly or indirectly, closely or remotely, to the great fun-

damental principle, *truth*. It is so very difficult for persons of great liveliness to restrain themselves within the sober limits of strict veracity, either in their assertions or narrations, especially when a little undue indulgence of fancy is apt to procure for them the praise of genius and spirit, that this restraint is one of the earliest principles which should be worked into the youthful mind.

The conversation of young females is also in danger of being overloaded with epithets. As in the warm season of youth hardly any thing is seen in the true point of vision, so hardly any thing is named in naked simplicity; and the very sensibility of the feelings is partly a cause of the extravagance of the expression. But here, as in other points, the sacred writers, particularly of the New Testament, present us with the purest models; and its natural and unlabour-ed style of expression is perhaps not the meanest evidence of the truth of the Gospel. There is throughout the whole narratives, no overcharged character, no elaborate description, nothing studiously emphatical, as if truth of itself were weak, and wanted to be helped out. There is little panegyric, and less invective; none but on great, and awful, and justifiable occasions. The authors record their own faults with the same honesty as if they were the faults of other men, and the faults of other men with as little amplification as if they were their own. There is perhaps no book in which adjectives are so sparingly used. A modest statement of the fact, with no colouring and little comment, with little emphasis and no varnish, is the example held out to us for correcting the exuberances of passion and of language, by that divine volume which furnishes us with the still more important rule of faith and standard of practice. Nor is the truth lowered by any feebleness, nor is the spirit diluted, nor the impression weakened by this soberness and moderation; for with all this plainness there is so much force, with all this simplicity there is so much energy, that a few slight touches and artless strokes of Scripture characters convey a stronger outline of the person delineated, than is sometimes given by the most elaborate and finished portrait of more artificial historians.

If it be objected to this remark, that many parts of the sacred writings abound in a lofty, figurative, and even hyperbolical style; this objection applies chiefly to the writings of the Old Testament, and to the prophetical and poetical parts of that. But the metaphorical and florid style of those writings is distinct from the inaccurate and overstrained expression we have been censuring; for that only is inaccuracy which leads to a false and inadequate conception in the reader or hearer. The lofty style of the eastern, and of other heroic poetry, does not so mislead; for the metaphor is understood to be a metaphor, and the imagery is understood to be ornamental. The style of the Scriptures of the Old Testament is not, it is true, plain in opposition to figurative; nor simple in opposition to florid; but it is plain and simple in the best sense, as opposed to false principles and false taste; it raises no wrong idea; it gives an exact impression of the thing it means to convey; and its very tropes and figures, though bold, are never unnatural or affected: when it embellishes it does not mislead; even when it exaggerates, it does not misrepresent; if it be hyperbolical, it is so either in compliance with the genius of oriental language, or in compliance with contemporary customs, or because the subject is one which will be most forcibly impressed by a strong figure. The loftiness of the expression deducts nothing from the weight of the circumstance; the imagery animates the reader without misleading him; the boldest illustration, while it dilates his conception of the subject, detracts nothing from its exactness; and the divine Spirit, instead of suffering truth to be injured by the opulence of the figures, contrives to make them fresh and varied avenues to the heart and the understanding.

CHAP. XI.

On religion. The necessity and duty of early instruction shown by analogy with human learning.

It has been the fashion of our late innovators in philosophy, who have written some of the most brilliant and popular treatises on education, to decry the practice of early instilling religious knowledge into the minds of children. In vindication of this opinion it has been alleged, that it is of the utmost importance to the cause of truth, that the mind of man should be kept free from prepossessions; and in particular, that every one should be left to form such judgment on religious subjects as may seem best to his own reason in maturer years.

This sentiment has received some countenance from those better characters who have wished, on the fairest principle, to encourage free inquiry in religion; but it has been pushed to the blameable excess here censured, chiefly by the new philosophers; who, while they profess only an ingenuous zeal for truth, are in fact slily endeavouring to destroy Christianity itself, by discountenancing, under the plausible pretence of free inquiry, all attention whatever to the religious education of our youth.

It is undoubtedly our duty, while we are instilling principles into the tender mind, to take peculiar care that those principles be sound and just; that the religion we teach be the religion of the Bible, and not the inventions of human error or superstition: that the principles we infuse into others, be such as we ourselves have well scrutinized, and not the result of our credulity or bigotry; not the mere hereditary, unexamined prejudices of our own undiscerning childhood. It may also be granted, that it is the duty of every parent to inform the youth, that when his faculties shall have so unfolded themselves, as to enable him to examine for himself those principles which the parent is now instilling, it will be his duty so to examine them.

But after making these concessions, I would most seriously insist that there are certain leading and fundamental truths; that there are certain sentiments on the side of Christianity, as

well as of virtue and benevolence, in favour of which every child *ought* to be prepossessed; and may it not be also added, that to expect to keep the mind void of all prepossession, even upon any subject, appears to be altogether a vain and impracticable attempt; an attempt, the very suggestion of which argues much ignorance of human nature.

Let it be observed here, that we are not combating the infidel; that we are not producing evidences and arguments in favour of the truth of Christianity, or trying to win over the assent of the reader to that which he disputes, but that we are taking it for granted, not only that Christianity is true, but that we are addressing those who believe it to be true: an assumption which has been made throughout this work. Assuming, therefore, that there are religious principles which are true, and which ought to be communicated in the most effectual manner, the next question which arises seems to be, at what age and in what manner these ought to be inculcated; that it ought to be at an early period we have the command of Christ; who encouragingly said, in answer to those who would have repelled their approach, 'Suffer *little* children to come unto me.'

But here conceding, for the sake of argument, what yet cannot be conceded, that some good reasons *may* be brought in favour of delay; allowing that such impressions as are communicated early may not be very deep; allowing them even to become totally effaced by the subsequent corruptions of the heart and of the world; still I would illustrate the importance of early infusing religious knowledge, by an allusion drawn from the power of early habit in human learning. Put the case, for instance, of a person who was betimes initiated in the rudiments of classical studies. Suppose him after quitting school to have fallen, either by a course of idleness or of vulgar pursuits, into a total neglect of study. Should this person at any future period happen to be called to some profession, which should oblige him, as we say, to rub up his Greek and Latin; his memory still retaining the unobliterated though faint traces of his early pursuits, he will be able to recover his neglected learning with less difficulty than he could now begin to learn; for he is not again obliged to set out with studying the simple elements; they come back on being pursued; they are found on being searched for; the decayed images assume shape, and strength, and colour; he has in his mind first principles to which to recur; the rules of grammar which he has allowed himself to violate, he has not however forgotten; he will recall neglected ideas, he will resume slighted habits far more easily than he could now begin to acquire new ones. I appeal to clergymen who are called to attend the dying beds of such as have been bred in gross and stupid ignorance of religion, for the justness of this comparison. Do they not find that these unhappy people have no ideas in common with them? that *they* therefore possess no intelligible medium by which to make themselves understood? that the persons to whom they are addressing themselves have no first principles to which they can be referred? that they are ignorant not only of the science, but the language of Christianity?

But at worst, whatever be the event of a pious education to the child, though in general we are encouraged from the tenor of Scripture and the course of experience to hope that the event will be favourable, and that 'when he is old he will not depart from it.' Is it nothing for the parent to have acquitted himself of this prime duty? Is it nothing to him that he has obeyed the plain command of 'training his child in the way he should go?' And will not the parent who so acquits himself, with better reason and more lively hope, supplicate the Father of mercies for the reclaiming of a prodigal, who has wandered out of that right path in which he has set him forward, than for the conversion of a neglected creature, to whose feet the Gospel had never been offered as a light? And how different will be the dying reflections even of that parent whose earnest endeavours have been unhappily defeated by the subsequent and voluntary perversion of his child, from his who will reasonably aggravate his pangs, by transferring the sins of his neglected child to the number of his own transgressions.

And to such well-intentioned but ill-judging parents as really wish their children to be hereafter pious, but erroneously withhold instruction till the more advanced period prescribed by the great master of splendid paradoxes* shall arrive: who can assure them, that while they are withholding the good seed, the great and ever vigilant enemy, who assiduously seizes hold on every opportunity which *we* slight, and cultivates every advantage which *we* neglect, may not be stocking the fallow ground with tares? Nay, who in this fluctuating state of things can be assured, even if this were not certainly to be the case, that to them the promised period ever shall arrive at all? Who shall ascertain to them that their now neglected child shall certainly live to receive the delayed instructions? Who can assure them that they themselves will live to communicate it?

It is almost needless to observe that parents who are indifferent about religion, much more those who treat it with scorn, are not likely to be anxious on this subject; it is therefore the attention of *religious* parents which is here chiefly called upon; and the more so, as there seems, on this point, an unaccountable negligence in many of these, whether it arises from indolence, false principles, or whatever other motive.

But independent of knowledge, it is something, nay, let philosophers say what they will, it is much to give youth *prepossessions* in favour of religion, to secure their *prejudices* on its side before you turn them adrift into the world; a world in which, before they can be completely armed with arguments and reasons, they will be assailed by numbers whose prepossessions and prejudices, far more than *their* arguments and reasons, attach them to the other side. Why should not the Christian youth furnish himself in the best cause with the same natural armour which the enemies of religion wear in the worst? It is certain that to set out in life with senti-

* Rosseau.

ments in favour of the religion of our country is no more an error or a weakness, than to grow up with a fondness for our country itself. If the love of our country be judged a fair principle, surely a Christian who is 'a citizen of no mean city,' may lawfully have *his* attachments too. If patriotism be an honest prejudice, Christianity is not a servile one. Nay, let us teach the youth to hug his prejudices, to glory in his prepossessions, rather than to acquire that versatile and accommodating citizenship of the world, by which he may be an infidel in Paris, a Papist at Rome, and a Mussulman at Cairo.

Let me not be supposed so to elevate politics, or so to depress religion, as to make any comparision of the value of the one with the other, when I observe, that between the true British patriot and the true Christian, there will be this common resemblance: the more deeply each of them inquires, the more will he be confirmed in his respective attachment, the one to his country, the other to his religion. I speak with reverence of the immeasurable distance; but the more the one presses on the firm arch of our constitution, and the other on that of Christianity, the stronger he will find them both. Each challenges scrutiny; each has nothing to dread but from shallow politicians and shallow philosophers; in each intimate knowledge justifies prepossession; in each investigation confirms attachment.

If we divide the human being into three component parts, the bodily, the intellectual, and the spiritual, is it not reasonable that a portion of care and attention be assigned to each in some degree adequate to its importance? Should I venture to say a *due* portion, a portion adapted to the real comparative value of each, would not that condemn in one word the whole system of modern education? The rational and intellectual part being avowedly more valuable than the bodily, while the spiritual and immortal part exceeds even the intellectual still more than that surpasses what is corporeal; is it acting according to the common rules of proportion; is it acting on the principles of distributive justice; is it acting with that good sense and right judgment with which the ordinary business of this world is usually transacted, to give the larger portion of time and care to that which is worth the least? Is it fair that what relates to the body and the organs of the body, I mean those accomplishments which address themselves to the eye and the ear, should occupy almost the whole thoughts; while the intellectual part should be robbed of its due proportion, and the spiritual part should have almost no proportion at all? Is not this preparing your children for an awful disappointment in the tremendous day when they shall be stripped of that body, of those senses and organs, which have been made almost the sole objects of their attentions, and shall feel themselves left in possession of nothing but that spiritual part which in education was scarcely taken into the account of their existence?

Surely it should be thought a reasonable compromise (and I am in fact undervaluing the object for the importance of which I plead) to suggest, that at least two-thirds of that time which is now usurped by externals should be restored to the rightful owners, the understanding and the heart; and that the acquisition of religious knowledge in early youth should at least be *no less* an object of sedulous attention than the cultivation of human learning or of outward embellishments. It is also not unreasonable to suggest, that we should in Christianity, as in arts, sciences, or languages, begin with the beginning, set out with the simple elements, and thus 'go on unto perfection.'

Why in teaching to draw do you begin with straight lines and curves, till by gentle steps the knowledge of outline and proportion be obtained, and your picture be completed; never losing sight, however, of the elementary lines and curves? Why in music do you set out with the simple notes, and pursue the acquisition through all its progress, still in every stage recurring to the notes? Why in the science of numbers do you invent the simplest methods of conveying just ideas of computation, still referring to the tables which involve the fundamental rules? Why in the science of quantity do men introduce the pupil at first to the plainest diagrams, and clear up one difficulty before they allow another to appear? Why in teaching languages to the youth do you sedulously infuse into his mind the rudiments of your syntax? Why in parsing is he led to refer every word to its part of speech, to resolve every sentence into its elements, to reduce every term to its original, and from the first case of nouns, and the first tense of verbs, to explain their formations, changes, and dependences, till the principles of language become so grounded, that, by continually recurring to the rules, speaking and writing correctly are fixed into a habit? Why all this, but because you uniformly wish him to be grounded in each of his acquirements? Why, but because you are persuaded that a slight, and slovenly, and superficial, and irregular way of instruction will never train him to excellence in any thing?

Do young persons then become musicians, painters, linguists, and mathematicians by early study and regular labour; and shall they become Christians by accident? or rather, is not this acting on that very principle of Dogberry, at which you probably have often laughed? Is it not supposing that religion like reading and writing comes by nature? Shall all those accomplishments, 'which perish in the using,' be so assiduously, so systematically taught? Shall all those habits, which are limited to the things of this world, be so carefully formed, so persisted in, as to be interwoven with our very make, so as to become as it were a part of ourselves; and shall that knowledge which is to make us 'wise unto salvation' be picked up at random, cursorily, or perhaps not picked up at all? Shall that difficult divine science which requires 'line upon line, and precept upon precept,' here a little and there a little; that knowledge which parents, even under a darker dispensation, were required to teach their children *diligently*, and to talk of it when they sat in their house, and when they walked by the way, and when they lay down, and when they rose up,' shall this knowledge be by Christian parents

omitted or deferred, or taught slightly; or be superseded by things of comparatively little worth?

Shall the lively period of youth, the soft and impressible season when lasting habits are formed, when the seal cuts deep into the yielding wax, and the impression is more likely to be clear, and sharp, and strong, and lasting; shall this warm and favourable season be suffered to slide by, without being turned to the great purpose for which not only youth, but life and breath, and being were bestowed? Shall not that 'faith without which it is impossible to please God;' shall not that 'holiness without which no man can see the Lord;' shall not that knowledge which is the foundation of faith and practice; shall not that charity without which all knowledge is 'sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal,' be impressed, be inculcated, be enforced, as early, as constantly, as fundamentally, with the same earnest pushing on to continual progress, with the same constant reference to first principles, as are used in the case of those arts which merely adorn human life? Shall we not seize the happy period when the memory is strong, the mind and all its powers vigorous and active, the imagination busy and all alive; the heart flexible, the temper ductile, the conscience tender, curiosity awake, fear powerful, hope eager, love ardent; shall we not seize this period for inculcating that knowledge, and impressing those principles which are to form the character, and fix the destination for eternity?

I would now address myself to another and a still more dilatory class, who are for procrastinating all concern about religion till they are driven to it by actual distress, and who do not think of praying till they are perishing like the sailor who said, 'he thought it was always time enough to begin to pray when the storm began.' Of these I would ask, shall we, with an unaccountable deliberation, defer our anxiety about religion till the busy man and the dissipated woman are become so immersed in the cares of life, or so entangled in its pleasures, that they will have little heart or spirit to embrace a new principle? a principle whose precise object it will be to condemn that very life in which they have already embarked: nay, to condemn almost all that they have been doing and thinking ever since they first began to act or think? Shall we, I say, begin now? or shall we suffer those instructions, to receive which, requires all the concentrated powers of a strong and healthy mind, to be put off till the day of excruciating pain, till the period of debility and stupefaction? Shall we wait for that season, as if it were the most favourable for religious acquisitions, when the senses shall have been palled by excessive gratification, when the eye shall be tired with seeing, and the ear with hearing? Shall we, when the whole man is breaking up by disease or decay, expect that the dim apprehension will discern a new science, or the obtuse feelings delight themselves with a new pleasure? a pleasure too, not only incompatible with many of the hitherto indulged pleasures, but one which carries with it a strong intimation that those pleasures terminate in the death of the soul.

But, not to lose sight of the important analogy on which we have already dwelt so much; how preposterous would it seem to you to hear any one propose to an illiterate dying man, to set about learning even the plainest, and easiest rudiments of any new art; to study the musical notes; to conjugate a verb; to learn, not the first problem in Euclid, but even the numeration table, and yet you do not think it absurd to postpone religious instruction, on principles, which, if admitted, at all, must terminate either in ignorance or in your proposing too late to a dying man to begin to learn the totally unknown scheme of Christianity. You do not think it impossible that he should be brought to listen to 'the voice of this charmer, when he can no longer listen to 'the voice of singing men and singing women.' You do not think it unreasonable that immortal beings should delay to devote their days to heaven, till they have 'no pleasure in them' themselves. You will not bring them to offer up the first fruits of their lips, and hearts, and lives, to their Maker, because you persuade yourselves that he who has called himself a 'jealous God,' may however be contented hereafter with the wretched sacrifice of decayed appetites, and the worthless leavings of almost extinguished affections.

We can scarcely believe, even with all the melancholy procrastination we see around us that there is any one, except he be a decided infidel, who does not consider religion as at least a good reversionary thing; as an object which ought always to occupy a little remote corner of his map of life; the study of which, though it is always to be postponed, is however not to be finally rejected; which, though it cannot conveniently come into his present scheme of life, it is intended somehow or other to take up before death. This awful deception, this defect in the intellectual vision, arises, partly from the bulk which the objects of time and sense acquire in our eyes by their nearness; while the invisible realities of eternity are but faintly discerned by a feeble faith, through a dim and distant medium. It arises also partly from a totally false idea of the nature of Christianity, from a fatal fancy that we can repent at any future period, and that as amendment is a thing which will always be in our power, it will be time enough to think of reforming our life, when we should think only of closing it.

But depend upon it, that a heart long hardened, I do not mean by gross vices merely, but by a fondness for the world, by an habitual and excessive indulgence in the pleasures of sense, will by no means be in a favourable state to admit the light of divine truth, or to receive the impressions of divine grace. God indeed sometimes shows us by an act of his sovereignty, that this wonderful change, the conversion of a sinner's heart, may be produced without the intervention of human means, to show that the work is His. But as this is not the way in which the Almighty usually deals with his creatures, it would be nearly as preposterous for men to act on this presumption, and sin on in hopes of a miraculous conversion, as it would be to take no means for the preservation of their lives, because Jesus Christ raised Lazarus from the dead.

CHAP. XII.

On the manner of instructing young persons in religion.—General remarks on the genius of Christianity.

I would now with great deference address those respectable characters who are really concerned about the best interests of their children; those to whom Christianity is indeed an important consideration, but whose habits of life have hitherto hindered them from giving it its due degree in the scale of education.

Begin then with considering that religion is a part, and the most prominent part, in your system of instruction. Do not communicate its principles in a random, desultory way; nor scantily stint this business to only such scraps and remnants of time as may be casually picked up from the gleanings of other acquirements. 'Will you bring to God for a sacrifice that which costs you nothing?' Let the best part of the day, which with most people is the earliest part, be steadily and invariably dedicated to this work by your children, before they are tired with their other studies, while the intellect is clear, the spirit light, and the attention sharp and unfatigued.

Confine not your instructions to mere verbal rituals and dry systems, but communicate them in a way which shall interest their feelings, by lively images, and by a warm practical application of what they read to their own hearts and circumstances. If you do not study the great but too much slighted art of fixing, of commanding, of chaining the attention, you may throw away much time and labour, with little other effect than that of disgusting your pupils and wearying yourself. There seems to be no good reason that while every other thing is to be made amusing, religion alone must be dry and uninviting. Do not fancy that a thing is good merely because it is dull. Why should not the most entertaining powers of the human mind be supremely consecrated to that subject which is most worthy of their full exercise? The misfortune is, that religious learning is too often rather considered as an act of the memory than of the heart and affections; as a dry duty, rather than a lively pleasure. The manner in which it is taught differs as much from their other learning as punishment from recreation. Children are turned over to the dull work of getting by rote as a task that which they should get from example, from animated conversation, from lively discussion, in which the pupil should learn to bear a part, instead of being merely a passive hearer. Teach them rather, as their blessed Saviour taught, by interesting parables, which, while they corrected the heart, left some exercise for the ingenuity in the solution, and for the feelings in their application. Teach, as He taught, by seizing on surrounding objects, passing events, local circumstances, peculiar characters, apt illusions, just analogy, appropriate illustration. Call in all creation, animate and inanimate, to your aid, and accustom your young audience to

> Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing

Even when the nature of your subject makes it necessary for you to be more plain and didactic, do not fail frequently to enliven these less engaging parts of your discourse with some incidental imagery which will captivate the fancy with some affecting story with which it shall be associated in the memory. Relieve what would otherwise be too dry and preceptive, with some striking exemplification in point, some touching instance to be imitated, some awful warning to be avoided; something which shall illustrate your instruction, which shall realize your position, which shall embody your idea, and give shape and form, colour and life, to your precept. Endeavour unremittingly to connect the reader with the subject by making her feel that what you teach is neither an abstract truth, nor a thing of mere general information, but that it is a business in which *she herself* is individually and immediately concerned; in which not only her eternal salvation but her *present* happiness is involved. Do, according to your measure of ability, what the Holy Spirit which indited the Scriptures has done, always take the sensibility of the learner into your account of the faculties which are to be worked upon. 'For the doctrines of the Bible,' as the profound and enlightened Bacon observes, 'are not proposed to us in a naked logic form, but arrayed in the most beautiful and striking colours which creation affords.' By those affecting illustrations used by Him 'who knew what was in man,' and therefore best knew how to address him, it was, that the unlettered audiences of Christ and his apostles were enabled both to comprehend and to relish doctrines, which would not readily have made their way to their understandings, had they not first touched their hearts; and which would have found access to neither the one nor the other, had they been delivered in dry scholastic disquisitions. Now, those audiences not being learned, may be supposed to have been nearly in the state of children, as to their receptive faculties, and to have required nearly the same sort of instruction; that is, they were more capable of being moved with what was simple and touching, and lively, than what was elaborate, abstruse, and unaffecting. Heaven and earth were made to furnish their contributions, when man was to be taught that science which was to make him wise unto salvation. Something which might enforce or illustrate was drawn from every element. The appearances of the sky, the storms of the ocean, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the fruits of the earth, the seed and the harvest, the labours of the husbandmen, the traffic of the merchant, the season of the year! all were laid hold of in turn. And the most important moral instruction, or religious truth, was deduced from some recent occurrence, some natural appearance, some ordinary fact.

If that be the purest eloquence which most persuades and which comes home to the heart with the fullest evidence and the most irresistible force, then no eloquence is so powerful as that of Scripture; and an intelligent Christian teacher will be admonished by the mode of Scripture itself, how to communicate its truths with life and spirit; 'while he is musing, the fire burns;' that fire which will preserve him

from an insipid and freezing mode of instruction. He will morever, as was said above, always carefully keep up a quick sense of the personal interest the pupil has in every religious instruction which is impressed upon him. He will teach as Paul prayed, 'with the spirit, and with the understanding also;' and in imitating this great model, he will necessarily avoid the opposite faults of two different sorts of instructors; for while some of our divines of the higher class have been too apt to preach as if mankind had only intellect, and the lower and more popular sort as if they had only passions, let him borrow what is good from both, and address his pupils as beings compounded of both understanding and affections.*

Fancy not that the Bible is too difficult and intricate to be presented in its own naked form, and that it puzzles and bewilders the youthful understanding. In all needful and indispensable points of knowledge, the darkness of Scripture, as a great Christian philosopher† has observed, 'is but a partial darkness, like that of Egypt, which benighted only the enemies of God, while it left his children in clear day.' It is not pretended that the Bible will *find* in the young reader clear views of God and of Christ, of the soul and eternity, but that it will *give* them. And if it be really the appropriate character of Scripture, as it tells us itself that it is, 'to enlighten the eyes of the *blind*,' and 'to make wise the *simple*,' then it is as well calculated for the youthful and uninformed as for any other class; and as it was never expected that the greater part of Christians should be learned, so is learning, though of inestimable value in a *teacher* of theology, no *essential* qualification for a common Christian, for which reason Scripture truths are expressed with that clear and simple evidence adapted to the kind of assent which they require; an assent materially different from that sort of demonstration which a mathematical theorem demands. He who could bring an unprejudiced heart and an unperverted will, would bring to the Scriptures the best qualification for understanding and receiving them. And though they contain things which the pupil cannot comprehend (as what ancient poet, historian, or orator does not) the teacher may address to him the words which Christ addressed to Peter, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.'

Histories of the Bible, and commentaries on the Bible, for the use of children, though valuable in their way, should never be used as substitutes for the Bible itself. For historical or geographical information, for calling the attention to events and characters, they are very useful. But Scripture truths are best conveyed in its own sublime and simple phraseology; its doctrines are best understood in its own appropriate language; its precepts are best retained in their own simple form. Paraphrases, in professing to explain, often dilute; while the terseness and brevity of Scripture composition fills the mind, touches the heart, and fastens on the memory. While I would cause them to 'read, the commentary for the improvement of the understanding, they should mark, learn, and inwardly digest' the Bible for the comfort and edification of the heart.

Young people who have been taught religion in a formal and superficial way, who have had all its drudgeries and none of its pleasures, will probably have acquired so little relish for it, as to consider the continued prosecution of their religious studies as a badge of their tutelage, as a mark that they are still under subjection; and will look forward with impatience to the hour of their emancipation from the lectures on christianity, as the era of their promised liberty; the epocha of independence. They will long for the period when its lessons shall cease to be delivered; will conclude that, having once attained such an age, and arrived at the required proficiency, the object will be accomplished, and the labour at an end. But let not *your* children 'so learn Christ.' Apprise them that no specific day will ever arise, on which they shall say, I *have* attained; but inform them, that every acquisition must be followed up; knowledge must be increased; prejudices subdued; good habits rooted; evil ones eradicated; amiable dispositions strengthened; right principles confirmed; till going on from light to light, and from strength to strength, they come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

But though serious instruction will not only be uninteresting but irksome, if conveyed to youth in a cold didactic way; yet if their affections be suitably engaged, while their understandings are kept in exercise, their hearts so far from necessarily revolting, as some insist, will often receive the most solemn truths with alacrity. It is, as we have repeated, the manner which revolts them, and not the thing. Nor will they, as some assert, necessarily dislike the teacher, because the truths taught are of the most awful and solemn kind. It has happened to the writer to be a frequent witness of the gratitude and affection expressed by young persons to those who had sedulously and seriously instructed them in religious knowledge; an affection as lively, a gratitude as warm, as could have been excited by any indulgence to their persons, or any gratification of a worldly nature.

As it is notorious that men of wit and sprightly fancy have been the most formidable enemies to Christianity; while men, in whom those talents have been consecrated to God, have been some of her most useful champions, take particular care to press that ardent and ever-active power, the *imagination*, into the service of religion. This bright and busy faculty will be leading its possessor into perpetual peril, and is an enemy of peculiar potency till it come to be employed in the cause of God. It is a lion, which though worldly prudence indeed may *chain* so as to prevent out

* The zeal and diligence with which the bishop of London's weekly lectures have been attended by persons of all ranks and descriptions, but more especially by that class to whom this little work is addressed, is a very promising circumstance for the age. And while we consider with pleasure the advantages peculiarly to be derived by the young from so interesting and animated an exposition of the Gospel, we are further led to rejoice at the countenance given by such high authority to the revival of that excellent but too much neglected practice of lectures.

† Mr. Boyle.

ward mischief, yet the malignity remains within; but when sanctified by Christianity, the imagination is a lion *tamed;* you have all the benefit of its strength and its activity, divested of its mischief. God never bestowed that noble but restless faculty, without intending it to be an instrument of his own glory; though it has been too often set up in rebellion against him; because, in its youthful stirrings, while all alive and full of action, it has not been seized upon to serve its rightful Sovereign, but was early enlisted with little opposition under the banners of the world, the flesh, and the devil! Religion is the only subject in which, under the guidance of a severe and sober-minded prudence, this discursive faculty can safely stretch its powers and expand its energies! But let it be remembered, that it must be a sound and genuine Christianity which can alone so chastise and regulate the imagination, as to restrain it from those errors and excesses into which a false, a mistaken, an irregular religion, has too often led its injudicious and ill-instructed professor. Some of the most fatal extremes into which a wild enthusiasm or a frightful superstition has plunged its unhappy votaries, have been owing to the want of a due direction, to the want of a strict and holy castigation of this ever-working faculty. To secure imagination, therefore, on the safe side, and, if I may change the metaphor, to put it under the direction of its true pilot, in the stormy voyage of life, is like engaging those potent elements, the wind and tide in your favour.

In your communications with young people, take care to convince them that as religion is not a business to be laid aside with the lesson, so neither is it a single branch of duty; some detached thing, which like the acquisition of an art or a language, is to be practised separately, and to have its distinct periods and modes of operation. But let them understand, that common acts, by the spirit in which they are to be performed, are to be made acts of religion. Let them perceive that Christianity may be considered as having something of that influence over the conduct, which external grace has over the manners; for as it is not the performance of some particular act which denominates any one to be graceful, grace being a spirit diffused through the whole system, which animates every sentiment, and informs every action; as she who has true personal grace has it uniformly, and is not sometimes awkward and sometimes elegant; does not sometimes lay it down and sometimes take it up; so religion is not an occasional act, but an indwelling principle, an inwrought habit, a pervading and informing spirit, from which indeed every act derives all its life, and energy, and beauty.

Give them clear views of the broad discrimination between practical religion and worldly morality; in short, between the virtues of Christians and of Pagans. Show them that no good qualities are genuine, but such as flow from the religion of Christ. Let them learn that the virtues which the better sort of people, who are yet destitute of true Christianity, inculcate and practise, resemble those virtues which have the love of God for their motive, just as counterfeit coin resembles sterling gold; they may have, it is true, certain points of resemblance with the others; they may be bright and shining; they have perhaps the image and the superscription, but they ever want the true distinguishing properties; they want sterling value, purity, and weight. They may indeed pass current in the traffic of this world, but when brought to the touchstone, they will be found full of alloy; when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, 'they will be found wanting,' they will not stand that final trial which is to separate 'the precious from the vile;' they will not abide the day 'of *his* coming who is like a refiner's fire.'

One error into which even some good people are apt to fall, is that endeavouring to deceive young minds by temporising expedients. In order to allure them to become religious, they exhibit false, or faint, or inadequate views of Christianity; and while they represent it as it really is, as a life of superior happiness and advantage, they conceal its difficulties, and like the jesuitical Chinese missionaries, extenuate, or sink, or deny, such parts of it as are least alluring to human pride. In attempting to disguise its principles, they destroy its efficacy. They deny the cross instead of making it the badge of a Christian. But besides that, the project fails with them as it did with the Jesuits; all fraud is bad in itself; and a pious fraud is a contradiction in terms, which ought to be buried in the rubbish of papal desolation.

Instead of representing to the young Christian, that it may be possible by a prudent ingenuity at once to pursue, with equal ardour and success, worldly fame and eternal glory, would it not be more honest to tell him fairly and unambiguously that there are two distinct roads between which there is a broad boundary line? that there are two contending and irreconcilable interests? that he must forsake the one if he would cleave to the other? that 'there are two masters,' both of whom it is impossible to serve? that there are two sorts of characters at eternal variance? that he must renounce the one if he is in earnest for the other? that nothing short of absolute decision can make a confirmed Christian? Point out the different sorts of promises annexed to these different sorts of characters. Confess in the language of Christ how the man of the world often obtains (and it is the natural course of human things) the recompence he sedulously seeks. 'Verily I say unto you they have their reward.' Explain the beatitudes on the other hand, and unfold what kind of specific reward is there individually promised to its concomitant virtue. Show your pupil that to that 'poverty of spirit' to which 'the kingdom of heaven' is promised, it would be inconsistent to expect that the recompence of human commendation should be also attached; that to that 'purity of heart' to which the beatific vision is annexed, it would be unreasonable to suppose you can unite the praise of licentious wits, or the admiration of a catch-club. These will be bestowed on their appropriate and corresponding merit. Do not enlist them under false colours, disappointment will produce a desertion. Different sorts of rewards are attached to different sorts of services; and while you truly assert that

Religion's ways are 'ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace,' take care that you do not lead them to depend too exclusively on worldly happiness and earthly peace, for these make no part of the covenant; they may be, and they often are, superadded, but they were never stipulated in the contract.

But if, in order to attract the young to a religious course, you disingenuously conceal its difficulties, while you are justly enlarging upon its pleasures, you will tempt them to distrust the truth of Scripture itself.—For what will they think, not only of a few detached texts, but of the general cast and colour of the Gospel when contrasted with your representation of it? When you are describing to them the inseparable human advantages which will follow a religious course, what notion will they conceive of 'the strait gate' and 'narrow way?' of the amputation of a 'right hand?' of the excision of a 'right eye?' of the other strong metaphors by which the Christian warfare is shadowed out? of 'crucifying the flesh?' of 'mortifying the old man?' of 'dying unto sin?' of 'overcoming the world?' Do you not think their meek and compassionate Saviour who died for your children, loved them as well as you love them? And if this were his language, ought it not to be yours? It is the language of true love; of that love with which a merciful God loved the world, when he spared not his own Son. Do not fear to tell your children what he told his disciples, that 'in the world they shall have tribulation;' but teach them to rise superior to it, on *his* principle, by 'overcoming the world.' Do not then try to conceal from them, that the life of a Christian is necessarily opposite to the life of the world; and do not seek by a vain attempt at accommodation to reconcile that difference which Christ himself has pronounced to be irreconcilable.

May it not be partly owing to the want of a due introduction to the knowledge of the real nature and spirit of religion, that so many young Christians, who set out in a fair and flourishing way, decline and wither when they come to perceive the requisitions of experimental christianity? requisitions which they had not suspected of making any part of the plan; and from which, when they afterwards discover them, they shrink back, as not prepared and hardened for the unexpected contest.

People are no more to be cheated into religion than into learning. The same spirit which influences your oath in a court of justice should influence your discourse in that court of equity —your family. Your children should be told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It is unnecessary to add, that it must be done gradually and discreetly. We know whose example we have for postponing that which the mind is not yet prepared to receive: 'I have many things yet to say to you, but ye cannot bear them *now*.' Accustom them to reason by analogy. Explain to them that great *worldly* attainments are never made without great sacrifices; that the merchant cannot become rich without industry; the statesman eminent without labour; the scholar learned without study; the hero renowned without danger: would it not then, on human principles, be unreasonable to think that the Christian alone should obtain a triumph without a warfare? the highest prize with the lowest exertion? an eternal crown without a present cross? and that heaven is the only reward which the idle may reckon upon No: though salvation 'be the *gift* of God,' yet it must be '*worked out*.' Convince your young friends, however, that in this case the difficulty of the battle bears no proportion to the prize of the victory. In one respect, indeed, the point of resemblance between worldly and Christian pursuits fails, and that most advantageously for the Christian; for while, even by the most probable means, which are the union of talents with diligence, no human prosperity can be *insured* to the worldly candidate; while the most successful adventurer may fail by the fault of another; while the best concerted project of the statesman may be crushed; the bravest hero lose the battle; the brightest genius fail of getting bread; and while moreover, the pleasure arising even from success in these may be no sooner tasted than it is poisoned by a more prosperous rival; the persevering Christian is safe and certain of obtaining *his* object; no misfortunes can defeat *his* hope; no competition can endanger *his* success; for though another gain, he will not lose; nay, the success of another, so far from diminishing his gain, is an addition to it; the more he diffuses, the richer he grows: his blessings are enlarged by communication; and that mortal hour which cuts off for ever the hopes of worldly men, crowns and consummates his.

Beware at the same time of setting up any act of self-denial or mortification as the *procuring* cause of salvation. This would be a presumptuous project to *purchase* that eternal life which is declared to be the 'free *gift* of God.' This would be to send your children, not to the Gospel to learn their christianity, but to the monks and ascetics of the middle ages; it would be sending them to Peter the hermit, and the holy fathers of the desert, and not to Peter the apostle and his Divine Master. Mortification is not the price; it is nothing more than the discipline of a soul of which sin is the disease, the diet prescribed by the great Physician. Without this guard the young devout Christian would be led to fancy that abstinence, pilgrimage and penance might be adopted as the cheap substitute for the subdued desire, the resisted temptation, the conquered corruption, and the obedient will; and would be almost in as much danger, on the one hand, of self-righteousness arising from austerities and mortification, as she would be, on the other, from self-gratification in the indulgences of the world. And while you carefully impress on her the necessity of living a life of strict obedience if she would please God, do not neglect to remind her also that a complete renunciation of her own performances as a ground of merit, *purchasing* the favour of God by their own intrinsic worth, is included in that obedience.

It is of the last importance in stamping on young minds a true impression of the genius of christianity, to possess them with a conviction that it is the purity of the motive which not only gives worth and beauty, but which, in a Chris-

tian sense gives life and soul to the best action; nay, that while a right intention will be acknowledged and accepted at the final judgment, even without the act, the act itself will be disowned which wanted the basis of a pure design.

Thou didst well that it was in thy *heart* to build me a temple,' said the Almighty to that monarch, whom yet he permitted not to build it. How many splendid actions will be rejected in the great day of retribution, to which statues and monuments have been raised on earth, while their almost deified authors shall be as much confounded at their own unexpected reprobation, as at the Divine acceptance of those 'whose life the world counted madness.' It is worthy of remark, that 'Depart from me, I never knew you,' is not the malediction denounced on the sceptic, or the scoffer, or the profligate, and the libertine, but on the high professor, on the unfruitful worker of 'miracles,' on the unsanctified utterer of 'prophecies;' for even acts of piety wanting the purifying principle, however they may dazzle men, offend God. Cain sacrificed, Balaam prophesied, Rousseau wrote the most sublime panegyric on the *Son of Mary*, VOLTAIRE BUILT A CHURCH! nay, so superior was *his* affectation of sanctity, that he ostentatiously declared, that while others were raising churches to *saints*, there was one man at least who would erect *his* church to God:* that God whose altars he was overthrowing, whose name he was villifying, whose gospel he was exterminating, and the very name of whose Son he had solemnly pledged himself to blot from the face of the earth!

Though it be impossible here to enumerate all those Christian virtues which should be impressed in the progress of a Christian education, yet in this connexion I cannot forbear mentioning one which more immediately grows out of the subject; and to remark that the principle which should be the invariable concomitant of all instruction, and especially of religious instruction, is *humility*. As this temper is inculcated in every page of the Gospel, as it is deducible from every precept and every action of Christ; that is a sufficient intimation that it should be made to grow out of every study, that it should be grafted on every acquisition. It is the turning point, the leading principle indicative of the very genius, of the very being of Christianity. The chastising quality should therefore be constantly made in education to operate as the only counteraction of that knowledge which puffeth up.'—Youth should be taught that as humility is the discriminating characteristic of our religion, therefore a proud Christian, a haughty disciple of a crucified Master, furnishes perhaps a stronger opposition in terms than the whole compass of language can exhibit.—They should be taught that humility being the appropriate grace of Christianity, is precisely the thing which makes Christian and pagan virtues *essentially* different. The virtues of the Romans, for instance, were obviously founded in pride; as a proof of this, they had not even a word in their copious language to express humility, but what was used in a bad sense, and conveyed the idea of meanness or vileness, of baseness and servility Christianity so stands on its own single ground, is so far from assimilating itself to the spirit of other religions, that, unlike the Roman emperor, who, though he would not become a Christian, yet ordered that the image of Christ should be set up in the pantheon with those of the heathen gods, and be worshipped in common with them; Christianity not only rejects all such partnerships with other religions, but it pulls down their images, defaces their temples, tramples on their honours, founds its own existence on the ruins of spurious religions and spurious virtues, and will be every thing when it is admitted to be any thing.

Will it be going too much out of the way to observe, that Christian Britain retaliates upon pagan Rome? For if the former used humility in a bad sense, has not the latter learnt to use pride in a good one? May we without impertinence venture to remark, that in the deliberations of as honourable and upright political assemblies as ever adorned, or, under Providence upheld a country; in orations which leave us nothing to envy in Attic or Roman eloquence in their best days; it were to be wished that we did not borrow from Rome an epithet which suited the genius of her religion as much as it militates against ours? The panegyrist of the battle of Marathon, of Platea, or of Zama, might with propriety speak of a 'proud day,' or a 'proud event,' or a 'proud success.' But surely the Christian encomiasts of the battle of the Nile, might, from their abundance, select an epithet better appropriated to such a victory—a victory which, by preserving Europe, has perhaps preserved that religion which sets its foot on the very neck of pride, and in which the conqueror himself, even in the first ardours of triumph, forgot not to ascribe the victory to ALMIGHTY GOD. Let us leave to the enemy both the terms and the thing; arrogant words being the only weapons in which we must ever vail to their decided superiority. As we must despair of the victory, let us disdain the contest.

Above all things then you should beware that your pupils do not take up with a vague, general, and undefined religion, but look to it that their Christianity be really the religion of Christ. Instead of slurring over the doctrines of the Cross, as disreputable appendages to our religion, which are to be disguised or got over as well as we can, but which are never to be dwelt upon, take care to make these your grand fundamental articles. Do not dilute or explain away these doctrines, and by some elegant periphrasis *hint* at a Saviour instead of making him the foundation-stone of your system. Do not convey primary, and plain, and awful, and indispensable truths elliptically, I mean as something that is to be understood without being expressed; nor study fashionable circumlocutions to avoid names and things on which our salvation hangs, in order to prevent your discourse from being offensive. Persons who are thus instructed in religion with more good-breeding than seriousness and simplicity, imbibe a distaste for plain scriptural language: and the Scriptures themselves are so little in use with a certain fashionable class of readers, that when the doctrines and language of the Bible occa-

* Deo erexit Voltaire, is the inscription affixed by himself on his church at Ferney.

sionally occur in other authors, or in conversation, they present a sort of novelty and peculiarity which offend; and such readers as disuse the Bible, are apt from a supposed delicacy of taste, to call that precise and puritanical, which is in fact sound and scriptural. Nay, it has several times happened to the author to hear persons of sense and learning ridicule insulated sentiments and expressions that have fallen in their way, which they would have treated with decent respect, had they known them to be, as they really were, texts of Scripture. This observation is hazarded with a view to enforce the importance of early communicating religious knowledge, and of infusing an early taste for the venerable phraseology of Scripture.

The persons in question thus possessing a kind of pagan Christianity, are apt to acquire a sort of a pagan expression also, which just enables them to speak with complacency of the 'Deity,' of a 'first cause,' and of 'conscience.' Nay, some may even go so far as to talk of 'the Founder of our religion,' of the 'Author of Christianity,' in the same general terms, as they would talk of the prophet of Arabia, or the lawgiver of China, of Athens, or of the Jews. But their refined ears revolt not a little at the unadorned name of Christ, and especially the naked and unqualified term of our Saviour, or Redeemer, carries with it a queerish, inelegant, not to say suspicious sound.—They will express a serious disapprobation of what is wrong, under the moral term of *vice*, or the forensic term of *crime;* but they are apt to think that the Scripture term of *sin* has something fanatical in it and, while they discover a respect for morality, they do not much relish holiness, which is indeed the specific and only morality of a Christian.—They will speak readily of a man's reforming, or leaving off a vicious habit, or growing more correct in some individual practice; but the idea conveyed under any of the Scripture phrases signifying a total change of heart, they would stigmatize as the very shibboleth of a sect, though it is the language of a Liturgy they affect to admire and of a Gospel which they profess to receive.

CHAP. XIII.

Hints suggested for furnishing young persons with a scheme of prayer.

Those who are aware of the inestimable value of prayer themselves, will naturally be anxious not only that this duty should be earnestly inculcated on their children, but that they should be taught it in the best manner; and *such* parents need little persuasion or counsel on the subject. Yet children of decent and orderly (I will not say of strictly religious) families are often so superficially instructed in this important business, that when they are asked what prayers they use, it is not unusual for them to answer, 'the Lord's Prayer and the *Creed*.' And even some who are better taught, are not always made to understand with sufficient clearness the specific distinction between the two; that the one is the confession of their *faith*, and the other the model for their *supplications*. By this confused and indistinct beginning, they set out with a perplexity in their ideas which is not always completely disentangled in more advanced life.

An intelligent mother will seize the first occasion which the child's opening understanding shall allow, for making a little course of lectures on the Lord's Prayer, taking every division or short sentence separately; for each furnishes valuable materials for a distinct lecture. The child should be led gradually through every part of this divine composition; she should be taught to break it into all the regular divisions, into which indeed it so naturally resolves itself. She should be made to comprehend one by one each of its short but weighty sentences; to amplify and spread them out for the purpose of better understanding them, not in their most extensive and critical sense, but in their most simple and obvious meaning. For in those condensed and substantial expressions every word is an ingot and will bear beating out; so that the teacher's difficulty will not so much be what she shall say as what she shall suppress; so abundant is the expository matter which this succinct pattern suggests.

When the child has a pretty good conception of the meaning of each division, she should then be made to observe the connexion, relation and dependance of the several parts of this prayer one upon another; for there is a great method and connexion in it.—We pray that the 'kingdom of God may come,' as the best means to 'hallow his name;' and that by us, the obedient subjects of his kingdom, 'his will may be done.' A judicious interpreter will observe how logically and consequently one clause grows out of another, though she will use neither the word logical nor consequence; for all explanations should be made in the most plain and familiar terms, it being words, and not things, which commonly perplex children, if, as it sometimes happens, the teacher, though not wanting sense, wants perspicuity and simplicity.*

The young person from being made a complete mistress of this short composition (which as it is to be her guide and model through life, too much pains cannot be bestowed on it) will have a clearer conception, not only of its individual contents, but of prayer in general, than many ever attain, though their memory has been perhaps loaded with long and unexplained forms, which they have been accustomed to swallow in the lump without scrutiny and without discrimination. Prayer should not be so swallowed. It is a regular prescription which should stand analysis and examination: it is not a charm, the successful operation of which depends on your blindly taking it, without knowing what is in it, and in which the good you receive is promoted by your ignorance of its contents.

* It might perhaps be a safe rule to establish for prayer in general, to suspect that any petition which cannot in some shape or other be accommodated to the spirit of some part of this prayer may not be right to be adopted. Here, temporal things are kept in their due subordination; they are asked for moderately, as an acknowledgment of our dependance and of God's power; 'for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things.'

I would have it understood that by these little comments, I do not mean that the child should be put to learn dry, and to her unintelligible expositions; but that the exposition is to be colloquial. And here I must remark in general, that the teacher is sometimes unreasonably apt to relieve herself at the child's expense, by loading the *memory* of a little creature on occasions in which far other faculties should be put in exercise. The child herself should be made to furnish a good part of this extemporaneous commentary by her answers; in which answers she will be much assisted by the judgment the teacher uses in her manner of questioning. And the youthful understanding, when its powers are properly set at work, will soon strengthen by exercise, so as to furnish reasonable if not very correct answers.

Written forms of prayer are not only useful and proper, but indispensably necessary to begin with. But I will hazard the remark, that if children are thrown *exclusively* on the best forms, if they are made to commit them to memory like a copy of verses, and to repeat them in a dry, customary way, they will produce little effect on their minds. They will not understand what they repeat, if we do not early open to them the important *scheme* of prayer. Without such an elementary introduction to this duty, they will afterwards be either ignorant or enthusiasts, or both. We should give them *knowledge* before we can expect them to make much progress in *piety*, and as a due preparative to it: Christian instruction in this resembling the Sun, who, in the course of his communications, gives light before he gives heat. And to labour to excite a spirit of devotion without first infusing that knowledge out of which it is to grow, is practically reviving the popish maxim, that ignorance is the mother of devotion, and virtually adopting the popish rule of praying in an unknown tongue.

Children, let me again observe, will not attend to their prayers if they do not understand them; and they will not understand them, if they are not taught to analyze, to dissect them, to know their component parts, and to methodise them.

It is not enough to teach them to consider prayer under the general idea that it is an application to God for what they want, and an acknowledgment to Him for what they have. This, though true in the gross, is not sufficiently precise and correct. They should learn to define and to arrange all the different parts of prayer. And as a preparative to prayer itself, they should be impressed with as clear an idea as their capacity and the nature of the subject will admit, of 'Him with whom they have to do.' His omnipresence is perhaps, of all his attributes, that of which we may make the first practical use, Every head of prayer is founded on some great scriptural truths, which truths the little analysis here suggested will materially assist to fix in their minds.

On the knowledge that 'God is,' that he is an infinitely Holy Being, and that 'he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him,' will be grounded the first part of prayer, which is *adoration*. The creature, devoting itself to the Creator, or *self-dedication*, next presents itself. And if they are first taught that important truth, that as needy creatures they want help, which may be done by some easy analogy, they will easily be led to understand how naturally *petition* forms a most considerable branch of prayer: and divine grace being among the things for which they are to petition, this naturally suggests to the mind the doctrine of the influences of the Holy Spirit. And when to this is added the conviction which will be readily worked into an ingenuous mind, that as offending creatures they want pardon, the necessity of *confession* will easily be made intelligible to them. But they should be brought to understand that it must not be such a general and vague confession as awakens no sense of personal humiliation, as excites no recollection of their own more peculiar and individual faults. But it must be a confession founded on self-knowledge, which is itself to arise out of the practice of self-examination: for want of this sort of discriminating habit, a well-meaning but ill-instructed girl may be caught confessing the sins of some other person and omitting those which are more especially her own. On the gladness of heart natural to youth, it will be less difficult to impress the delightful duty of *thanksgiving*, which forms so considerable a branch of prayer. In this they should be habituated to recapitulate not only their general, but to enumerate their peculiar, daily, and incidental mercies, in the same specific manner as they should have been taught to detail their individual and personal *wants* in the petitionary, and their *faults* in the confessional part. The same warmth of feeling which will more readily dispose them to express their gratitude to God in thanksgiving, will also lead them more gladly to express their love to their parents and friends, by adopting another indispensable, and, to an affectionate heart, pleasing part of prayer, which is *intercesssion*.

When they had been made, by a plain and perspicuous mode of instruction, fully to understand the different nature of all these; and when they clearly comprehend that *adoration*, *self-dedication*, *confession*, *petition*, *thanksgiving*, and *intercession*, are distinct heads, which must not be involved in each other, you may exemplify the rules by pointing out to them these successive branches in any well written form. And they will easily discern, that ascription of glory to that God to whom we owe so much, and on whom we so entirely depend, is the conclusion into which a Christian's prayer will naturally resolve itself. It is hardly needful to remind the teacher that our truly Scriptural Liturgy invariably furnishes the example of presenting *every* request in the name of the great Mediator. For there is no access to the Throne of grace but by *that new and living way*. In the liturgy too they will meet with the best exemplifications of prayers, exhibiting separate specimens of each of the distinct heads we have seen suggesting.

But in order that the minds of young persons may, without labour or difficulty, be gradually brought into such a state of preparation as to be benefitted by such a little course of lectures as we have recommended: they should, from

the time when they were first able to read, have been employing themselves at their leisure hours, in laying in a store of provisions for their present demands. And here the memory may be employed to good purpose; for being the first faculty which is ripened, and which is indeed perfected when the others are only beginning to unfold themselves, this is an intimation of Providence that it should be the first seized on for the best uses. It should therefore be devoted to lay in a stock of the more easy and devotional parts of Scripture. The Psalms alone are an inexhaustible storehouse of rich materials.* Children, whose minds have been early well furnished from these, will be competent at nine or ten years old to produce from them, and to select with no contemptible judgment, suitable examples of all the parts of prayer; and will be able to extract and appropriate texts under each respective head, so as to exhibit, without help, complete specimens of every part of prayer. By confining them entirely to the sense, and nearly to the words of Scripture, they will be preserved from enthusiasm, from irregularity, and conceit. By being obliged continually to apply for themselves, they will get a habit in all their difficulties of 'searching the Scriptures,' which may be hereafter useful to them on other and more trying occasions. But I would at first *confine* them to the Bible; for were they allowed with equal freedom to ransack other books with a view to get helps to embellish their little compositions, or rather compilations, they might be tempted to pass off for their own what they pick up from others, which might tend at once to make them both vain and deceitful. This is a temptation to which they are too much laid open when they find themselves extravagantly commended for any pilfered passage with which they decorate their little themes and letters. But in the present instance there is no danger of any similar deception, for there is such a sacred signature stamped on every Scripture phrase, that the owner's name can never be defaced or torn off from the goods, either by fraud or violence.

It would be well, if in those Psalms which children were first directed to get by heart, an eye were had to this their future application; and that they were employed, but without any intimation of your subsequent design, in learning such as may be best turned to this account. In the hundred and thirty-ninth, the first great truth to be imprinted on the young heart, the divine omnipresence, as was before observed, is unfolded with such a mixture of majestic grandeur, and such an interesting variety of intimate and local circumstances, as is likely to seize on the quick and lively feelings of youth. The awful idea that that Being whom she is taught to reverence, is not only *in general* 'acquainted with all her ways,' but that 'he is about her path, and about her bed,' bestows such a sense of real and present existence on *him* of whom she is apt to conceive as having his distant habitation only in Heaven, as will greatly help her to realize the sense of his actual presence.

The hundred and third Psalm will open to the mind rich and abundant sources of expression for gratitude and thanksgiving, and it includes the acknowledgment of spiritual as well as temporal favours. It illustrates the compassionate mercies of God by familiar and domestic images, of such peculiar tenderness and exquisite endearment, as are calculated to strike upon every chord of filial fondness in the heart of an affectionate child. The fifty-first supplies an infinite variety of matter in whatever relates to confession of sin, or to supplication for the aids of the Spirit. The twenty-third abounds with captivating expressions of the protecting goodness and tender love of their heavenly Father, conveyed by pastoral imagery of uncommon beauty and sweetness: in short, the greater part of these charming compositions overflows with materials for every head of prayer.

The child who, while she was engaged in learning these scriptures, was not aware that there was any specific object in view, or any farther end to be answered by it, will afterwards feel an unexpected pleasure arising from the application of her petty labours, when she is called to draw out from her little treasury of knowledge the stores she has been insensibly collecting; and will be pleased to find that without any fresh application to study, for she is now obliged to exercise a higher faculty than memory, she has lying ready in her mind the materials with which she is at length called upon to work. Her judgment must be set about selecting one, or two, or more texts which shall contain the substance of every specific head of prayer before noticed; and it will be a farther exercise to her understanding to concatenate the detached parts into one regular whole, occasionally varying the arrangement as she likes; that is, changing the order, sometimes beginning with invocation, sometimes with confession, sometimes dwelling longer on one part, sometimes on another. As the hardships of a religious Sunday are often so pathetically pleaded, as making one of the heavy burdens of religion; and as the friends of religion are so often called upon to mitigate its intolerable rigours, by recommending pleasant employment, might not such an exercise as has been here suggested help, by varying its occupations, to lighten its load.

The habits of the pupil being thus early formed, her memory, attention and intellect being bent in a right direction, and the exercise invariably maintained, may we not reasonably hope that her *affections* also, through divine grace, may become interested in the work, till she will be enabled 'to pray with the spirit and with the understanding also?' She will now be qualified to use a well-composed form, if necessary, with seriousness and advantage; for she will now use it not mechanically, but rationally. That which before appeared to her a mere mass of good words, will now appear a significant composition, exhibiting variety, and regularity, and beauty: and while she will have

* This will be so far from spoiling the cheerfulness, or impeding the pleasures of childhood, that the author knows a little girl who, before she was seven years old, had learnt the whole Psalter through a second time; and that without any diminution of uncommon gayety of spirits or any interference with the elegant acquirements suited to her station.

the farther advantage of being enabled by her improved judgment to distinguish and select for her own purpose such prayers as are more judicious and more scriptural, it will also habituate her to look for plan, and design, and lucid order, in other works.

A VIEW

OF THE PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT

PREVALENT AMONG WOMEN OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

CHAP. XIV.

The practical use of female knowledge, with a sketch of the female character, and a comparative view of the sexes.

THE chief end to be proposed in cultivating the understandings of women, is to qualify them for the practical purposes of life. Their knowledge is not often like the learning of men, to be reproduced in some literary composition, nor ever in any learned profession; but it is to come out in conduct. It is to be exhibited in life and manners. A lady studies, not that she may qualify herself to become an orator or a pleader; not that she may learn to debate, but to act. She is to read the best books, not so much to enable her to talk of them, as to bring the improvement which they furnish, to the rectification of her principles and the formation of her habits. The great uses of study to a woman are to enable her to regulate her own mind, and to be instrumental to the good of others.

To woman, therefore, whatever be her rank, I would recommend a predominance of those more sober studies, which, not having display for their object, may make her wise without vanity, happy without witnesses, and content without panegyrists; the exercise of which will not bring celebrity, but improve usefulness. She should pursue every kind of study which will teach her to elicit truth; which will lead her to be intent upon realities; will give precision to her ideas; will make an exact mind. She should cultivate every study which, instead of stimulating her sensibility, will chastise it; which will neither create an excessive or a false refinement; which will give her definite notions; will bring the imagination under dominion; will lead her to think, to compare, to combine, to methodise; which will confer such a power of discrimination, that her judgment shall learn to reject what is dazzling, if it be not solid; and to prefer, not what is striking, or bright, or new, but what is just. That kind of knowledge which is rather fitted for home consumption than foreign exportation, is peculiarly adapted to women.*

It is because the superficial nature of their education furnishes them with a false and low standard of intellectual excellence, that women have too often become ridiculous by the unfounded pretensions of literary vanity; for it is not the really learned, but the smatterers who have generally brought their sex into discredit, by an absurd affectation, which has set them on despising the duties of ordinary life. There have not indeed been wanting (but the character is not now common) *precieuses ridicules*, who assuming a superiority to the sober cares which ought to occupy their sex, have claimed a lofty and supercilious exemption from the dull and plodding drudgeries

> Of this dim speck called earth!

There have not been wanting ill-judging females who have affected to establish an unnatural separation between talents and usefulness, instead of bearing in mind that talents are the great appointed instruments of usefulness, who have acted as if knowledge were to confer on woman a kind of fantastic sovereignty which should exonerate her from the discharge of female duties; whereas it is only meant the more eminently to qualify her for the performance of them. A woman of real sense will never forget, that while the greater part of her proper duties are such as the most moderately gifted may fulfil with credit (since Providence never makes that to be very difficult, which is generally necessary) yet that the most highly endowed are equally bound to fulfil them; and let her remember that the humblest of these offices, performed on Christian principles, are wholesome for the minds even of the most enlightened, as they tend to the casting down of those 'high imaginations' which women of genius are too much tempted to indulge.

For instance; ladies whose natural vanity has been aggravated by a false education, may look down on *economy* as a vulgar attainment; unworthy of the attention of an highly cultivated intellect; but this is the false estimate of a shallow mind. Economy, such as a woman of fortune is called on to practise, is not merely the petty detail of small daily expenses, the shabby curtailments and stinted parsimony of a little mind, operating on little concerns; but it is the exercise of a sound judgment exerted in the comprehensive outline of order, of arrangements, of distribution; of regulations by which alone well governed societies, great and small, subsist. She who has the best regulated mind will, other things being equal, have the best regulated family. As in the superintendance of the universe, wisdom is seen in its *effects;* and as in the visible works of Providence that which goes on with such beautiful regularity is the result not of chance but of design, so that manage-

* May I be allowed to strengthen my own opinion with the authority of Dr. Johnson, that a *woman cannot have too much arithmetic*? It is a solid practical acquirement, in which there is much use and little display; it is a quiet sober kind of knowledge, which she acquires for herself and her family, and not for the world.

ment which seems the most easy is commonly the consequence of the best concerted plan: and a well concerted plan is seldom the offspring of an ordinary mind. A sound economy is a sound understanding brought into action: it is calculation realized; it is the doctrine of proportion reduced to practice: it is foreseeing consequences, and guarding against them; it is expecting contingencies and being prepared for them. The difference is, that to a narrow minded vulgar economist, the details are continually present; she is overwhelmed by their weight, and is perpetually bespeaking your pity for her labours, and your praise for her exertions; she is afraid you will not see how much she is harassed. She is not satisfied that the machine moves harmoniously, unless she is perpetually exposing every secret spring to observation. Little events and trivial operations engross her whole soul; while a woman of sense, having provided for their probable recurrence, guards against the inconveniences, without being disconcerted by the casual obstructions which they offer to her general scheme. Subordinate expenses and inconsiderable retrenchments should not swallow up that attention which is better bestowed on regulating the general scale of expense; correcting and reducing an overgrown establishment, and reforming radical and growing excesses.

Superior talents, however, are not so common, as, by their frequency, to offer much disturbance to the general course of human affairs: and many a lady, who tacitly accuses herself of neglecting her ordinary duties because she is a *genius*, will perhaps be found often to accuse herself as unjustly as good St. Jerome, when he laments that he was beaten by the angel for being too Ciceronian in his style.

The truth is, women who are so puffed up with the conceit of talents as to neglect the plain duties of life, will not frequently be found to be women of the best abilities. And here may the author be allowed the gratification of observing, that those women of real genius and extensive knowledge, whose friendship has conferred honour and happiness on her own life, have been, in general, eminent for economy and the practice of domestic virtues; and have risen superior to the poor affectation of neglecting the duties and despising the knowledge of common life, with which literary women have been frequently, and not always unjustly, accused.

A romantic girl with a pretension to sentiment, which her still more ignorant friends mistake for genius (for in the empire of the blind the one-eyed are kings) and possessing something of a natural ear, has perhaps in her childhood exhausted all the images of grief, and love, and fancy picked up in her desultory poetical reading, in an elegy on a sick linnet, or a sonnet on a dead lap-dog; she begins thenceforward to be considered as a prodigy in her little circle; surrounded with fond and flattering friends, every avenue to truth is shut out; she has no opportunity of learning that her fame is derived not from her powers, but her position; and that when an impartial critic shall have made all the necessary deductions, such as—that she is a neighbour, that she is a relation, that she is a female, that she is young, that she has had no advantages, that she is pretty perhaps—when her verses come to be stripped of all their extraneous appendages, and the fair author is driven off her 'vantage ground' of partiality, sex, and favour, she will commonly sink to the level of ordinary capacities. While those more quiet women, who have meekly sat down in the humble shades of prose and prudence, by a patient perseverance in rational studies, rise afterwards much higher in the scale of intellect, and acquire a much larger stock of sound knowledge for far better purposes than mere display. And though it may seem a contradiction, yet it will generally be found true, that girls who take to scribble, are the least studious, the least reflecting, and the least rational. They early acquire a false confidence in their own unassisted powers: it becomes more gratifying to their natural vanity to be always pouring out their minds on paper, than to be drawing into them fresh ideas from richer sources. The original stock, small perhaps at first, is soon spent. The subsequent efforts grow more and more feeble, if the mind which is continually exhausting itself, be not also continually replenished; till the latter compositions become little more than reproductions of the same ideas, and fainter copies of the same images, a little varied and modified perhaps, and not a little diluted and enfeebled.

It will be necessary to combat vigilantly that favourite plea of lively ignorance, that study is an enemy to originality. Correct the judgment, while you humble the vanity of the young untaught pretender, by convincing her that those half-formed thoughts and undigested ideas which she considers as proofs of her invention, prove only, that she wants taste and knowledge. That while conversation must polish and reflection invigorate her ideas, she must improve and enlarge them by the accession of various kinds of virtue and elegant literature; and that the cultivated mind will repay with large interest the seeds sown in it by judicious study. Let it be observed, I am by no means encouraging young ladies to turn authors: I am only reminding them, that

Authors before they write should read.

I am only putting them in mind that to be ignorant is not to be original.

These self-taught, and self-dependant scribblers pant for the unmerited and unattainable praise of fancy and of genius, while they disdain the commendation of judgment, knowledge, and perseverance which would probably be within their reach. To extort admiration they are accustomed to boast of an impossible rapidity in composing; and while they insinuate how little time their performances cost them, they intend you should infer how perfect they might have made them had they condescended to the drudgery of application: but application with them implies defect of genius. They take superfluous pains to convince you that there was neither learning nor labour employed in the work for which they solicit your praise: Alas! the judicious eye too soon perceives it! though it does *not* perceive that native strength and mother

wit, which in works of real genius make some amends for the negligence, which yet they do not justify. But instead of extolling those effusions for their facility, it would be kind in friends rather to blame them for their crudeness: and when the young candidates for fame, are eager to prove in how short a time such a poem has been struck off, it would be well to regret that they had not either taken a longer time, or refrained from writing at all; as in the former case the work would have been less defective, and in the latter the writer would have discovered more humility and self-distrust.

A general capacity for knowledge, and the cultivation of the understanding at large, will always put a woman into the best state of directing her pursuits into those particular channels which her destination in life may afterwards require. But she should be carefully instructed that her talents are only a means to a still higher attainment, and that she is not to rest in them as an end: that merely to exercise them as instruments for the acquisition of fame and the promotion of pleasure is subversive of her delicay as a woman, and contrary to the spirit of a christian.

Study, therefore, is to be considered as the means of strengthening the mind, and of fitting it for higher duties, just as exercise is to be considered as an instrument for strengthening the body for the same purpose! And the valetudinarian who is religiously punctual in the observance of his daily rides to promote his health, and rests in that as an end, without so much as intending to make his improved health an instrument of increased usefulness, acts on the same low and selfish principle with her who reads merely for pleasure and for fame, without any design of devoting the more enlarged and invigorated mind to the glory of the Giver.

But there is one *human* consideration which would perhaps more effectually tend to damp in an aspiring woman the ardours of literary vanity (I speak not of real genius, though there the remark often applies) than any which she will derive from motives of humility, or propriety, or religion; which is, that in the judgment passed on her performances, she will have to encounter the mortifying circumstance of having her sex always taken into account; and her highest exertions will probably be received with the qualified approbation *that it is really extraordinary for a woman.* Men of learning, who are naturally inclined to estimate works in proportion as they appear to be the result of art, study, and institution, are inclined to consider even the happier performances of the other sex as the spontaneous productions of a fruitful but shallow soil; and to give them the same kind of praise which we bestow on certain sallads, which often draw from us a sort of wondering commendation, not indeed as being worth much in themselves, but because by the lightness of the earth, and a happy knack in the gardener, these indifferent cresses spring up in a night, and therefore we are ready to wonder they are no worse.

As to men of sense, however, they need be the less hostile to the improvement of the other sex, as they themselves will be sure to be gainers by it; the enlargement of the female understanding being the most likely means to put an end to those petty and absurd contentions for equality which female smatterers so anxiously maintain. I say smatterers, for between the first class of both sexes the question is much more, rarely, and always more temperately agitated. Co-operation and not competition is indeed the clear principle we wish to see reciprocally adopted by those higher minds in each sex which readily approximate the nearest to each other. The more a woman's understanding is improved, the more obviously she will discern that there can be no happiness in any society where there is a perpetual struggle for power; and the more her judgment is rectified, the more accurate views will she take of the station she was born to fill, and the more readily will she accommodate herself to it; while the most vulgar and ill informed women are ever most inclined to be tyrants, and those always struggle most vehemently for power, who feel themselves at the greatest distance from deserving it; and who would not fail to make the worst use of it when attained. Thus the weakest reasoners are always the most positive in debate; and the cause is obvious, for *they* are unavoidably driven to maintain their pretensions by violence, who want arguments and reasons to prove that they are in the right.

There is this singular difference between a woman vain of her wit, and a woman vain of her beauty; that the beauty while she is anxiously alive to her own fame, is often indifferent enough about the beauty of other women, and provided she herself is sure of your admiration, she does not insist on your thinking that there is another handsome woman in the world; while she who is vain of her genius, more liberal at least in her vanity, is jealous for the honour of her whole sex, and contends for the equality of their pretensions as a body, in which she feels that her own are involved as an individual. The beauty vindicates her own rights, the wit the rights of women; the beauty fights for herself; the wit for a party; and while the more selfish though more moderate beauty

would but be queen for life,

the public spirited wit struggles to abrogate the Salique law of intellect, and to enthrone

a whole sex of queens.

At the revival of letters in the sixteenth and the following century, the controversy about this equality was agitated with more warmth than wisdom; and the process was instituted and carried on, on the part of the female complainant, with that sort of acrimony which always raises a suspicion of the justice of any cause; for violence commonly implies doubt, and invective indicates weakness rather than strength. The novelty of that knowledge that was then bursting out from the dawn of a long dark night, kindled all the ardours of a female mind, and the ladies fought zealously for a portion of that renown which the reputation of learning was beginning to bestow. Besides their own pens, they had for their advocates all those needy authors who had any thing to hope from their power, their riches or their influence; and so giddy did some of these literary ladies

become by the adulation of their numerous panegyrists, that through these repeated draughts of inebriating praise, they even lost their former moderate measure of sober-mindedness, and grew to despise the equality for which they had before contended, as a state below their merit, and unworthy of their acceptance. They now scorned to litigate for what they had already thought they obviously possessed, and nothing short of the palm of superiority was at length considered as adequate to their growing claims. When court-ladies and princesses were the candidates, they could not long want champions to support their cause; by these champions female authorities were produced as if paramount to facts; quotations from these female authors were considered as proofs, and their point-blank assertions stood for solid and irrefragable arguments. In those parasites who offered this homage to female genius, the homage was the effect neither of truth, nor of justice, nor of conviction. It arose rather out of gratitude, or it was a reciprocation of flattery; it was sometimes vanity, it was often distress, which prompted the adulation; it was the want of a patroness; it was the want of a dinner. When a lady, and especially as it then often happened, when a lady who was noble or royal sat with gratifying docility at the foot of a professor's chair; when she admired the philosopher, or took upon her to protect the theologian, whom his rivals among his own sex were tearing to pieces, what could the grateful professor or delighted theologian do less in return than make the apotheosis of her who had the penetration to discern his merit and the spirit to reward it? Thus in fact it was not so much *her* vanity as his own, that he was often flattering, though she was the dupe of her more deep and designing panegyrist.

But it is a little unfortunate for the perpetuity of that fame which the encomiast had made over to his patroness, in the never-dying records of his verses and orations, that in the revolution of a century or two the names of the flattered are now almost as little known as the works of the flatterers. *Their memorial is perished with them.** An instructive lesson, reminding us that whoever bestows, or assumes a reputation disproportioned to the merit of the claimant, will find that reputation as little durable as it is solid. For this literary warfare which engaged such troops of the second-hand authors of the age in question in such continual skirmishes, and not a few pitched battles; which provoked so much rancour, so many volumes, and so little wit; so much vanity, so much flattery, and so much invective, produced no useful nor lasting effect. Those who promised themselves that their names would outlive 'one half of round eternity,' did not reach the end of the century in which the boast was made; and those who prodigally offered the incense, and those who greedily snuffed up the fumes, are buried in the same blank oblivion!

But when the temple of Janus seemed to have been closed; or when at worst the peace was only occasionally broken by a slight and random shot from the hand of some single straggler; it appears that though open rebellion had ceased, yet the female claim had not been renounced; it had only (if we may change the metaphor) lain in abeyance. The contest has recently been revived with added fury, and with multiplied exactions; for whereas the ancient demand was merely a kind of imaginary prerogative, a speculative importance, a mere titular right, a shadowy claim to a few unreal acres of Parnassian territory; the revived contention has taken a more serious turn, and brings forward political as well as intellectual pretensions; and among the innovations of this innovating period, the imposing term of *rights* has been produced to sanctify the claim of our female pretenders, with a view not only to rekindle in the minds of women a presumptuous vanity dishonourable to their sex, but produced with a view to excite in their hearts an impious discontent with the post which God has assigned them in this world.

But *they* little understand the true interests of woman who would lift her from the important duties of her allotted station, to fill with fantastic dignity a loftier but less appropriate niche. Nor do they understand her true happiness, who seek to annihilate distinctions from which she derives advantages, and to attempt innovations which would depreciate her real value. Each sex has its proper excellencies which would be lost, were they melted down into the common character by the fusion of the new philosophy. Why should we do away distinctions which increase the mutual benefits and enhance the satisfactions of life? Whence, but by carefully preserving the original marks of difference stamped by the hand of the Creator, would be derived the superior advantage of mixed society? Is either sex so abounding in perfection as to be independent on the other for improvement? Have men no need to have their rough angles filed off, and their harshness and asperities smoothed and polished by assimilating with beings of more softness and refinement! Are the ideas of women naturally so *very* judicious, are their principles so *invincibly* firm, are their views so *perfectly* correct, are their judgments so *completely* exact, that there is occasion for no additional weight, no superadded strength, no increased clearness, none of that enlargement of mind, none of that additional invigoration which may be derived from the aids of the stronger sex? What identity could advantageously supercede such an enlivening opposition, such an interesting variety of character? Is it not then more wise, as well as more honourable to move contentedly in the plain path which Providence has obviously marked out to the sex, and in which custom has for the most part rationally confirmed them, rather than to stray, awkwardly, unbecomingly, and unsuccessfully, in a forbidden road? Is it not desirable to be the lawful possessors of a lesser domestic territory, rather than the turbulent usurpers of a wider foreign empire? to be good originals, than bad imitators? to be the best thing of one's own kind, rather than an inferior thing even if it were of an higher kind? to be excellent women rather than indifferent men?

Is the author then undervaluing her own sex? —No. It is her zeal for their true *interests*

* See Brantome, Pere le Moine, Mons. Thomas, &c.

which leads her to oppose their imaginary *rights*. It is her regard for their happiness which makes her endeavour to cure them of a feverish thirst for a fame as unattainable as inappropriate; to guard them against an ambition as little becoming the delicacy of their female character as the meekness of their religious profession. A little Christian humility and sober-mindedness are worth all the empty renown which was ever attained by the misapplied energies of the sex; it is worth all the wild metaphysical discussion which has ever been obtruded under the name of reason and philosophy; which has unsettled the peace of vain women, and forfeited the respect of reasonable men. And the most elaborate definition of ideal rights, and the most hardy measures for obtaining them, are of less value in the eyes of a truly amiable woman, than 'that meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.'

Natural propensities best mark the designations of Providence as to their application. The fin was not more clearly bestowed on the fish that he should swim, nor the wing given to the bird that he should fly, than superior strength of body, and a firmer texture of mind was given to man, that he might preside in the deep and daring scenes of action and of council; in the complicated arts of government, in the contention of arms, in the intricacies and depths of science, in the bustle of commerce, and in those professions which demand a higher reach, and a wider range of powers. The true value of woman is not diminished by the imputation of inferiority in those talents which do not belong to her, of those qualities in which her claim to excellence does not consist. She has other requisites, better adapted to answer the end and purposes of her being, from 'Him who does all things well;' who suits the agent to the action; who accommodates the instrument to the work.

Let not then aspiring, because ill-judging woman, view with pining envy the keen satirist, hunting vice through all the doublings and windings of the heart; the sagacious politician, leading senates and directing the fate of empires; the acute lawyer, detecting the obliquities of fraud; and the skilful dramatist, exposing the pretensions of folly; but let her ambition be consoled by reflecting, that those who thus excel, to all that Nature bestows, and books can teach, must add besides, that consummate knowledge of the world,-to which a delicate woman has no fair avenues, and which even if she could attain, she would never be supposed to have come honestly by.

In almost all that comes under the description of polite letters, in all that captivates by imagery, or warms by just and affecting sentiment, women are excellent. They possess in a high degree that delicacy and quickness of perception, and that nice discernment between the beautiful and defective which comes under the denomination of taste. Both in composition and action they excel in details; but they do not so much generalize their ideas as men, nor do their minds seize a great subject with so large a grasp. They are acute observers, and accurate judges of life and manners, as far as their own sphere of observation extends; but they describe a smaller circle. A woman sees the world, as it were, from a little elevation in her own garden, whence she makes an exact survey of home scenes, but takes not in that wider range of distant prospects which he who stands on a loftier eminence commands. Women have a certain *tact* which often enables them to feel what is just, more instantaneously than they can define it. They have an intuitive penetration into character, bestowed on them by Providence, like the sensitive and tender organs of some timid animals, as a kind of natural guard to warn, of the approach of danger, beings who are often called to act defensively.

In summing up the evidence, if I may so speak, of the different capacities of the sexes, one may venture, perhaps, to assert, that women have equal *parts*, but are inferior in *wholeness* of mind, in the integral understanding: that though a superior woman may possess single faculties in equal perfection, yet there is commonly a juster proportion in the mind of a superior man: that if women have in an equal degree the faculty of fancy which creates images, and the faculty of memory which collects and stores ideas, they seem not to possess in equal measure the faculty of comparing, combining, analysing, and separating these ideas; that deep and patient thinking which goes to the bottom of a subject; nor that power of arrangement which knows how to link a thousand connected ideas in one dependant train, without losing sight of the original idea out of which the rest grow, and on which they all hang. The female too, wanting steadiness in her intellectual pursuits, is perpetually turned aside by her characteristic tastes and feelings. Woman in the career of genius, is the Atalanta, who will risk losing the race by running out of her road to pick up the golden apple; while her male competitor, without, perhaps, possessing greater natural strength or swiftness, will more certainly attain his object, by direct pursuit, by being less exposed to the seductions of extraneous beauty, and will win the race, not by excelling in speed, but by despising the bait.*

Here it may be justly enough retorted, that as it is allowed the education of women is so defective, the alleged inferiority of their minds may be accounted for on that ground, more justly than by ascribing it to their natural make. And, indeed, there is so much truth in the remark, that till women shall be more reasonably educated, and till the native growth of their mind shall cease to be stinted and cramped, we have no juster ground for pronouncing that their understanding has already reached its highest attainable point, than the Chinese would have for affirming that their women have attained to the greatest possible perfection in walking, whilst the first care is, during their infancy, to cripple their feet! At least, till the female sex are more carefully instructed, this question will always

* What indisposes even reasonable women to concede in these points is, that the weakest man instantly lays hold on the concession; and on the mere ground of sex, plumes himself on his own individual superiority, inferring that the silliest man is superior to the first rate woman.

remain as undecided as to the *degree* of difference between the masculine and feminine understanding, as the question between the understandings of blacks and whites; for until men and women, and until Africans and Europeans are put more nearly on a par in the cultivation of their minds, the shades of distinction, whatever they be, between their native abilities, can never be fairly ascertained.

And when we see (and who will deny that we see it frequently?) so many women nobly rising from under all the pressure of a disadvantageous education, and a defective system of society, and exhibiting the most unambiguous marks of a vigorous understanding, a correct judgment, and a sterling piety, it reminds us of those shining lights which have now and then burst out through all the 'darkness visible' of the Romish church, have disencumbered themselves from the gloom of ignorance, shaken off the fetters of prejudice, and with a noble energy risen superior to all the errors of a corrupt theology.

But whatever characteristical distinctions may exist; whatever inferiority may be attached to woman from the slighter frame of her body, or the more circumscribed powers of her mind; from a less systematic education, and from the subordinate station she is called to fill in life; there is one great and leading circumstance which raises her importance, and even establishes her equality. *Christianity* has exalted women to true and undisputed dignity; in Christ Jesus, as there is neither 'rich nor poor,' 'bond nor free,' so there is neither 'male nor female.' In the view of that immortality, which is brought to light by the Gospel, she has no superior. 'Women' (to borrow the idea of an excellent prelate) 'make up one half of the human race; equally with men redeemed by the blood of Christ.' In this their true dignity consists; here their best pretensions rest; here their highest claims are allowed.

All disputes then for pre-eminence between the sexes, have only for their object the poor precedence for a few short years, the attention of which would be better devoted to the duties of life and the interests of eternity.

And as the final hope of the female sex is equal, so are their present means, perhaps, more favourable, and their opportunities, often, less obstructed than those of the other sex. In their Christian course, women have every superior advantage, whether we consider the natural make of their minds, their leisure for acquisition in youth, or their subsequently less exposed mode of life. Their hearts are naturally soft and flexible, open to impressions of love and gratitude; their feelings tender and lively; all these are favourable to the cultivation of a devotional spirit. Yet while we remind them of these native benefits, they will do well to be on their guard lest this very softness and ductility lay them more open to the seductions of temptation and error.

They have in the native constitution of their minds, as well as from the relative situations they are called to fill, a certain sense of attachment and dependance, which is peculiarly favourable to religion. They feel, perhaps, more intimately the want of a strength which is not their own. Christianity brings that superinduced strength; it comes in aid of their conscious weakness, and offers the only true counterpoise to it.—'Woman be thou healed of thine infirmity,' is still the heart-cheering language of a gracious Saviour.

Women also bring to the study of Christianity fewer of those prejudices which persons of the other sex too often early contract. Men, from their classical education, acquire a strong partiality for the manners of pagan antiquity, and the documents of pagan philosophy: this, together with the impure taint caught from the loose descriptions of their poets, and the licentious language even of their historians (in whom we reasonably look for more gravity) often weakens the good impressions of young men, and at least confuses their ideas of piety, by mixing them with so much heterogeneous matter. Their very spirits are imbued all the week with the impure follies of a depraved mythology; and it is well if even on Sundays they can hear of the 'true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.' While women, though struggling with the same natural corruptions, have commonly less knowledge to unknow, and fewer schemes to unlearn; they have not to shake off the pride of system, and to disencumber their minds from the shackles of favourite theories: they do not bring from the porch or the academy any 'oppositions of science' to obstruct their reception of those pure doctrines taught on the Mount: doctrines which ought to find a readier entrance into minds uninfected with the pride of the school of Zeno, or the libertinism of that of Epicurus.

And as women are naturally more affectionate than fastidious, they are likely both to read and to hear with a less critical spirit than men: they will not be on the watch to detect errors, so much as to gather improvement; they have seldom that hardness which is acquired by dealing deeply in books of controversy, but are more inclined to the perusal of works which quicken the devotional feelings, than to such as awaken a spirit of doubt and scepticism. They are less disposed to consider the compositions they read, as materials on which to ground objections and answers, than as helps to faith and rules of life. With these advantages, however, they should also bear in mind that their more easily received impressions being often less abiding, and their reason less open to conviction by means of the strong evidences which exist in favour of the truth of Christianity, 'they ought, therefore, to give the more earnest heed to the things which they have heard, lest at any time they should let them slip.' Women are, also, from their domestic habits, in possession of more leisure and tranquility for religious pursuits, as well as secured from those difficulties and strong temptations to which men are exposed in the tumult of a bustling world. Their lives are more regular and uniform, less agitated by the passions, the businesses, the contentions, the shock of opinions, and the opposition of interests which divide society and convulse the world.

If we have denied them the possession of talents which might lead them to excel as lawyers, they are preserved from the peril of having their

principles warped by that too indiscriminate defence of right and wrong, to which the professors of the law are exposed. If we should question their title to eminence as mathematicians, they are happily exempt from the danger to which men devoted to that science are said to be liable: namely, that of looking for demonstration on subjects, which by their very nature, are incapable of affording it. If they are less conversant in the powers of nature, the structure of the human frame, and the knowledge of the heavenly bodies than philosophers, physicians, and astronomers; they are, however, delivered from the error into which many of each of these have sometimes fallen, I mean from the fatal habit of resting in second causes, instead of referring all to the first; instead of making 'the heavens declare the glory of God, and proclaim his handy work;' instead of concluding, when they observe 'how fearfully and wonderfully we are made, marvellous are thy works O Lord, and that my soul knoweth right well.'

And let the weaker sex take comfort, that in their very exemption from privileges, which they are sometimes foolishly disposed to envy, consists not only their security, but their happiness. If they enjoy not the distinctions of public life and high offices, do they not escape the responsibility attached to them, and the mortification of being dismissed from them? If they have no voice in deliberative assemblies, do they not avoid the load of duty inseparably connected with such privileges? Preposterous pains have been taken to excite in women an uneasy jealousy, that their talents are neither rewarded with public honours nor emoluments in life; nor with inscriptions, statues, and mausoleums after death. It has been absurdly represented to them as an hardship, that while they are expected to perform duties, they must yet be content to relinquish honours, and must unjustly be compelled to renounce fame, while they must sedulously labour to deserve it.

But for christian women to act on the low views suggested to them by their ill-judging panegyrists; for christian women to look up with a giddy head and a throbbing heart, to honours and remunerations, so little suited to the wants and capacities of an immortal spirit, would be no less ridiculous than if christian heroes should look back with an envy on the old pagan reward of ovations, oak garlands, parsley crowns, and laurel wreaths. The Christian hope more than reconciles Christian women to these petty privations, by substituting a nobler prize for their ambition, 'the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;' by substituting, for that popular and fluctuating voice, which may cry, 'Hosanna,' and 'crucify' in a breath, that 'favour of God which is eternal life.'

If women should lament it as a disadvantage attached to their sex, that their character is of so delicate a texture as to be sullied by the slightest breath of calumny, and that the stain once received is indelible; yet are they not led by that very circumstance as if indistinctively to shrink from all those irregularities to which the loss of character is so certainly expected to be attached; and to shun with keener circumspection the most distant approach towards the confines of danger? Let them not lament it as an hardship, but account it as a privilege, that the delicacy of their sex impels them more scrupulously to avoid the very 'appearance of evil;' let them not regret that the consciousness of their danger serves to secure their purity by placing them at a greater distance, and in a more deep intrenchment from the evil itself.

Though it be one main object of this little work, rather to lower than to raise any desire of celebrity in the female heart; yet I would awaken it to a just sensibility to honest fame: I would call on women to reflect that our religion has not only made them heirs to a blessed immortality hereafter, but has greatly raised them in the scale of being here, by lifting them to an importance in society unknown to the most polished ages of antiquity. The religion of Christ has even bestowed a degree of renown on the sex beyond what any other religion ever did. Perhaps there are hardly so many virtuous women (for I reject the long catalogue whom their vices have transferred from oblivion to infamy) named in all the pages of Greek or Roman history, as are handed down to eternal fame, in a few of those short chapters with which the great Apostle to the Gentiles has concluded his epistles to his converts. 'Of devout and honourable women,' the sacred scriptures record 'not a few.' Some of the most affecting scenes, the most interesting transactions, and the most touching conversations which are recorded of the Saviour of the world, passed with women. *Their* examples have supplied some of the most eminent instances of faith and love. *They* are the first remarked as having 'ministered to him of their substance.' *Theirs* was the praise of not abandoning their despised Redeemer when he was led to execution, and under all the hopeless circumstances of his ignominious death, *they* appear to have been the *last* attending at his tomb, and the *first* on the morning when he arose from it. *Theirs* was the privilege of receiving the earliest consolation from their risen Lord; *theirs* was the honour of being first commissioned to announce his glorious resurrection. And even to have furnished heroic confessors, devoted saints, and unshrinking martyrs to the Church of Christ, has not been the exclusive honour of the bolder sex.

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CHAP. XV.

CONVERSATION.—*Hints suggested on the subject.—On the tempers and dispositions to be introduced in it.—Errors to be avoided. Vanity under various shapes the cause of those errors.*

THE sexes will naturally desire to appear to each other, such as each believes the other will best like; their conversation will act reciprocally; and each sex will wish to appear more or less rational as they perceive it will more or less recommend them to the other. It is therefore to be regretted, that many men, even of distinguished sense and learning, are too apt to consider the society of ladies as a scene in which they are rather to rest their understandings,

than to exercise them; while ladies, in return, are too much addicted to make their court by lending themselves to this spirit of trifling; they often avoid making use of what abilities they have; and affect to talk below their natural and acquired powers of mind; considering it as a tacit and welcome flattery to the understanding of men, to renounce the exercise of their own.

Now since taste and principles thus mutually operate; men, by keeping up conversation to its proper standard, would not only call into exercise the powers of mind which women actually possess; but would even awaken in them new energies which they do not know they possess; and men of sense would find their account in doing this, for their own talents would be more highly rated by companions who were better able to appreciate them; and they would be receiving as well as imparting improvement. And on the other hand, if young women found it did not often recommend them in the eyes of those whom they most wish to please, to be frivolous and superficial, they would become more sedulous in correcting their own habits. Whenever fashionable women indicate a relish for instructive conversation, men will not be apt to hazard what is vain, or unprofitable; much less will they ever presume to bring forward what is loose or corrupt, where some signal has not been previously given, that it will be acceptable, or at least that it will be pardoned.

Ladies commonly bring into company minds already too much relaxed by petty pursuits, rather than overstrained by intense application. The littleness of the employments in which they are usually engaged, does not so exhaust their spirits as to make them stand in need of that relaxation from company which severe application or overwhelming business makes requisite for studious or public men. The due consideration of this circumstance might serve to bring the sexes more nearly on a level in society; and each might meet the other half way; for that degree of lively and easy conversation, which is a necessary refreshment to the learned and the busy, would not decrease in pleasantness by being made of so rational a cast as would yet somewhat raise the minds of women, who commonly seek society as a scene of pleasure, not as a refuge from intense thought or exhausting labour.

It is a disadvantage even to those women who keep the best company, that it is unhappily almost established into a system, by the other sex, to postpone every thing like instructive discourse till the ladies are withdrawn; their retreat serving as a kind of signal for the exercise of intellect. And in the few cases in which it happens that any important discussion takes place in their presence, they are for the most part considered as having little interest in serious subjects. Strong truths, whenever such happen to be addressed to them, are either diluted with flattery, or kept back in part, or softened to their taste; or if the ladies express a wish for information on any point, they are put off with a compliment, instead of a reason. They are reminded of their beauty when they are seeking to inform their understanding, and are considered as beings who must be contented to behold every thing through a false medium, and who are not expected to see and to judge of things as they really exist.

Do we then wish to see, the ladies, whose want of opportunities leaves them so incompetent on many points, and the modesty of whose sex ought never to allow them even to be as shining as they are able; do we wish to see them take the lead in metaphysical disquisitions? Do you wish them to plunge into the depths of theological polemics,

> And find no end in wand'ring mazes lost?

Do we wish them to revive the animosities of the Bangorian controversy, or to decide the process between the Jesuits and the five propositions of Jansenius? Do we wish to enthrone them in the professor's chair, to deliver oracles, harangues, and dissertations? to weigh the merits of every new production in the scales of Quintilian, or to regulate the unities of dramatic composition *by Aristotle's clock*? Or renouncing those foreign aids, do we desire to behold them vain of a native independence of soul, inflated with their original powers, labouring to strike out sparks of wit, with a restless anxiety to shine, which generally fails, and with an anxious affectation to please, which never pleases?

> Diseurs de bon mots, fades caracteres!

All this be far from them!—But we *do* wish to see the conversation of well-bred women rescued from vapid common place, from uninteresting tattle, from trite and hackneyed communications, from frivolous earnestness, from false sensibility, from a warm interest about things of no moment, and an indifference to topics the most important; from a cold vanity, from the ill concealed overflowings of self-love, exhibiting itself under the smiling mask of an engaging flattery, and from all the factitious manners of artificial intercourse. We *do* wish to see the time passed in polished and intelligent society, considered among the beneficial, as well as the pleasant portions of our existence, and not consigned over, as it too frequently is, to premeditated triflings, to empty dulness, to unmeaning levity, to systematic unprofitableness. Let me not however, be misunderstood: it is not meant to prescribe that ladies should affect to discuss lofty subjects, so much as to suggest that they should bring good sense, simplicity, precision, and truth to the discussion of those common subjects, of which, after all, both the business and conversation of mankind must be in a great measure made up.

It is too well known how much the dread of imputed pedantry keeps off every thing that verges towards *learned*, and the terror of imputed enthusiasm frightens away any thing that approaches to *serious* conversation; so that the two topics which peculiarly distinguish us, as rational and immortal beings, are by general consent in a good degree banished from the society of rational and immortal creatures. But we might almost as consistently give up the comforts of fire, because a few persons have been burnt, and the benefit of water, because some

others have been drowned, as relinquish the enjoyments of intellectual, and the blessings of religious intercourse, because the learned world has sometimes been infested with pedants, and the religious world with fanatics.

As in the momentous times in which we live it is next to impossible to pass an evening in company but the talk will so inevitably revert to politics, that without any premeditated design, every one present shall infallibly be able to find out to which side the other inclines; why, in the far higher concern of eternal things, should we so carefully shun every offered opportunity of bearing even a casual testimony to the part we espouse in religion? Why, while we make it a sort of point of conscience to leave no doubt on the mind of a stranger, whether we adopt the party of Pitt or Fox, shall we choose to leave it very problematical whether we belong to God or Baal? Why, in religion, as well as in politics, should we not act like people who, having their all at stake, cannot forbear now and then adverting for a moment to the object of their grand concern, and dropping, at least, an incidental intimation of the side to which they belong?

Even the news of the day, in such an eventful period as the present, may lend frequent occasions to a woman of principle to declare, without parade, her faith in a moral Governor of the world; her trust in a particular Providence; her belief in the Divine Omnipotence; her confidence in the power of God, in educing good from evil, in his employing wicked nations, not as favourites, but instruments; her persuasion that present success is no proof of the Divine favour; in short, some intimation that she is not ashamed to declare that her mind is under the influence of Christian faith; that she is steadily governed by an unalterable principle, of which no authority is too great to make her ashamed, which no occasion is too trivial to call into exercise. A general concurrence in habitually exhibiting this spirit of decided faith and holy trust, would inconceivably discourage that pert and wakeful infidelity which is ever on the watch to produce itself: and, as we have already observed, if women, who derive authority from their rank or talents, did but reflect how their sentiments are repeated, and how their authority is quoted, they would be so on their guard, that general society might become a scene of profitable communication and common improvement; and the young who are looking for models on which to fashion themselves, would become ashamed and afraid of exhibiting any thing like levity, or scepticism, or profaneness.

Let it be understood, that it is not meant to intimate that serious subjects should make up the bulk of conversation; this, as it is impossible, would also often be improper. It is not intended to suggest that they should be abruptly introduced, or unsuitably prolonged; but only that they should not be systematically shunned; nor the brand of fanaticism be fixed on the person who, with whatever propriety hazards the introduction of such subjects. It is evident, however, that this general dread of serious topics arises a good deal from an ignorance of the true nature of Christianity; people avoid it on the principle expressed by the vulgar phrase of the danger of playing with edge tools. They conceive of religion as something which involves controversy, and dispute; something either melancholy or mischievous; something of an inflammatory nature which is to stir up ill humours and hatred; they consider it as a question which has two sides; as of a sort of party-business which sets friends at variance. So much is this notion adopted, that I have seen announced two works of considerable merit, in which it was stipulated as an attraction, that the subject of religion, as being likely to excite anger and party distinctions, should be carefully excluded. Such is the worldly idea of the spirit of that religion whose direct object it was to bring 'peace and good will to men!'

Women too little live or converse up to the standard of their understandings, and however we have deprecated affectation or pedantry, let it be remembered, that both in reading and conversing, the understanding gains more by stretching than stooping. If by exerting itself it may not attain to all its desires, yet it will be sure to gain something. The mind by always applying itself to objects below its level, contracts its dimensions, and shrinks itself to the size, and lowers itself to the level, of the object about which it is conversant: while the understanding which is active and aspiring, expands and raises itself, grows stronger by exercise, larger by diffusion, and richer by communication.

But the taste of general society is not favourable to improvement. The seriousness with which the most frivolous subjects are agitated, and the levity with which the most serious are despatched, bear a pretty exact proportion to each other. Society too is a sort of magic lantern; the scene is perpetually shifting. In this incessant change we must

> Catch, e'er she fall, the Cynthia of the minute;—

and the fashion of the present minute, evanescent probably like its rapid precursors, while in many it leads to the cultivation of real knowledge, has also not unfrequently led even the gay and idle to the affectation of mixing a sprinkling of science with the mass of dissipation. The ambition of appearing to be well informed breaks out even in those triflers who will not spare time from their pleasurable pursuits sufficient for acquiring that knowledge, of which, however, the reputation is so desirable. A little smattering of philosophy often dignifies the pursuits of their day, without rescuing them from the vanities of the night. A course of lectures (that admirable assistant for enlightening the understanding) is not seldom resorted to as a means to substitute the appearance of knowledge for the fatigue of application. But where this valuable help is attended merely like any other public exhibition, as a fashionable pursuit, and is not furthered by correspondent reading at home it often serves to set off the reality of ignorance with the affectation of skill. But instead of producing in conversation a few reigning scientific terms, with a familiarity and readiness, which

> Amaze the unlearn'd, and make the learned smile,

would it not be more modest even for those who

are better informed to avoid the use of technical terms whenever the idea can be as well conveyed without them? For it argues no real ability to know the *names* of tools; the ability lies in knowing their *use:* and while it is in the thing, not in the term, that real knowledge consists, the charge of pedantry is attached to the use of the term, which would not attach to the knowledge of the science.

In the faculty of speaking well, ladies have such a happy promptitude of turning their slender advantages to account, that there are many who, though they have never been taught a rule of syntax, yet by a quick facility in profiting from the best books and the best company, hardly ever violate one; and who often exhibit an elegant and perspicuous arrangement of style without having studied any of the laws of composition. Every kind of knowledge which appears to be the result of observation, reflection, and natural taste, sits gracefully on women.—Yet on the other hand it sometimes happens, that ladies of no contemptible natural parts are too ready to produce, not only pedantic expressions, but crude and unfounded notions; and still oftener to bring forward obvious and hackneyed remarks; which float on the very surface of a subject, with the imposing air of recent invention, and all the vanity of conscious discovery. This is because their acquirements have not been worked into their minds by early instruction; what knowledge they have gotten stands out as it were above the very surface of their minds, like the *appliquee* of the embroiderer, instead of having been interwoven with the growth of the piece, so as to have become a part of the stuff. They did not, like men, acquire what they know while the texture was forming. Perhaps no better preventive could be devised for this literary vanity, than *early* instruction: that woman would be less likely to be vain of her knowledge who did not remember the time when she was ignorant. Knowledge that is *burnt in* if I may so speak, is seldom obtrusive, rarely impertinent.

Their reading also has probably consisted much in abridgments from larger works, as was observed in a former chapter; this makes a readier talker, but a shallower thinker, than the perusal of books of more bulk. By these scanty sketches, their critical powers have not been formed; for in those crippled mutilations they have seen nothing of that just proportion of parts, that skilful arrangement of the plan, and that artful distribution of the subject, which, while they prove the master hand of the writer, seem also to form the taste of the reader, far more than a disjointed skeleton, or a beautiful feature or two, can do. The instruction of women is also too much drawn from the scanty and penurious sources of short writings of the essay kind: this, when it comprises the best part of a person's reading, makes a smatterer and spoils a scholar; for though it supplies current talk, yet it does not make a full mind; it does not furnish a storehouse of materials, to stock the understanding, neither does it accustom the mind to any trains of reflection: for the subjects, besides being each succinctly, and, on account of this brevity, superficially treated, are distinct and disconnected; they arise out of no concatenation of ideas, nor any dependent series of deduction. Yet on this pleasant but desultory reading, the mind which has not been trained to severe exercise, loves to repose itself in a sort of creditable indolence, instead of stretching its energies in the wholesome labour of consecutive investigation.*

I am not discouraging study at a late period of life, or even censuring slender knowledge; information is good at whatever period and in whatever degree it be acquired. But in such cases it should be attended with peculiar humility: and the new possessor should bear in mind, that what is fresh to her has been long known to others; and she should therefore be aware of advancing as novel that which is common, and obtruding as rare that which every body possesses.—Some ladies are eager to exhibit proofs of their reading, though at the expense of their judgment, and will introduce in conversation quotations quite irrelevant to the matter in hand, because they happen at the instant to recur to their recollection, or were, perhaps, found in the book they have just been reading. Unappropriate quotations or strained analogy may show reading, but they do not show taste. That just and happy allusion which knows by a word how to awaken a corresponding image, or to excite in the hearer the idea which fills the mind of the speaker, shows less pedantry and more taste than bare citations; and a mind imbued with elegant knowledge will inevitably betray the opulence of its resources, even on topics which do not relate to science or literature. It is the union of parts and acquirements, of spirit and modesty, which produces the indefinable charm of conversation. Well-informed persons will easily be discovered to have read the best books, though they are not always detailing lists of authors; for a muster-roll of names may be learnt from the catalogue as well as from the library.—Though honey owes its exquisite taste to the fragrance of the sweetest flowers, yet the skill of the little artificer appears in this, that the delicious stores are so admirably worked up, and there is such a due proportion observed in mixing them, that the perfection of the whole consists in its not tasting individually of the rose, the jessamine, the carnation, or any of those sweets of the very essence of all which it is compounded. But true judgment will discover the infusion which true modesty will not display; and even common subjects passing through a cultivated understanding, borrow a flavour of its richness. A power of apt selection is more valuable than any power of general retention; and an apposite remark, which shoots straight to the point, demands a higher capacity of mind than an hundred simple acts of memory; for the business of the memory is only to store up materials which the understanding is to mix and work up with its native

* The writer cannot be supposed desirous of depreciating the value of those many beautiful periodical essays which adorn our language. But, perhaps, it might be better to regale the mind with them singly, at different times, than to read, at the same sitting, a multitude of short pieces on dissimilar and unconnected topics, *by way of getting through the book*

faculties, and which the judgment is to bring out and apply. But young women who have more vivacity than sense, and more vanity than vivacity, often risk the charge of absurdity to escape that of ignorance, and will even compare two authors who are totally unlike, rather than miss the occasion to show that they have read both.

Among the arts to spoil conversation some ladies possess that of suddenly diverting it from the channel in which it was beneficially flowing, because some *word* used by the person who was speaking has accidentally struck out a new train of thinking in their own minds, and not because the general *idea* expressed has struck out a corresponding idea, which sort of collision is indeed the way of eliciting the true fire. Young ladies, whose sprightliness has not been disciplined by a correct education, consider how things may be prettily said, rather than how they may be prudently or seasonably spoken; and willingly hazard being thought wrong, or rash, or vain, for the chance of being reckoned pleasant. The graces of rhetoric captivate them more than the justest deductions of reason; when they have no arms they use flowers, and to repel an argument, they arm themselves with a metaphor.—Those also who do not aim so high as eloquence, are often surprised that you refuse to accept of a prejudice instead of a reason; they are apt to take up with a probability instead of a demonstration, and cheaply put you off with an assertion, when you are requiring a proof. The mode of education which renders them light in assumption, and superficial in reasoning, renders them also impatient of opposition; and if they happen to possess beauty, and to be vain of it, they may be tempted to consider that this is an additional proof of their being always in the right. In this case, they will not ask you to submit your judgment to the force of their argument, so much as to the authority of their charms.

The same fault in the mind, strengthened by the same error (a neglected education) leads lively women often to pronounce on a question, without examining it: on any given point they seldomer *doubt* than men; not because they are more clear-sighted, but because they have not been accustomed to look into a subject long enough to discover its depths and its intricacies; and not discerning its difficulties, they conclude that it has none. Is it a contradiction to say, that they seem at once to be quick-sighted and short-sighted? What they see at all, they commonly see at once; a little difficulty discourages them; and, having caught a hasty glimpse of a subject, they rush to this conclusion, that either there is no more to be seen, or that what is behind will not pay them for the trouble of searching. They pursue their object eagerly, but not regularly; rapidly, but not pertinaciously; for they want that obstinate patience of investigation which grows stouter by repulse. What they have not attained, they do not believe exists: what they cannot seize at once, they persuade themselves is not worth having.

Is a subject of moment started in company? While the more sagacious are deliberating on its difficulties, and viewing it under all its aspects, in order to form a competent judgment before they decide; you will often find the most superficial woman present determine the matter, without hesitation. Not seeing the perplexities in which the question is involved, she wonders at the want of penetration in the man whose very penetration keeps him silent. She secretly despises the dull perception and slow decision of him who is patiently *untying* the knot which she fancies she exhibits more dexterity by *cutting*. By this shallow sprightliness, of which vanity is commonly the radical principle, the most ignorant person in the company leads the conversation, while he whose opinion is best worth having is discouraged from delivering it, and an important subject is dismissed without discussion, by inconsequent flippancy and voluble rashness. It is this abundance of florid talk, from superficial matter, which has brought on so many of the sex the charge of *inverting* the Apostle's precept, and being *swift* to *speak*, *slow* to *hear*.

If the great Roman orator could observe, that silence was so important a part of conversation, that 'there was not only an art but an eloquence in it,' how peculiarly does the remark apply to the modesty of youthful females! But the silence of listless and vapid ignorance, and the animated silence of sparkling intelligence, are two things almost as obviously distinct, as the wisdom and the folly of the tongue. An inviolable and marked attention may show that a woman is pleased with a subject, and an illuminated countenance may prove that she understands it almost as unequivocally as language itself could do; and this, with a modest question, which indicates at once rational curiosity and becoming diffidence, is in many cases as large a share of the conversation as it is decorous for feminine delicacy to take. It is also as flattering an encouragement as men of sense and politeness require, for pursuing useful topics in the presence of women, which they would be more disposed to do, did they oftener gain by it the attention which it is natural to wish to excite; and did women themselves discover that desire of improvement which liberal-minded men are pleased with communicating.

Yet do we not sometimes see an impatience to be heard (nor is it a *feminine* failing only) which good breeding can scarcely subdue? And even when these incorrigible talkers are compelled to be quiet, is it not evident that they are not silent because they are listening to what is said, but because they are thinking of what they themselves shall say when they can seize the first lucky interval for which they are so narrowly watching? The very turn of their countenance betrays that they do not take the slightest degree of interest in any thing that is said by others, except with a view to lie in wait for any little chasm in the discourse, on which they may lay hold, and give vent to their own overflowing vanity.

But conversation must not be considered as a stage for the display of our talents, so much as a field for the exercise and improvement of our virtues; as a means for promoting the glory of our Creator, and the good and happiness of our fellow creatures. Well-bred and intelligent

Christians are not, when they join in society, to consider themselves as entering the lists like intellectual prize-fighters, in order to exhibit their own vigour and dexterity, to discomfit their adversary, and to bear away the palm of victory. Truth and not triumph should be the invariable object; and there are few occasions in life, in which we are more unremittingly called upon to watch ourselves narrowly, and to resist the assaults of various temptations, than in conversation. Vanity, jealousy, envy, misrepresentation, resentment, disdain, levity, impatience, insincerity, and pride, will in turn solicit to be gratified. Constantly to struggle against the desire of being thought more wise, more witty, and more knowing, than those with whom we associate, demands the incessant exertion of Christian vigilance; a vigilance which the generality are far from suspecting to be at all necessary in the intercourse of common society. On the contrary, cheerful conversation is rather considered as an exemption and release from watchfulness, than as an additional obligation to it. But a circumspect soldier of Christ will never be off his post; even when he is not called to public combat by the open assaults of his great spiritual enemy, he must still be acting as a sentinel, for the dangers of an ordinary Christian will arise more from these little skirmishes which are daily happening in the warfare of human life, than from those pitched battles which more rarely occur, and for which he will probably think it sufficient to be armed.

But society, as was observed before, is not a stage on which to throw down our gauntlet, and prove our own prowess by the number of falls we give to our adversary; so far from it, true good-breeding as well as Christianity, considers as an indispensable requisite for conversation, the disposition to bring forward to notice any talent in others, which their own modesty, or conscious inferiority, would lead them to keep back. To do this with effect it requires a penetration exercised to discern merit, and a generous candour which delights in drawing it out. There are few who cannot converse tolerably on some one topic: what that is, we should try to discover, and in general introduce that topic, though to the suppression of any one on which we ourselves are supposed to excel: and however superior we may be in other respects to the persons in question, we may, perhaps, in that particular point, improve by them; or if we do not gain information, we shall at least gain a wholesome exercise to our humility and self-denial; we shall be restraining our own impetuosity; we shall, if we take this course on just occasions only, and so as to beware lest we gratify the vanity of others, be giving confidence to a doubting, or cheerfulness to a depressed spirit. And to place a just remark, hazarded by the diffident, in the most advantageous point of view; to call the attention of the inattentive, the forward, and the self-sufficient, to the unobtrusive merit of some quiet person in the company, who, though of much worth, is perhaps of little note; these are requisites for conversation, less brilliant, but far more valuable, than the power of exciting bursts of laughter by the brightest wit, or of exciting admiration by the most poignant sallies of ridicule.

Wit is, of all the qualities of the female mind, that which requires the severest castigation: yet the temperate exercise of this fascinating quality throws an additional lustre round the character of an amiable woman; for to manage with discreet modesty a dangerous talent, confers a higher praise than can be claimed by those from whom the absence of the talent removes the temptation to misemploy it. To women, wit is a peculiar perilous possession, which nothing short of the sober-mindedness of religion can keep in subjection; and perhaps there is scarcely any one order of human beings that requires the powerful curb of Christian control more than women whose genius has this tendency. Intemperate wit craves admiration as its natural aliment: it lives on flattery as its daily bread! The professed wit is a hungry beggar, subsisting on the extorted alms of perpetual panegyric; and like the vulture in the Grecian fable, the appetite increases by indulgence. Simple truth and sober approbation become tasteless and insipid to the palate daily vitiated by the delicious poignancies of exaggerated commendation. Under the above restrictions, however, wit may be safely and pleasantly exercised; for *chastised wit* is an elegant and well-bred, and not unfeminine quality. But *humour*, especially if it degenerates into imitation, or mimicry, is very sparingly to be ventured on; for it is so difficult totally to detach it from the suspicion of buffoonery, that a woman will be likely to lose more of the delicacy which is her appropriate grace, and without which every other quality loses its charm, than she will gain in another way in the eyes of the judicious, by the most successful display of humour.

A woman of genius, if she have true humility, will not despise those lesser arts which she may not happen to possess, even though she be sometimes put to the trial of having her superior mental endowments overlooked, while she is held cheap for being destitute of some more ordinary accomplishment. Though the rebuke of Themistocles* was just to one who thought that so great a general and politician should employ his time like an effeminate lutinist, yet he would probably have made a different answer if he had happened to understand music.

If it be true that some women are too apt to affect brilliancy and display in their own discourse, and to undervalue the more humble pretensions of less showy characters; it must be confessed also, that some of more ordinary abilities are now and then guilty of the opposite error and foolishly affect to value themselves on not making use of the understanding they really possess; and affect to be thought even more silly than they are. They exhibit no small satisfaction in ridiculing women of high intellectual endowments, while they exclaim, with much affected humility, and much real envy, that 'they are thankful *they* are not geniuses. Now, though we are glad to hear gratitude ex-

* 'Can you play on the lute?' said a certain Athenian to Themistocles. 'No,' replied he, 'but I can make a little village a great city.'

pressed on any occasion, yet the want of sense is really no such great mercy to be thankful for; and it would indicate a better spirit, were they to pray to be enabled to make a right use of the moderate understanding they possess, than to expose with a too visible pleasure, the imaginary or real defects of their more shining acquaintance. Women of the brightest faculties should not only 'bear those faculties meekly,' but should consider it as no derogation, cheerfully to fulfil those humbler offices which make up the business and the duties of common life, while they should always take into the account the nobler exertions as well as the higher responsibilities attached to higher gifts. In the mean time women of lower attainments should exert to the utmost such abilities as Providence has assigned them; and while they should not deride excellences which are above their reach, they should not despond at any inferiority which did not depend on themselves; nor, because God has denied them ten talents, should they forget that they are equally responsible for the one he *has* allotted them, but set about devoting that one with humble diligence to the glory of the giver.

Vanity, however, is not the monopoly of talents. Let not a young lady, therefore, fancy that she is humble, merely because she is not ingenious, or consider the absence of talents as the criterion of worth. Humility is not the exclusive privilege of dulness. Folly is as conceited as wit, and ignorance many a time outstrips knowledge in the race of vanity. Equally earnest competitions spring from causes less worthy to excite them than wit and genius. Vanity insinuates itself into the female heart under a variety of unsuspected forms, and is on the watch to enter it by seizing on many a little pass which was not thought worth guarding.

Who has not seen as restless emotion agitate the features of an anxious matron, while peace and fame hung trembling in doubtful suspense on the success of a soup or sauce, on which sentence was about to be pronounced by some consummate critic, as could have been excited by any competition for literary renown, or any struggle for contested wit? Anxiety for fame is by no means measured by the real value of the object pursued, but by the degree of estimation in which it is held by the pursuer. Nor was the illustrious hero of Greece more effectually hindered from sleeping by the trophies of Miltiades, than many a modish damsel by the eclipsing superiority of some newer decoration exhibited by her more successful friend.

There is another species of vanity in some women which disguises itself under the thin veil of an affected humility; they will accuse themselves of some fault from which they are remarkably exempt, and lament the want of some talent which they are rather notorious for possessing. Now though the wisest are commonly the most humble, and those who are freest from faults are most forward in confessing error; yet the practice we are censuring is not only a clumsy trap for praise, but a disingenuous intention, by renouncing a quality they eminently possess, to gain credit for others in which they are really deficient. All affectation involves a species of deceit. The Apostle when he enjoins, 'not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought,' does not exhort us to think *falsely* of ourselves, but to think 'soberly;' and it is worth observing that in this injunction he does not use the word *speak*, but *think*, inferring possibly, that it would be safer to *speak* little of ourselves or not at all; for it is so far from being an unequivocal proof of our humility to talk even of our defects, that while we make *self* the subject, in whatever way, self-love contrives to be gratified, and will even be content that our faults should be talked of, rather than that we should not be talked of at all. Some are also attacked with such proud fits of humility, that while they are ready to accuse themselves of almost every sin in the lump, they yet take fire at the imputation of the slightest *individual* fault; and instantly enter upon their own vindication as warmly as if you, and not themselves, had brought forward the charge. The truth is, they ventured to condemn themselves, in the full confidence that you would contradict the self-accusation; the last thing they intended was that you should believe them, and they are never so much piqued and disappointed as when they are taken at their word.

Of the various shapes and undefined forms into which vanity branches out in conversation, there is no end. Out of restless desire to please, grows the vain desire to astonish: for from vanity, as much as from credulity, arises that strong love of the marvellous, with which the conversation of the ill-educated abounds. Hence that fondness for dealing in narratives hardly within the compass of possibility. Here vanity has many shades of gratification; those shades will be stronger or weaker, whether the relater chance to have been an eye-witness of the wonder she records; or whether she claim only the second-hand renown of its having happened to her friend, or the still remoter celebrity of its having been witnessed only by her friend's friend: but even though that friend only knew the man, who remembered the woman, who conversed with the person, who actually beheld the thing which is now causing admiration in the company, still *self*, though in a fainter degree, is brought into notice, and the relater contrives in some circuitous and distant way to be connected with the wonder.

To correct this propensity, 'to elevate and surprise,'* it would be well in mixed society to abstain altogether from hazarding stories, which though they may not be absolutely false, yet lying without the verge of probability, are apt to impeach the credit of the narrator; in whom the very consciousness that she is not believed, excites an increased eagerness to depart still farther from the soberness of truth, and induces a habit of vehement asseveration, which is too often called in to help out a questionable point.†

* The Rehearsal.

† This is also a good rule in composition. An event though it may actually have happened, yet if it be out of the reach of probability, or contrary to the common course of nature, will seldom be chosen as a subject by a writer of good taste: for he knows that a probable fiction will interest the feeling more than an unlikely truth. Verisimilitude is indeed the poet's truth, but the truth of the moralist is of a more sturdy growth.

Or if the propensity be irresistible, I would recommend to those persons who are much addicted to relate doubtful, or improbable, or wonderful circumstances, to imitate the example of the two great naturalists, Aristotle and Boyle, who not being willing to discredit their works with incredible realities threw all their improbabilities into a lump, under the general name of *Strange Reports*. May we not suspect that, in some instances, the chapter of strange reports would be a bulky one?

There is another shape, and a very deformed shape it is, in which loquacious vanity shows itself: I mean the betraying of confidence. Though the act be treacherous, yet the fault, in the first instance, is not treachery, but vanity. It does not so often spring from the mischievous desire of divulging a secret, as from the pride of having been trusted with it. It is the secret inclination of mixing *self* with whatever is important. The secret would be of little value, if the revealing it did not serve to intimate our connexion with it; the pleasure of its having been deposited with us would be nothing, if others may not know that it has been so deposited.—When we continue to see the variety of serious evils which this principle involves, shall we persist in asserting that vanity is a slender mischief?

There is one offence committed in conversation of much too serious a nature to be overlooked, or to be animadverted on without sorrow and indignation: I mean, the habitual thoughtless profaneness of those who are repeatedly invoking their Maker's name on occasions the most trivial. It is offensive in all its variety of aspects;—it is very pernicious in its *effects*;—it is a *growing* evil;—those who are most guilty of it, are from habit hardly conscious when they do it; are not aware of the sin; and for both these reasons without the admonitions of faithful friendship, are little likely to discontinue it. It is utterly INEXCUSABLE;—it has none of the palliatives of *temptation* which other vices plead, and in that respect stands distinguished from all others both in its nature and degree of guilt.—Like many other sins, however, it is at once cause and effect: it *proceeds* from want of love and reverence to the best of Beings, and *causes* the want of that love both in themselves and others. Yet with all these aggravations, there is perhaps, hardly any sin so frequently committed, so slightly censured, so seldom repented of, and so little guarded against. On the score of *impropriety* too, it is additionally offensive, as to being utterly repugnant to female delicacy, which often does not see the turpitude of this sin, while it affects to be shocked at swearing in a man. Now this species of profaneness is not only swearing, but, perhaps, in some respects, swearing of the worst sort; as it is a *direct* breach of an express command, and offends against the *very letter* of that law which says in so many words, THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN. It offends against politeness and *good breeding*; for those who commit it, little think of the pain they are inflicting on the sober mind, which is deeply wounded when it hears the holy name it loves dishonoured; and it is as contrary to good breeding to give pain, as it is to true piety to be profane. It is astonishing that the refined and elegant should not reprobate this practice for its coarseness and vulgarity, as much as the pious abhor it for its sinfulness.

I would endeavour to give some faint idea of the grossness of this offence, by an analogy (oh! how inadequate!) with which the feeling heart, even though not seasoned with religion, may yet be touched. To such I would earnestly say:—Suppose you had some beloved friend—to put the case still more strongly, a departed friend—a revered parent, perhaps—whose image never occurs without awaking in your bosom sentiments of tender love and lively gratitude; how would you feel if you heard this honourable name *bandied about* with unfeeling familiarity and indecent levity; or at best, thrust into every pause of speech as a vulgar expletive? Does not your affectionate heart recoil at the thought? And yet the hallowed name of your truest Benefactor, your heavenly Father, your best friend, to whom you are indebted for all you enjoy; who gives you those very friends in whom you so much delight, those very talents with which you dishonour him, those very organs of speech with which you blaspheme him, is treated with an irreverence, a contempt, a wantonness, with which you cannot bear the very thought or mention of treating a human friend. His name is impiously, is unfeelingly, is ungratefully singled out as the object of decided irreverence, of systematic contempt, of thoughtless levity. His sacred name is used indiscriminately to express anger, joy, grief, surprise, impatience; and what is almost still more unpardonable than all, it is wantonly used as a mere unmeaning expletive, which, being excited by no temptation, can have nothing to extenuate it; which, causing no emotion, can have nothing to recommend it, unless it be the pleasure of the sin.

Among the deep, but less obvious mischiefs of conversation, *misrepresentation* must not be overlooked. Self-love is continually at work, to give to all we say a bias in our own favour. The counteraction of this fault should be set about in the earliest stages of education. If young persons have not been discouraged in the natural, but evil, propensity to relate every dispute they have had with others to their own advantage; if they have not been trained to the bounden duty of doing justice even to those with whom they are at variance; if they have not been led to aim at a complete impartiality in their little narratives, and instructed never to take advantage of the absence of the other party, in order to make the story lean to their own side more than the truth will admit: how shall we in advanced life look for correct habits, for unprejudiced representations, for fidelity, accuracy, and unbiassed justice?

Yet, how often in society, otherwise respectable, are we pained with narrations in which prejudice warps, and self-love binds! How often do we see, that withholding part of a truth answers the worst ends of a falsehood! How often regret the unfair turn given to a cause, by placing a sentiment in one point of view, which the speaker had used in another! the letter of

truth preserved where its spirit is violated! a superstitious exactness scrupulously maintained in the under parts of a detail, in order to impress such an idea of integrity as shall gain credit for the *misrepresenter*, while he is designedly mistaking the leading principle. How may we observe a new character given to a fact by a different look, tone, or emphasis, which alters it as much as words could have done! the false impression of a sermon conveyed, when we do not like the preacher, or when through him we wish to make religion itself ridiculous! the care to avoid literal untruths, while the mischief is better effected by the unfair quotation of a passage divested of its context; the bringing together detached portions of a subject, and making those parts ludicrous, when connected, which were serious in their distinct position! the insidious use made of a sentiment by representing it as the *opinion* of him who had only brought it forward in order to expose it! the relating opinions which had merely been put hypothetically, as if they were the avowed principles of him we would discredit! that subtle falsehood which is so made to incorporate with a certain quantity of truth, that the most skilful moral chemists cannot analyse or separate them! for a good *misrepresenter* knows that a successful lie must have a certain infusion of truth, or it will not go down. And this amalgamation is the test of his skill; as too *much* truth would defeat the end of his mischief; and too *little* would destroy the belief of the hearer. All that indefinable ambiguity and equivocation; all that prudent deceit, which is rather implied than expressed; those more delicate artifices of the school of Loyola and of Chesterfield, which allow us when we dare not deny a truth, yet so to disguise and discolour it, that the truth we relate shall not resemble the truth we heard! These and all the thousand shades of simulation and dissimulation will be carefully guarded against in the conversation of vigilant Christians.

Again, it is surprising to mark the common deviations from strict veracity which spring, not from enmity to truth, not from intentional deceit, not from malevolence or envy, not from the least design to injure; but from mere levity, habitual inattention, and a current notion that it is not worth while to be correct in small things. But here the doctrine of habits comes in with great force, and in that view no error is small. The cure of this disease in its more inveterate stages being next to impossible, its prevention ought to be one of the earliest objects of education.*

Some women indulge themselves in sharp raillery, unfeeling wit, and cutting sarcasms, from the consciousness, it is to be feared, that they are secure from the danger of being called to account; this license of speech being encouraged by the very circumstance which ought to suppress it. To be severe, because they can be so with impunity, is a most ungenerous reason. It is taking a base and dishonourable advantage of their sex, the weakness of which, instead of tempting them to commit offences because they can commit them with safety, ought rather to make them more scrupulously careful to avoid indiscretions for which no reparation can be demanded. What can be said for those who carelessly involve the injured party in consequences from which they know themselves exempted, and whose very sense of their own security leads them to be indifferent to the security of others!

The grievous fault of gross and obvious detraction which infects conversation, has been so heavily and so justly condemned by divines and moralists, that the subject, copious as it is, is exhausted. But there is an error of an opposite complexion, which we have before noticed, and against which the peculiar temper of the times requires that young ladies of a better cast should be guarded. From the narrowness of their own sphere of observation, they are sometimes addicted to accuse of uncharitableness, that distinguishing judgment which, resulting from a sound penetration and a zeal for truth, forbids persons of a very correct principle to be indiscriminately prodigal of commendation without inquiry and without distinction. There is an affectation of candour, which is almost as mischievous as calumny itself; nay, if it be less injurious in its individual application, it is perhaps, more alarming in its general principle, as it lays waste the strong fences which separate good from evil. They know, as a general principle (though they sometimes calumniate) that calumny is wrong; but they have not been told that flattery is wrong also; and youth, being apt to fancy that the direct contrary to wrong must necessarily be right, are apt to be driven into violent extremes. The dread of being only suspected of one fault, makes them actually guilty of the opposite; and to avoid the charge of harshness or of envy, they plunge into insincerity and falsehood. In this they are actuated either by an unsound judgment which does not see what is right, or an unsound principle which prefers what is wrong. Some also commend to conceal envy; and others are compassionate to indulge superiority.

In this age of high-minded independence when our youth are apt to set up for themselves, and every man is too much disposed to be his own legislator without looking to the established law of the land as his standard; and to set up for his own divine, without looking to the revealed will of God as his rule—by a candour equally vicious with our vanity, we are also complaisantly led to *give* the latitude we *take*: and it is become too frequent a practice in our *tolerating* young ladies, when speaking of their more erring and misled acquaintance, to offer for them this flimsy vindication, 'that what they do is right if it appear right to *them*:'—'if *they* see the thing in that light, and act up to it with sincerity, they cannot be materially wrong.' But the standard of truth, justice, and religion, must neither be elevated nor depressed, in order to accommodate it to actual circumstances; it must never be lowered to palliate error, to justify folly, or to vindicate vice. Good natured young people often speak favourably of unworthy, or extravagantly of common characters, from one of these motives; either their own views of excellence are low, or they speak respectfully of the undeserving, to purchase for themselves the re

* See the chapter on the use of definitions.

putation of tenderness and generosity; or they lavish unsparing praise on almost all alike, in the usurious hope of buying back universal commendation in return; or in those captivating characters in which the simple and masculine language of truth is sacrificed to the jargon of affected softness; and in which smooth and pliant manners are substituted for intrinsic worth, the inexperienced are too apt to *suppose* virtues, and to *forgive* vices. But they should carefully guard against the error of making *manner* the criterion of merit, and of giving unlimited credit to strangers for possessing every perfection, only because they bring into company the engaging exterior of urbanity and alluring gentleness. They should also remember that it is an easy, but not an honest way of obtaining the praise of candour, to get into the soft and popular habit of saying of all their acquaintance, when speaking of them, that *they are so good!* True Christian candour conceals faults, but it does not invent virtues. It tenderly forbears to expose the evil which may belong to a character, but it dares not ascribe to it the good which does not exist. To correct this propensity to false judgment and insincerity, it would be well to bear in mind, that while every good action, come from what source it may, and every good quality, be it found in whomsoever it will, deserves its fair proportion of distinct and willing commendation; yet no character is GOOD, in the true sense of the word, which is not RELIGIOUS.

In fine—to recapitulate what has been said, with some additional hints:—Study to promote both intellectual and moral improvement in conversation; labour to bring into it a disposition to bear with others, and to be watchful over yourself; keep out of sight any prominent talent of your own, which, if indulged, might discourage or oppress the feeble minded; and try to bring their modest virtues into notice. If you know any one present to possess any particular weakness or infirmity, never exercise your wit by maliciously inventing occasions which may lead her to expose or betray it; but give as favourable a turn as you can to the follies which appear, and kindly help her to keep the rest out of sight. Never gratify your own humour, by hazarding what you suspect may wound any one present in their persons, connexions, professions in life, or religious opinions; and do not forget to examine whether the laugh your wit has raised be never bought at this expense. Give credit to those who, without your kindness, will get none; do not talk *at* any one whom you dare not talk *to*, unless from motives in which the golden rule will bear you out. Seek neither to shine nor to triumph; and if you seek to please, take care that it be in order to convert the influence you may gain by pleasing to the good of others. Cultivate true politeness, for it grows out of true principle, and is consistent with the Gospel of Christ; but avoid those feigned attentions which are not stimulated by good will, and those stated professions of fondness which are not dictated by esteem. Remember that the pleasure of being thought *amiable* by strangers may be too dearly purchased, if it be purchased at the expense of truth and simplicity, remember that simplicity is the first charm in manner as truth is in mind; and could truth make herself visible, she would appear invested in simplicity.

Remember also that true Christian good nature is the soul, of which politeness is only the garb. It is not that artificial quality which is taken up by many when they go into society, in order to charm those whom it is not their particular business to please; and is laid down when they return home to those to whom to appear amiable is a real duty. It is not that fascinating but deceitful softness, which, after having acted over a hundred scenes of the most lively sympathy and tender interest with every slight acquaintance; after having exhausted every phrase of feeling, for the trivial sicknesses or petty sorrows of multitudes who are scarcely known, leaves it doubtful whether a grain of real feeling or genuine sympathy be reserved for the dearest connexions; and which dismisses a woman to her immediate friends with little affection, and to her own family with little attachment.

True good-nature, that which alone deserves the name, is not a holyday ornament, but an every-day habit. It does not consist in servile complaisance, or dishonest flattery, or affected sympathy, or unqualified assent, or unwarrantable compliance, or eternal smiles. Before it can be allowed to rank with the virtues, it must be wrought up from a humour into a principle, from an occasional disposition into a habit. It must be the result of an equal and well-governed mind, not the start of casual gayety, the trick of designing vanity, or the whim of capricious fondness. It is compounded of kindness, forbearance, forgiveness, and self-denial; 'it seeketh not its own,' but is capable of making continual sacrifices of its own tastes, humours, and self-love; yet knows that among the sacrifices it makes, it must never include its integrity. Politeness on the one hand, and insensibility on the other, assume its name, and wear its honours; but they assume the honours of a triumph, without the merit of a victory; for politeness subdues nothing, and insensibility has nothing to subdue. Good-nature of the true cast, and under the foregoing regulations, is above all price in the common intercourse of domestic society; for an ordinary quality, which is constantly brought into action by the perpetually recurring through minute events of daily life, is of higher value than more brilliant qualities which are less frequently called into use; as small pieces of ordinary current coin are of more importance in the commerce of the world than the medals of the antiquary. And, indeed, Christianity has given that new turn to the character of all the virtues, that perhaps it is the best test of the excellence of many that they have little brilliancy in them.—The Christian religion has degraded some splendid qualities from the rank they held, and elevated those which were obscure into distinction.

CHAP. XVI.

On the danger of an ill-directed Sensibility.

IN considering the human mind with a view

to its improvement, it is prudent to endeavour to discover the natural bent of the individual character: and having found it, to direct your force against that side on which the warp lies, that you may lessen by counteraction the defect which you might be promoting, by applying your aid in a contrary direction. But the misfortune is, people who mean better than they judge are apt to take up a set of general rules, good perhaps in themselves, and originally gleaned from experience and observation on the nature of human things, but not applicable in all cases. These rules they keep by them as nostrums of universal efficacy, which they therefore often bring out for use in cases to which they do not apply. For to make any remedy effectual, it is not enough to know the medicine, you must study the constitution also; if there be not a congruity between the two, you may be injuring one patient by the means which are requisite to raise and restore another.

In forming the female character it is of importance that those on whom the task devolves should possess so much penetration as accurately to discern the degree of sensibility, and so much judgment as to accommodate the treatment to the individual character. By constantly stimulating and extolling feelings naturally quick, those feelings will be rendered too acute and irritable. On the other hand, a calm and equable temper will become obtuse by the total want of excitement: the former treatment converts the feelings into a source of error, agitation, and calamity; the latter starves their native energy, deadens the affections and produces a cold, dull, selfish spirit; for the human mind is an instrument which will lose its sweetness if strained too high, and will be deprived of its tone and strength if not sufficiently raised.

It is cruel to chill the precious sensibility of an ingenuous soul, by treating with supercilious coldness and unfeeling ridicule every indication of a warm, tender, disinterested, and enthusiastic spirit, as if it exhibited symptoms of a deficiency in understanding or in prudence. How many are apt to intimate, with a smile of mingled pity and contempt, in considering such a character, that when she knows the world, that is, in other words, when she shall be grown cunning, selfish, and suspicious, she will be ashamed of her present glow of honest warmth, and of her lovely susceptibility of heart. May she never know the world, if the knowledge of it must be acquired at such an expense! But to sensible hearts, every indication of genuine feeling will be dear, for they well know that it is this temper which, by the guidance of the Divine Spirit, may make her one day become more enamoured of the beauty of holiness; which, with the co-operation of principle, and under its direction will render her the lively agent of Providence in diminishing the misery that is in the world; into which misery this temper will give her a quicker intuition than colder characters possess. It is this temper which, when it is touched and purified by a 'live coal from the altar,'* will give her a keener taste for the spirit of religion, and a quicker zeal in discharging its duties. But let it be remembered likewise, that as there is no quality in the female character which more raises its tone, so there is none which will be so likely to endanger the peace, and to expose the virtue of the possessor; none which requires to have its luxuriances more carefully watched, and its wild shoots more closely lopped.

For young women of affections naturally warm but not carefully disciplined, are in danger of incurring an unnatural irritability; and while their happiness falls a victim to the excess of uncontrolled feelings, they are liable at the same time to indulge a vanity of all others the most preposterous, that of being vain of their very defect. They have heard sensibility highly commended, without having heard any thing of those bounds and fences which were intended to confine it, and without having been imbued with that principle which would have given it a beneficial direction. Conscious that they possess the quality itself in the extreme, and not aware that they want all that makes that quality safe and delightful, they plunge headlong into those sins and miseries from which they conceitedly and ignorantly imagine, that not principle, but coldness, has preserved the more sober-minded and well-instructed of their sex.

As it would be foreign to the present design to expatiate on those criminal excesses which are some of the sad effects of ungoverned passion, it is only intended here to hazard a few remarks on those lighter consequences of it which consist in the loss of comfort without ruin of character, and occasion the privation of much of the happiness of life without involving any very censurable degree of guilt or discredit. It may, however, be incidentally remarked, and let it be carefully remembered, that if no women have risen so high in the scale of moral excellence as those whose natural warmth has been conscientiously governed by its true guide, and directed to its true end; so none have furnished such deplorable instances of extreme depravity as those who, through the ignorance or the dereliction of principle, have been abandoned by the excess of this very temper to the violence of ungoverned passions and uncontrolled inclinations. Perhaps, if we were to inquire into the remote cause of some of the blackest crimes which stain the annals of mankind, profligacy, murder, and especially suicide, we might trace them back to this original principle, an ungoverned sensibility.

Notwithstanding all the fine theories in prose and verse to which this topic has given birth, it will be found that very exquisite sensibility contributes so little to *happiness*, and may yet be made to contribute so much to *usefulness*, that it may perhaps be generally considered as bestowed for an exercise to the possessor's own virtue, and at the same time, as a keen instrument with which he may better work for the good of others.

Women of this cast of mind are less careful to avoid the charge of unbounded extremes, than to escape at all events the imputation of insensibility. They are little alarmed at the danger of *exceeding*, though terrified at the suspicion

* Isaiah, vi. 6.

of *coming short*, of what they take to be the extreme point of feeling. They will even resolve to prove the warmth of their sensibility, though at the expense of their judgment, and sometimes also of their justice. Even when they earnestly desire to *be* and to *do* good, they are apt to employ the wrong instrument to accomplish the right end. They employ the passions to do the work of the judgment; forgetting, or not knowing, that the passions were not given us to be used in the search and discovery of truth, which is the office of a cooler and more discriminating faculty; but to animate us to warmer zeal in the pursuit and practice of truth, when the judgment shall have pointed out what *is* truth.

Through this natural warmth, which they have been justly told is so pleasing, but which perhaps, they have not been told will be continually exposing them to peril and to suffering, their joys and sorrows are excessive. Of this extreme irritability, as was before remarked, the ill-educated learn to boast as if it were a decided indication of superiority of soul, instead of labouring to restrain it as the excess of a temper which ceases to be amiable when it is no longer under the control of the governing faculty. It is misfortune enough to be born more liable to suffer and to sin, from this conformation of mind, it is too much to nourish the evil by unrestrained indulgence; it is still worse to be proud of so misleading a quality.

Flippancy, impetuosity, resentment, and violence of spirit, grow out of this disposition, which will be rather promoted than corrected, by the system of education, on which we have been animadverting; in which system emotions are too early and too much excited, and tastes and feelings are considered as too exclusively making up the whole of the female character; in which the judgment is little exercised, the reasoning powers are seldom brought into action, and self-knowledge and self-denial scarcely included.

The propensity of mind which we are considering, if unchecked, lays its possessors open to unjust prepossessions, and exposes them to all the danger of unfounded attachments. In early youth, not only love at first sight, but also friendship of the same instantaneous growth, springs up from an ill-directed sensibility, and in after-life, women under the powerful influence of this temper, conscious that they have much to be borne with, are too readily inclined to select for their confidential connexions, flexible and flattering companions, who will indulge and perhaps admire her faults, rather than firm and honest friends, who will reprove and would assist in curing them. We may adopt it as a general maxim, that an obliging, weak, yielding, complaisant friend, full of small attentions, with little religion, little judgment, and much natural acquiescence and civility, is a most dangerous, though generally a too much desired confidante: she soothes the indolence, and gratifies the vanity of her friend, by reconciling her to her faults, while she neither keeps the understanding nor the virtues of that friend in exercise; but withholds from her every useful truth, which by opening her eyes might give her pain. These obsequious qualities are the 'soft green,'* on which the soul loves to repose itself.—But it is not a refreshing or a wholesome repose; we should not select, for the sake of present ease, a soothing flatterer, who will lull us into a pleasing oblivion of our failings, but a friend who, valuing our soul's health above our immediate comfort, will rouse us from torpid indulgence, to animation, vigilance, and virtue.

An ill-directed sensibility also leads a woman to be injudicious and eccentric in her *charities*; she will be in danger of proportioning her bounty to the immediate effect which the distressed object produces on her senses; and will therefore be more liberal to a small distress presenting itself to her own eyes, than to the more pressing wants and better claims of those miseries of which she only hears the relation. There is a sort of stage effect which some people require for their charities; and such a character as we are considering, will be apt also to desire, that the object of her compassion shall have something interesting and amiable in it, such as shall furnish pleasing images and lively pictures to her imagination, that in her charities as well as in every thing else, and engaging subjects for description; forgetting she is to be a 'follower of Him who pleased not himself:' forgetting that the most coarse and disgusting object may be as much the representative of Him, who said, 'Inasmuch as ye do it to one of the least of these ye do it unto me,' as the most interesting. Nay, the more uninviting and repulsive cases may be better tests of the principle on which we relieve, than those which abound in pathos and interest, as we can have less suspicion of our motive in the latter case than in the former. But while we ought to neglect neither of these supposed cases, yet the less our feelings are caught by pleasing circumstances, the less will be the danger of our indulging self-complacency, and the more likely shall we be to do what we do for the sake of Him who has taught us, that no deeds but what are performed on that principle 'shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.'

But through the want of that governing principle which should direct her sensibility, a tender-hearted woman, whose hand, if she be actually surrounded with scenes and circumstances to call it into action, is

> Open as day to melting charity;

nevertheless may utterly fail in the great and comprehensive duty of Christian love, for she has feelings which are acted upon solely by local circumstances and present events. Only remove her into another scene, distant from the wants she has been relieving; place her in the lap of indulgence, so entrenched with ease and pleasure, so immersed in the softness of life, that distress no longer finds any access to her presence, but through the faint and dull medium of a distant representation; remove her from the sight and sound of that misery, which, when present, so tenderly affected her—she now forgets that misery exists; as she hears but little, and sees nothing of want and sorrow, she is

* Burke's 'Sublime and Beautiful.'

ready to fancy that the world is grown happier than it was: in the meantime, with a quiet conscience and a thoughtless vanity, she has been lavishing on superfluities that money, which she would cheerfully have given to a charitable case, had she not forgotten that any such were in existence, because *pleasure* had blocked up the avenues through which misery used to find its way to her heart; and now, when again such a case enforces itself into her presence, she laments with real sincerity that the money is gone which should have relieved it.

In the mean time, perhaps, other women of less natural sympathy, but whose sympathies are under better regulation, or who act from a principle which requires little stimulus, have, by an habitual course of self-denial, by a constant determination to refuse themselves unnecessary indulgences, and by guarding against that dissolving PLEASURE which melts down the firmest virtue that allows itself to bask in its beams, have been quietly furnishing a regular provision for miseries, which their knowledge of the state of the world teaches them are every where to be found, and which their obedience to the will of God tells them it is their duty both to find out and relieve; a general expectation of being liable to be called upon for acts of charity, will lead the conscientiously charitable always to be prepared.

On such a mind as we have been describing, *Novelty* also will operate with peculiar force, and in nothing more than in the article of charity. Old established institutions, whose continued existence must depend on the continued bounty of that affluence to which they owed their origin, will be sometimes neglected, as presenting no variety to the imagination, as having by their uniformity ceased to be interesting; there is now a total failure of those springs of more sensitive feeling which set the charity a-going, and those sudden emotions of tenderness and gusts of pity, which once were felt, must now be excited by newer forms of distress. As age comes on, that charity which has been the effect of mere feeling, grows cold and rigid: this hardness is also increased by the frequent disappointments charity has experienced in its too high expectations of the gratitude and subsequent merit of those it has relieved; and by withdrawing its bounty, because some of its objects have been undeserving, it gives clear proof that what it bestowed was for its own gratification; and now finding that self-complacency at an end, it bestows no longer. Probably too the cause of so much disappointment may have been, that ill choice of the objects to which feeling, rather than a discriminating judgment, has led. The summer showers of mere sensibility soon dry up, while the living spring of Christian charity flows alike in all seasons.

The impatience, levity, and fickleness, of which women have been somewhat too generally accused, are perhaps in no small degree aggravated by the littleness and frivolousness of female pursuits. The sort of education they commonly receive, teaches girls to set a great price on small things.—Besides this, they do not always learn to keep a very correct scale of degrees for rating the value of the objects of their admiration and attachment; but by a kind of unconscious idolatry, they rather make a merit of loving *supremely* things and persons which ought to be loved with moderation and in a subordinate degree the one to the other. Unfortunately, they consider moderation as so necessarily indicating a cold heart, and narrow soul, and they look upon a state of indifference with so much horror, that either to love or hate with energy is supposed by them to proceed from a higher state of mind than is possessed by more steady and equable characters. Whereas it is in fact the criterion of a warm but well-directed sensibility, that while it is capable of loving with energy, it must be enabled, by the judgment which governs it, to suit and adjust its degree of interest to the nature and excellence of the object about which it is interested; for unreasonable prepossession, disproportionate attachment, and capricious or precarious fondness, is not sensibility.

Excessive but unintentional *flattery* is another fault into which a strong sensibility is in danger of leading its possessor. A tender heart and a warm imagination conspire to throw a sort of radiance round the object of their love, till they are dazzled by a brightness of their own creating. The worldly and fashionable borrow the warm language of sensibility without having the really warm feeling; and young ladies get such a habit of saying, and especially of writing such over-obliging and flattering things to each other, that this mutual politeness, aided by the self-love so natural to us all, and by an unwillingness to search into our own hearts, keeps up the illusion, and we acquire a habit of taking our character from the good we *hear* of ourselves, which others assume, but do not very well know, rather than from the evil we *feel* in ourselves, and which we therefore ought to be too thoroughly acquainted with to take our opinion of ourselves from what we hear from others.

Ungoverned sensibility is apt to give a wrong direction to its anxieties; and its affection often falls short of the true end of friendship. If the object of its regard happen to be sick, what inquiries! what prescription! what an accumulation is made of cases in which the remedy its fondness suggests has been successful! What an unaffected tenderness for the perishing body! Yet is this sensibility equally alive to the immortal interests of the sufferer? Is it not silent and at ease when it contemplates the dearest friend persisting in opinions essentially dangerous; in practices unquestionably wrong? Does it not view all this, not only without a generous ardour to point out the peril, and rescue the friend; but if that friend be supposed to be dying, does it not even make it the *criterion* of kindness to let her die, undeceived as to her true state? What a want of real sensibility, to feel for the pain but not for the danger of those we love? Now see what sort of sensibility the Bible teaches? 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but thou shalt in any wise rebuke him, and shalt not suffer sin upon him.'* But let that tenderness which shrinks from the idea of exposing what it loves to a momentary pang,

* Leviticus, xix. 17.

figure to itself the bare possibility, that the object of its own fond affection may not be the object of Divine favour! Let it shrink from the bare conjecture, that 'the familiar friend with whom it has taken sweet counsel,' is going down to the gates of death, unrepenting, unprepared and yet unwarned!

But mere human sensibility goes a shorter way to work. Not being able to give its friend the pain of hearing her faults or of knowing her danger, it works itself up into the quieting delusion that no danger exists, at least not for the objects of its own affection; it gratifies itself by inventing a salvation so comprehensive as shall take in all itself loves with all their faults; it creates to its own fond heart an ideal and exaggerated divine mercy, which shall pardon and receive all in whom this blind sensibility has an interest, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

In regard to its application to religious purposes, it is a test that sensibility has received its true direction when it is supremely turned to the love of God: for to possess an overflowing fondness for our fellow-creatures and fellow-sinners, and to be cold and insensible to the essence of goodness and perfection, is an inconsistency to which the feeling heart is awfully liable. God has himself the first claim to the sensibility he bestowed. 'He *first* loved us:' this is a *natural* cause of love. 'He loved us while we were sinners:' this is a *supernatural* cause. He continues to love us though we neglect his favours and slight his mercies: this would wear out any earthly kindness. He forgives us, not petty neglects, not occasional slights, but grievous sins, repeated offences, broken vows, and unrequited love. What human friendship performs offices so calculated to touch the soul of sensibility?

Those young women in whom feeling is indulged to the exclusion of reason and examination, are peculiarly liable to be the dupes of prejudice, rash decisions, and false judgment. The understanding having but little power over the will, their affections are not well poised, and their minds are kept in a state ready to be acted upon by the fluctuations of alternate impulses; by sudden and varying impressions; by casual and contradictory circumstances; and by emotions excited by every accident. Instead of being guided by the broad views of general truth, instead of having one fixed principle, they are driven on by the impetuosity of the moment. And this impetuosity blinds the judgment as much as it misleads the conduct; so that for want of a habit of cool investigation and inquiry, they meet every event without any previously formed opinion or settled rule of action. And as they do not accustom themselves to appreciate the real value of things, their attention is as likely to be led away by the under parts of a subject, as to seize on the leading feature. The same eagerness of mind which hinders the operation of the discriminating faculty leads also to the error of determining on the rectitude of an action by its success, and to that of making the event of an undertaking decide on its justice or propriety: it also leads to that superficial and erroneous way of judging which fastens on exceptions, if they make in our own favour, as grounds of reasoning, while they lead us to overlook received and general rules which tend to establish a doctrine contrary to our wishes.

Open-hearted, indiscreet girls, often pick up a few strong notions, which are as false in themselves as they are popular among the class in question: such as 'that warm friends must make warm enemies;'—that 'the generous love and hate with all their heart;' that 'a reformed rake makes the best husband;'—that 'there is no medium in marriage, but that it is a state of exquisite happiness or exquisite misery;' with many other doctrines of equal currency and equal soundness! These they consider as axioms, and adopt them as rules of life. From the two first of these oracular sayings, girls are in no small danger of becoming unjust through the very warmth of their hearts: for they will acquire a habit of making their estimate of the good or ill quality of others merely in proportion to the greater or less degree of kindness which they themselves have received from them. Their estimation of general character is thus formed on insulated and partial grounds; on the accidental circumstance of personal predilection or personal pique. Kindness to themselves or their friends involves all possible excellence; neglect, all imaginable defects. Friendship and gratitude can and should go a great way; but as they cannot convert vice into virtue, so they ought never to convert truth into falsehood. And it may be the more necessary to be upon our guard in this instance, because the very idea of gratitude may mislead us, by converting injustice into the semblance of a virtue. Warm expressions should therefore be limited to the conveying a sense of our own individual obligations which are real, rather than employed to give an impression of general excellence in the person who has obliged us, which may be imaginary. A good man is still good, though it may not have fallen in his way to oblige or serve *us*, nay, though he may have neglected, or even unintentionally hurt us: and sin is still sin, though committed by the person in the world to whom we are the most obliged, and whom we best love.

There is danger lest our excessive commendation of our friends, merely as such, may be derived from vanity as well as gratitude. While we only appear to be triumphing in the virtues of our friend, we may be guilty of self-complacency; the person so excellent is the person who distinguishes *us*, and we are too apt to insert into the general eulogium the distinction we ourselves have received from him who is himself so much distinguished by others.

With respect to that fatal and most indelicate, nay gross maxim, that a 'reformed rake makes the best husband,' (an aphorism to which the principles and happiness of so many young women have been sacrificed)—it goes upon the preposterous supposition, not only that effects do not follow causes, but that they oppose them; on the supposition, that habitual vice creates rectitude of character, and that sin produces happiness: thus flatly contradicting what the moral government of God uniformly exhibits in the course of human events; and what revelation so evidently and universally teaches.

For it should be observed that the reformation is generally, if not always supposed to be brought about by the all-conquering force of female charms. Let but a profligate young man have a point to carry by winning the affections of a vain and thoughtless girl; he will begin his attack upon her heart by undermining her religious principles, and artfully removing every impediment which might have obstructed her receiving the addresses of a man without character. And while he will lead her not to hear without ridicule the mention of that change of heart which Scripture teaches and experience proves, that the power of Divine grace can work on a vicious character;' while he will teach her to sneer at a change which he would treat with contempt, because he denies the possibility of so strange and miraculous a conversion; yet he will not scruple to swear that the power of her beauty has worked a revolution in his own loose practices which is equally complete and instantaneous.

But supposing his reformation to be genuine, it would even then by no means involve the truth of her proposition, that past libertinism insures future felicity; yet many a weak girl, confirmed in this palatable doctrine by examples she has frequently admired of those surprising reformations so conveniently effected in the last scene of most of our comedies, has not scrupled to risk her earthly and eternal happiness with a man, who is not ashamed to ascribe to the influence of her beauty that power of changing the heart which he impiously denies to Omnipotence itself.

As to the last of these practical aphorisms, that 'there is no medium in marriage, but that it is a state of exquisite happiness or exquisite misery;' this, though not equally sinful, is equally delusive; for marriage is only one modification of human life, and human life is not commonly in itself a state of exquisite extremes; but is for the most part that mixed and moderate state, so naturally dreaded by those who set out with fancying this world a state of rapture; and so naturally expected by those who know it to be a state of probation and discipline. Marriage, therefore, is only one condition, and often the best condition, of that imperfect state of being which, though seldom very exquisite, is often very tolerable; and which may yield much comfort to those who do not look for constant transport. But unfortunately, those who find themselves disappointed of the unceasing raptures they had anticipated in marriage disdaining to sit down with so poor a provision as comfort, and scorning the acceptance of that moderate lot which Providence commonly bestows with a view to check despondency and to repress presumption, give themselves up to the other alternative; and, by abandoning their hearts to discontent, make to themselves that misery with which their fervid imagination had filled the opposite scale.

The truth is, these young ladies are very apt to pick up their opinions, less from the divines than the poets; and the poets, though it must be confessed they are some of the best embellishers of life, are not *quite* the safest conductors through it. In travelling through a wilderness, though we avail ourselves of the harmony of singing birds to render the grove delightful, yet we never think of following them as guides to conduct us through its labyrinths.

Those women in whom the natural defects of a warm temper have been strengthened by an education which fosters their faults, are very dexterous in availing themselves of a hint, when it favours a ruling inclination, sooths vanity, indulges indolence, or gratifies their love of power. They have heard so often from their favourite sentimental authors, and their more flattering male friends, 'that when nature denied them strength, she gave them fascinating graces in compensation; that their strength consists in their weakness;' and that 'they are endowed with arts of persuasion which supply the absence of force, and the place of reason;' that they may learn, in time, to pride themselves on that very weakness, and to become vain of their imperfections; till at length they begin to claim for their defects not only pardon, but admiration. Hence they acquire a habit of cherishing a species of feeling which, if not checked, terminates in excessive selfishness; they learn to produce their inability to bear contradiction as a proof of their tenderness; and to indulge in that sort of irritability in all that relates to themselves, which inevitably leads to the utter exclusion of all interest in the sufferings of others. Instead of exercising their sensibility in the wholesome duty of relieving distress and visiting scenes of sorrow that sensibility itself is pleaded as a reason for their not being able to endure sights of wo, and for shunning the distress it should be exerted in removing. That exquisite sense of feeling which God implanted in the heart as a stimulus to quicken us in relieving the miseries of others, is thus introverted, and learns to consider *self* not as the agent, but the object of compassion. Tenderness is made an excuse for being hard-hearted; and instead of drying the weeping eyes of others, this false delicacy reserves its selfish and ready tears for the more elegant and less expensive sorrows of the melting novel, or the pathetic tragedy.

When feeling stimulates only to self-indulgence; when the more exquisite affections of sympathy and pity evaporate in sentiment, instead of flowing out in active charity, and affording assistance, protection, or consolation to every species of distress within its reach, it is an evidence that the feeling is of a spurious kind; and instead of being nourished as an amiable tenderness, it should be subdued as a fond and base self-love.

That idleness, to whose cruel inroads many women of fortune are unhappily exposed, from not having been trained to consider wholesome occupation, vigorous exertion, and systematic employment, as making part of the indispensable duties and pleasures of life, lays them open to a thousand evils of this kind, from which the useful and the busy are exempted; and, perhaps, it would not be easy to find a more pitiable object than a woman with a great deal of time, and a great deal of money on her hands, who, never having been taught the conscientious use of either squanders both at random, or rather moulders both away, without plan, without principle, and without pleasure: all whose projects begin

and terminate in self; who considers the rest of the world only as they may be subservient to her gratification; and to whom it never occurred, that both her time and money were given for the gratification and good of others.

It is not much to the credit of the other sex, that they now and then lend themselves to the indulgence of this selfish spirit in their wives, and cherish by a kind of false fondness those faults which should be combatted by good sense and a reasonable counteraction; slothfully preferring a little false peace, the purchase of precarious quiet, and the popular reputation of good nature, to the higher duty of forming the mind, fixing the principles, and strengthening the character of her with whom they are connected. Perhaps too, a little vanity in the husband helps out his good nature; he secretly rewards himself for his sacrifice by the consciousness of his superiority; he feels a self-complacency in his patient condescension to her weakness, which tacitly flatters his own strength: and he is, as it were, paid for stooping, by the increased sense of his own tallness. Seeing also, perhaps, but little of other women, he is taught to believe that they are all pretty much alike, and that, as a man of sense, he must content himself with what he takes to be the common lot. Whereas, in truth, by his misplaced indulgence, he has rather *made* his own lot than *drawn* it; and thus, through an indolent despair in the husband of being able to effect any amendment by opposition, and through the want of that sound affection which labours to improve and exalt the character of its object; it happens, that many a helpless, fretful, and daudling wife acquires a more powerful ascendancy than the most discreet and amiable woman; and that the most absolute female tyranny is established by these sickly and capricious humours.

The poets again, who, to do them justice, are always ready to lend a helping hand when any mischief is to be done, have contributed their full share towards confirming these feminine follies: they have strengthened by adulatory maxims, sung in seducing strains, those faults which their talents and their influence should have been employed in correcting. By fair and youthful females, an argument, drawn from sound experience and real life, is commonly repelled by a stanza or a sonnet; and a couplet is considered as nearly of the same validity with a text. When ladies are complimented with being

Fine by defect, and delicately weak

is not a standard of feebleness held out to them, to which vanity will gladly resort, and to which softness and indolence can easily act up, or rather *act down*, if I may be allowed the expression?

When ladies are told by the same misleading, but to them, high authority, that 'smiles and tears are the irresistible arms with which nature nas furnished the weak for conquering the strong,' will they not eagerly fly to this cheap and ready artillery, instead of labouring to furnish themselves with a reasonable mind, an equable temper, and a meek and quiet spirit?

Every animal is endowed by Providence with the peculiar powers adapted to its nature and its wants; while none, except the human, by grafting art on natural sagacity, injures or mars the gift. Spoilt women, who fancy there is something more *picquant* and alluring in the mutable graces of caprice, than in the monotonous smoothness of an even temper; and who also having heard much, as was observed before, about their 'amiable weakness,' learn to look about them for the best succedaneum to strength, the supposed absence of which, they sometimes endeavour to supply by artifice. By this engine the weakest woman frequently furnishes the converse to the famous reply of the French minister, who, when he was accused of governing the mind of that feeble queen, Mary de Medicis, by sorcery, replied, 'that the only sorcery he had used, was that influence which strong minds naturally have over weak ones.'

But though it be fair so to study the tempers, defects, and weaknesses of others, as to convert our knowledge of them to the promotion of their benefit and our own; and though it be making a lawful use of our penetration to avail ourselves of the faults of others for 'their good to edification;' yet all deviations from the straight line of truth and simplicity; every plot insidiously to turn influence to unfair account; all contrivances to extort from a bribed complaisance what reason and justice would refuse to our wishes; these are some of the operations of that lowest and most despicable engine, selfish cunning, by which *little minds sometimes govern great ones.*

And, unfortunately, women from their natural desire to please, and from their sometimes doubting by what means this grand end may be best effected, are in more danger of being led into dissimulation than men; for dissimulation is the result of weakness; it is the refuge of doubt and distrust, rather than of conscious strength, the dangers of which lie another way. Frankness, truth, and simplicity, therefore, as they are inexpressibly charming, so are they peculiarly commendable in women; and nobly evince that while the possessors of them wish to please (and why should they not wish it?) they disdain to have recourse to any thing but what is fair, and just, and honourable to effect it; that they scorn to attain the most desired end by any but the most lawful means. The beauty of simplicity is indeed so intimately felt and generally acknowledged by all who have a true taste for personal, moral, or intellectual beauty, that women of the deepest dissimulation often find their account in assuming an exterior the most foreign to their character, and exhibiting the most engaging *naivete.* It is curious to see how much *art* they put in practice in order to appear *natural*; and the deep *design* which is set at work to display *simplicity.* And, indeed, this feigned simplicity is the most mischievous, because the most engaging of all the Proteus forms which artifice can put on. For the most free and bold sentiments have been sometimes hazarded with fatal success under this unsuspected mask. And an innocent, quiet, indolent, artless manner, has been adopted as the most refined and unsuccessful accompaniment of senti

ments, ideas, and designs, neither artless, quiet, nor innocent.

CHAP. XVII.

On dissipation, and the modern habits of fashionable life.

Perhaps the interests of true friendship, elegant conversation, mental improvement, social pleasure, maternal duty, and conjugal comfort, never received such a blow as when Fashion issued out that arbitrary and universal decree, that *every body must be acquainted with every body;* together with that consequent, authoritative, but rather inconvenient clause that *every body must also go every where every night.* The implicit and devout obedience paid to this law, is incompatible with the very being of friendship; for as the circle of acquaintance expands, and it will be continually expanding, the affections will be beaten out into such thin lamina, as to leave little solidity remaining. The heart which is continually exhausting itself in professions, grows cold and hard. The feelings of kindness diminish in proportion as the expression of it becomes more diffuse and indiscriminate. The very traces of 'simplicity and Godly sincerity,' in a delicate female, wear away imperceptibly by constant collision with the world at large. And perhaps no woman takes so little interest in the happiness of her real friends, as she whose affections are incessantly evaporating in universal civilities; as she who is saying fond and flattering things at random, to a circle of five hundred people every night.

The decline and fall of animated and instructive conversation, has been in a good measure effected by this barbarous project of assembling *en masse.* An excellent prelate,* with whose friendship the author was long honoured, and who himself excelled in the art of conversation, used to remark, that a few years had brought about a great revolution in the manners of society; that it used to be the custom, previously to going into company, to think that something was to be communicated or received, taught or learnt; that the powers of the understanding were expected to be brought into exercise, and that it was therefore necessary to quicken the mind, by reading and thinking, for the share the individual might be expected to take in the general discourse; but that now, knowledge and taste, and wit, and erudition, seemed to be scarcely considered as necessary materials to be brought into the pleasurable commerce of the world; because now there was little chance of turning them to much account; and therefore, he who possessed them, and he who possessed them not, were nearly on a footing.

It is obvious also that multitudinous assemblies are so little favourable to that *cheerfulness* which it should seem to be their very end to promote, that if there were any chemical process by which the quantum of spirits, animal or intellectual, could be ascertained, the diminution would be found to have been inconceivably great, since the transformation of man and woman from a social to a gregarious animal.

But if it be true that friendship, society, and cheerfulness, have sustained so much injury by this change of manners, how much more pointedly does the remark apply to family happiness.

Notwithstanding the known fluctuation of manners, and the mutability of language, could it be foreseen when the apostle Paul exhorted 'married women to be keepers *at home*,' that the time would arrive when that very phrase would be selected to designate one of the most decided acts of dissipation? Could it be foreseen that when a fine lady should send out a notification that on such a night she shall be at home, these two significant words (besides imitating the rarity of the thing) would present to the mind an image the most *undomestic* which language can convey? Could it be anticipated that the event of one lady's being *at home* could only be effected by the universal concurrence of all her acquaintance to be abroad? That so simple an act should require such complicated co-operation? And that the report that one person would be found in her own house, should operate with such an electric force as to empty the houses of all her friends?

My country readers, who may require to have it explained that these two magnetic words *at home*, now possess the powerful influence of drawing together every thing *fine* within the sphere of their attraction, may need also to be apprized, that the guests afterwards are not asked what was *said* by the company, but whether the *crowd* was prodigious; the rule for deciding on the merit of a fashionable society, not being by the taste or the spirit, but by the *score* and the *hundred.* The question of pleasure, like a parliamentary question, is now carried by numbers. And when two parties modish, like two parties political, are run one against another on the same night, the same kind of mortification attends the leader of a defeated minority, the same triumph attends the exulting carrier of superior numbers, in the one case as in the other. The scale of enjoyment is rated by the measure of fatigue, and the quantity of inconvenience furnishes the standard of gratification: the smallness of the dimensions to which each person is limited on account of the multitudes which must divide among them a certain given space, adds to the sum total of general delight; the aggregate of pleasure is produced by the proportion of individual suffering; and not till every guest feels herself in the state of a cat in an exhausted receiver, does the delighted hostess attain the consummation of that renown which is derived from such overflowing rooms as shall throw all her competitors at a disgraceful distance.

An eminent divine has said, that either 'perseverance in prayer will make a man leave off sinning, or a continuance in sin will make him leave off prayer.' This remark may be accommodated to those ladies who, while they are devoted to the enjoyments of the world, yet retain considerable solicitude for the instruction of their daughters. But if they are really in earnest to give them a christian education, they must themselves renounce a dissipated life. Or if

* The late Bishop Horne.

they resolve to pursue the chase of pleasure, they must renounce this prime duty. Contraries cannot unite. The moral nurture of a tall daughter can no more be administered by a mother whose time is absorbed by crowds abroad, than the physical nurture of her infant offspring can be supplied by her in a perpetual absence from home. And is not that a preposterous affection, which, after leading a mother to devote a few months to the inferior duty of furnishing aliment to the mere animal life, allows her to desert her post when the more important moral and intellectual cravings require sustenance? This great object is not to be effected with the shreds and parings rounded off from the circle of a dissipated life; but in order to its adequate execution, the mother should carry it on with the same spirit and perseverance at home, which the father thinks it necessary to be exerting abroad in his public duty or professional engagement.

The usual vindication (and in theory it has a plausible sound) which has been offered for the large portion of time spent by women in acquiring ornamental talents is, that they are calculated to make the possessor love home, and that they innocently fill up the hours of leisure. The plea has indeed so promising an appearance, that it is worth inquiring whether it be in fact true. Do we then, on fairly pursuing the inquiry, discover that those who have spent most time in such light acquisitions, are really remarkable for loving home, or staying quietly there? or that when there, they are sedulous in turning time to the best account? I speak not of that rational and respectable class of women, who, applying (as many of them do) these elegant talents to their true purpose, employ them to fill up the vacancies of better occupations, and to embellish the leisure of a life actively good. But do we *generally* see that even the most valuable and sober part of the reigning female acquisitions leads their possessor to scenes most favourable to the enjoyment of them? to scenes which we should naturally suppose she would seek, in order to the more effectual cultivation of such rational pleasures? To learn to endure, to enjoy, and to adorn solitude, seems to be one great end for bestowing accomplishments, instead of making them the motive for hurrying those who have acquired them into crowds, in order for their most effectual display.

Would not those delightful pursuits, botany and drawing, for instance, seem likely to court the fields, the woods, and gardens of the paternal seat, as more congenial to their nature, and more appropriate to their exercise, than barren watering places, destitute of a tree, or an herb, or a flower, and not affording an hour's interval from successive pleasures, to profit by the scene, even it abounded with the whole vegetable world, from the 'cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall.'

From the mention of watering places, may the author be allowed to suggest a few remarks on the evils which have arisen from the general conspiracy of the gay to usurp the regions of the sick; and from their converting the health-restoring fountains, meant as a refuge for disease, into the resorts of vanity for those who have no disease but idleness?

This inability of staying at home, as it is one of the most infallible, so it is one of the most dangerous symptoms of the reigning mania. It would be more tolerable, did this epidemic malady break out only as formerly during the winter, or some one season.—Heretofore, the tenantry and the poor, the natural dependants on the rural mansions of the opulent, had some definite period to which they might joyfully look forward for the approach of those patrons, part of whose business in life it is to influence by their presence, to instruct by their example, to sooth by their kinkness, and to assist by their liberality, those whom Providence, in the distribution of human lots, has placed under their more immediate protection. Though it would be far from truth to assert, that dissipated people are never charitable, yet I will venture to say that dissipation is inconsistent with the *spirit* of charity. That affecting precept followed by so gracious a promise, 'Never turn away thy face from any poor man, and then the face of the Lord shall never be turned away from thee,' cannot literally mean that we should *give* to all, as then we should soon have nothing left to give: but it seems to intimate the habitual attention, the duty of inquiring out all cases of distress, in order to judge which are fit to be relieved, now for this inquiry, for this attention, for this sympathy, the dissipated have little taste, and less leisure.

Let a reasonable conjecture (for calculation would fail!) be made of how large a diminution of the general good has been effected in this single respect by causes which, though they do not seem important in themselves, yet make no inconsiderable part of the mischief arising from modern manners: and I speak now to persons who *intend* to be charitable: what a deduction will be made from the aggregate of charity by a circumstance apparently trifling, when we consider what would be the beneficial effects of that regular bounty which must almost unavoidably result from the evening walks of a great and benevolent family among the cottages of their own domain: the thousand little acts of comparatively unexpensive kindness which the *sight* of petty wants and difficulties would excite; wants, which will scarcely be felt in the relation; and which will probably be neither seen, nor felt, nor fairly represented, in their long absences, by an agent. And what is even almost more than the good done, is the habit of mind kept up in those who do it. Would not this habit, exercised on the Christian principle, that 'even a cup of cold water,' given upon *right motives*, shall not lose its reward; while the giving 'all their goods to feed the poor,' without the true *principle* of charity, shall profit them nothing; would not this habit, I say, and the inculcation of the spirit which produces it, be almost the best part of the education of daughters.*

* It would be a pleasant summer amusement for our young ladies of fortune, if they were to preside at such spinning feasts as are instituted at Nuneham for the promotion of virtue and industry in their own sex. Pleasurable anniversaries of this kind would serve to combine in the minds of the poor two ideas which ought

Transplant this wealthy and bountiful family periodically, to the frivolous and uninteresting bustle of the watering place; there it is not denied that frequent public and fashionable acts of charity may make a part (and it is well they do) of the business and amusement of the day; with this latter, indeed, they are sometimes good naturedly mixed up. But how shall we compare the regular systematical good these persons would be doing at their own home, with the light, and amusing, and bustling bounties of the public place? The illegal raffle at the toy-shop, may relieve, it is true, some distress; but this distress, though it may be real, and if real it ought to be relieved, is far less easily ascertained than the wants of the poor round a person's own neighbourhood, or the debts of a distressed tenant. How shall we compare the broad stream of bounty which should be flowing through, and refreshing whole districts; with the penurious current of the subscription breakfast for the needy musician, in which the price of the gift is taken out in the diversion, and in which pleasure dignifies itself with the name of bounty? How shall we compare the attention, and time, and zeal, which would otherwise, perhaps, be devoted to the village school, spent in hawking about benefit tickets for a broken player, while the kindness of the benefactress, perhaps, is rewarded by scenes in which her charity is not always repaid by the purity of the exhibition.

Far be it from the author to wish to check the full tide of charity wherever it is disposed to flow! Would she could multiply the already abundant streams, and behold every source purified! But in the public resorts there are many who are able and willing to give. In the sequestered, though populous village, there is, perhaps, only one affluent family: the distress which they do not *behold* will probably not be attended to: the distress which *they* do not relieve will probably not be relieved at all: the wrongs which *they* do not redress will go unredressed: the oppressed whom *they* do not rescue will sink under the tyranny of the oppressor.—Through their own rural domains too, charity runs in a clearer current, and is under less suspicion of being polluted by that muddy tincture which it is sometimes apt to contract in passing through the impure soil of the world.

But to return from this too long digression. The old standing objection formerly brought forward by the prejudices of the other sex, and too eagerly laid hold on as a shelter for indolence and ignorance by ours, was, that intellectual accomplishments too much absorbed the thoughts and affections, took women off from the necessary attention to domestic duties, and superinduced a contempt or neglect of whatever was useful. It is peculiarly the character of the present day to detect absurd opinions, and expose plausible theories by the simple and decisive answer of experiment; and it is presumed that this popular error, as well as others, is daily receiving the refutation of actual experience. For it cannot surely be maintained on ground that is any longer tenable, that acquirements truly rational are celculated to draw off the mind from real duties. Whatever removes prejudices, whatever stimulates industry, whatever rectifies the judgment, whatever corrects self-conceit, whatever purifies the taste, and raises the understanding, will be likely to contribute to moral excellence: to woman moral excellence is the grand object of education: and of moral excellence, domestic life is to woman the proper sphere.

Count over the list of females who have made shipwreck of their fame and virtue, and have furnished the most lamentable examples of the dereliction of family duties; and the number will not be found considerable who have been led astray by the pursuit of knowledge. And if a few deplorable instances of this kind be produced, it will commonly be found that there was little infusion in the minds of such women of that correcting principle without which all other knowledge only 'puffeth up.'

The time nightly expended in late female vigils is expended by the light of far other lamps than those which are fed by the student's oil: and if families *are* to be found who are neglected through too much study in the mistress, it will probably be proved to be Hoyle and not Homer, who has robbed her children of her time and affections. For one family which has been neglected by the mother's passion for books, an hundred have been deserted through her passion for play. The husband of a fashionable woman will not often find that the library is the apartment the expenses of which involve him in debt or disgrace. And for one literary slattern, who now manifests her indifference to her husband by the neglect of her person, there are scores of elegant spendthrifts who ruin theirs by excess of decoration.

May I digress a little while I remark, that I am far from asserting that literature has never filled women with vanity and self-conceit: the contrary is too obvious: and it happens in this as in other cases, that a few characters conspicuously absurd, have served to bring a whole order into ridicule. But I will assert, that in general those whom books are supposed to have spoiled, would have been spoiled in another way without them. She who is a vain pedant because she has read much, has probably that defect in her mind which would have made her a vain fool if she had read nothing. It is not her having more knowledge, but less sense, which makes her insufferable: and ignorance would have added little to her value, for it is not what she has, but what she wants, which makes her unpleasant. The truth, however, probably lies here, that while her understanding was improved, the tempers of her heart were neglected, and that in cultivating the fame of a *savante*, she lost the humility of a Christian. But these instances too furnish only a fresh argument for the *general* cultivation of the female mind. The wider diffusion of sound knowledge, would re

never to be separated, but which *they* are not very forward to unite-that the great wish is to make them happy as well as good. Occasional approximations of the rich and poor, for the purposes of relief and instruction, and annual meetings for the purpose of innocent pleasure, would do much towards wearing away discontent, and the conviction that the rich really take an interest in their comfort, would contribute to reconcile the lower class to that state in which it has pleased God to place them.

move that temptation to be vain which may be excited by its rarity.

From the union of an unfurnished mind and a cold heart there results a kind of necessity for dissipation. The very term gives an idea of mental imbecility. That which a working and fatigued mind requires is *relaxation;* it requires something to unbend itself; to slacken its efforts, to relieve it from its exertions; while amusement is the *business* of feeble minds, and is carried on with a length and seriousness incompatible with the refreshing idea of relaxation. There is scarcely any one thing which comes under the description of public amusement, which does not fill the space of three or four hours nightly. Is not that a large proportion of refreshment for a mind, which, generally speaking, has been kept so many hours together on the stretch in the morning, by business, by study, by devotion?

But while we would assert that a woman of a cultivated intellect is not driven by the same necessity as others into the giddy whirl of public resort; who but regrets that real cultivation does not *inevitably* preserve her from it? No wonder that inanity of character, that vacuity of mind, that torpid ignorance, should plunge into dissipation as their natural refuge; should seek to bury their insignificance in the crowd of pressing multitudes, and hope to escape analysis and detection in the undistinguished mass of mixed assemblies! *There* attrition rubs all bodies smooth, and makes all surfaces alike! thither superficial and external accomplishments naturally fly as to their proper scene of action; as to a field where competition in *such* perfections is in perpetual exercise; where the laurels of admiration are to be won; whence the trophies of vanity may be carried off triumphantly.

It would indeed be matter of little comparative regret, if this corrupt air were breathed only by those whose natural element it seems to be; but who can forbear lamenting that the power of fashion attracts into this impure and unwholesome atmosphere, minds also of a better make, of higher aims and ends, of more ethereal temper? that it attracts even those who, renouncing enjoyments for which they have a genuine taste, and which would make them really happy, neglect society they love and pursuits they admire, in order that they may *seem* happy and *be* fashionable in the chase of pleasures they despise, and in company they disapprove! But no correctness of taste, no depth of knowledge, will infallibly preserve a woman from this contagion, unless her heart be impressed with a deep Christian conviction that she is accountable for the application of time. Perhaps if there be any one principle which should more sedulously than another be worked into the youthful mind, it is the doctrine of particular as well as general responsibility.

The contagion of dissipated manners is so deep, so wide, and fatal, that if I were called upon to assign the predominant cause of the greater part of the misfortunes and corruptions of the great and gay in our days, I should not look for it principally in any obviously great or striking circumstance: not in the practice of notorious vices, not originally in the dereliction of Christian principle; but I should without hesitation ascribe it to a growing, regular, systematic series of amusements: to an incessant, boundless, and not very disreputable DISSIPATION. Other corruptions, though more formidable in appearance, are yet less fatal in some respects, because they leave us intervals to reflect on their turpitude and spirit to lament their excesses: but dissipation is the more hopeless, as by engrossing almost the entire life, and enervating the whole moral and intellectual system, it leaves neither time for reflection, nor space for self-examination, nor temper for the cherishing of right affections, nor leisure for the operation on sound principles, nor interval for regret, nor vigour to resist temptation, nor energy to struggle for amendment.

The great master of the science of pleasure among the ancients, who reduced it into a system which he called the *chief good of man*, directed that there should be interval enough between the succession of delights to sharpen inclination; and accordingly instituted periodical days of abstinence; well knowing that gratification was best promoted by previous self-denial. But so little do our votaries of fashion understand the true nature of pleasure, that one amusement is allowed to overtake another without any interval, either for recollection of the past or preparation for the future. Even on their own selfish principle, therefore, nothing can be worse understood than this continuity of enjoyment: for to such a degree of labour is the pursuit carried, that the pleasures exhaust instead of exhilarating, and the recreations require to be rested from.

For, not to argue the question on the ground of religion, but merely on that of present enjoyment look abroad and see who are the people that complain of weariness, listlessness and dejection. You will not find them among the class of such as are overdone with work, but with pleasure. The natural and healthful fatigues of business may be recruited by simple and cheap gratifications: but a spirit worn down with the toils of amusement, requires pleasures, of poignancy, varied, multiplied, stimulating.

It has been observed by medical writers, that that sober excess in which many indulge, by eating and drinking a little too much at every day's dinner and every night's supper, more effectually undermines the health, than those more rare excesses by which others now and then break in upon a life of general sobriety. This illustration is not introduced with a design to recommend occasional deviations into gross vice, by way of a pious receipt for mending the morals; but merely to suggest that there is a probability that those who are sometimes driven by unresisted passion into irregularities which shock their cooler reason, are more liable to be roused to a sense of their danger, than persons whose perceptions of evil are blunted through a round of systematical unceasing and yet not scandalous dissipation. And when I affirm that this system of regular indulgence relaxes the soul, enslaves the heart, bewitches the senses, and thus disqualifies for pious thought or useful action, without having any thing in it so gross as to shock the conscience; and when I hazard an opinion that this state is more formidable, because less

alarming, than that which bears upon it a more determined character of evil, I no more mean to speak of the latter in slight and palliating terms, than I would intimate, because the sick sometimes recover from a fever, but seldom from a palsy, that a fever is therefore a safe or a healthy state.

But there seems to be an error in the first concoction, out of which the subsequent errors successively grow. First then, as has been observed before, the showy education of women tends chiefly to qualify them for the glare of public assemblies: secondly, they seem in many instances to be so educated, with a view to the greater probability of their being splendidly married; thirdly, it is alleged in vindication of those dissipated practices, that daughters can only be seen, and admirers, procured at balls, operas, and assemblies: and that therefore by a natural and necessary consequence, balls, operas, and assemblies must be followed up without intermission till the object be effected. For the accomplishment of this object it is that all this complicated machinery had been previously set a going, and kept in motion with an activity not at all slackened by the disordered state of the system; for some machines, instead of being stopped, go faster because the main spring is out of order; the only difference being that they go wrong, and so the increased rapidity adds only to the quantity of error.

It is also, as we have already remarked, an error to fancy that the love of pleasure exhausts itself by indulgence, and that the very young are chiefly addicted to it. The contrary appears to be true. The desire often grows with the pursuit in the same degree as motion is quickened by the continuance of the gravitating force.

First then it cannot be thought unfair to trace back the excessive fondness for amusement to that mode of education we have elsewhere reprobated. Few of the accomplishments, falsely so called, assist the developement of the faculties: they do not exercise the judgment, nor bring into action those powers which fit the heart and mind for the occupations of life; they do not prepare women to love home, to understand its occupations, to enliven its uniformity, to fulfil its duties, to multiply its comforts: they do not lead to that sort of experimental logic, if I may so speak, compounded of observation and reflection, which makes up the moral science of life and manners. Talents which have *display* for their object despise the narrow stage of home! they demand mankind for their spectators, and the world for their theatre.

While we cannot help shrinking a little from the idea of a delicate young creature, lovely in person, and engaging in mind and manners, sacrificing nightly at the public shrine of Fashion, at once the votary and the victim; we cannot help figuring to ourselves how much more interesting she would appear in the eyes of a man of sense and feeling, did he behold her in the more endearing situation of domestic life. And who can forbear wishing, that the good sense, good taste, and delicacy of the men had rather led them to prefer seeking companions for life in the almost sacred quiet of a virtuous home? *There* they might have had the means of seeing and admiring those amiable beings in the best point of view; *there* they might have been enabled to form a juster estimate of female worth, than is likely to be obtained in the scenes where such qualities and talents as might be expected to add to the stock of domestic comfort must necessarily be kept in the back ground, and where such only *can* be brought into view as are not particularly calculated to insure the certainty of home delights.

> O! did they keep their persons fresh and new,
> How would they pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
> And win by rareness!

But by what unaccountable infatuation is it that men too, even men of understanding, join in the confederacy against their own happiness, by looking for their home companions in the resorts of vanity? Why do not such men rise superior to the illusions of fashion? Why do they not uniformly seek her who is to preside in *their* families in the bosom of her own? in the practice of every domestic duty, in the exercise of every amiable virtue, in the exertion of every elegant accomplishment? those accomplishments of which we have been reprobating, not the possession, but the application? *there* they would find her exerting them to their true end; to enliven business, to animate retirement, to embellish the charming scene of family delights, to heighten the interesting pleasures of social intercourse, and rising in just gradation to their noblest object, to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour.

If, indeed, women were mere outside, form and face only, and if *mind* made up no part of her composition, it would follow that a ball-room was quite as appropriate a place for choosing a wife, as an exhibition room for choosing a picture. But, inasmuch as women are not mere portraits, their value not being determinable by a glance of the eye, it follows that a different mode of appreciating their value, and a different place for viewing them antecedent to their being individually selected, is desirable. The two cases differ also in this, that if a man select a picture for himself from among all its exhibited competitors, and bring it to his own house, the picture being passive, he is able to *fix* it there: while the wife, picked up at a public place, and accustomed to incessant display, will not, it is probable, when brought home, stick so quietly to the spot where he fixes her, but will escape to the exhibition-room again, and continue to be displayed at every subsequent exhibition, just as if she were not become private property, and had never been definitely disposed of.

It is the novelty of a thing which astonishes us, and not its absurdity; objects may be so long kept before the eye that it begins no longer to observe them; or may be brought into such close contact with it, that it does not discern them. Long habit so reconciles us to almost any thing, that the grossest improprieties cease to strike us when they once make a part of the common course of action. This, by the way, is a strong reason for carefully sifting every opinion and every practice before we let them incorporate into the mass of our habits, for after that time they will be no more examined.—Would it not be accounted preposterous for a young

man to say he had fancied such a lady would dance a better minuet because he had seen her behave devoutly at church, and *therefore* had chosen her for his partner? and yet he is not thought at all absurd when he intimates that he chose a partner for life because he was pleased with her at a ball. Surely the place of choosing and the motives of choice, would be just as appropriate in one case as in the other, and the mistake, if the judgment failed, not *quite* so serious.

There is among the more elevated classes of society, a certain set of persons who are pleased exclusively to call themselves, and whom others by a sort of compelled courtesy are pleased to call, the *fine world*. This small detachment consider their situation with respect to the rest of mankind, just as the ancient Grecians did theirs, that is as the Grecians thought there were but two sorts of beings, and that all who were not Grecians were barbarians; so this *certain set* conceives of society as resolving itself into two distinct classes, the *fine world* and the *people;* to which last class they turn over all who do not belong to their little *coterie*, however high their rank, or fortune, or merit. Celebrity, in their estimation, is not bestowed by birth or talents, but by being connected with *them*. They have laws, immunities, privileges, and almost a language of their own; they form a kind of distinct *cast*, and with a sort of *esprit du corps* detach themselves from others, even in general society, by an affectation of distance and coldness; and only whisper and smile in their own little groups of the initiated: their confines are jealously guarded, and their privileges are incommunicable.

In this society a young man loses his natural character, which, whatever, it might have been originally, is melted down and cast into the one prevailing mould of fashion: all the strong, native, discriminating qualities of his mind being made to take one shape, one stamp, one superscription! However varied and distinct might have been the materials which nature threw into the crucible, plastic fashion takes care that they shall all be the same, or at least appear the same, when they come out of the mould. A young man in such an artificial state of society, accustomed to the voluptuous ease, refined luxuries, soft accommodations, obsequious attendance, and all the unrestrained indulgencies of a fashionable club, is not to be expected after marriage to take very cordially to a home, unless very extraordinary exertions are made to amuse, to attach, and to interest him: and he is not likely to lend a very helping hand to the union, whose most laborious exertions have hitherto been little more than a selfish stratagem to reconcile health with pleasure. Excess of gratification has only served to make him irritable and exacting; it will of course be no part of his project to make sacrifices, he will expect to receive them: and what would appear incredible to the *Paladins* of gallant times, and the *Chevaliers Preux* of more heroic days, even in the necessary business of establishing himself for life, he sometimes is more disposed to expect attentions than to make advances.

Thus the indolent son of fashion, with a thousand fine, but dormant qualities, which a bad tone of manners forbids him to bring into exercise: with real energies which that tone does not allow him to discover, and an unreal apathy which it commands him to feign; with the heart of a hero, perhaps, if called into the field, affects at home the manners of a Sybarite; and he who, with a Roman, or what is more, with a British valour, would leap into the gulf at the call of public duty,

> Yet in the soft and piping time of peace,

when fashion has resumed her rights, would murmur if a rose leaf lay double under him.

The clubs above alluded to, as has been said, generate and cherish luxurious habits, from their perfect ease, undress, liberty, and inattention to the distinctions of rank; they promote a love of play, and in short, every temper and spirit which tends to *undomesticate;* and what adds to the mischief is, all this is attained at a cheap rate compared with what may be procured at home in the same style.

These indulgences, and this habit of mind, gratify so many passions, that a woman can never hope successfully to counteract the evil by supplying at home gratifications which are *of the same kind*, or which gratify the *same* habits. Now a passion for gratifying vanity, and a spirit of dissipation *is* a passion of the same kind; and therefore, though for a few weeks, a man who has chosen his wife in the public haunts, and this wife a woman made up of *accomplishments*, may, from the novelty of the connexion and of the scene, continue domestic; yet in a little time she will find that those passions, to which she has trusted for making pleasant the married life of her husband, will crave the still higher pleasures of the club; and while these are pursued, she will be consigned over to solitary evenings at home, or driven back to the old dissipations.

To conquer the passions for club gratifications, a woman must not strive to feed it with sufficient aliment of the same kind in her society, either at home or abroad; she must supplant and overcome it by a passion of a different nature, which Providence has kindly planted within us; I mean by inspiring him with the love of fire-side enjoyments. But to qualify herself for administering these she must cultivate her understanding, and her heart, and her temper, acquiring at the same time that modicum of accomplishments suited to his taste, which may qualify her for possessing, both for him and for herself, greater varieties of safe recreation.

One great cause of the want of attachment in these modish couples is, that by living in the world at large, they are not driven to depend on each other as the chief source of comfort. Now it is pretty clear, in spite of modern theories, that the very frame and being of societies, whether great or small, public or private, is jointed and glued together by dependence. Those attachments, which arise from, and are compacted by, a sense of mutual wants, mutual affection, mutual benefit, and mutual obligation, are the cement, which secure the union of the family as well as of the state.

Unfortunately, when two young persons of the above description marry, the union is some

times considered rather as the end than the beginning of an engagement; the attachment of each to the other is rather viewed as an object already completed, than as one which marriage is to confirm more closely. But the companion for life is not always chosen from the purest motive; she is selected, perhaps, because she is admired by other men, rather than because she possesses in an eminent degree those peculiar qualties which are likely to constitute the individual happiness of the man who chooses her. Vanity usurps the place of affection; and indolence swallows up the judgment. Not happiness, but some easy substitute for happiness is pursued; and a choice which may excite envy, rather than produce satisfaction, is adopted as the means of effecting it.

The pair, not *matched but joined*, set out separately with their independent and individual pursuits. Whether it made a part of their original plan or not, that they should be indispensably necessary to each other's comfort, the sense of this necessity, probably not very strong at first, rather diminishes than increases by time; they live so much in the world, and so little together, that to stand well with their *own set* continues the favourite project of each; while to stand well with each other is considered as an under part of the plot in the drama of life. Whereas, did they start in the conjugal race with the fixed idea that they were to look to each other for their chief worldly happiness, not only principle, but prudence, and even selfishness, would convince them of the necessity of sedulously cultivating each other's esteem and affection as the grand means of promoting that happiness. But vanity, and the desire of flattery and applause, still continue to operate. Even after the husband is brought to feel a perfect indifference for his wife, he still likes to see her decorated in a style which may serve to justify his choice. He encourages her to set off her person, not so much for his own gratification, as that his self-love may be flattered, by her continuing to attract the admiration of those whose opinion is the standard by which he measures his fame, and which fame is to stand him in the stead of happiness. Thus is she necessarily exposed to the two-fold temptation of being at once neglected by her husband, and exhibited as an object of attraction to other men. If she escape this complicated danger, she will be indebted for her preservation not to his prudence, but to her own principles.

In some of these modish marriages, instead of the decorous neatness, the pleasant intercourse, and the mutual warmth of communication of the once social dinner; the late and uninteresting meal is commonly hurried over by the languid and slovenly pair, that the one may have time to dress for his club, and the other for her party. And in these cold abstracted *tetes-a-tetes*, they often take as little pains to entertain each other, as if the one was precisely the only human being in the world in whose eyes the other did not feel it necessary to appear agreeable.

Now if these young, and perhaps really amiable persons could struggle against the imperious tyranny of fashion, and contrive to pass a little time together, so as to get acquainted with each other; and if each would live in the lively and conscientious exercise of those talents and attractions which they sometimes know how to produce on occasions not *quite* so justifiable; they would, I am persuaded, often find out each other to be very agreeable people. And both of them, delighted and delighting, receiving and bestowing happiness, would no longer be driven to the necessity of perpetually escaping from home as from the only scene which offers no possible materials for pleasure. The steady and growing attachment, improved by unbounded confidence and mutual interchange of sentiments; judgment ripening, and experience strengthening that esteem which taste and inclination first inspired; each party studying to promote the eternal as well as temporal happiness of the other; each correcting the errors, improving the principles and confirming the faith of the beloved object; this would enrich the feeling heart with gratifications which the insolvent world has not to bestow: such an heart would compare its interesting domestic scenes with the vapid pleasures of public resort, till it would fly to its own home, not from necessity but from taste; not from custom, but choice; not from duty, but delight.

It may seem a contradiction to have asserted, that beings of all ages, tempers and talents, should with such unremitting industry follow up any way of life, if they did not find some enjoyment in it: yet I appeal to the bosoms of these incessant hunters in the chase of pleasure, whether they are really happy. No:—in the full tide and torrent of diversion, in the full blaze of gayety and splendor,

> The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy?

But there is an anxious restlessness excited by the pursuit, which, if not interesting, is bustling. There is the dread, and partly the discredit, of being suspected of having one hour unmortgaged, not only to successive, but contending engagements; this it is, and not the pleasure of the engagement itself, which is the object—There is an agitation in the arrangements which imposes itself on the vacant heart for happiness. There is a tumult kept up in the spirits which is a busy though treacherous substitute for comfort.—The multiplicity of solicitations sooths vanity. The very regret that they cannot be all accepted has its charms: for dignity is flattered because refusal implies importance, and pre-engagement intimates celebrity. Then there is the joy of being invited when others are neglected; the triumph of showing our less modish friend that we are going where she cannot come; and the feigned regret at being *obliged* to go, assumed before her who is half wild at being obliged to stay away.—There is the secret art of exciting envy in the very act of bespeaking compassion; and of challenging respect by representing their engagements as duties, oppressive indeed but indispensable.—These are some of the supplemental shifts for happiness with which Vanity contrives to feed her hungry followers, too eager to be nice.*

* The precaution which is taken against the possibility of being unengaged by the long interval between

In the succession of open houses, in which pleasure is to be started and pursued on any given night, the actual place is never taken into the account of enjoyment: the scene of which is always supposed to lie in any place where her votaries happen not to be. Pleasure has no present tense: but in the house which her pursuers have just quitted, and in the house to which they are just hastening, a stranger might conclude the slippery goddess had really fixed her throne, and that her worshippers considered the existing scene, which they seem compelled to suffer, but from which they are eager to escape, as really detaining them from some positive joy to which they are flying in the next crowd; till, if he met them there, he would find the component parts of each precisely the same. He would hear the same stated phrases interrupted, not answered, by the same stated replies, the unfinished sentence 'driven adverse to the winds,' by pressing multitudes; the same warm regret mutually exchanged by two *friends* (who had expressly denied to each other all the winter) that they had not met before; the same soft and smiling sorrow at being *torn away* from each other now; the same avowed anxiety to renew the meeting, with perhaps the same secret resolution to avoid it. He would hear described with the same pathetic earnestness the difficulties of getting into this house, and the dangers of getting out of the last! the perilous retreat of former nights, effected amidst the shock of chariots, and the clang of contending coachmen! a retreat indeed effected with a skill and peril little inferior to that of the *ten thousand*, and detailed with far juster triumph: for that which happened only once in a life to the Grecian hero, occurs to these British heroines every night. There is one point of resemblance, indeed, between them, in which the comparison fails; for the commander with a *mauvaise honte* at which a true female veteran would blush, is remarkable for never *naming himself*.

With 'mysterious reverence' I forbear to descant on those serious and interesting rites, for the more august and solemn celebration of which, Fashion nightly convenes these splendid myriads to her more sumptuous temples. Rites! which, when engaged in with due devotion, absorb the whole soul, and call every passion into exercise, except indeed those of love, and peace, and kindness, and gentleness. Inspiring rites! which stimulate fear, rouse hope, kindle zeal, quicken dulness, sharpen discernment, exercise memory, inflame curiosity! Rites! in short, in the due performance of which all the energies and attentions, all the powers and abilities, all the abstraction and exertion, all the diligence and devotedness, all the sacrifice of time, all the contempt of ease, all the neglect of sleep, all the oblivion of care, all the risks of fortune (half of which, if directed to their true objects, would change the very face of the world) all these are concentrated to one point; a point in which the wise and the weak, the learned and the ignorant, the fair and the frightful, the sprightly and the dull, the rich and the poor, the patrician and the plebian, meet in one common and uniform equality; an equality as religiously respected in these solemnities, in which all distinctions are levelled at a blow (and of which the very spirit therefore is democratical) as it is combatted in all other instances.

Behold four kings, in majesty rever'd,
With hoary whiskers and a forked beard
And four fair queens, whose hands sustain a flow'r,
The expressive emblem of their softer pow'r:
Four knaves in garbs succint, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And party-colour'd troops, a shining train,
Drawn forth to combat on the velvet plain.*

CHAP. XVIII.

On public amusements.

It is not proposed to enter the long contested field of controversy as to the individual amusements which may be considered as safe and lawful for those women of the higher class who make a strict profession of Christianity. The judgment they will be likely to form for themselves on the subject, and the plan they will consequently adopt, will depend much on the clearness or obscurity of their religious views, and on the greater or less progress they have made in their Christian course. It is in their choice of amusements that you are able, in some measure to get acquainted with the real dispositions of mankind. In their *business*, in the leading employments of life, their path is in a good degree chalked out for them: there is in this respect a sort of general character; wherein the greater part, more or less, must coincide. But in their *pleasures* the choice is voluntary, the taste is self-directed, the propensity is independent; and of course the habitual state, the genuine bent and bias of the temper, are most likely to be seen in those pursuits which every person is at liberty to choose for himself.

When a truly religious principle shall have acquired such a degree of force as to produce that conscientious and habitual improvement of time before recommended, it will discover itself by an increasing indifference and even deadness to those pleasures which are interesting to the world at large. A woman under the predominating influence of such a principle, will begin to discover that the same thing which in itself is innocent may yet be comparatively wrong. She will begin to feel that there are many amusements and employments which, though they have nothing censurable in themselves, yet if they be allowed to intrench on hours which ought to be dedicated to still better purposes; or if they are protracted to an undue length; or above all, if by softening and relaxing her mind and dissipating her spirits, they so indispose her for better pursuits as to render subsequent duties a burden, they become in that case clearly wrong for her, whatever they may be for others. Now as temptations of this sort are the peculiar dangers of better kind of characters, the sacrifice of such little gratifications as may *have no great*

* Rape of the Lock

the invitation and the period of its accomplishment, reminds us of what historians remark of the citizens of ancient Crotona, who used to send their invitations a year before the time, that the guests might prepare both their dress and their appetite for the visit.

harm in them, come in among the daily calls to self-denial in a Christian.

The fine arts, for instance, polite literature, elegant society, these are among the lawful, and liberal, and becoming recreations of higher life; yet if even these be cultivated to the neglect or exclusion of severer duties; if they interfere with serious studies, or disqualify the mind for religious exercises, it is an intimation that they have been too much indulged, and under such circumstances, it might be the part of Christian circumspection to inquire if the time devoted to them ought not to be abridged. Above all, a tender conscience will never lose sight of one safe rule of determining in all doubtful cases: if the point be so nice that though we hope upon the whole there *may* be no harm in engaging in it, we may at least be always quite sure that there *can* be no harm in letting it alone. The adoption of this simple rule would put a period to much unprofitable casuistry.

The principle of being responsible for the use of time once fixed in the mind, the conscientious Christian will be making a continual progress in the great art of turning time to account. In the first stages of her religion she will have abstained from pleasures which began a *little* to wound the conscience, or which assumed a questionable shape; but she will probably have abstained with regret, and with a secret wish that conscience *could* have permitted her to keep well with pleasure and religion too. But you may discern in her subsequent course that she has reached a more advanced stage, by her beginning to neglect even such pleasures or employments as have no moral turpitude in them, but are merely what are called innocent. This relinquishment arises, not so much from her feeling still more the restraints of religion, as from the improvement in her religious taste. Pleasures cannot now attach her merely from being innocent, unless they are likewise interesting, and to be interesting they must be consonant to her superinduced views. She is not contented to spend a large portion of her time harmlessly, it must be spent profitably also. Nay, if she be indeed earnestly 'pressing towards the mark,' it will not be even enough for her that her present pursuit be good if she be convinced that it might be still better. Her contempt of ordinary enjoyments will increase in a direct proportion to her increased relish for those pleasures which religion enjoins and bestows. So that at length if it were possible to suppose that an angel could come down to take off as it were the interdict, and to invite her to resume all the pleasures she had renounced, and to resume them with complete impunity; she would reject the invitation, because, from an improvement in her spiritual taste, she would despise those delights from which she had at first abstained through fear. Till her will and affections come heartily to be engaged in the service of God, the progress will not be comfortable; but when once they are so engaged, the attachment to this service will be cordial, and her heart will not desire to go back and toil again in the drudgery of the world. For her religion has not so much given her a new creed, as a new heart, and a new life.

As her views are become new, so her tempers, dispositions, tastes, actions, pursuits, choice of company, choice of amusements, are new also; her employment of time is changed, her turn of conversation is altered; 'old things are passed away, all things are become new.' In dissipated and worldly society, she will seldom fail to feel a sort of uneasiness, which will produce one of these two effects; she will either, as proper seasons present themselves, struggle hard to introduce such subjects as may be useful to others, or, supposing that she finds herself unable to effect this, she will as far as she prudently can, absent herself from all unprofitable kind of society. Indeed her manner of conducting herself under these circumstances may serve to furnish her with a test of her own sincerity For while people are contending for a little more of this amusement, and pleading for a little extension of that gratification, and fighting in order that they may hedge in a little more territory to their pleasure ground, they are exhibiting a kind of evidence against themselves, that they are not yet 'renewed in the spirit of their mind.'

It has been warmly urged as an objection to certain religious books, and particularly against a recent work of high worth and celebrity, by a distinguished layman,* that they have set the standard of self-denial higher than reason or even than Christianity requires. The works do indeed elevate the general tone of religion to a higher pitch than is quite convenient to those who are at infinite pains to construct a comfortable and comprehensive plan which shall unite the questionable pleasures of this world with the promised happiness of the next. I say it has been sometimes objected, even by those readers who, on the whole, greatly admire the particular work alluded to, that it is unreasonably strict in the preceptive and prohibitory parts; and especially that it individually and specifically forbids certain fashionable amusements, with a severity not to be found in the Scriptures; and is scrupulously rigid in condemning diversions against which nothing is said in the New Testament. Each objector, however, is so far reasonable, as only to beg quarter for her own favourite diversion, and generously abandons the defence of those in which she herself has no particular pleasure.

But these objectors do not seem to understand the true genius of Christianity. They do not consider that it is the character of the gospel to exhibit a scheme of principles, of which it is the tendency to infuse such a spirit of holiness as must be utterly incompatible, not only with customs decidedly vicious, but with the very spirit of worldly pleasure. They do not consider that Christianity is neither a table of ethics, nor a system of opinions, nor a bundle of rods to punish, nor an exhibition of rewards to allure, nor a scheme of restraints to terrify, nor merely a code of laws to restrict; but it is a new principle infused into the heart by the word and the Spirit of God; out of which principle will inevitably grow right opinions, renewed affections, correct morals, pure desires, heavenly tempers, and holy habits, with an invariable desire of

* Practical View, &c. by Mr Wilberforce.

pleasing God, and a constant fear of offending him. A real Christian whose heart is thoroughly imbued with this principle, can no more return to the amusements of the world, than a philosopher can be refreshed with the diversions of the vulgar, or a man be amused with the recreations of a child. The New Testament is not a mere statute book: it is not a table where every offence is detailed, and its corresponding penalty annexed: it is not so much a *compilation*, as a *spirit* of laws: it does not so much prohibit every individual wrong practice, as suggest a temper and implant a general principle with which every wrong practice is incompatible. It did not, for instance, so much attack the then reigning and corrupt fashions, which were probably like the fashions of other countries, temporary and local, as it struck at the worldliness, which is the root and stock from which all corrupt fashions proceed.

The prophet Isaiah, who addressed himself more particularly to the Israelitish women, inveighed not only against vanity, luxury, and immodesty, in general; but with great propriety censured even those precise instances of each, to which the women of rank, in the particular country he was addressing, were especially addicted; nay, he enters into the minute detail* of their very personal decorations, and brings specific charges against several instances of their levity and extravagance of apparel; meaning, however, chiefly to censure the turn of character which these indicated. But the gospel of Christ, which was to be addressed to all ages, stations, and countries, seldom contains any such detailed animadversions; for though many of the censurable modes which the prophet so severely reprobated, continued probably to be still prevalent in Jerusalem in the days of our Saviour, yet how little would it have suited the universality of his mission, to have confined his preaching to such local, limited and fluctuating customs! not but there are many texts which actually *do* define the Christian conduct as well as temper, with sufficient particularity to serve as a condemnation of many practices which are pleaded for, and often to point pretty directly at them.

It would be well for those modish Christians who vindicate excessive vanity in dress, expense, and decoration, on the principle of their being mere matters of indifference, and no where prohibited in the gospel, to consider that such practices strongly mark the temper and spirit with which they are connected, and in that view are so little creditable to the Christian profession, as to furnish a just subject of suspicion against the piety of those who indulge in them.

Had Peter, on that memorable day when he added three thousand converts to the church by a single sermon, narrowed his subject to a remonstrance against this diversion, or that public place, or the other vain amusement, it might indeed have suited the case of some of the female Jewish converts who were present, but such restrictions as might have been appropriate to *them*, would probably not have applied to the cases of the Parthians and the Medes, of which his audience was partly composed· or such as might have belonged to them, would have been totally inapplicable to the Cretes and Arabians; or again, those which suited these would not have applied to the Elamites and Mesapotamians. By such partial and circumscribed addresses, his multifarious audience, composed of all nations and countries, would not have been, as we are told they were, 'pricked to the heart.' But when he preached on the broad ground of general 'repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ,' it was no wonder that they all cried out, 'What shall we do?' These collected foreigners, at their return home, must have found very different usages to be corrected in their different countries; of course a detailed restriction of the popular abuses at Jerusalem, would have been of little use to strangers returning to their respective nations. The ardent apostle, therefore, acted more consistently in communicating to them the large and comprehensive spirit of the gospel which should at once involve all their scattered and separate duties, as well as reprove all their scattered and separate corruptions, for the whole always includes a part, and the greater involves the less. Christ and his disciples, instead of limiting their condemnation to the peculiar vanities reprehended by Isaiah, embraced the very soul and principle of them all, in such exhortations as the following: 'Be ye not conformed to the world:' —'If a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him:'—'The fashion of this world passeth away.' Our Lord and his apostles, whose future unselected audience was to be made up out of the various inhabitants of the whole world, attacked the evil *heart*, out of which all those incidental, local, peculiar, and popular corruptions proceeded.

In the time of Christ and his immediate followers, the luxury and intemperance of the Romans had arisen to a pitch before unknown in the world; but as the same gospel, which its Divine Author and his disciples were then preaching to the hungry and necessitous, was afterwards to be preached to high and low, not excepting the Roman emperors themselves; the large precept, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,' was likely to be of more general use, than any separate exhortation to temperance, to thankfulness, to moderation, as to quantity or expense; which last indeed must always be left in some degree to the judgment and circumstances of the individual.

When the apostle of the Gentiles visited the 'Saints of Cæsar's household,' he could hardly fail to have heard, nor could he have heard without abhorrence, of some of the fashionable amusements in the court of Nero. He must have reflected with peculiar indignation on many things which were practised in the Circensian games; yet, instead of pruning this corrupt tree, and singling out even the inhuman gladiatorial sports for the object of his condemnation, he laid his axe to the root of all corruption, by preaching to them that Gospel of Christ of which 'he was not ashamed,' and showing to them that believed, that 'it was the power of God and the wisdom of God.' Of this gospel the great object was, to attack not one popular

* Isaiah, chap. iii.

evil, but the whole body of sin. Now the doctrine of Christ crucified, was the most appropriate means for destroying this; for by what other means could the fervid imagination of the apostle have so powerfully enforced the heinousness of sin, as by insisting on the costliness of the sacrifice which was offered for its expiation? It is somewhat remarkable, that about the very time of his preaching to the Romans, the public taste had sunk to such an excess of depravity, that the very women engaged in those shocking encounters with the gladiators.

But in the first place, it was better that the right practice of his hearers should grow out of the right principle; and next, his specifically reprobating these diversions might have had this ill-effect, that succeeding ages, seeing that they in their amusements came somewhat short of those dreadful excesses of the polished Romans, would only have plumed themselves on their own comparative superiority; and on this principle, even the bull fights of Madrid might in time have had their panegyrists. The truth is, the apostle knew that such abominable corruptions could never subsist together with Christianity, and in fact the honour of abolishing these barbarous diversions, was reserved for Constantine, the first Christian emperor.

Besides, the apostles, by inveighing against some *particular* diversions might have seemed to sanction all which they did not actually censure: and as, in the lapse of time, and the revolution of governments, customs change and manners fluctuate, had a minute reprehension of the fashions of the then existing age been published in the New Testament, that portion of scripture must in time have become obsolete, even in that very same country, when the fashions themselves should have changed. Paul and his brother apostles knew that their epistles would be the oracles of the Christian world, when these temporary diversions would be forgotten. In consequence of this knowledge, by the universal precept to avoid 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;' they have prepared a lasting antidote against the *principle* of all corrupt pleasures, which will ever remain equally applicable to the loose fashions of all ages, and of every country, to the end of the world.

Therefore, to vindicate diversions which are in themselves unchristian, on the pretended ground that they are not specifically condemned in the gospel, would be little less absurd than if the heroes of Newmarket should bring it as a proof that their periodical meetings are not condemned in scripture, because St. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, did not speak against these diversions; and that in availing himself of the Isthmian games, as a happy illustration of the Christian race, he did not drop any censure on the practice itself: a practice which was indeed as much more pure than the races of Christian Britain, as the moderation of being contented with the triumph of a crown of leaves, is superior to that criminal spirit of gambling which iniquitously enriches the victor by beggaring the competitor.

Local abuses, as we have said, were not the object of a book whose instructions were to be of universal and lasting application. As a proof of this, little is said in the gospel of the then prevailing corruption of polygamy; nothing against the savage custom of exposing children, or even against slavery; nothing expressly against suicide or duelling; the last Gothic custom, indeed, did not exist among the crimes of *Paganism*. But is there not implied a prohibition against polygamy, in the general denunciation against adultery? Is not exposing of children condemned in that charge against the Romans, that 'they were without natural affection?' Is there not a strong censure against slavery conveyed in the command, to 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you?' and against suicide and duelling, in the general prohibition against murder, which is strongly enforced and affectingly amplified by the solemn manner in which murder is traced back to its first seed of anger in the sermon on the mount?

Thus it is clear, that when Christ sent the gospel to all nations, he meant that that gospel should proclaim those prime truths, general laws, and fundamental doctrines, which must necessarily involve the prohibition of all individual, local, and inferior errors; errors which could not have been specifically guarded against, without having a distinct gospel for every country, or without swelling the divine volume into such inconvenient length as would have defeated one great end of its promulgation.* And while its leading principles are of universal application, it must always, in some measure, be left to the discretion of the preacher, and to the conscience of the hearer, to examine whether the life and habits of those who profess it, are conformable to its main spirit and design.

The same Divine Spirit which indited the Holy Scriptures, is promised to purify the hearts and renew the natures of repenting and believing Christians; and the compositions it inspired, are in some degree analogous to the workmanship it effects. It prohibited the vicious practices of the apostolical days, by prohibiting the passions and principles which render them gratifying; and still working in like manner on the hearts of real Christians, it corrects the taste which was accustomed to find its proper gratification in the resorts of vanity; and thus effectually provides for the reformation of the habits, and infuses a relish for rational and domestic enjoyments, and for whatever can administer pleasure to that spirit of peace, and love, and hope, and joy, which animates and rules the renewed heart of the true Christian.

But there is a portion of scripture which, though to a superficial reader it may seem but very remotely connected with the present subject, yet to readers of another cast, seems to settle the matter beyond controversy. In the parable of the great supper, this important truth is held out to us, that even things *good in themselves*, may be the means of our eternal ruin; by drawing our hearts from God, and causing us to make light of the offers of the gospel. One invited guest had bought an estate, another had made a purchase, equally blameless, of oxen; a third had married a wife, an act not illaudable in itself. They

* 'To the *poor* the gospel is preached,'—Luke vii. 23.

had all different reasons, none of which appeared to have any moral turpitude; but they all agree in this, *to decline the invitation to the supper.* The worldly possessions of one, the worldly business of another, and what should be particularly attended to, the love to his dearest relative, of a third, (a love by the way, not only allowed, but commanded in Scripture) were brought forward as excuses for not attending to the important business of religion. The consequence, however, was the same to all. 'None of those which were bidden shall taste of my supper.' If then things *innocent*, things *necessary*, things *laudable*, things *commanded*, become sinful, when by unseasonable or excessive indulgence, they detain the heart and affections from God, how vain will all those arguments necessarily be rendered, which are urged by the advocates for certain amusements, on the ground of their *harmlessness;* if those amusements serve (not to mention any positive evil which may belong to them) in like manner to draw away the thoughts and affections from all spiritual objects!

To conclude; when this topic happens to become the subject of conversation, instead of addressing severe and pointed attacks to young ladies on the sin of attending places of diversion, would it not be better first to endeavour to excite in them that principle of Christianity, with which such diversions seem not quite compatible; as the physician, who visits a patient in an eruptive fever, pays little attention to those spots which to the ignorant appear to be the disease, except indeed so far as they serve as indications to let him into its nature, but goes straight to the root of the malady? He attacks the fever, he lowers the pulse, he changes the system, he corrects the general habit; well knowing that if he can but restore the vital principle of health, the spots, which were nothing but symptoms, will die away of themselves.

In instructing others, we should imitate our Lord and his apostles, and not always aim our blow at each particular corruption; but making it our business to convince our pupil that what brings forth the evil fruit she exhibits, cannot be a branch of the true vine; we should thus avail ourselves of individual corruptions, for impressing her with a sense of the necessity of purifying the common source from whence they flow—a corrupt nature. Thus making it our grand business to rectify the heart, we pursue the true, the compendious, the only method of producing universal holiness.

I would, however, take leave of those amiable and not ill-disposed young persons, who complain of the rigour of human prohibitions, and declare, 'they meet with no such strictness in the Gospel,' by asking them with the most affectiouate earnestness, if they can conscientiously reconcile their nightly attendance, at every public place which they frequent, with such precepts as the following: 'Redeeming the time;'—'Watch and pray:'—'Watch, for ye know not at what time your Lord cometh:'—'Abstain from all *appearance* of evil:'—'Set your affections on things above:'—'Be ye spiritually minded:'—'Crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts!' And I would venture to offer one criterion, by which the persons in question may be enabled to decide on the positive innocence and safety of such diversions; I mean, provided they are sincere in their scrutiny and honest in their avowal. If, on their return at night from those places, they find they can retire, and 'communo with their own hearts;' if they find the love of God operating with undiminished force on their minds; if they can 'bring every thought into subjection,' and concentrate every wandering imagination; if they can soberly examine into their own state of mind—:—I do not say if they can do all this perfectly and without distraction: (for who almost can do this at any time?) but if they can do it with the same *degree* of seriousness, pray with the same *degree* of fervour, and renounce the world in as great a *measure* as at other times; and if they can lie down with a peaceful consciousness of having avoided in the evening, 'that temptation' which they had prayed not to be 'led into' in the morning, they may then more reasonably hope that all is well, and that they are not speaking false peace to their hearts. —Again, if we cannot beg the blessing of our Maker on whatever we are going to do or to enjoy, is it not an unequivocal proof that the thing ought not to *be* done or enjoyed? On all the rational enjoyments of society, on all healthful and temperate exercise, on the delights of friendship, arts, and polished letters, on the exquisite pleasures resulting from the enjoyment of rural scenery; and the beauties of nature; on the innocent participation of these we may ask the divine favour—for the sober enjoyment of these we may thank the divine beneficence: but do we feel equally disposed to invoke blessings or return praises for gratifications found (to say no worse) in levity, in vanity, and waste of time?—If these tests were fairly used; if these experiments were honestly tried; if these examinations were conscientiously made, may we not, without offence, presume to ask —*Could* our numerous places of public resort, *could* our ever-multiplying scenes of more select but not less dangerous diversion, nightly overflow with an excess hitherto unparalleled in the annals of pleasure?*

* If I might presume to recommend a book which of all others exposes the insignificance, vanity, littleness and emptiness of the world, I should not hesitate to name Mr. Law's Serious call to a devout and holy life.' Few writers except Pascal, have directed so much acuteness of reasoning and so much pointed wit to this object. He not only makes the reader afraid of a worldly life on account of its sinfulness, but ashamed of it on account of its folly. Few men perhaps have had a deeper insight into the human heart, or have more skilfully probed its corruptions: yet on points of doctrine his views do not seem to be just; and his disquisitions are often unsound and fanciful, so that a *general* perusal of his works would neither be profitable nor intelligible. To a fashionable woman immersed in the vanities of life, or to a busy man overwhelmed with its cares, I know no book so applicable, or likely to exhibit with equal force the vanity of the shadows they are pursuing. But even in this work, Law is not a safe guide to evangelical light; and in many of his others he is highly visionary and whimsical: and I have known some excellent persons who were first led by this admirable genius to see the wants of their own hearts, and the utter insufficiency of the world to fill up the craving void, who, though they became eminent for piety and self-denial, have had their usefulness abridged; and whose minds have contracted something of a monastic severity by an unqualified perusal of Mr. Law. True Christianity does not call on us to starve our bodies, but our corruptions

CHAP. XIX.

A worldly spirit incompatible with the spirit of Christianity.

Is it not whimsical to hear such complaints against the strictness of religion as we are frequently hearing, from the beings who are voluntarily pursuing, as has been shown in the preceding chapters, a course of life which fashion makes infinitely more severe. How really burdensome would Christianity be if she enjoined such sedulous application, such unremitting labours, such a succession of fatigues! If religion commanded such hardships and self-denial, such days of hurry, such evenings of exertion, such nights of broken rest, such perpetual sacrifices of quiet, such exile from family delights, as *fashion* imposes, then indeed the service of Christianity would no longer merit its present appellation of being a '*reasonable* service:' then the name of perfect slavery might be justly applied to that which we are told in the beautiful language of our church, is 'a service of perfect freedom;' a service the great object of which is 'to deliver us from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.'

A worldly temper, by which I mean a disposition to prefer worldly pleasures, worldly satisfactions, and worldly advantages, to the immortal interests of the soul; and to let worldly considerations actuate us instead of the dictates of religion in the concerns of ordinary life; a worldly temper, I say, is not, like almost any other fault, the effect of passion or the consequence of surprise, when the heart is off its guard. It is not excited incidentally by the operation of external circumstances on the infirmity of nature: but it is the vital spirit, the essential soul, the living principle of evil. It is not so much an act, as a state of being; not so much an occasional complaint, as a tainted constitution of mind. It does not always show itself in extraordinary excesses, it has no perfect intermission. Even when it is not immediately tempted to break out into overt and specific acts, it is at work within, stirring up the heart to disaffection against holiness, and infusing a kind of moral disability to whatever is intrinsically right. It infects and depraves all the powers and faculties of the soul; for it operates on the understanding, by blinding it to whatever is spiritually good; on the will, by making it averse from God; on the affections, by disordering and sensualizing them; so that one may almost say to those who are under the supreme dominion of this spirit, what was said to the hosts of Joshua, 'Ye *cannot* serve the Lord.'

The worldliness of mind is not at all commonly understood, and for the following reason:—People suppose that in this world, our chief business is with the things of this world, and that to conduct the business of this world well, that is conformably to moral principles, is the chief substance of moral and true goodness. Religion, if introduced at all into the system, only makes it occasional, and if I may so speak its holyday appearance. To bring religion into every thing, is thought incompatible with the due attention to the things of this life. And so it would be, if by religion were meant *talking* about religion. The phrase, therefore, is: 'We cannot always be praying; we must mind our business and our social duties as well as our devotion.' Worldly business being thus subjected to worldly, though in some degree moral, maxims, the mind during the conduct of business grows worldly; and a continually increasing worldly spirit dims the sight and relaxes the moral principle on which the affairs of the world are conducted, as well as indisposes the mind for all the exercises of devotion.

But this temper as far as relates to *business*, so much assumes the semblance of goodness, that those who have not the right views are apt to mistake the carrying on the affairs of life on a tolerable moral principle, for religion. They do not see that the evil lies not in their so carrying on business, but in their not carrying on the things of this life in subserviency to the things of eternity; in their not carrying them on with the unintermitting idea of responsibility. The evil does not lie in their not being always on their knees, but in their not bringing their religion from the closet into the world: in their not bringing the spirit of Sunday's devotions into the transactions of the week: in not transforming their religion from a dry, and speculative, and imperative system, into a lively, and influential, and unceasing principle of action.

Though there are, blessed be God! in the most exalted stations, women who adorn their Christian profession by a consistent conduct; yet are there not others who are labouring hard to unite the irreconcileable interests of earth and heaven? who, while they will not relinquish one jot of what *this* world has to bestow, yet by no means renounce their hopes of a better? who do not think it unreasonable that their indulging in the fullest possession of present pleasure should interfere with the most certain reversion of future glory? who, after living in the most unbounded gratification of ease, vanity, and luxury, fancy that heaven must be attached of course to a life of which Christianity is the outward profession and which has not been stained by any flagrant or dishonourable act of guilt.

Are there not many who, while they entertain a respect for Religion (for I address not the unbelieving or the licentious) while they believe its truths, observe its forms, and would be shocked not to be thought religious are yet immersed in this life of disqualifying worldliness? who, though they make a conscience of going to the public worship once on a Sunday; and are scrupulously observant of the other rites of the church, yet hesitate not to give up all the rest of their time to the very same pursuits and pleasures which occupy the hearts and engross the lives of those looser characters whose enjoyment is not obstructed by any dread of a future account? and who are acting on the wise principle of the 'children of the world,' in making the most of the present

As the mortified apostle of the holy and self-denying Baptist, preaching repentance because the kingdom of Heaven is at hand, Mr. Law has no superior. As a preacher of salvation on spiritual grounds I would follow other guides.

state of being from the conviction that there is no other to be expected.

It must be owned, indeed, that faith in unseen things is at times lamentably weak and defective even in the truly pious; and that it is so, is the subject of their grief and humiliation. O! how does the real Christian take shame in the coldness of his belief, in the lowness of his attainments! How deeply does he lament that 'when he would do good, evil is present with him!'—'that the life he now lives in the flesh, is' not, in the degree it ought to be, 'by faith in the Son of God!' Yet one thing is clear; however weak his belief may seem to be, it is evident that his actions are principally governed by it; he evinces his sincerity to others by a life in some good degree analogous to the doctrines he professes; while to himself he has at least this conviction, that faint as his confidence may be at times, low as may be his hope, and feeble as his faith may seem, yet at the worst of times he would not exchange that faint measure of trust and hope for all the actual pleasures and possessions of his most splendid acquaintance; and what is a proof of his sincerity he never seeks the cure of his dejection, where they seek theirs, in this world, but in God.

But as to the faith of worldly persons, however strong it may be in speculation, however orthodox their creed, however stout their profession, we cannot help fearing that it is a little defective in sincerity: for if there were in their minds a full persuasion of the truth of Revelation, and of the eternal bliss it promises, would it not be obvious to them that there must be more diligence for its attainment? We discover great ardour in carrying on worldly projects, because we believe the good which we are pursuing is real, and will reward the trouble of the pursuit; we believe *that* good is to be attained by diligence, and we prudently proportion our earnestness to this conviction; when therefore we see persons professing a lively faith in a better world, yet labouring little to obtain an interest in it, can we forbear suspecting that their belief, not only of their own title to eternal happiness but of eternal happiness itself, is not well grounded; and that, if they were to 'examine themselves truly,' and to produce the principle of such a relaxed morality, the faith would be found to be much of a piece with the practice?

The objections which disincline the world to make present sacrifices of pleasure, with a view to obtaining eternal happiness, are such as apply to all the ordinary concerns of life. That is, men object chiefly to a religious course as tending to rob them of that actual pleasure which is within their reach, for the sake of a remote enjoyment. They object to giving up the seen good for the unseen. But do not almost all the transactions of life come under the same description?—Do we not give up present ease and renounce much indulgence in order to acquire a future? Do we not part with our current money for the reversion of an estate, which we know it will be a long time before we can possess? Nay, do not the most worldly often submit to an immediate inconvenience, by reducing their present income, in order to insure to themselves a larger capital for their future subsistence?

Now, 'Faith, which is the substance of things hoped for,' is meant to furnish the soul with present support, while it satisfies it as to the security on which it has lent itself; just as a man's bonds and mortgages assure him that he is really rich, though he has not all the money in hand ready to spend at the moment. Those who truly believe the Bible, must in the same manner be content to live on its promises, by which God has as it were pledged himself for their future blessedness.

Even that very spirit of enjoyment which leads the persons in question so studiously to possess themselves of the qualifications necessary for the pleasures of the present scene, that understanding and good sense, which leads them to acquire such talents as may enable them to relish the resorts of gayety here; that very spirit should induce those who are really looking for a future state of happiness, to wish to acquire something of the taste, and temper, and talents, which may be considered as qualifications for the enjoyment of that happiness. The neglect of doing this must proceed from one of these two causes; either they must think their present course a safe and proper course; or they must think that death is to produce some sudden and surprising alteration in the human character. But the office of death is to transport us to a new state, not to transform us to a new nature; the stroke of death is intended to effect our deliverance out of this world, and our introduction into another; but it is not likely to effect any sudden and wonderful, much less a total change in our hearts or our tastes; so far from this that we are assured in Scripture, 'that he that is filthy will be filthy still, and he that is holy will be holy still.' Though we believe that death will completely cleanse the holy soul from its remaining pollutions, that it will exchange defective sanctification into perfect purity, entangling temptation into complete freedom; suffering and affliction into health and joy; doubts and fears into perfect security, and oppressive weariness into everlasting rest; yet there is no magic in the wand of death which will convert an unholy soul into a holy one. And it is awful to reflect, that such tempers as have the allowed predominance here will maintain it forever; that such as the will is when we close our eyes upon the things of time, such it will be when we open them on those of eternity. The mere act of death no more fits us for heaven, than the mere act of the mason who pulls down our old house fits us for a new one. If we die with our hearts running over with the love of the world, there is no promise to lead us to expect that we shall rise with them full of the love of God. Death indeed will show us to ourselves such as we are, but will not make us such as we are not: and it will be too late to be acquiring self-knowledge when we can no longer turn it to any account, but that of tormenting ourselves. To illustrate this truth still farther by an allusion familiar to the persons I address: the drawing up the curtain at the theatre, though it serve to introduce us to the entertainments behind it, does not create in us any new faculties to ur

derstand or to relish those entertainments: these must have been already acquired; they must have been provided beforehand, and brought with us to the place, if we would relish the pleasure of the place; for the entertainment can only operate on that taste we carry to it. It is too late to be acquiring when we ought to be enjoying.

That spirit of prayer and praise, those dispositions of love, meekness, 'peace, quietness, and assurance;' that indifference to the fashion of a world which is passing away; that longing after deliverance from sin; that desire of holiness, together with all 'the fruits of the Spirit' here, must surely make some part of our qualification for the enjoyment of a world, the pleasures of which are all spiritual. And who can conceive any thing comparable to the awful surprise of a soul long immersed in the indulgences of vanity and pleasure, yet all the while lulled by the self-complacency of a religion of mere forms; who, while it counted upon heaven as a thing of course; had made no preparation for it! Who can conceive any surprise comparable to that of such a soul on shutting its eyes on a world of sense, of which all the objects and delights were so congenial to its nature, and opening them on a world of spirits of which all the characters of enjoyment are of a nature new, unknown, surprising, and specifically different? pleasures more inconceivable to its apprehension and more unsuitable to its taste, than the gratifications of one sense are to the organs of another, or than the most exquisite works of art and genius to absolute imbecility of mind.

While we would with deep humility confess that we cannot purchase heaven by any works or right dispositions of our own; while we gratefully acknowledge that it must be purchased for us by 'Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his blood;' yet let us remember that we have no reason to expect we could be capable of enjoying the pleasures of a heaven so purchased without heavenly mindedness.

When those persons who are apt to expect as much comfort from religion as if their hearts were not full of the world, now and then in a fit of honesty or low spirits, complain that Christianity does not make them as good and happy as they were led to expect from that assurance, that 'great peace have they who love the law of God,' and that 'they who wait on him shall want no manner of thing that is good;' when they lament that the paths of religion are not those 'paths of pleasantness' which they were led to expect; their case reminds one of a celebrated physician, who used to say that the reason why his prescriptions, which commonly cured the poor and the temperate, did so little good among his rich and luxurious patients, was, that while he was labouring to remove the disease by medicines, of which they only took drams, grains, and scruples, they were inflaming it by a multiplicity of injurious aliments, which they swallowed by ounces, pounds, and pints.

These fashionable Christians should be reminded, that there was no half engagement made for them at their baptism; that they are not partly their own, and partly their Redeemer's. 'He that is bought with a price,' is the sole property of the purchaser. Faith does not consist merely in submitting the opinions of the understanding, but the dispositions of the heart religion is not a sacrifice of sentiments, but of affections; it is not the tribute of fear extorted from a slave, but the voluntary homage of love paid by a child.

Neither does a Christian's piety consist in living in retreat, and railing at the practices of the world, while perhaps her heart is full of the spirit of that world at which she is railing: but it consists in *subduing* the spirit of the world resisting its temptations, and opposing its practices, even while her duty obliges her to live in it.

Nor is the spirit or the love of the world confined to those only who are making a figure in it; nor are its operations bounded by the precincts of the metropolis nor by the limited regions of first-rate rank and splendour. She who inveighs against the luxury and excesses of London, and solaces herself in her own comparative sobriety, because her more circumscribed fortune compels her to take up with the second-hand pleasures of successive watering-places, if she pursue these pleasures with avidity, is governed by the same spirit: and she whose still narrower opportunities stint her to the petty diversions of her provincial town, if she be busied in swelling and enlarging her smaller sphere of vanity and idleness, however she may comfort herself with her own comparative goodness, by railing at the unattainable pleasures of the watering place, or the still more unapproachable joys of the capital, is governed by the same spirit; for she who is as vain as dissipated, and as extravagant as actual circumstances admit, would be as vain, as dissipated, and as extravagant as the gayest objects of her invective actually are, if she could change places with them. It is not merely by what we do that we can be sure the spirit of the world has no dominion over us, but by fairly considering what we should probably do if more were in our power.

The worldly Christian, if I may be allowed such a palpable contradiction in terms, must not imagine that she acquits herself of her religious obligations by paying in her mere weekly oblation of prayer. There is no covenant by which communion with God is restricted to an hour or two on the Sunday: she must not imagine she acquits herself by setting apart a few particular days in the year for the exercise of a periodical devotion, and then flying back to the world as eagerly as if she were resolved to repay herself with a large interest for her short fit of self-denial; the stream of pleasure running with a more rapid current, from having been interrupted by this forced obstruction. And the avidity with which we have seen certain persons of a still less correct character than the class we have been considering, return to a whole year's carnival, after the self imposed penance of a passion week, gives a shrewd intimation that they considered the temporary abstraction less as an act of penitence for the past, than as a purchase of indemnity for the future. Such bareweight Protestants prudently condition for retaining the Popish doctrine of indulgences, which they buy not indeed of the late spiritual court of Rome

but of that secret self-acquitting judge, which ignorance of its own turpitude, and of the strict requirements of the divine law, has established supreme in the tribunal of every unrenewed heart.

But the practice of self-examination is impeded by one clog, which renders it peculiarly inconvenient to the gay and worldly: for the royal prophet (who was, however, himself as likely as any one to be acquainted with the difficulties peculiar to greatness) has annexed as a concomitant to 'communing with our own heart,' that we should 'be *still*.' Now this clause of the injunction annihilates the other, by rendering it incompatible with the present habits of fashionable life, of which *stillness* is clearly not one of the constituents. It would, however, greatly assist those who do not altogether decline the practice, if they were to establish into a rule the habit of detecting certain suspicious practices, by realizing them, as it were, to their own minds, through the means of drawing them out in detail, and of placing them before their eyes clothed in language; for there is nothing that so effectually exposes an absurdity which has hitherto passed muster for want of such an inquisition, as giving it shape, and form, and body. How many things which now silently work themselves into the habit, and pass current without inquiry, would then shock us by their palpable inconsistency! Who, for instance, could stand the sight of such a debtor and creditor account as this:—*Item;* so many card-parties, balls, and operas due to me in the following year, for so many manuals, prayers, and meditations paid beforehand during the last six days in lent? With how much indignation soever this suggestion may be treated; whatever offence may be taken at such a combination of the serious and the ludicrous; however we may revolt at the idea of such a composition with our Maker, when put into so many words; does not the habitual course of some go near to realize such a statement?

But 'a Christian's *race*,' as a venerable prelate* observes, 'is not to run at so many *heats*,' but is a constant course, a regular progress by which we are continually gaining ground upon sin, and approaching nearer to the kingdom of God.

Am I then ridiculing this pious seclusion of contrite sinners? Am I then jesting at that 'troubled spirit' which God has declared is his 'acceptable sacrifice?' God forbid! Such reasonable retirements have been the practice, and continue to be the comfort of some of the sincerest Christians; and *will* continue to be resorted to as long as Christianity, that is, as long as the world shall last. It is well to call off the thoughts, even for a short time, not only from sin and vanity, but even from the lawful pursuits of business and the laudable concerns of life; and at times, to annihilate, as it were, the space which divides us from eternity:

'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven,
And how they might have borne more welcome news.

Yet to those who seek a short annual retreat as a mere form; who dignify with the idea a religious retirement, a week in which it is rather unfashionable to be seen in town; who retire with unabated resolution to return to the maxims, the pleasures, and the spirit of that world which they do but mechanically renounce; is it not to be feared that this short secession, which does not even pretend to subdue the principle, but merely suspends the act, may only serve to set a keener edge on the appetite for the pleasures they are quitting? Is it not to be feared that the bow may fly back with redoubled violence from having been unnaturally bent? that by varnishing over a life of vanity with the transient externals of a formal and temporary piety they may the more dangerously skin over the troublesome soreness of a tender conscience, by laying

This flattering unction to the soul?

And is it not awfully to be apprehended that such devotions come in among those vain oblations which the Almighty has declared he will not accept? For, is it not among the delusions of a worldly piety, to consider Christianity as a thing which cannot, indeed, safely be omitted, but which is to *be got over;* a certain quantity of which is, as it were, to be taken in the lump, with long intervals between the repetitions? Is it not among its delusions to consider religion as imposing a set of hardships, which *must* be occasionally encountered, in order to procure a peaceable enjoyment of the long respite?—a short penalty for a long pleasure? that these severer conditions thus fulfilled, the acquitted Christian having paid the annual demand of a rigorous requisition, she may now lawfully return to her natural state; the old reckoning being adjusted, she may begin a new score, and receive the reward of her punctual obedience, in the resumed indulgence of those gratifications which she had for a short time laid aside as a hard task to please a hard master; but this task performed and the master appeased, the mind may discover its natural bent, in joyfully returning to the objects of its real choice? Whereas, it is not clear on the other hand, that if the religious exercises had produced the effect which it is the nature of true religion to produce, the penitent *could* not return with her own genuine alacrity to those habits of the world, from which the pious weekly manuals through which she has been labouring with the punctuality of an almanac as to the day, and the accuracy of a bead-roll as to the number, were intended by the devout authors to rescue their reader?

I am far from insinuating, that this literal sequestration ought to be prolonged throughout the year, or that all the days of business are to be made equally days of solemnity and continued meditation. This earth is a place in which a much larger portion of a common Christian's time must be assigned to action than to contemplation. Women of the higher class were not sent into the world to shun society, but to improve it. They were not designed for the cold and visionary virtues of solitudes and monasteries, but for the amiable, and endearing, and useful offices of social life: they are of a religion which does not impose idle austerities, but en-

* Bishop Hopkins.

joins active duties; a religion which demands the most benevolent actions, and which requires them to be sanctified by the purest motives; a religion which does not condemn its followers to the comparatively easy task of seclusion *from* the world, but assigns them the more difficult province of living uncorrupted *in it;* a religion which, while it forbids them 'to follow a multitude to do *evil*,' includes in that prohibition the sin of doing *nothing*, and which moreover enjoins them to be followers of Him 'who went about doing *good*.'

But may we not reasonably contend, that though the same sequestration is not required, yet that the same *spirit* and *temper* which we would hope is thought necessary even by those on whom we are animadverting, during the occasional humiliation, must by every real Christian be extended throughout all the periods of the year? And when that is really the case, when once the spirit of religion shall indeed govern the heart, it will not only animate her religious actions and employments, but will gradually extend itself to the chastising her conversation, will discipline her thoughts, influence her common business, restrain her indulgences, and sanctify her very pleasures.

But it seems that many, who entertain a *general* notion of Christian duty, do not consider it as of universal and unremitting obligation, but rather as a duty binding at times on all, and at all times on some. To the attention of such we would recommend that very explicit address of our Lord on the subject of self-denial, the temper directly opposed to a worldly spirit: 'And he said unto them ALL, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross DAILY.' Those who think self-denial not of *universal* obligation will observe the word *all;* and those who think the obligation not *constant*, will attend to the term *daily*. These two little words cut up by the root all the occasional religious observances grafted on a worldly life; all transient, periodical, and temporary acts of piety, which some seem willing to commute for a life of habitual thoughtlessness and vanity.

There is, indeed, scarcely a more pitiable being than one who, instead of making her religion the informing principle of all she does has only just enough to keep her in continual fear; who drudges through her stinted exercises with a superstitious kind of terror, while her general life shows that the love of holiness is not the governing principle in her heart; who seems to suffer all the pains and penalties of Christianity, but is a stranger to 'that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.' Let it not be thought a ludicrous invention, if the author hazard the producing a real illustration of these remarks, in the instance of a lady of this stamp, who returning from church on a very cold day, and remarking with a good deal of self-complacency how much she had suffered in the performance of her duty, comforted herself with emphatically adding, 'that she hoped it would *answer*.'

There is this striking difference between the real and the worldly Christian, the latter does not complain of the strictness of the divine law, but of the deficiencies of his own performance; while the worldly Christian is little troubled at his own failures, but deplores the strictness of the divine requisitions. The one wishes that God would expect less, the other prays for strength to do more. When the worldly person hears real Christians speak of their own low state, and acknowledge their extreme unworthiness, he really believes them to be worse than those who make no such humiliating confessions. He does not know that a mind which is at once deeply convinced of its own corruptions, and of the purity of the divine law, is so keenly alive to the perception of all sin, as to be humbled by the commission of such as is comparatively small, and which those who have less correct views of gospel truth, hardly allow to be sin at all. Such an one, with Job, says, 'Now mine eye *seeth* Thee.'

But there is no permanent comfort in any religion, short of that by which the diligent Christian strives that all his actions shall have the love of God for their motive, and the glory of God, as well as his own salvation, for their end; while we go about to balance our good and bad actions, one against the other, and to take comfort in the occasional predominance of the former while the cultivation of the principle from which they should spring is neglected, is not the road to all those peaceful fruits of the Spirit to which true Christianity conducts the humble and penitent believer. For, after all we can do, Christian tempers and a Christian spirit are the true criterion of a Christian character, and serve to furnish the most unequivocal test of our attainments in religion. Our doctrines may be sound, but they may not be influential; our actions may be correct, but they may want the sanctifying principle; our frames and feelings may *seem*, nay they may be devout, but they may be heightened by mere animal fervour; even if genuine, they are seldom lasting; and to many pious persons they are not given: it is therefore the Christian tempers which most infallibly indicate the sincere Christian, and best prepare him for the heavenly state.

I am aware that a better cast of characters than those we have been contemplating; that even the amiable and the well-disposed, who, while they want courage to resist what they have too much principle to think right, and too much sense to justify, will yet plead for the *palliating* system, and accuse these remarks of unnecessary rigour. They will declare 'That really they are as religious as they can be; they wish they were better: they have little satisfaction in the life they are leading, yet they cannot break with the world; they cannot fly in the face of custom; it does not become individuals like them to oppose the torrent of fashion.' Beings so interesting, abounding with engaging qualities; who not only feel the beauty of goodness, but reverence the truths of Christianity, and are awfully looking for a general judgment, we are grieved to hear lament 'that they only do as others do,' when they are perhaps themselves of such rank and importance that if they would begin to do right, others would be brought to do as they did. We are grieved to hear them indolently assert, that, 'they wish it were otherwise,' when they possess the power to *make* it

otherwise, by setting an example which they know would be followed. We are sorry to hear them content themselves with declaring, 'that they have not the courage to be singular,' when they must feel, by seeing the influence of their example in worse things, that there would be no such great singularity in piety itself, if once *they* become sincerely pious. Besides, this diffidence does not break out on other occasions. They do not blush to be quoted as the opposers of an old mode, or the inventors of a new one: nor are they equally backward in being the first to appear in a strange fashion, such an one as often excites wonder, and sometimes even offends against delicacy. Let not then diffidence be pleaded as an excuse only on occasions wherein courage would be virtue.

Will it be thought too harsh a question if we venture to ask these gentle characters who are thus entrenching themselves in the imaginary safety of surrounding multitudes, and who say, 'We only do as others do,' whether they are willing to run the tremendous risk of consequences, and *to fare as others fare*?

But while these plead the authority of fashion as a sufficient reason for their conformity to the world, one who has spoken with a paramount authority has positively said, 'Be ye *not* conformed to the world.' Nay, it is urged as the very badge and distinction by which the character opposite to the Christian is to be marked, 'that the friendship of the world is *enmity* with God.'

Temptation to conform to the world was never perhaps more irresistible than in the days which immediately preceded the Deluge; and no man could ever have pleaded the *fashion* in order to justify a criminal assimilation with the reigning manners, with more propriety than the patriarch Noah. He had the two grand and contending objects of terror to encounter which we have; the fear of ridicule, and the fear of destruction; the dread of sin, and the dread of singularity. Our cause of alarm is at least equally pressing with his; for it does not appear, even while he was actually obeying the Divine command in providing the means of his future safety, that he *saw* any actual symptoms of the impending ruin. So that in one sense *he* might have truly pleaded as an excuse for 'slackness of preparation,' that all things continued as they were from the beginning;' while many of us, though the storm is actually begun, never think of providing the refuge: it is true he was 'warned of God,' and he provided 'by faith.' But are not we also warned of God? have we not had a fuller revelation? have we not seen Scripture illustrated, prophecy fulfilling, with every awful circumstance that can either quicken the most sluggish remissness, or confirm the feeblest faith?

Besides, the patriarch's plea for following the fashion was stronger than you can produce. While you must see that many are going wrong, he saw that none were going right. 'All flesh had corrupted his way before God;' whilst, blessed be God! you have still instances enough of piety to keep you in countenance. While you lament that *the world* seduces you (for every one has a little world of his own) your world perhaps is only a petty neighbourhood, a few streets and squares; but the patriarch had really the contagion of a whole united world to resist; he had literally the example of the whole face of the earth to oppose. The 'fear of man also would have been a more pardonable fault, when the lives of the same individuals who were likely to excite respect or fear was prolonged many ages, than it can be in the short period now assigned to human life. How lamentable then that human opinion should operate so powerfully, when it is but the breath of a being so frail and so short-lived,

> That he doth cease to be,
> Ere one can say he is?

You who find it so difficult to withstand the individual allurement of modish acquaintance, would, if you had been in the patriach's case have concluded the struggle to be quite ineffectual, and sunk under the supposed fruitlessness of resistance. 'Myself,' would you not have said? 'or at most my little family of eight persons can never hope to stop this torrent of corruption; I lament the fruitlessness of opposition; I deplore the necessity of conformity with the prevailing system: but it would be a foolish presumption to hope that *one* family can effect a change in the state of the world.' In your own case, however, is it not certain to how wide an extent the hearty union of even fewer persons in such a cause might reach: at least is it nothing to what the patriarch did? was it nothing to preserve himself from the general destruction; was it nothing to deliver his own soul? was it nothing to rescue the souls of his whole family?

A wise man will never differ from the world in trifles. It is certainly a mark of a sound judgment to comply with custom whenever we safely can; such compliance strengthens our influence by reserving to ourselves the greater weight of authority on those occasions, when our conscience obliges us to differ. Those who are prudent will cheerfully conform to all the innocent usages of the world; but those who are Christians will be scrupulous in defining which are really innocent previous to their conformity to them. Not what the world, but what the Gospel calls innocent will be found at the grand scrutiny to have been really so. A discreet Christian will take due pains to be convinced he is right before he will presume to be singular: but from the instant he is persuaded the Gospel is true, and the world of course wrong, he will no longer risk his safety by following multitudes, or hazard his soul by staking it on human opinion. All our most dangerous mistakes arise from our not constantly referring our practice to the standard of Scripture, instead of the mutable standard of human estimation by which it is impossible to fix the real value of characters. For this latter standard in some cases determines those to be good who do not run all the lengths in which the notoriously bad allow themselves. The Gospel has an universal, the world has a local standard of goodness; in certain societies certain vices alone are dishonourable, such as covetousness and cowardice; while those sins of which our Saviour has said, that

they which commit them 'shall not inherit the kingdom of God,' detract nothing from the respect some persons receive. Nay, those very characters whom the Almighty has expressly and awfully declared 'He will judge,'* are received, are admired, are caressed, in that which calls itself the best company.

But to weigh our actions by one standard now, when we know they will be judged by another hereafter, would be reckoned the height of absurdity in any transctions but those which involve the interests of eternity. 'How readest thou?' is a more specific direction than any comparative view of our own habits with the habits of others: and at the final bar it will be of little avail that our actions have risen above those of bad men, if our views and principles shall be found to have been in opposition the Gospel of Christ.

Nor is *their* practice more commendable, who are ever on the watch to pick out the worst actions of good men, by way of justifying their own conduct on the comparison. The faults of the best men, 'for there is not a just man upon earth who sinneth not,' can in no wise justify the errors of the worst: and it is not invariably the example of even good men that we must take for our unerring rule of conduct: nor is it by a single action that either they or we shall be judged; for in that case who could be saved? but it is by the general prevalence of right principles and good habits and Christian tempers; by the predominance of holiness and righteousness, and temperance in the life, and by the power of humility, faith and love in the heart.

CHAP. XX.

On the leading doctrines of Christianity.—The corruption of human nature. The doctrine of redemption. The necessity of a change of heart and of the divine influences to produce that change. With a sketch of the Christian character.

The author having in this little work taken a view of the false notions often imbibed in early life from a bad education, and of their pernicious effects; and having attempted to point out the respective remedies to these; she would now draw all that has been said to a point, and declare plainly what she humbly conceives to be the source whence all these false notions and this wrong conduct really proceed: the prophet Jeremiah shall answer: 'It is because they have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.' It is an ignorance past belief of what true Christianity really is: the remedy, therefore, and the only remedy that can be applied with any prospect of success, is RELIGION, and by Religion she would be understood to mean the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It has been before hinted, that religion should be taught at an early period of life; that children should be *brought up* 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' The *manner* in which they should be taught has likewise with great plainness been suggested; that it should be done in so lively and familiar a manner as to make religion amiable, and her ways to appear, what they really are, 'ways of pleasantness.' And a slight sketch has been given of the genius of Christianity, by which her amiableness would more clearly appear. But this, being a subject of such vast importance compared with which every other subject sinks into nothing; it seems not sufficient to speak on the doctrines and duties of Christianity in *detached* parts, but it is of importance to point out, though in a brief and imperfect manner, the mutual dependence of one doctrine upon another, and the influence which these doctrines have upon the heart and life, so that the *duties* of Christianity may be seen to grow out of its *doctrines:* by which it will appear that Christian virtue differs *essentially* from pagan: it is of a quite different kind, the plant itself is different, it comes from a different root, and grows in a different soil.

It will be seen how the humbling doctrine of the corruption of human nature, which was followed from the corruption of our first parents, makes way for the bright display of redeeming love. How from the abasing thought that 'we are all as sheep going astray, every one in his own way;' that none *can* return to the Shepherd of our souls, 'except the Farther draw him:' that 'the natural man *cannot* receive the things of the Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned:' how from this humiliating view of the *helplessness*, as well as the *corruption* of human nature, we are to turn to that animating doctrine, the offer of *divine assistance*. So that, though human nature will appear from this view in a deeply degraded state, and consequently *all* have cause for humility, yet not one has cause for despair: the disease indeed is dreadful, but a physician is at hand, both able and willing to save us: though we are naturally without 'strength, our help is laid upon one that is mighty.' If the gospel discover to us our lapsed state, it discovers also the means of our restoration to the divine image and favour. It not only discovers but impresses this image; it not only gives us the description, but the attainment of this favour; and while the word of God suggests the remedy, his Spirit applies it.

We should observe then, that the doctrines of our Saviour are, if I may so speak, with a beautiful consistency, all woven into one piece. We should get such a view of their reciprocal dependence as to be persuaded that without a deep sense of our own corruptions we can never seriously believe in a Saviour, because the substantial and acceptable belief in Him must always arise from the conviction of our want of Him; that without a firm persuasion that the Holy Spirit can alone restore our fallen nature, repair the ruins of sin, and renew the image of God upon the heart, we never shall be brought to serious humble prayer for repentance and restoration; and that, without this repentance, there is no salvation: for though Christ has died for us, and consequently to him alone we must look as a Saviour, yet he has himself declared that he will save none but true penitents.

* Hebrew, xiii. 4.

On the doctrine of human corruption.

To come now to a more particular statement of these doctrines. When an important edifice is about to be erected, a wise builder will dig deep, and look well to the foundations: knowing that without this the fabric will not be likely to stand. The foundation of the Christian religion, out of which the whole structure may be said to arise, appears to be the doctrine of the fall of man from his original state of righteousness; and the corruption and helplessness of human nature, which are the consequences of this fall, and which is the natural state of every one born into the world. To this doctrine it is important to conciliate the minds, more especially of young persons, who are peculiarly disposed to turn away from it as a morose, unamiable and gloomy idea. They are apt to accuse those who are more strict, and serious of unnecessary severity, and to suspect them of thinking unjustly ill of mankind. Some of the reasons which prejudice the inexperienced against the doctrine in question appear to be the following:

Young persons themselves have seen little of the world. In pleasurable society the world puts on its most amiable appearance; and that softness and urbanity which prevail, particularly amongst persons of fashion, are liable to be mistaken for more than they are really worth. The opposition to this doctrine in the young, arises partly from ingenuousness of heart, partly from a habit of indulging themselves in favourable suppositions respecting the world, rather than of pursuing truth, which is always the grand thing to be pursued; and partly from the popularity of the tenet, *that every body is so wonderfully good!*

This error in youth has however a still deeper foundation, which is their not having a right standard of moral good and evil themselves, in consequence of their already partaking of the very corruption which is spoken of, and which, in perverting the will, darkens the understanding also; they are therefore apt to have no very strict sense of duty, or of the necessity of a right and religious motive to every act.

Moreover, young people usually do not know themselves. Not having yet been much exposed to temptation, owing to the prudent restraints in which they have been kept, they little suspect to what lengths in vice they are liable to be transported, nor how far others are actually carried who are set free from those restraints.

Having laid down these as some of the causes of error on this point, I proceed to observe on what strong grounds the doctrine itself stands.

Profane history abundantly confirms this truth: the history of the world being in fact but little else than the history of the crimes of the human race. Even though the annals of remote ages lie so involved in obscurity, that some degree of uncertainty attaches itself to many of the events recorded, yet this one melancholy truth is always clear, that most of the miseries which have been brought upon mankind, have proceeded from this general depravity.

The world we now live in furnishes abundant proof of this truth. In a world formed on the deceitful theory of those who assert the innocence and dignity of man, almost all the professions, since they would have been rendered useless by such a state of innocence, would not have existed. Without sin we may fairly presume there would have been no sickness; so that every medical professor is a standing evidence of this sad truth. Sin not only brought sickness but death into the world; consequently every funeral presents a more irrefragable argument than a thousand sermons. Had man persevered in his original integrity, there could have been no litigation, for there would be no contests about property in a world where none would be inclined to attack it. Professors of law, therefore, from the attorney who prosecutes for a trespass, to the pleader who defends a criminal, or the judge who condemns him, loudly confirm the doctrine. Every victory by sea or land should teach us to rejoice with humiliation, for conquest itself brings a terrible, though splendid attestation to the truth of the fall of man.

Even those who deny the doctrine, act universally more or less on the principle. Why do we all secure our houses with bolts, and bars, and locks? Do we take those steps to defend our lives or property from any *particular* fear; from any suspicion of *this* neighbour, or *that* servant, or the *other* invader? No—It is from a practical conviction of the common depravity; from a constant, pervading, but undefined dread of impending evil arising from the sense of general corruption. Are not prisons built, and laws enacted on the same practical principle?

But not to descend to the more degraded part of our species. Why in the fairest transaction of business is nothing executed without bonds, receipts, and notes of hand? why does not a perfect confidence in the *dignity of human nature* abolish all these securities; if not between enemies, or people indifferent to each other, yet at least between friends and kindred, and the most honourable connexions? why, but because of that universal suspicion between man and man, which, by all we see, and hear, and feel, is become interwoven with our very make? Though we do not entertain any *individual* suspicion, nay, though we have the strongest *personal* confidence, yet the acknowledged principle of conduct has this doctrine for its basis. 'I will take a receipt, though it were from my brother,' is the established voice of mankind; or as I have heard it more artfully put, by a fallacy of which the very disguise discovers the principle, 'Think every man honest, but deal with him as if you knew him to be otherwise.' And as in a state of innocence, the beasts, it is presumed, would not have bled for the sustenance of man, so their parchments would not have been wanted as instruments of his security against his fellow man.*

But the grand arguments for this doctrine must be drawn from the Holy Scriptures; and these, besides implying it almost continually

* Bishop Butler distinctly declares this truth to be evident from experience as well as Revelation, 'that this world exhibits an idea of a *Ruin*;' and *he* will hazard much who ventures to assert that Butler defended Christianity upon principles unconsonant to *reason, philosophy*, or sound experience.

expressly assert it; and that in instances too numerous to be all of them brought forward here. Of these may I be allowed to produce a few; 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.—'God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for *all flesh* had corrupted his way upon the earth. And it *repented* the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it *grieved him at his heart.*'* This is a picture of mankind *before* the flood, and the doctrine receives additional confirmation in Scripture, when it speaks of the times which followed after that tremendous judgment had taken place. The Psalms abound in lamentations on the depravity of man. 'They are *all* gone aside; there is *none* that doeth good, no not *one.*'—'In *thy* sight,' says David, addressing the Most High, 'shall *no man living* be justified.' Job, in his usual lofty strain of interrogation, asks, 'What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold the heavens are not clean in *His* sight, how much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water.'†

Nor do the Scriptures speak of this corruption as arising only from occasional temptation, or from mere extrinsic causes. The wise man tells us, that 'foolishness is bound up in the *heart of a child*,' the prophet Jeremiah assures us, 'the *heart* is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:' and David plainly states the doctrine: 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' Can language be more explicit?

The New Testament corroborates the Old. Our Lord's reproof of Peter seems to take the doctrine for granted: 'Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of *man*;' clearly intimating, that the *ways of man* are opposite to the ways of God. And our Saviour, in that affecting discourse to his disciples, observes to them that, as they were by his grace made *different* from others, therefore they must expect to be hated by those who were so unlike them. And it should be particularly observed, as another proof that the world is wicked, that our Lord considered '*the world*' as opposed to him and to his disciples. 'If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'‡ St. John, writing to his Christian church, states the same truth: 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.'

Man in his natural and unbelieving state, is likewise represented as in a state of *guilt*, and under the displeasure of Almighty God. 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him.'

Here, however, if it be objected, that the heathen who never heard of the Gospel will not assuredly be judged by it, the Saviour's answer to such curious inquirers concerning the state of others is, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' It is enough for us to believe that God, who will 'judge the world in righteousness,' will judge all men according to their opportunities. The heathen to whom he has not sent the light of the Gospel will probably not be judged by the Gospel. But with whatever mercy he may judge those who, living in a land of darkness, are without knowledge of his revealed law, *our* business is not with them, but with ourselves. It is *our* business to consider what mercy he will extend to those who, living in a Christian country, abounding with means and ordinances, where the Gospel is preached in its purity; it is *our* business to inquire how he will deal with those who shut their eyes to its beams, and who close their ears to its truths. For an unbeliever who has passed his life in the meredian of Scripture light, or for an outward but unfruitful professor of Christianity, I know not what hope the Gospel holds out.

The natural state of man is again thus described:—'The carnal mind is enmity against God! (awful thought!) for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be. So then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God.' What the apostle means by *being in the flesh*, is evident by what follows; for speaking of those whose hearts were changed by divine grace, he says, 'But ye are *not* in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;' that is, you are not now in your natural state: the change that has passed on your minds by the influence of the Spirit of God, is so great that your state may properly be called, 'being in the spirit.' It may be further observed that the same apostle, writing to the churches of Galatia, tells them, that the natural corruption of the human heart is continually opposing the Spirit of holiness which influences the regenerate. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to each other:' which passage by the way, at the same time that it proves the corruption of the heart, proves the necessity of divine influences. And the apostle, with respect to himself, freely confesses and deeply laments the workings of this corrupt principle: 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

It has been objected by some who have opposed this doctrine, that the same Scriptures which speak of mankind as being *sinners*, speak of some as being *righteous;* and hence they would argue that though this depravity of human nature may be *general*, yet it cannot be *universal*. This objection, when examined, serves only like all other objections against the truth to establish that which it was intended to destroy. For what do the Scriptures assert respecting the righteous? That there are some whose principles, views and conduct, are so different from the rest of the world, and from what theirs themselves once were, that these persons are honoured with the peculiar title of the 'sons of God.' But no where do the Scriptures assert, that even these are *sinless;* on the contrary their *faults* are frequently mentioned; and persons of this class are moreover represented as those on whom

* Genesis vi.

† Perhaps one reeson why the faults of the most eminent saints are recorded in Scripture, is to add fresh confirmation to this doctrine. If Abraham, Moses, Noah, Elijah, David, and Peter sinned, who shall we presume to say has escaped the universal taint?

‡ John, xv. 19.

a great *change* has passed: as having been formerly 'dead in trespasses and sins;' but as 'being now *called out* of darkness into light;' as '*translated* into the kingdom of God's dear Son;' as 'having *passed* from death to life.' And St. Paul put this matter past all doubt, by expressly asserting, that '*they were all* by nature the children of wrath even as others.'

It might be well to ask certain persons, who oppose the doctrine in question, and who also seem to talk as if they thought there were many sinless people in the world, how they expect that such sinless people will be saved? (though indeed to talk of an *innocent* person being *saved* involves a palpable contradiction in terms, of which those who use the expression do not seem to be aware; it is talking of curing a man already in health.) 'Undoubtedly,' such will say, 'they will be receeived into those abodes of bliss prepared for the righteous.' But be it remembered, there is but *one way* to these blissful abodes, and that is, through Jesus Christ: 'For there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved.' If we ask whom did Christ come to save? the Scripture directly answers, 'He came into the world to save *sinners*:—'His name was called Jesus, because he came to save his people *from their sins*.' When St. John was favoured with a heavenly vision, he tells us, that he beheld 'a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes:' that one of the heavenly inhabitants informed him who they were:—These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in his Temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'

We may gather from this description what these glorious and happy beings once were: they were *sinful* creatures: their robes were not *spotless*: 'They had *washed* them, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' They are likewise generally represented as having been once a *suffering* people: they came out of great tribulation. They are described as having overcome the great tempter of mankind, 'by the blood of the Lamb:'* as they who 'follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth:' as 'redeemed from among men.'† And their *employment* in the regions of bliss is a farther confirmation of the doctrine of which we are treating. —'The great multitude' &c. &c. we are told, stood and cried with a loud voice, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb!' Here we see they ascribe their salvation to Christ, and consequently their present happiness to his atoning blood. And in another of their celestial anthems, they say in like manner: 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.'*

By all this it is evident that men of any other description than *redeemed sinners* must gain admittance to heaven some other way than that which the Scriptures point out; and also that when they shall arrive there, so different will be their employment, that they must have an anthem peculiar to themselves.

Nothing is more adapted to 'the casting down of high imaginations,' and to promote humility, than this reflection, that heaven is always in Scripture pointed out not as the reward of the innocent, but as the hope of the penitent. This, while it is calculated to 'exclude boasting,' the temper the most opposite to the Gospel, is yet the most suited to afford comfort; for were heaven promised as the reward of innocence, who could attain to it? but being as it is the promised portion of faith and repentance, purchased for us by the blood of Christ, and offered to every penitent believer, who is compelled to miss it?

It is urged that the belief of this doctrine of our corruption produces many ill effects, and therefore it should be discouraged.—That it does *not* produce those ill effects, when not misunderstood or partially represented, we shall attempt to show: at the same time let it be observed, if it be really *true* we must not reject it on account of any of these supposed ill consequences. Truth may often be attended with disagreeable effects, but if it be truth it must still be pursued. If, for instance, treason should exist in a country, every one knows the disagreeable effects which will follow such a conviction; but our *not believing* such treason to exist, will not prevent such effect following it: on the contrary, our believing it may prevent the fatal consequences.

It is objected, that this doctrine debases and degrades human nature, and that finding fault with the building is only another way of finding fault with the architect. To the first part of this objection it may be remarked, that if man be really a corrupt, fallen being, it is proper to represent him as such: the fault then lies in the *man*, and not in the *doctrine*, which only states the *truth*. As to the inference which is supposed to follow, namely, that it throws the fault upon the Creator, it proceeds upon the false supposition that man's present corrupt state is the state in which he was originally created: the contrary of which is the truth. 'God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions.'

It is likewise objected, that as this doctrine must give us such a bad opinion of mankind, it must consequently produce ill-will, hatred, and suspicion. But it should be remembered, that it gives us no worse an opinion of other men than it gives us of ourselves; and such views of ourselves have a very salutary effect, inasmuch as they have a tendency to produce *humility*; and humility is not likely to produce ill-will to others, 'for only from pride cometh contention:' and as to the views it gives us of mankind, it represents us as *fellow-sufferers*; and surely the consideration that we are *companions*

* Rev xii. 14. † Rev. xiv. 4 * Rev. v. 9.

in misery is not calculated to produce hatred. The truth is, these effects, where they have actually followed, have followed from a false and partial view of the subject.

Old persons who have seen much of the world, and who have little religion, are apt to be strong in their belief of man's actual corruption; but not taking it up on Christian grounds, this belief in them shows itself in a narrow and malignant temper; in uncharitable judgment and harsh opinions, in individual suspicion, and in too general a disposition to hatred.

Suspicion and hatred also are the uses to which Rochefaucault and the other French philosophers have converted this doctrine: their acute minds intuitively found the corruption of man, and they saw it without its concomitant and correcting doctrine; they allowed man to be a depraved creature, but disallowed his high original: they found him in a low state, but did not conceive of him as having fallen from a better. They represent him rather as a brute than as an apostate; not taking into the account that his present degraded nature and depraved faculties are not his original state: that he is not such as he came out of the hands of his Creator, but such as he has been made by sin. Nor do they know that he has not even now lost all remains of his primitive dignity, all traces of his divine original, but is still capable of a restoration more glorious

Than is dreamt of in their philosophy.

Perhaps, too, they know from what they *feel* all the *evil* to which man is inclined; but they do not know, for they have not felt, all the good of which he is capable by the superinduction of the divine principle: thus they asperse human nature instead of representing it fairly, and in so doing it is *they* who calumniate the great Creator.

The doctrine of corruption, is likewise accused of being a gloomy, discouraging doctrine, and an enemy to joy and comfort.—Now suppose this objection true in its fullest extent, is it any way unreasonable that a being fallen into a state of sin, under the displeasure of Almighty God, should feel *seriously alarmed* at being in such a state? Is the condemned criminal blamed because he is not *merry?* And would it be esteemed a kind action to persuade him that he is *not* condemned in order to make him so?

But this charge is *not* true in the sense intended by those who bring it forward.—Those who believe this doctrine are *not* the most gloomy people. When, indeed, any one by the influence of the Holy Spirit is brought to view his state as it really is, a state of guilt and danger, it is natural that *fear* should be excited in his mind, but it is such a fear as impels him to 'flee from the wrath to come;' it is such a fear as moved Noah to 'prepare an ark to the saving of his house.' Such an one will likewise feel *sorrow;* not however 'the sorrow of the world which worketh death,' but that godly sorrow which worketh repentance. Such an one is said to be driven to *despair* by this doctrine; but it is the despair of his own ability to save himself; it is that wholesome despair of his own merits produced by conviction and humility which drives him to seek a better refuge; and such an one is in a proper state to receive the glorious doctrine we are next about to contemplate, namely,

THAT GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVED ON HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

Of this doctrine it is of the last importance to form just views, for as it is the only doctrine which can keep the humble penitent from despair, so, on the other hand, great care must be taken that false views of it do not lead us to presumption. In order to understand it rightly, we must not fill our minds with our own reasonings upon it, which is the way in which some good people have been misled, but we must betake ourselves to the Scriptures, wherein we shall find the doctrine stated so plainly as to show that the mistakes have not arisen from a want of clearness in the Scriptures, but from a desire to make it bend to some favourite notions. While it has been totally rejected by some, it has been so mutilated by others, as hardly to retain any resemblance to the Scripture doctrine of redemption. We are told in the beautiful passage last quoted *the source*—the love of God to a lost world;—*who* the Redeemer was—the Son of God;—the *end* for which this plan was formed and executed—'that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'—As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.'—'He would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.'—'He would not have any perish, but that all should come to repentance.' There is nothing surely in all this to promote gloominess. On the contrary, if kindness and mercy have a tendency to win and warm the heart, here is every incentive to joy and cheerfulness. Christianity looks kindly towards all, and with peculiar tenderness on such as, from humbling views of their own unworthiness, might be led to fancy themselves excluded:—we are expressly told, that 'Christ died for *all:*'—that 'he tasted death for *every* man;'—that 'he died for the sins of the *whole world.*' Accordingly he has commanded that his gospel should be 'preached to *every creature;*' which is in effect declaring, that not a single human being is excluded: for to preach the gospel is to offer a Saviour:—and the Saviour in the plainest language offers himself to all,—declaring to 'all the ends of the earth,'—'Look unto me and be saved.' It is therefore an undeniable truth, that no one will perish for the *want* of a Saviour, but for *rejecting* him. That none are excluded who do not exclude themselves, as many unhappily do, who 'reject the counsel of God against themselves, and so receive the grace of God in vain.'

But to suppose that because Christ has *died* for the 'sins of the whole world,' the whole world will therefore be *saved*, is a most fatal mistake. In the same book which tells us that 'Christ died for all,' we have likewise this awful admonition; 'Strait is the gate, and *few* there be that find it;' which, whether it be understood of the immediate reception of the gospel, or of

the final use which was too likely to be made of it, gives no encouragement to hope that *all* will be qualified to partake of its promises. And whilst it declares that 'there is no other name whereby we may be saved but the name of Jesus;' it likewise declares

THAT 'WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD.'

It is much to be feared that some, in their zeal to defend the gospel doctrines of free grace, have materially injured the gospel doctrine of holiness: stating that Christ has done all in such a sense, as that there is nothing left for us to do.—But do the Scriptures hold out this language?—'Come, for all things are ready,' is the gospel call; in which we may observe, that at the same time that it tells us that 'all things are ready,' it nevertheless tells us that we must '*come*' Food being *provided* for us will not benefit us except we *partake* of it. It will not avail us that 'Christ our passover is *sacrificed* for us,' unless 'we *keep* the feast.'—We must *make use* of 'the fountain which is opened for sin and uncleanness,' if we would be *purified*. 'All, indeed, who are *athirst* are invited to take of the waters of life freely;' but if we feel no '*thirst*;' if we do not *drink*, their saving qualities are of no avail.

It is the more necessary to insist on this in the present day, as there is a worldly and fashionable, as well as a low and sectarian Antinomianism: there lamentably prevails in the world an unwarranted assurance of salvation, founded on a slight, vague, and general confidence in what Christ has done and suffered for us, as if the great object of his doing and suffering had been to emancipate *us* from all obligations to duty and obedience; and as if, because he died for sinners, we might therefore safely and comfortably go on to live in sin, contenting ourselves with now and then a transient, formal, and unmeaning avowal of our unworthiness, our obligation, and the all-sufficiency of *his* atonement. By the discharge of this quit-rent, of which all the cost consists in acknowledgment, the sensual, the worldly, and the vain hope to find a refuge in heaven, when driven from the enjoyment of this world. But this cheap and indolent Christianity is no where taught in the Bible. The faith inculcated *there* is not a lazy, professional faith, but that faith which 'produceth *obedience*,' that faith which 'worketh by love,' that faith of which the practical language is—'*Strive* that you may 'enter in;' 'So *run* that you may obtain;'—'So *fight* that you may lay hold on eternal life:'—that faith which directs us 'not to be weary in well-doing;'—which says, '*work* out your own salvation:'—never forgetting at the same time, 'that it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do.' The contrary doctrine is implied in the very name of the Redeemer; 'And his name shall be called 'Jesus, for he shall save his people *from* their sins,' not *in* their sins.—Are those rich supplies of grace which the gospel offers; are those abundant aids of the Spirit which it promises, tendered to the *slothful*?—No. God will have all his gifts improved. Grace must be used, or it will be withdrawn. The Almighty thinks it not derogatory to his free grace to declare, that 'those only who do his commandments have right to the tree of life.' And the scriptures represent it as not derogatory to the *sacrifice* of Christ, to follow his example in well-doing. The only caution is, that we must not work in our own strength, nor bring in our contribution of works as if in aid of the supposed deficiency of His merits.

For we must not in our *over-caution* fancy, that because Christ has 'redeemed us from the curse of the law,' we are therefore without a law. In acknowledging Christ as a deliverer, we must not forget that he is a law-giver too, and that we are expressly commanded 'to fulfil the law of Christ:' if we wish to know what his laws are, we must 'search the Scriptures,' especially the New Testament; there we shall find him declaring

THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF A CHANGE OF HEART AND LIFE.

Our Saviour says, that 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:' that it is not a mere acknowledging His authority, calling him 'Lord, Lord,' that will avail any thing, except we DO what He commands; that any thing short of this is like a man building his house upon the sand, which when the storms come on, will certainly fall. In like manner the apostles are continually enforcing the necessity of this change, which they describe under the various names of 'the new man;'*—'the new creature;'†—'a transformation into the image of God;'‡—'a participation of the divine nature.'§ Nor is this change represented as consisting merely in a change of religious opinions, not even in being delivered over from a worse to a better system of doctrines, nor in exchanging gross sins for those which are more sober and reputable: nor in renouncing the sins of youth, and assuming those of a quieter period of life; nor in leaving off evil practices because men are grown tired of them, or find they injure their credit, health, or fortune; nor does it consist in inoffensiveness and obliging manners, nor indeed in any merely *outward* reformation.

But the change consists in 'being renewed in the spirit of our minds;' in being 'conformed to the image of the Son of God:' in being 'called out of darkness into his marvellous light.' And the whole of this great change, its beginning, progress, and final accomplishment (for it is represented as a *gradual* change) is ascribed to

THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We are perpetually reminded of our utter inability to help ourselves, that we may set the higher value on those gracious aids which are held out to us. We are taught that 'we are not sufficient to *think* any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' And when we are told that 'if we live after the flesh, we shall die, we are at the same time reminded, that it is 'through the *Spirit* that 'we must mortify the

* Ephesians, iv. 24. † Galatians, vi. 15
‡ 2 Corinthians, xii. § 2 Peter, i. 4.

deeds of the body.' We are likewise cautioned that we 'grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,' 'that we quench not the Spirit.' By all which expressions, and many others of like import, we are taught that, while we are to ascribe with humble gratitude every good thought, word, and work, to the influence of the Holy Spirit, we are not to look on such influence as superseding our own exertions; and it is too plain that we *may* reject the gracious offers of assistance, since otherwise there would be no occasion to caution us *not* to do it. The scriptures have illustrated this in terms which are familiar indeed, but which are therefore only the more condescending and endearing. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Observe, it is not said, if any man will not listen to me, I will force open the door. But if we refuse admittance to such a guest, we must abide by the consequences.

The sublime doctrine of divine assistance is the more to be prized not only on account of our own helplessness, but from the additional consideration of the powerful adversary with whom the Christian has to contend: an article of our faith by the way, which is growing into general disrepute among the politer class of society. Nay, there is a kind of ridicule attached to the very suggestion of the subject, as if it were exploded by general agreement, on full proof of its being an absolute absurdity, utterly repugnant to the liberal spirit of an enlightened age. And it requires no small neatness of expression and periphrastic ingenuity to get the very mention tolerated;—I mean

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE EXISTENCE AND POWER OF OUR GREAT SPIRITUAL ENEMY.

This is considered by the fashionable sceptic as a vulgar invention, which ought to be banished with the belief in dreams, and ghosts and witchcraft:—by the fashionable Christian, as an ingenious allegory, but not as a literal truth; and by almost all, as a doctrine which, when it happens to be introduced at church, has at least nothing to do with the *pews*, but is by common consent made over to the *aisles*, if indeed it must be retained at all.

May I, with great humility and respect, presume to suggest to our divines that they would do well not to lend their countenance to the modish curtailments of the Christian faith: nor to shun the introduction of this doctrine whenever it consists with their subject to bring it forward! A truth which is seldom brought before the eye, imperceptibly grows less and less important; and if it be an unpleasing truth, we grow more and more reconciled to its absence, till at length its intrusion becomes offensive, and we learn in the end to renounce what we at first only neglected. Because some coarse and ranting enthusiasts have been fond of using tremendous terms and awful denunciations with a violence and frequency, which might make it seem to be a gratification to them to denounce judgments and anticipate torments, can *their* coarseness or vulgarity make a true doctrine false, or an important one trifling? If such preachers have given offence by their uncouth manner of managing an awful doctrine, that indeed furnishes a caution to treat the subject more discreetly, but it is no just reason for avoiding the doctrine. For to keep a truth out of sight because it has been absurdly handled or ill-defended, might in time be assigned as a reason for keeping back, one by one, every doctrine of our holy church; for which of them has not occasionally had imprudent advocates or weak champions?

Be it remembered that the doctrine in question is not only interwoven by allusion, implication, or direct assertion throughout the whole scripture, but that it stands prominently *personified* at the opening of the New as well as the Old Testament. The devil's temptation of our Lord, in which he is not represented figuratively, but visibly and palpably, stands exactly on the same ground of authority with other events which are received without repugnance. And it may not be an unuseful observation to remark, that the very refusing to believe in an evil spirit, may be considered as one of his own suggestions; for there is not a more dangerous illusion than to believe ourselves out of the reach of reasons, nor a more alarming temptation than to fancy that we are not liable to be tempted.

But the dark cloud raised by this doctrine will be dispelled by the cheering certainty that our blessed Saviour having himself 'been tempted like as we are, is able to deliver those who are tempted.'

To return.—From this imperfect sketch we may see how suitable the religion of Christ is to fallen man! How exactly it meets every want! No one needs now perish because he is a sinner, provided he be willing to forsake his sins; for 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;' and 'He is now exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sin.' Which passage, be it observed, may be considered as pointing out to us the *order* in which he bestows his blessings; he gives first *repentance* and then *forgiveness*.

We may likewise see how much the character of a true Christian rises above every other; that there is a wholeness, an integrity, a completeness in the Christian character, that a few natural, pleasing qualities, not cast in the mould of the Gospel, are but as beautiful fragments, or well-turned single limbs, which for want of that beauty, which arises from the proportion of parts, for want of that connexion of the members with the living head, are of little comparative excellence. There may be amiable qualities which are not Christian graces; and the apostle, after enumerating every separate article of attack or defence with which a Christian warrior is to be accoutred, sums up the matter by directing that we put on 'the *whole* armour of God.' And this *completeness* is insisted on by all the apostles. One prays that his converts may 'stand *perfect* and *complete* in the whole will of God;' another enjoins that they 'be *perfect* and *entire*, wanting nothing.'

Now we are not to suppose that they expected any convert to be *without faults;* they knew too well the constitution of the human heart to form so unfounded an expectation. But Chris-

tians must have no fault in their *principle;* their views must be correct, their proposed *scheme* must be faultless; their intention must be single: their *standard* must be lofty; their *object* must be right; their *mark* must be the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'—There must be no *allowed* evil, no *warranted* defection, no *tolerated* impurity, no *habitual* irregularity. Though they do not rise as high as they ought, nor as they wish, in the scale of perfection, yet the scale itself must be correct, and the desire of ascending perpetual; counting nothing done while any thing remains undone. Every grace must be kept in exercise; conquests once made over an evil propensity must not only be maintained but extended. And in truth Christianity so comprizes contrary, and as it may be thought irreconcilable excellences, that those which seem so incompatible as to be incapable by nature of being inmates of the same breast are almost necessarily involved in the Christian character.

For instance; Christianity requires that our faith be at once fervent and sober; that our love be both ardent and lasting; that our patience be not only heroic but gentle; she demands dauntless zeal and genuine humility; active services and complete self-renunciation; high attainments in goodness, with deep consciousness of defect; courage in reproving, and meekness in bearing reproof; a quick perception of what is sinful; with a willingness to forgive the offender; active virtue ready to *do* all, and passive virtue ready to *bear* all. We must stretch every faculty in the service of our Lord, and yet bring every thought into obedience to Him: while we aim to live in the exercise of every Christian grace, we must account ourselves unprofitable servants: we must *strive* for the crown, yet receive it as a *gift*, and then lay it at our Master's feet: while we are busily trading in the world with our Lord's talents, we must 'commune with our hearts, and be still:' while we strive to practise the purest disinterestedness, we must be contented though we meet with selfishness in return; and while laying out our lives for the good of mankind, we must submit to reproach without murmuring, and to ingratitude without resentment. And to render us equal to all these services, Christianity bestows not only the precepts, but the power; she does what the great poet of Ethics lamented that reason could not do, 'she lends us arms as well as rules.'

For here, if not only the worldly and the timid, but the humble and the well-disposed, should demand with fear and trembling, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' Revelation makes its own reviving answer, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

It will be well here to distinguish that there are two sorts of Christian professors, one of which affect to speak of Christianity as if it were a mere system of doctrines, with little reference to their influence on life and manners; while the other consider it as exhibiting a scene of human duties independent of its doctrines. For though the latter sort may admit the doctrines, yet they contemplate them as a separate and disconnected set of opinions, rather than as an influential principle of action. In violation of that beautiful harmony which subsists in every part of Scripture between practice and belief the religious world furnishes two sorts of people who seem to enlist themselves, as if in opposition, under the banner of Saint Paul and Saint James; as if those two great champions of the Christian cause had fought for two masters. Those who affect respectively to be the disciples of each, treat faith and works as if they were opposite interests, instead of inseparable points. Nay, they go farther, and set Saint Paul at variance with himself.

Now instead of reasoning on the point, let us refer to the apostle in question, who himself definitely settles the dispute. The apostolic order and method in this respect deserves notice and imitation: for it is observable that the earlier parts of most of the epistles abound in the *doctrines* of Christianity, while those latter chapters, which wind up the subject, exhibit all the duties which grow out of them, as the natural and necessary productions of such a living root.* But this alternate mention of doctrine and practice, which seemed likely to *unite*, has on the contrary formed a sort of line of separation between these two orders of believers, and introduced a broken and mutilated system. Those who would make Christianity consist of doctrines only, dwell for instance, on the first eleven chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, as containing exclusively the sum and substance of the Gospel. While the mere moralists, who wish to strip Christianity of her lofty and appropriate attributes, delight to dwell on the *twelfth* chapter, which is a table of duties, as exclusively as if the preceding chapters made no part of the sacred Canon. But Saint Paul himself, who was at least as sound a theologian as any of his commentators, settles the matter another way, by making the duties of the twelfth grow out of the doctrines of the antecedent *eleven*, just as any other consequence grows out of its cause. And as if he suspected that the indivisible union between them might possibly be overlooked, he links the two distinct divisions together by a logical 'therefore,' with which the twelfth begins:—'I beseech you *therefore*,' (that is, as the effect of all I have been inculcating,) 'that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to God,' &c. and then goes on to enforce on them, as a consequence of what he had been preaching, the practice of every Christian virtue. This combined view of the subject seems on the one hand, to be the only means of preventing the substitution of Pagan morality for Christian holiness: and, on the other, of securing the leading doctrine of justification by faith, from the dreadful danger of Antinomian licentiousness; every human obligation being thus grafted on the living stock of a divine principle.

CHAP. XXI.

On the duty and efficacy of prayer.

It is not proposed to enter largely on a topic

* This is the language of our church, as may be seen in her 12th article; viz.

Good works do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruit.

which has been exhausted by the ablest pens. But as a work of this nature seems to require that so important a subject should not be overlooked, it is intended to notice in a slight manner a few of those many difficulties and popular objections which are brought forward against the use and efficacy of prayer, even by those who would be unwilling to be suspected of impiety and unbelief.

There is a class of objectors who strangely profess to withhold homage from the Most High, not out of contempt but reverence. They affect to consider the use of prayer as derogatory from the omniscience of God, asserting that it looks as if we thought he stood in need of being informed of our wants; and as derogatory from his goodness, as implying that he needs to be put in mind of them.

But is it not enough for such poor frail beings as we are to know, that God himself does not consider prayer as derogatory either to his wisdom or goodness? And shall we erect ourselves into judges of what is consistent with the attributes of Him before whom angels fall prostrate with self-abasement? Will he thank such defenders of his attributes, who, while they profess to reverence, scruple not to disobey him? It ought rather to be viewed as a great encouragement to prayer, that we are addressing a Being, who knows our wants better than we can express them, and whose preventing goodness is always ready to relieve them. Prayer seems to unite the different attributes of the Almighty: for if he is indeed the God that heareth prayer, that is the best reason why 'to him all flesh should come.'

It is objected by another class, and on the specious ground of humility too, though we do not always find the objector himself quite as humble as his plea would be thought, that it is arrogant in such insignificant beings as we are to presume to lay our petty necessities before the Great and Glorious God, who cannot be expected to condescend to the multitude of trifling and even interfering requests which are brought before him by his creatures. These and such like objections arise from mean and unworthy thoughts of the Great Creator. It seems as if those who make them considered the Most High as 'such an one as themselves;' a Being, who can perform a certain given quantity of business, but who would be overpowered with an additional quantity. Or, at best, is it not considering the Almighty in the light, not of an infinite God, but of a great man, of a minister, or a king, who, while he superintends public and national concerns, is obliged to neglect small and individual petitions, because his hands being full he cannot spare that leisure and attention which suffice for every thing? They do not consider him as that infinitely glorious Being, who while he beholds at once all that is doing in heaven and in earth, is at the same time as attentive to the prayer of the poor destitute, as present to the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner, as if each of these forlorn creatures were individually the object of his undivided attention.

These critics, who are for sparing the Supreme Being the trouble of our prayers, and, if I may so speak without profaneness, would relieve Omnipotence of part of his burden, by assigning to his care only such a portion as may be more easily managed, seem to have no adequate conception of his attributes.

They forget that infinite wisdom puts him as easily within reach of all knowledge, as infinite power does of all performance; that he is a Being in whose plans complexity makes no difficulty, variety no obstruction, and multiplicity no confusion; that to ubiquity distance does not exist; that to infinity space is annihilated; that past, present, and future, are discerned more accurately at one glance of his eye, to whom a thousand years are as one day, than a single moment of time or a single point of space can be by ours.

To the other part of the objection, founded on the supposed interference (that is irreconcilableness) of one man's petitions with those of another, this answer seems to suggest itself: first, that we must take care that when we ask, we do not 'ask amiss;' that for instance, we ask chiefly, and in an unqualified manner, only for spiritual blessings to ourselves and others; and in doing this the prayer of one man cannot interfere with that of another, because no proportion of sanctity or virtue implored by one obstructs the same attainments in another. Next in asking for temporal and inferior blessings, we must *qualify* our petition, even though it should extend to deliverance from the severest pains, or to our very life itself, according to that example of our Saviour: 'Father *if it be possible*, let this cup pass from me. *Nevertheless*, *not my will*, but thine, be done.' By thus qualifying our prayer, we exercise ourselves in an act of resignation to God: we profess not to wish what will interfere with his benevolent plan, and yet we may hope by prayer to secure the blessing so far as it is consistent with it. Perhaps the reason why this objection to prayer is so strongly felt, is the too great disposition to pray for merely temporal and worldly blessings, and to desire them in the most unqualified manner, not submitting to be without them, even though the granting them should be inconsistent with the general plan of Providence.

Another class continue to bring forward, as pertinaciously as if it had never been answered, the exhausted argument, that seeing God is immutable, no petitions of ours can ever change Him: that events themselves being settled in a fixed and unalterable course, and bound in a fatal necessity, it is folly to think that we can disturb the established laws of the universe, or interrupt the course of Providence by our prayers: and that it is absurd to suppose these firm decrees can be reversed by any requests of ours.

Without entering into the wide and trackless field of fate and free will, from which pursuit I am kept back equally by the most profound ignorance and the most invincible dislike, I would only observe, that these objections apply equally to all human action as well as to prayer. It may therefore with the same propriety be urged, that seeing God is immutable and his decrees unalterable, therefore our *actions* can produce no change in Him or in our own state. Weak as well as impious reasoning! It may be questioned whether even the modern French and

German philosophers may not be prevailed upon to acknowledge the existence of God, if they might make such a use of his attributes. The truth is (and it is a truth discoverable without any depth of learning) all these objections are the offspring of *pride*. Poor short-sighted man cannot reconcile the omniscience and decrees of God with the efficacy of prayer; and because *he* cannot reconcile them, he modestly concludes they are irreconcilable. How much more wisdom, as well as happiness, results from an humble Christian spirit! Such a plain practical text as, 'Draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you,' carries more consolation, more true knowledge of his wants and their remedy to the heart of a penitent sinner, than all the 'tomes of casuistry,' which have puzzled the world ever since the question was first set afloat by its original propounders.

And as the plain man only got up and walked, to prove there was such a thing as motion, in answer to the philosopher who in an elaborate theory denied it: so the plain Christian, when he is borne down with the assurance that there is no efficacy in prayer, requires no better argument to repel the assertion, than the good he finds in prayer itself.

All the doubts proposed to him respecting God, do not so much affect him, as this one doubt respecting himself: 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' For the chief doubt and difficulty of a real Christian consists, not so much of a distrust of God's ability and willingness to answer the prayer of the upright, as in a distrust of his own uprightness, as in a doubt whether he himself belongs to that description of persons to whom the promises are made, and of the quality of the prayer which he offers up.

Let the subjects of a dark fate maintain a sullen, or the slaves of a blind chance a hopeless silence, but let the child of a compassionate Almighty Father supplicate His mercies with a humble confidence, inspired by the assurance, that 'the very hairs of his head are numbered.' Let him take comfort in that individual and minute attention, without which not a sparrow falls to the ground, as well as in that heart-cheering promise; that, as 'the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,' so are 'his ears open to their prayers.' And as a pious bishop has observed, 'Our Saviour has as it were hedged in and inclosed the Lord's prayer with these two great fences of our faith, God's *willingness* and his *power* to help us;' the preface to it assures us of the one, which by calling God by the tender name of 'Our Father,' intimates his *readiness* to help his children: and the animating conclusion, 'Thine is the *power*,' rescues us from every unbelieving doubt of his *ability* to help us.

A Christian knows, because he feels, that prayer is, though in a way to him inscrutable, the medium of connexion between God and his rational creatures: the means appointed by him to draw down his blessings upon us. The Christian knows that prayer is the appointed means of uniting two ideas, one of the highest magnificence, the other of the most profound lowliness, within the compass of imagination; namely, that it is the link of communication between 'the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, and that heart of the 'contrite in which he delights to dwell.' He knows that this inexplicable union between beings so unspeakably, so essentially different, can only be maintained by prayer: that this is the strong but secret chain which unites time with eternity, earth with heaven, man with God.

The plain Christian, as was before observed, cannot explain why it is so; but while he *feels* the efficacy, he is content to let the learned *define* it; and he will no more postpone prayer till he can produce a chain of reasoning on the manner in which he derives benefit from it, than he will postpone eating till he can give a scientific lecture on the nature of digestion; he is contented with knowing that his meat has nourished him; and he leaves to the philosopher, who may choose to defer his meal till he has elaborated his treatise, to starve in the interim. The Christian feels better than he is able to explain, that the functions of his spiritual life can no more be carried on without habitual prayer, than those of his natural life without frequent bodily nourishment. He feels renovation and strength grow out of the use of the appointed means, as necessarily in the one case as in the other. He feels that the health of his soul can no more be sustained, and its powers kept in continued vigour, by the *prayers* of a distant day, than his body by the *aliment* of a distant day.

But there is one motive to the duty in question, far more constraining to the true believer than all others that can be named; more imperious than any argument on its utility, than any convictions of its efficacy, even than any experience of its consolations. *Prayer is the command of God;* the plain, positive, repeated injunction of the Most High, who declares, 'He will be inquired of.' This is enough to secure the obedience of the Christian, even though a promise were not, as it always is, attached to the command. But in this case, to our unspeakable comfort, the promise is as clear as the precept: '*Ask*, and ye shall *receive*—*seek*, and ye shall *find*—Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' This is encouragement enough for the plain Christian. As to the *manner* in which prayer is made to coincide with the general scheme of God's plan in the government of human affairs; how God has left himself at liberty to reconcile our prayer with his own predetermined will, the Christian does not very critically examine, his precise and immediate duty being to pray, and not to examine; and probably this being among the 'secret things which belong to God,' and not to us, it will lie hidden among those numberless mysteries which we shall not fully understand till faith be lost in sight.

In the meantime it is enough for the humble believer to be assured, that the Judge of all the earth is doing right; it is enough for him to be assured in that word of God 'which cannot lie,' of numberless actual instances of the efficacy of prayer in obtaining blessings and averting calamities, both national and individual: it is enough for him to be convinced experimentally,

by that internal evidence, which is perhaps paramount to all other evidence, the comfort he himself has received from prayer when all other comforts have failed:—and above all to end with the same motive with which we began, the only motive indeed which *he* requires for the performance of any duty—it is motive enough for him—that *thus saith the Lord.* For when a serious Christian has once got a plain unequivocal command from his Maker on any point, he never suspends his obedience while he is amusing himself with looking about for subordinate motives of action. Instead of curiously analysing the nature of the duty, he considers how he shall best fulfil it: for on these points at least it may be said without controversy that 'the ignorant (and here who is *not* ignorant?) *have nothing to do with the law but to obey it?*

Others there are, who, perhaps not controverting any of the premises, yet neglect to build practical consequences on the admisssion of them, who neither denying the duty nor the efficacy of prayer, yet go on to live either in the irregular observance or the total neglect of it, as appetite, or pleasure, or business, or humour, may happen to predominate; and who by living almost without prayer, may be said 'to live almost without God in the world.' To such we can only say, that they little know what they lose.—The time is hastening on when they will look upon those blessings as invaluable, which now they think not worth asking for; when they will bitterly regret the absence of those means and opportunities which now they either neglect or despise. 'O that they were wise! that they understood this! that they would consider their latter end!'

There are again others, who it is to be feared having once lived in the habit of prayer, yet not having been well grounded in those principles of faith and repentance on which genuine prayer is built, have by degrees totally discontinued it. 'They do not find,' say they, 'that their affairs prosper the better or the worse; or perhaps they were unsuccessful in their affairs even before they dropped the practice, and so had no encouragement to go on.' They do not *know* that they had no encouragement; they do not *know* how much worse their affairs might have gone on, had they discontinued it sooner, or how their prayers helped to retard their ruin. Or they do not *know* that perhaps 'they asked amiss,' or that if they had obtained what they asked, they might have been far more unhappy. For a true believer never 'restrains prayer' because he is not certain he obtains every individual request; for he is persuaded that God, in compassion to our ignorance, sometimes in great mercy withholds what we desire, and often disappoints his most favoured children by giving them, not what they ask, but what he knows is really good for them. The froward child, as a pious prelate* observes, cries for the shining blade, which the tender parent withholds, knowing it would cut his fingers.

Thus to persevere when we have not the encouragement of visible success, is an evidence of tried faith. Of this holy perseverance Job was a noble instance. Defeat and disappointment rather stimulated than stopped *his* prayers. Though in a vehement strain of passionate eloquence he exclaims, 'I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment,' yet so persuaded was he, notwithstanding, of the duty of continuing this holy importunity, that he persisted against all human hope, till he attained to that exalted pitch of unshaken faith, by which he was enabled to break out into that sublime apostrophe, 'Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.'

But may we not say that there is a considerable class, who not only bring none of the objections which we have stated against the use of prayer; who are so far from rejecting, that they are exact and regular in the performance of it; who yet take it up on as low ground as is consistent with their ideas of their own safety; who while they considsr prayer as an indispensable form, believe nothing of that change of heart and of those holy tempers which it is intended to produce? Many who yet adhere scrupulously to the letter, are so far from entering into the spirit of this duty, that they are strongly inclined to suspect those of hypocrisy who adopt the true scriptural views of prayer. Nay, as even the Bible may be so wrested as to be made to speak almost any language in support of almost any opinion, these persons lay hold on Scripture itself to bear them out in their own slight views of this duty; and they profess to borrow from thence the ground of that censure which they cast on the more serious Christians. Among the many passages which have been made to convey a meaning foreign to their original design, none have been seized upon with more avidity by such persons than the pointed censures of our Saviour on those 'who for a pretence make long prayers;' as well as on those 'who use vain repetitions, and think they shall be heard for much speaking.' Now the things here intended to be reproved, were the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the ignorance of the heathen, together with the error of all those who depended on the success of their prayers, while they imitated the deceit of the one or the folly of the other. But our Saviour never meant those severe reprehensions should cool or abridge the devotion of pious Christians, to which they do not at all apply.

More or fewer words, however, so little constitute the true value of prayer, that there is no doubt but one of the most affecting specimens on record is the short petition of the publican, full fraught as it is with that spirit of contrition and self-abasement which is the very principle and soul of prayer. And this specimen perhaps is the best model for that sudden lifting up of the heart which we call ejaculation. But I doubt, in general, whether those few hasty words to which these frugal petitioners would stint the scanty devotions of others and themselves, will be always found ample enough to satisfy the humble penitent, who, being a sinner, has much to confess; who, hoping he is a pardoned sinner, has much to acknowledge. Such an one perhaps cannot always pour out the fulness of his soul within the prescribed abridg

* Bishop Hall.

ments. Even the sincerest Christian, when he wishes to find his heart warm, has often to lament its coldness. Though he feel that he has received much, and has therefore much to be thankful for, yet he is not able at once to bring his wayward spirit into such a posture as shall fit it for the solemn business; for such an one has not merely his form to repeat; but he has his tempers to reduce to order; his affections to excite, and his peace to make. His thoughts may be realizing the sarcasm of the prophet on the idol Baal, 'they may be gone a journey,' and must be recalled; his heart perhaps 'sleepeth and must be awaked.' A devout supplicant too will labour to affect and warm his mind with a sense of the great and gracious attributes of God, in imitation of the holy men of old. Like Jehosaphat, he will sometimes enumerate 'the power, and the might, and the mercies of the Most High,' in order to stir up the sentiments of awe, and gratitude, and love, and humility in his own soul.* He will labour to imitate the example of his Saviour, whose heart dilated with the expression of the same holy affections. 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.' A heart thus animated, thus warmed with divine love, cannot always scrupulously limit itself to the mere *business* of prayer, if I may so speak. It cannot content itself with merely spreading out its own necessities, but expands in contemplating the perfections of Him to whom he is addressing them. The humble supplicant, though he be no longer *governed* by a love of the world, yet grieves to find that he cannot totally exclude it from his thoughts. Though he has on the whole a deep sense of his own wants, and of the abundant provision which is made for them in the Gospel; yet when he most wishes to be rejoicing in those strong motives for love and gratitude, alas! even then he has to mourn his worldliness, his insensibility, his deadness. He has to deplore the littleness and vanity of the objects which are even then drawing away his heart from his Redeemer. The best Christian is but too liable, during the temptations of the day, to be ensnared by 'the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' and is not always brought without effort to reflect that he is but dust and ashes. How can even good persons who are just come perhaps from listening to the flattery of their fellow-worms, acknowledge before God, without any preparation of the heart, that they are miserable sinners? They require a little time to impress on their own souls the truth of that solemn confession of sin they are making to Him, without which brevity and not length might constitute hypocrisy. Even the sincerely pious have in prayer grievous wanderings to lament, from which others mistakingly suppose the advanced Christian to be exempt. Such wanderings that, as an old divine has observed, it would exceedingly humble a good man, could he, after he had prayed, be made to see his prayers written down, with exact interlineations of all the vain and impertinent thoughts which had thrust themselves in amongst them. So that such an one will indeed, from a strong sense of these distractions, feel deep occasion with the prophet to ask forgiveness for 'the iniquity of his *holy* things:' and would find cause enough for humiliation every night, had he to lament the sins of his prayers only.

We know that such a brief petition as 'Lord help my unbelief,' if the supplicant be in so happy a frame, and the prayer be darted up with such strong faith that his very soul mounts with the petition, may suffice to draw down a blessing which may be withheld from the more prolix petitioner: yet, if by prayer we do not mean a mere form of words, whether they be long or short; if the true definition of prayer be, that it is *the desire of the heart:* if it be that secret communion between God and the soul, which is the very breath and being of religion; then is the Scripture so far from suggesting that short measure of which it is accused, that it expressly says, 'Pray without ceasing'—'Pray evermore—'I will that men pray every where'—'continue instant in prayer.'

If such 'repetitions' as these objectors reprobate, stir up desires as yet unawakened, or protract affections already excited (for '*vain* repetitions' are such as awaken or express no new desire, and serve no religious purpose) then are 'repetitions not to be condemned. And that our Saviour did not give the warning against 'long prayers and repetitions' in the sense these objections allege, is evident from his own practice; for once we are told 'he continued *all night* in prayer to God.' And again, in the most awful crisis of his life, it is expressly said, 'He prayed the *third* time, using *the same words*.'*

All habits gain by exercise; of course the Christian graces gain force and vigour by being called out, and, as it were, mustered in prayer. Love, faith, and trust in the divine promises, if they were not kept alive by this stated intercourse with God, would wither and die. Prayer is also one great source and chief encourager of holiness. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.'

Prayer possesses the two-fold property of fighting and preparing the heart to receive the blessings we pray for, in case we should attain them; and of fortifying and disposing it to submit to the will of God, in case it should be his pleasure to withhold them.

A sense of sin should be so far from keeping us from prayer, through a false plea of unworthiness, that the humility growing on this very consciousness is the truest and strongest incentive to prayer. There is, for our example and encouragement, a beautiful union of faith and humility in the prodigal—'I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' This as it might seem to imply hopelessness of pardon, might be supposed to promote unwillingness to ask it; but the heart-broken penitent drew the direct contrary conclusion—'I will arise and go to my father!'

Prayer, to make it accepted, requires neither genius, eloquence, nor language; but sorrow for sin, faith, and humility. It is the cry of distress, the sense of want, the abasement of contrition, the energy of gratitude. It is not an elaborate string of well arranged periods nor an

* 2 Chron. xv. 5, 6.

* Matt. xxvi. 44.

exercise of ingenuity, nor an effort of the memory; but the devout breathing of a soul struck with a sense of its own misery, and of the infinite holiness of Him whom it is addressing; experimentally convinced of its own emptiness, and of the abundant fulness of God. It is the complete renunciation of self, and the entire dependence on another. It is the voice of a beggar who would be relieved; of the sinner who would be pardoned. It has nothing to offer but sin and sorrow; nothing to ask but forgiveness and acceptance; nothing to plead but the promises of the Gospel in the death of Christ. It never seeks to obtain its object by diminishing the guilt of sin, but by exalting the merits of the Saviour.

But as it is the effect of prayer to *expand* the affections as well as to *sanctify* them; the benevolent Christian is not satisfied to commend himself alone to the divine favour. The heart which is full of the love of God will overflow with love to its neighbour. All that are near to himself he wishes to bring near to God. He will present the whole human race as objects of divine compassion; but especially the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Religion makes a man so liberal of soul, that he cannot endure to restrict any thing, much less divine mercies, to himself: he therefore spiritualizes the social affections, by adding intercessory to personal prayer; for he knows that petitioning for others is one of the best methods of exercising and enlarging our own love and charity, even if it were not to draw down those blessings which are promised to those for whom we ask them. It is unnecessary to produce any of the numberless instances with which Scripture abounds, on the efficacy of intercession: in which God has proved the truth of his own assurance, that 'his ear was open to their cry.' I shall confine myself to a few observations on the benefits it brings to him who offers it. When we pray for the object of our dearest regard, it purifies passion, and exalts love into religion; when we pray for those with whom we have worldly intercourse, it smooths down the swellings of envy, and bids the tumults of anger and ambition subside: when we pray for our country, it sanctifies patriotism: when we pray for those in authority, it adds a divine motive to human obedience: when we pray for our enemies, it softens the savageness of war and molifies hatred into tenderness, and resentment into sorrow. And we can only learn the duty so difficult to human nature, of forgiving those who have offended us, when we bring ourselves to pray for them to Him whom we ourselves daily offend. When those who are the faithful followers of the same Divine Master pray for each other, the reciprocal intercession delightfully realizes that beautiful idea of 'the communion of saints.' There is scarcely any thing which more enriches the Christian than the circulation of this holy commerce; than the comfort of believing, while he is praying for his Christian friends, that he is also reaping the benefit of their prayers for him.

Some are for confining their intercessions only to the good, as if none but persons of merit were entitled to our prayers. Merit! who has it? Desert! who can plead it? in the sight of God, I mean. Who shall bring his own piety, or the piety of others, in the way of *claim*, before a Being of such transcendant holiness, that 'the heavens are not clean in his sight?' And if we wait for perfect holiness as a preliminary to prayer, when shall such erring creatures pray *at all* to HIM 'who chargeth the angels with folly!'

In closing this little work with the subject of intercessory prayer, may the author be allowed to avail herself of the feeling it suggests to her own heart? And while she earnestly implores that Being, who can make the meanest of his creatures instrumental to his glory, to bless this humble attempt to those for whom it was written, may she, without presumption, entreat that this work of Christian charity may be reciprocal; and that those who peruse these pages may put up a petition for her, that in the great day to which we are all hastening, she may not be found to have suggested to others what she herself did not believe, or to have recommended what she did not desire to practice? In that awful day of everlasting decision, may both the reader and the writer be pardoned and accepted, 'not for any works of righteousness which they have done,' but through the merits of the GREAT INTERCESSOR.

PRACTICAL PIETY,

OR THE INFLUENCE OF

THE RELIGION OF THE HEART

ON THE CONDUCT OF THE LIFE.

The fear of God begins with the Heart, and purifies and rectifies it; and from the Heart, thus rectified, grows a conformity in the Life, the Words, and the Actions.—*Sir Matthew Hale's Contemplations.*

PREFACE.

AN eminent professor of our own time modestly declared that he taught chemistry in order that he might learn it. The writer of the following pages might, with far more justice, offer a

similar declaration, as an apology for so repeatedly treating on the important topics of religion and morals

Abashed by the equitable precept,

Let those teach others who themselves excel—

she is aware, how fairly she is putting it in the power of the reader, to ask, in the searching words of an eminent old prelate, 'They that speak thus, and advise thus, do they do thus?' She can defend herself in no other way, than by adopting for a reply the words of the same venerable divine, which immediately follow:—'O that it were not too true. Yet although it be but little that is attained, the very aim is right, and something there is that is done by it. It is better to have such thoughts and desires, than altogether to give them up; and the very desire, if it be serious and sincere, may so much change the habitude of the soul and life, that it is not to be despised.'

The world does not require so much to be informed as reminded. A remembrancer may be almost as useful as an instructor; if his office be more humble, it is scarcely less necessary. The man whose employment it was, statedly to proclaim in the ear of Philip, REMEMBER THAT THOU ART MORTAL, had his plain admonition been allowed to make its due impression, might have produced a more salutary effect on the royal usurper, than the impassioned orations of his immortal assailant—

whose resistless eloquence
Shook th' arsenal and fulmined over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.

While the orator boldly strove to check the ambition, and arrest the injustice of the king, the simple herald barely reminded him, how short would be the reign of injustice, how inevitable and how near was the final period of ambition. Let it be remembered to the credit of the monarch, that while the thunders of the politician were intolerable, the monitor was of his own appointment.

This slight sketch, for it pretends to no higher name, aims only at being plain and practical. Contending solely for those indispensable points, which by involving present duty, involve future happiness, the writer has avoided, as far as Christian sincerity permits, all controverted topics; has shunned whatever might lead to disputation rather than to profit.

We live in an age, when, as Mr. Pope observed of that in which he wrote, it is criminal to be moderate. Would it could not be said that Religion has her parties as well as politics! Those who endeavour to steer clear of all extremes in either, are in danger of being reprobated by both. It is rather a hardship for persons, who have considered it as a Christian duty to cultivate a spirit of moderation in thinking, and of candour in judging, that, when these dispositions are brought into action, they frequently incur a harsher censure than the errors which it was their chief aim to avoid.

Perhaps, therefore, to that human wisdom whose leading object is human applause, it might answer best to be exclusively attached to some one party. On the protection of that party at least, it might in that case reckon; and it would then have this dislike of the opposite class alone to contend against; while those who cannot go all lengths with either, can hardly escape the disapprobation of both.

To apply the remark to the present case:—The author is apprehensive that she may at once be censured by opposite classes of readers, as being too strict and too relaxed:—too much attached to opinions, and too indifferent about them;—as having narrowed the broad field of Christianity by labouring to establish its peculiar doctrines;—as having broken down its enclosures by not confining herself to doctrines exclusively;—as having considered morality of too little importance;—as having raised it to an undue elevation;—as having made practice every thing;—as having made it nothing.

While a catholic spirit is accused of being latitudinarian in one party, it really *is* so in another. In one it exhibits the character of Christianity on her own grand but correct scale; in the other, it is the offspring of that indifference, which, considering all opinions as nearly of the same value, indemnifies itself for tolerating all, by not attaching itself to any, which, establishing a self-complacent notion of general benevolence, with a view to discredit the narrow spirit of Christianity, and adopting a display of that cheap material, liberal sentiment, as opposed to religious strictness, sacrifices true piety to false candour.

Christianity may be said to suffer between two criminals, but it is difficult to determine by which she suffers most;—whether by that uncharitable bigotry which disguises her divine character, and speculatively adopts the faggot and the flames of inquisitorial intolerance; or by that indiscriminate candour, that conceding slackness, which, by stripping her of her appropriate attributes, reduces her to something scarcely worth contending for; to something which, instead of making her the religion of Christ, generalizes her into any religion which may choose to adopt her.—The one distorts her lovely lineaments into caricature, and throws her graceful figure into gloomy shadow; the other, by daubing her over with colours not her own, renders her form indistinct, and obliterates her features. In the first instance, she excites little affection; in the latter she is not recognized.

The writer has endeavoured to address herself as a Christian who must die soon, to Christians

who must die certainly. She trusts that she shall not be accused of erecting herself into a censor, but be considered as one who writes with a real consciousness that she is far from having reached the attainments she suggests; with a heartfelt conviction of the danger of holding out a standard too likely to discredit her own practice. She writes not with the assumption of superiority, but with a deep practical sense of the infirmities against which she has presumed to caution others. She wishes to be understood as speaking the language of sympathy, rather than of dictation; of feeling rather than of document. So far from fancying herself exempt from the evils on which she has animadverted, her very feeling of those evils has assisted her in their delineation. Thus this interior sentiment of her own deficiencies, which might be urged as a disqualification, has, she trusts, enabled her to point out dangers to others.—If the patient cannot lay down rules for the cure of a reigning disease, much less effect the cure; yet from the symptoms common to the same malady, he who labours under it may suggest the necessity of attending to it. He may treat the case feelingly, if not scientifically. He may substitute experience, in default of skill: he may insist on the value of the remedy he has neglected, as well as recommend that from which he has found benefit.

The subjects considered in this treatise have been animadverted on, have been in a manner exhausted, by persons before whose names the author bows down with the deepest humility; by able professional instructors, by piety adorned with all the graces of style, and invigorated with all the powers of argument.

Why, then, it may be asked, multiply books which may rather incumber the reader than strengthen the cause?—'That the older is better,' cannot be disputed. But is not the being 'old' sometimes the reason why the 'better' is not regarded? Novelty itself is an attraction which but too often supersedes merit. A slighter drapery, if it be a new one, may excite a degree of attention to an object, not paid to it when clad in a richer garb to which the eye has been accustomed.

The author may begin to ask with one of her earliest and most enlightened friends*—'Where is the world into which we were born?' Death has broken most of those connexions which made the honour and happiness of her youthful days. Fresh links however have continued to attach her to society. She is singularly happy in the affectionate regard of a great number of amiable young persons, who may peruse with additional attention, sentiments which come recommended to them by the warmth of their own attachment, more than by any claim of merit in the writer. Is there not something in personal knowledge, something in the feelings of endeared acquaintance, which by that hidden association, whence so much of our undefined pleasure is derived, if it does not impart new force to old truths, may excite a new interest in considering truths which are known? Her concern for these engaging persons extends beyond the transient period of present intercourse. It would shed a ray of brightness on her parting hour, if she could hope that any caution here held out, any principle here suggested, any habit here recommended, might be of use to any one of them; when the hand which now guides the pen, can be no longer exerted in their service. This would be remembering their friend in a way which would evince the highest affection in them, which would confer the truest honour on herself.

Barley Wood, March 1st, 1811.

PRACTICAL PIETY,

OR THE INFLUENCE OF THE RELIGION OF THE HEART ON THE CONDUCT OF THE LIFE.

CHAP. I.

Christianity an internal principle.

Christianity bears all the marks of a divine original. It came down from heaven, and its gracious purpose is to carry us up thither. Its Author is God. It was foretold from the beginning, by prophecies which grew clearer and brighter as they approached the period of their accomplishment. It was confirmed by miracles which continued till the religion they illustrated was established. It was ratified by the blood of its author. Its doctrines are pure, sublime, consistent. Its precepts just and holy. Its worship is spiritual. Its services reasonable, and rendered practicable by offers of divine aid to human weakness. It is sanctioned by the eternal happiness of the faithful, and the everlasting misery to the disobedient. It had no collusion with power, for power sought to crush it. It could not be in any league with the world, for it set out by declaring itself the enemy of the world. It reprobated its maxims, it showed the vanity of its glories, the danger of its riches, the emptiness of its pleasures.

Christianity though the most perfect rule of life that ever was devised, is far from being barely a rule of life. A religion consisting of a mere code of laws, might have sufficed for a man in a state of innocence. But man who has broken these laws cannot be saved by a rule which he has violated. What consolation could he find in the perusal of statutes, every one of which, bringing a fresh conviction of his guilt, brings a fresh assurance of his condemnation. The chief object of the Gospel is not to furnish rules for the preservation of innocence, but to hold out the means of salvation to the guilty. It

* Dr. Johnson.

does not proceed from a supposition but a fact; not upon what might have suited man in a state of purity, but upon what is suitable to him in the exigences of his fallen state.

This religion does not consist in an external conformity to practices, which, though right in themselves, may be adopted from human motives, and to answer secular purposes. It is not a religion of forms, and modes, and decencies. It is being transformed into the image of God. It is being like-minded with Christ. It is considering him as our sanctification, as well as our redemption. It is endeavouring to live to him here that we may live with him hereafter. It is desiring earnestly to surrender our will to his, our heart to the conduct of his Spirit, our life to the guidance of his word.

The change in the human heart, which the Scriptures declare to be necessary, they represent to be not so much an old principle improved, as a new one created; not educed out of the former character, but infused into the new one. This change is there expressed in great varieties of language, and under different figures of speech. Its being so frequently described, or figuratively intimated in almost every part of the volume of inspiration, entitles the doctrine itself to reverence, and ought to shield from obloquy the obnoxious terms in which it is sometimes conveyed.

The sacred writings frequently point out the analogy between natural and spiritual things. The same Spirit which in the creation of the world moved upon the face of the waters, operates on the human character to produce a new heart and a new life. By this operation the affections and faculties of the man receive a new impulse—his dark understanding is illuminated, his rebellious will is subdued, his irregular desires are rectified, his judgment is informed, his imagination is chastised, his inclinations are sanctified; his hopes and fears are directed to their true and adequate end. Heaven becomes the object of his hopes, an eternal separation from God the object of his fears. His love of the world is transmuted into the love of God. The lower faculties are pressed into the new service. The senses have a higher direction. The whole internal frame and constitution receive a nobler bent; the intents and purposes of the mind a sublimer aim; his aspirations a loftier flight; his vacillating desires find a fixed object; his vagrant purposes a settled home; his disappointed heart a certain refuge. The heart, no longer a worshipper of the world, is struggling to become its conqueror. Our blessed Redeemer, in overcoming the world, bequeathed us his command to overcome it also: but as he did not give the command without the example, so he did not give the example without the offer of a power to obey the command.

Genuine religion demands not merely an external profession of our allegiance to God, but an inward devotedness of ourselves to his service. It is not a recognition, but a dedication. It puts the Christian into a new state of things, a new condition of being. It raises him above the world while he lives in it. It disperses the illusion of sense, by opening his eyes to realities in the place of those shadows which he has been pursuing. It presents this world as a scene of whose original beauty Sin has darkened and disordered, Man as a dependant creature, Jesus Christ as the repairer of all the evils which sin has caused, and as our restorer to holiness and happiness. Any religion short of this, any at least, which has not this for its end and object, is not that religion, which the Gospel has presented to us, which our Redeemer came down on earth to teach us by his precepts, to illustrate by his example, to confirm by his death, and to consummate by his resurrection.

If Christianity do not always produce these happy effects to the extent here represented, it has always a tendency to produce them. If we do not see the progress to be such as the Gospel annexes to the transforming power of true religion, it is not owing to any defect in the principle, but to the remains of sin in the heart; to the imperfectly subdued corruptions of the Christian. Those who are very sincere are still very imperfect. They evidence their sincerity by acknowledging the lowness of their attainments, by lamenting the remainder of their corruptions. Many an humble Christian whom the world reproaches with being extravagant in his zeal, whom it ridicules for being enthusiastic in his aims, and rigid in his practice, is inwardly mourning on the very contrary ground. He would bear their censure more cheerfully, but that he feels his danger lies in the opposite direction. He is secretly abasing himself before his Maker for not carrying far enough that principle which he is accused of carrying too far. The fault which others find in him is excess. The fault he finds in himself is deficiency. He is, alas! too commonly right. His enemies speak of him as they hear. He judges of himself as he feels. But though humbled to the dust by the deep sense of his own unworthiness, he is, 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' 'He has,' says the venerable Hooker, 'a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power.' His prayer is not for reward but pardon. His plea is not merit but mercy; but then it is mercy made sure to him by the promise of the Almighty to penitent believers.

The mistake of many in religion appears to be, that they do not begin with the beginning. They do not lay their foundation in the persuasion that man is by nature in a state of alienation from God. They consider him rather as an imperfect than a fallen creature. They allow that he requires to be improved, but deny that he requires a thorough renovation of heart.

But genuine Christianity can never be grafted on any other stock than the apostacy of man. The design to reinstate beings who have not fallen; to propose a restoration without a previous loss, a cure where there was no radical disease, is altogether an incongruity which would seem too palpable to require confutation, did we not so frequently see the doctrine of redemption maintained by those who deny that man was in a state to require such a redemption. But would Christ have been sent 'to preach deliverence to the captive,' if there had been no captivity; and 'the opening of the prison to

them that were bound,' had there been no prison, nad man been in no bondage?

We are aware that many consider the doctrine in question as a bold charge against our Creator. But may we not venture to ask, Is it not a bolder charge against God's goodness to presume that he had made beings originally wicked; and against God's veracity to believe, that having made such beings he pronounced them 'good?' Is not that doctrine more reasonable which is expressed or implied in every part of Scripture, that the moral corruption of our first parent has been entailed on his whole posterity; that from this corruption (though only punishable for their actual offences) they are no more exempt than from natural death?

We must not, however, think falsely of our nature; we must humble but not degrade it. Our original brightness is obscured, but not extinguished. If we consider ourselves in our natural state, our estimation cannot be too low: when we reflect at what a price we have been bought, we can hardly overrate ourselves in the view of immortality.

If, indeed, the Almighty had left us to the consequences of our natural state, we might, with more colour of reason, have mutinied against his justice. But when we see how graciously he has turned our very lapse into an occasion of improving our condition; how from this evil he was pleased to advance us to a greater good than we had lost; how that life which was forfeited may be restored; how by grafting the redemption of man on the very circumstance of his fall, he has raised him to the capacity of a higher condition than that which he has forfeited, and to a happiness superior to that from which he fell—What an impression does this give us of the immeasurable wisdom and goodness of God, of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The religion which it is the object of these pages to recommend, has been sometimes misunderstood, and not seldom misrepresented. It has been described as an unproductive theory, and ridiculed as a fanciful extravagance. For the sake of distinction it is here called, *The religion of the Heart.*—*There* it subsists as the fountain of spiritual life; *thence* it sends forth, as from the central seat of its existence, supplies of life and warmth through the whole frame; *there* is the soul of virtue; *there* is the vital principle which animates the whole being of a Christian.

This religion has been the support and consolation of the pious believer in all ages of the church. That it has been perverted both by the cloistered and the uncloistered mystic, not merely to promote abstraction of mind, but inactivity of life, makes nothing against the principle itself. What doctrine of the New Testament has not been made to speak the language of its injudicious advocate, and turned into arms against some other doctrines which it was never meant to oppose?

But if it has been carried to a blameable excess by the pious error of holy men, it has also been adopted by the less innocent fanatic, and abused to the most pernicious purposes. His extravagance has furnished to the enemies of internal religion, arguments or rather invectives, against the sound and sober exercises of genuine piety They seize every occasion to represent it as if it were criminal, as the foe of morality; ridiculous as the infallible test of an unsound mind, mischievous, as hostile to active virtue, and destructive as the bane of public utility.

But if these charges be really well founded, then were the brightest luminaries of the Christian church—then were Horne, and Porteus, and Beveridge; then were Hooker, and Taylor, and Herbert; Hopkins, Leighton, and Usher; Howe, and Baxter; Ridley, Jewel, and Hooper; then were Chrysostome and Augustine, the reformers and the fathers; then were the goodly fellowship of the prophets; then were the noble army of martyrs; then were the glorious company of the apostles; then was the disciple whom Jesus loved; then was Jesus himself—I shudder at the amplification—dry speculatists, frantic enthusiasts, enemies to virtue, and subverters of the public weal.

Those who disbelieve, or deride, or reject this inward religion, are much to be compassionated. Their belief that no such principle exists, will, it is to be feared, effectually prevent its existing in themselves, at least, while they make their own state the measure of their general judgment. Not being sensible of their required dispositions in their own hearts, they establish this as a proof of its impossibility in all cases. This persuasion, as long as they maintain it, will assuredly exclude the reception of divine truth. What they assert can be true in no case, cannot be true in their own. Their hearts will be barred against any influence in the power of which they do not believe. They will not desire it, they will not pray for it, except in the Liturgy, *where it is the decided language*: They will not addict themselves to those pious exercises to which it invites them, exercises which it ever loves and cherishes. Thus they expect the end, but avoid the way which leads to it; they indulge the hope of glory, while they neglect or pervert the means of grace. But let not the formal religionist, who has probably never sought, and therefore never obtained, any sense of the spiritual mercies of God, conclude that there is, therefore, no such state. His having no conception of it is no more proof that no such state exists, than it is a proof, that the cheering beams of a genial climate have no existence, because the inhabitants of the frozen zone never felt them.

Where our own heart and experience do not illustrate these truths practically, so as to afford us some evidence of their reality, let us examine our minds, and faithfully follow up our convictions; let us inquire whether God has really been wanting in the accomplishment of his promises, or whether we have not been sadly deficient in yielding to those suggestions of conscience which are the motions of his Spirit? Whether we have not neglected to implore the aids of that Spirit; whether we have not, in various instances, resisted them? Let us ask ourselves—have we looked up to our heavenly Father with humble dependence for the supplies of his grace? or have we prayed for these blessings only as a form, and having acquitted our selves of the form, do we continue to live as if

we had not so prayed? Having repeatedly implored his direction, do we endeavour to submit ourselves to its guidance? Having prayed that his will may be done, do we never stoutly set up our own will in contradiction to his?

If, then, we receive not the promised support and comfort, the failure must rest somewhere: it lies between him who has promised, and him to whom the promise was made. There is no other alternative; would it not be blasphemy to transfer the failure to God? Let us not, then, rest till we have cleared up the difficulty. The spirits sink and the faith fails, if, after a continued round of reading and prayer: after having for years conformed to the letter of the command; after having scrupulously brought in our tale of outward duties, we find ourselves just where we were at setting out.

We complain justly of our own weakness, and truly plead our inability as a reason why we cannot serve God as we ought. This infirmity, its nature, and its measure, God knows far more exactly than we know it; yet he knows that, with the help which he offers us, we can both love and obey him, or he never would have made it the qualification of our obtaining his favour. He never would have said, 'give me thy heart' —'seek ye my face'—'add to your faith, virtue' —'have a right heart and a right spirit,'— 'strengthen the things that remain'—'ye will not come to me that ye might have life'—had not all these precepts a definite meaning, had not all these been practicable duties.

Can we suppose that the omniscient God would have given these unqualified commands to powerless, incapable, unimpressible beings? Can we suppose that he would paralyse his creatures, and then condemn them for not being able to move? He knows, it is true, our natural impotence, but he knows, because he confers, our superinduced strength. There is scarcely a command in the whole Scripture which has not either immediately, or in some other part a corresponding prayer, and a corresponding promise. If it says in one place '*get* thee a new heart,' —it says in another 'a new heart will I *give* thee;—and in a third '*make* me a clean heart!' For it is worth observing that a diligent inquirer may trace every where this threefold union. If God *commands* by Saint Paul, 'let not sin reign in your mortal body,' he *promises* by the same apostle, 'sin shall *not* have dominion over you;' —while to complete the tripartate agreement, he makes David *pray* that his 'sins may not have dominion over him.'

The saints of old, so far from setting up on the stock of their own independent virtue, seem to have had no idea of any light but what was imparted, of any strength but what was communicated to them from above. Hear their importunate petitions!—'O send forth thy light and thy truth.'—Mark their grateful declarations! —'The Lord is my strength and my salvation!' —Observe their cordial acknowledgments!— 'Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless his holy name!'

Though we must be careful not to mistake for the divine Agency those impulses which pretend to operate independently of external revelation; which have little reference to it; which set themselves above it; it is however that powerful agency which sanctifies all means, renders all external revelation effectual. Notwithstanding that all the truths of religion, all the doctrines of salvation are contained in the holy Scriptures, these very scriptures require the influence of that Spirit which dictated them to produce an influential faith. This Spirit, by enlightening the mind, converts the rational persuasion, brings the intellectual conviction of divine truth conveyed in the New Testament, into an operative principle. A man from reading, examining, and inquiring, may attain to such a reasonable assurance of the truth of revelation as will remove all doubts from his own mind, and even enable him to refute the objections of others; but this bare intellectual faith alone will not operate against his corrupt affections, will not cure his besetting sin, will not conquer his rebellious will, and may not therefore be an efficacious principle. A mere historical faith, the mere evidence of facts with the soundest reasonings and deductions from them, may not be that faith which will fill him with all joy and peace in believing.

An habitual reference to that Spirit which animates the real Christian is so far from excluding, that it strengthens the truth of revelation, but never contradicts it. The word of God is always in unison with his Spirit; his Spirit is never in opposition to his word. Indeed that this influence is not an imaginary thing, is confirmed by the whole tenor of Scripture. We are aware that we are treading on dangerous, because disputed ground; for among the fashionable curtailments of Scripture doctrines, there is not one truth which has been lopped from the modern creed with a more unsparing hand; not one, the defence of which excites more suspicion against its advocates. But if it had been a mere phantom, should we with such jealous iteration have been cautioned against neglecting or opposing it? If the Holy Spirit could not be 'grieved,' might it not be 'quenched;' were it not likely to be 'resisted,' that very Spirit which proclaimed the prohibitions would never have said 'grieve not,' 'quench not,' 'resist not.' The Bible never warns us against imaginary evil, nor courts us to imaginary good. If then we refuse to yield to its guidance, if we reject its directions; if we submit not to its gentle persuasions, for such they are, and not arbitrary compulsions, we shall never attain to that peace and liberty which are the privilege, the promised reward of sincere Christians.

In speaking of that peace which passeth understanding, we allude not to those illuminations and raptures, which, if God has in some instances bestowed them, he has no where pledged himself to bestow; but of that rational yet elevated hope which flows from an assured persuasion of the paternal love of our heavenly Father; of that 'secret of the Lord,' which he himself assured us 'is with them that fear him;' of that life and power of religion which are the privilege of those 'who abide under the shadow of the Almighty;' of those who 'know in whom they have believed;' of those 'who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit;' of those 'who endure as seeing him who is invisible.'

Many faults may be committed where there is nevertheless a sincere desire to please God. Many infirmities are consistent with a cordial love of our Redeemer. Faith may be sincere where it is not strong. But he who can conscientiously say that he seeks the favour of God above every earthly good; that he delights in his service incomparably more than in any other gratification; that to obey him here and to enjoy his presence hereafter is the prevailing desire of his heart; that his chief sorrow is that he loves him no more and serves him no better, such a man requires no evidence that his heart is changed, and his sins forgiven.

For the happiness of the Christian does not consist in mere feeling which may deceive, nor in frames which can be only occasional; but in a settled, calm conviction that God and eternal things have the predominance in his heart; in a clear perception that they have, though with much alloy of infirmity, the supreme, if not undisturbed possession of his mind; in an experimental persuasion that his chief remaining sorrow is, that he does not surrender himself with so complete an acquiescence as he ought to his convictions. These abatements, though sufficient to keep us humble, are not powerful enough to make us happy.

The true measure then to be taken of our state is from a perceptible change in our desires, tastes, and pleasures; from a sense of progress, however small, in holiness of heart and life. This seems to be the safest rule of judging, for if mere feeling were allowed to be the criterion, the presumptuous world would be inflated with spiritual pride from the persuasion of enjoying them; while the humble from their very humility, might be as unreasonably depressed at wanting such evidences.

The recognition of this divine aid then, involves no presumption, raises no illusion, causes no inflation: it is sober in its principle and rational in its exercise. In establishing the law of God it does not reverse the law of nature, for it leaves us in full possession of those natural faculties which it improves and sanctifies; and so far from inflaming the imagination, its proper tendency is to subdue and regulate it.

A security which outruns our attainments is a most dangerous state, yet it is a state most unwisely coveted. The probable way to be safe hereafter, is not to be presumptuous now. If God graciously vouchsafe us inward consolation, it is only to animate us to farther progress. It is given us for support in our way, and not for settled maintenance in our present condition. If the promises are our aliment, the commandments are our works; and a temperate Christian ought to desire nourishment only in order to carry him through his business. If he so supinely rest on the one as to grow sensual and indolent, he might become not only unwilling, but incapacitated for the performance of the other. We must not expect to live upon cordials, which only serve to inflame without strengthening. Even without these supports, which we are more ready to desire than to put ourselves in the way to obtain, there is an inward peace in an humble trust in God, and in a simple reliance on his word; there is a repose of spirit, a freedom from solicitude in a lowly confidence in him, for which the world has nothing to give in exchange.

On the whole then, the state which we have been describing is not the dream of the enthusiast; it is not the revery of the visionary, who renounces prescribed duties for fanciful speculations, and embraces shadows for realities; but it is that sober earnest of Heaven, that reasonable anticipation of eternal felicity which God is graciously pleased to grant, not partially, nor arbitrarily, but to *all* who diligently seek his face, to *all* to whom his service is freedom, his will a law, his word a delight, his Spirit a guide; to all who love him unfeignedly, to all who devote themselves to him unreservedly, to all who with deep self-abasement, yet with filial confidence, prostrate themselves at the foot of his throne, saying, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us and we shall be safe.

CHAP. II.

Christianity a practical principle.

If God be the author of our spiritual life, the root from which we derive the vital principle, with daily supplies to maintain this vitality; then the best evidence we can give that we have received something of this principle, is an unreserved dedication of ourselves to the actual promotion of his glory. No man ought to flatter himself that he is in the favour of God, whose life is not consecrated to the service of God. Will it not be the only unequivocal proof of such a consecration, that he be more zealous of good works than those who, disallowing the principle, on which he performs them, do not even pretend to be actuated by any such motive?

The finest theory never yet carried any man to heaven. A religion of notions which occupies the mind, without filling the heart, may obstruct, but cannot advance the salvation of men. If these notions are false, they are most pernicious; if true and not operative, they aggravate guilt; if unimportant though not unjust, they occupy the place which belongs to nobler objects, and sink the mind below its proper level; substituting the things which only ought not to be left undone, in the place of those which ought to be done; and causing the grand essentials not to be done at all. Such a religion is not that which Christ came to teach mankind.

All the doctrines of the gospel are practical principles. The word of God was not written, the Son of God was not incarnate, the Spirit of God was not given, only that Christians might obtain right views, and possess just notions. Religion is something more than mere correctness of intellect, justness of conception, and exactness of judgment. It is a life-giving principle. It must be infused into the habit, as well as govern the understanding; it must regulate the will as well as direct the creed. It must not only cast the opinions into a new frame, but the heart into a new mould. It is a transforming as well as a penetrating principle. It changes the taste, gives activity to the inclinations, and together with a new heart produces a new life

Christianity enjoins the same temper, the same spirit, the same dispositions, on all its real professors. The act, the performance, must depend on circumstances which do not depend on us. The power of doing good is withheld from many, from whom, however, the reward will not be withheld. If the external act constituted the whole value of Christian virtue, then must the author of all good be himself the author of injustice, by putting it out of the power of multitudes to fulfil his own commands. In principles, in tempers, in fervent desires, in holy endeavours, consist the very essence of Christian duty.

Nor must we fondly attach ourselves to the practice of some particular virtue, or value ourselves exclusively on some favourite quality; nor must we wrap ourselves up in the performance of some individual actions, as if they formed the sum of Christian duty. But we must embrace the whole law of God in all its aspects, bearings and relations. We must bring no fancies, no partialities, no prejudices, no exclusive choice or rejection into our religion, but take it as we find it, and obey it as we receive it, as it is exhibited in the Bible without addition, curtailment, or adulteration.

Nor must we pronounce on a character by a single action really bad, or apparently good; if so, Peter's denial would render him the object of our execration, while we should have judged favourably of the prudent economy of Judas. The catastrophe of the latter, who does not know? while the other became a glorious martyr to that master, whom, in a moment of infirmity he had denied.

A piety altogether spiritual, disconnected with all outward circumstances; a religion of pure meditation and abstracted devotion, was not made for so compound, so imperfect a creature as man. There have, indeed, been a few sublime spirits, not 'touched but rapt,' who totally cut off from the world, seem almost to have literally soared above this terrene region, who almost appear to have stolen the fire of the Seraphim, and to have had no business on earth, but to keep alive the celestial flame. They would, however, have approximated more nearly to the example of their divine master, the great standard and only perfect model, had they combined a more diligent discharge of the active duties and benefices of life with their high devotional attainments.

But while we are in little danger of imitating, let us not too harshly censure the pious error of these sublimated spirits. Their number is small. Their example is not catching. Their ethereal fire is not likely, by spreading, to inflame the world. The world will take due care not to come in contact with it, while its distant light and warmth may cast, accidentally, a not unuseful ray on the cold-hearted and the worldly.

But from this small number of refined but inoperative beings, we do not intend to draw our notions of practical picty. God did not make a religion for these few exceptions to the general state of the world, but for the world at large; for beings active, busy, restless; whose activity, he, by his word, diverts into its proper channels; whose busy spirit is there directed to the common good; whose restlessness, indicating the unsatisfactoriness of all they find on earth, he points to a higher destination. Were total seclusion and abstraction designed to have been the general state of the world, God would have given man other laws, other rules, other faculties, and other employments.

There is a class of visionary but pious writers who seem to shoot as far beyond the mark, as mere moralists fall short of it.—Men of low views and gross minds may be said to be wise *below* what is written, while those of too subtle refinement are wise *above* it. The one grovel in the dust from the inertness of their intellectual faculties; while the others are lost in the clouds by stretching them beyond their appointed limits. The one build spiritual castles in the air, instead of erecting them on the 'holy ground' of Scripture; the other lay their foundation in the sand instead of resting it on the Rock of Ages. Thus, the superstructure of both is equally unsound.

God is the fountain from which all the streams of goodness flow; the centre from which all the rays of blessedness diverge.—All our actions are, therefore, only good, as they have a reference to Him: the streams must revert back to their fountain, the rays must converge again to their centre.

If love of God be the governing principle, this powerful spring will actuate all the movements of the rational machine. The essence of religion does not so much consist in actions as affections. Though right actions, therefore, as from an excess of courtesy they are commonly termed, may be performed where there are no right affections; yet are they a mere carcass; utterly destitute of the soul, and, therefore, of the substance of virtue. But neither can affections substantially and truly subsist without producing right actions; for never let it be forgotten that a pious inclination which has not life and vigour sufficient to ripen into act when the occasion presents itself, and a right action which does not grow out of a sound principle, will neither of them have any place in the account of real goodness. A good inclination will be contrary to sin, but a mere inclination will not subdue sin.

The love of God, as it is the source of every right action and feeling, so it is the only principle which necessarily involves the love of our fellow creatures. As man we do not love man. There is a love of partiality but not of benevolence; of sensibility but not of philanthropy; of friends and favourites, of parties and societies, but not of man collectively. It is true we may, and do, without this principle, relieve his distresses, but we do not bear with his faults. We may promote his fortune, but we do not forgive his offences; above all, we are not anxious for his immortal interests. We could not see him want without pain, but we can see him sin without emotion. We could not hear of a beggar perishing at our door without horror, but we can, without concern, witness an acquaintance dying without repentance. Is it not strange that we must participate something of the divine nature, before we can really love the human? It seems, indeed, to be an insensibility to sin,

rather than want of benevolence to mankind, that makes us naturally pity their temporal, and be careless of their spiritual wants; but does not this very insensibility proceed from the want of love to God?

As it is the habitual frame, and predominating disposition, which are the true measure of virtue, incidental good actions are no certain criterion of the state of the heart; for who is there, who does not occasionally do them? Having made some progress in attaining this disposition, we must not sit down satisfied with propensities and inclinations to virtuous actions, while we rest short of their actual exercise. If the principle be that of sound Christianity, it will never be inert. While we shall never do good with any great effect, till we labour to be conformed, in some measure, to the image of God; we shall best evince our having obtained something of that conformity, by a course of steady and active obedience to God.

Every individual should bear in mind, that he is sent into this world to act a part in it. And though one may have a more splendid, and another a more obscure part assigned him, yet the actor of each is equally, is awfully accountable. Though God is not a hard, he is an exact master. His service, though not a severe, is a reasonable service. He accurately proportions his requisitions to his gifts. If he does not expect that one talent should be as productive as five, yet to a single talent a proportionable responsibility is annexed.

He who has said 'Give me thy heart,' will not be satisfied with less; he will not accept the praying lips, nor the mere hand of charity as substitutes.

A real Christian will be more just, sober, and charitable than other men, though he will not rest for salvation on justice, sobriety, or charity. He will perform the duties they enjoin, in the spirit of Christianity, as instances of devout obedience, as evidences of a heart devoted to God.

All virtues, it cannot be too often repeated, are sanctified or unhallowed according to the principle, which dictates them; and will be accepted or rejected accordingly. This principle kept in due exercise, becomes a habit, and every act strengthens the inclination, adding vigour to the principle and pleasure to the performance.

We cannot be said to be real Christians, till religion become our animating motive, our predominating principle and pursuit, as much as worldly things are the predominating motive, principle and pursuit, of worldly men.

New converts, it is said, are most zealous, but they are not always the most persevering. If their tempers are warm; and they have only been touched on the side of their passions, they start eagerly, march rapidly, and are full of confidence in their own strength. They too often judge others with little charity, and themselves with little humility. While they accuse those who move steadily of standing still, they fancy their own course will never be slackened. If their conversion be not solid, religion, in losing its novelty, loses its power. Their speed declines. Nay, it will be happy if their motion become not retrograde. Those who are truly sincere, will commonly be persevering. If their speed is less eager, it is more steady. As they know their own heart more, they discover its deceitfulness, and learn to distrust themselves. As they become more humble in spirit, they become more charitable in judging. As they grow more firm in principle they grow more exact in conduct.

The rooted habits of a religious life may in deed lose their prominence because they are become more indented. If they are not embossed it is because they are burnt in. Where there is uniformity and consistency in the whole character, there will be little relief in an individual action. A good deed will be less striking in an established Christian than a deed less good in one who has been previously careless; good actions being his expected duty and his ordinary practice. Such a Christian indeed, when his right habits cease to be new and striking, may fear that he is declining: but his quiet and confirmed course is a surer evidence than the more early starts of charity, or fits of piety, which may have drawn more attention, and obtained more applause.

Again;—We should cultivate most assiduously, because the work is so difficult, those graces which are most opposite to our natural temper; the value of our good qualities depending much on their being produced by the victory over some natural wrong propensity. The implantation of a virtue is the eradication of a vice. It would cost one man more to keep down a rising passion than to do a brilliant deed. It will try another more to keep back a sparkling but corrupt thought, which his wit had suggested but which religion checks, than it would to give a large sum in charity. A real Christian being deeply sensible of the worthlessness of any actions which do not spring from the genuine fountain, will aim at such an habitual conformity to the divine image, that to perform all acts of justice, charity, kindness, temperance, and every kindred virtue, may become the temper, the habitual, the abiding state of his heart; that like natural streams they may flow spontaneously from the living source.

Practical Christianity then, is the actual operation of Christian principles. It is lying on the watch for occasions to exemplify them. It is 'exercising ourselves unto godliness.' A Christian cannot tell in the morning, what opportunities he may have of doing good during the day; but if he be a real Christian, he can tell that he will try to keep his heart open, his mind prepared, his affections alive to do whatever may occur in the way of duty. He will, as it were, stand in the way to receive the orders of Providence. Doing good is his vocation. Nor does the young artisan bind himself by firmer articles to the rigid performance of his master's work, than the indentured Christian to the active service of that Divine Master, who himself 'went about doing good.' He rejects no duty which comes within the sphere of his calling, nor does he think the work he is employed in a good one, if he might be doing a better. His having well acquitted himself of a good action, is so far from furnishing him with an excuse

for avoiding the next, that it is a new reason for his embarking in it. He looks not at the work which he has accomplished; but on that which he has to do. His views are always prospective. His charities are scarcely limited by his power. His will knows no limits. His fortune may have bounds: His benevolence has none. He is, in mind and desire, the benefactor of every miserable man. His heart is open to all the distressed; to the household of faith it overflows. Where the heart is large, however small the ability, a thousand ways of doing good will be invented. Christian charity is a great enlarger of means. Christian self-denial negatively accomplishes the purpose of the favourites of fortune in the fables of the nursery—if it cannot fill the purse by a wish, it will not empty it by a vanity. It provides for others by abridging from itself. Having carefully defined what is necessary and becoming, it allows of no encroachment on its definition. Superfluities it will lop, vanities it will cut off. The deviser of liberal things will find means of effecting them, which to the indolent appear incredible, to the covetous impossible. Christian beneficence takes a large sweep. That circumference cannot be small of which God is the centre. Nor does religious charity in a Christian stand still because not kept in motion by the main spring of the world. Money may fail, but benevolence will be going on. If he cannot relieve want, he may mitigate sorrow. He may warn the inexperienced, he may instruct the ignorant, he may confirm the doubting. The Christian will find out the cheapest way of *being* good as well as of *doing* good. If he cannot give money, he may exercise a more difficult virtue; he may forgive injuries. Forgiveness is the economy of the heart. A Christian will find it cheaper to pardon than to resent. Forgiveness saves expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits. It also puts the soul into a frame, which makes the practice of other virtues easy. The achievement of a hard duty is a great abolisher of difficulties. If great occasions do not arise, he will thankfully seize on small ones. If he cannot glorify God by serving others, he knows that he has always something to do at home; some evil temper to correct, some wrong propensity to reform, some crooked practice to straighten. He will never be at a loss for employment, while there is a sin or misery in the world; he will never be idle, while there is a distress to be relieved in another, or a corruption to be cured in his own heart. We have employment assigned to us for every circumstance in life. When we are alone, we have our thoughts to watch: in the family, our tempers; in company, our tongues.

What an example of disinterested goodness and unbounded kindness have we in our heavenly Father, who is merciful over all his works; who distributes common blessings without distinction; who bestows the necessary refreshments of life, the shining sun and the refreshing shower, without waiting, as we are apt to do for personal merit, or attachment or gratitude; who does not look out for desert, but want as a qualification for his favours; who does not afflict willingly, who delights in the happiness and desires the salvation of all his children; who dispenses his daily munificence and bears with our daily offences; who in return for our violation of his laws, supplies our necessities; who waits patiently for our repentance, and even solicits us to have mercy on our own souls?

What a model for our humble imitation is that Divine person who was clothed with our humanity; who dwelt among us that the pattern being brought near might be rendered more engaging, the conformity be made more practicable; whose whole life was one unbroken series of universal charity; who in his complicated bounties never forgot that man is compounded both of soul and body; who after teaching the multitude, fed them; who repulsed none for being ignorant; was impatient with none for being dull; despised none for being contemned by the world; rejected none for being sinners; who encouraged those whose importunity others censured; who in healing sickness converted souls; who gave bread and forgave injuries!

It will be the endeavour of the sincere Christian, to illustrate his devotions in the morning by his actions during the day. He will try to make his conduct a practical exposition of the divine prayer which made a part of them. He will desire to hallow the name of God, to promote the enlargement and the 'coming' of the 'kingdom' of Christ. He will endeavour to do and to suffer his whole will; 'to forgive' as he himself trusts that he is forgiven. He will resolve to avoid that 'temptation' into which he had been praying 'not to be led;' and he will labour to shun the 'evil' from which he had been begging to be 'delivered.' He thus makes his prayers as practical as the other parts of his religion; and labours to render his conduct as spiritual as his prayers. The commentary and the text are of reciprocal application.

If this gracious Saviour has left us a perfect model for our devotion in his prayer, he has left a model no less perfect for our practice in his sermon. This Divine exposition has been sometimes misunderstood. It was not so much a supplement to a defective law, at the restoration of the purity of a perfect law from the corrupt interpretations of its blind expounders. These persons had ceased to consider it as forbidding the principle of sin, and as only forbidding the act. Christ restores it to its original meaning, spreads it out on its due extent, shows the largeness of its dimensions and the spirit of its institution. He unfolds all its motions, tendencies and relations. Not contenting himself, as human legislators, are obliged to do, to prohibit a man the act which is injurious to others, but the inward temper which is prejudicial to himself.

There cannot be a more striking instance, how emphatically every doctrine of the gospel has a reference to practical goodness, than is exhibited by St. Paul in that magnificent picture of the resurrection, in his epistle to the Corinthians, which our church has happily selected, for the consolation of survivors at the last closing scene of mortality. After an interference as triumphant as it is logical, that because 'Christ is risen, we shall rise also;' after the most philosophical illustration of the raising

of the body from the dust, by the process of grain sown in the earth, and by the springing up into a new mode of existence; after describing the subjugation of all things to the Redeemer, and his laying down the mediatorial kingdom; after sketching with a seraph's pencil, the relative glories of the celestial and terrestrial bodies; after exhausting the grandest images of created nature, and the dissolution of nature itself;—after such a display of the solemnities of the great day, as makes this world, and all its concerns shrink into nothing: in such a moment, when, if ever, the rapt spirit might be supposed too highly wrought for precept and admonition, the apostle, wound up as he was by the energies of inspiration, to the immediate view of the glorified state—the last trumpet sounding—the change from mortal to immortality effected in the twinkling of an eye —the sting of death drawn out—victory snatched from the grave—then, by a turn as surprising as it is beautiful, he draws a conclusion as unexpectedly practical as his premises were grand and awful: '*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable; always abounding in the work of the Lord.' Then at once, by another quick transition, resorting from the duty to the reward, and winding up the whole with an argument as powerful, as his rhetoric had been sublime, he adds—'Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

CHAP. III.

Mistakes in Religion

To point out with precision all the mistakes which exist in the present day, on the awful subject of religion, would far exceed the limits of this small work. No mention therefore is intended to be made of the opinions or the practice of any particular body of people; nor will any notice be taken of any of the peculiarities of the numerous sects and parties which have risen up among us. It will be sufficient for the present purpose, to hazard some slight remarks on a few of those common classes of characters, which belong more or less to most general bodies.

There are, among many others, three different sorts of religious professors. The religion of one consists in a sturdy defence of what they themselves call orthodoxy, an attendance on public worship, and a general decency of behaviour. In their views of religion, they are not a little apprehensive of excess, not perceiving that their danger lies on the other side. They are far from rejecting faith or morals, but are somewhat afraid of *believing* too much, and a little scrupulous about *doing* too much, lest the former be suspected of fanaticism, and the latter of singularity. These Christians consider religion as a point, which they, by their regular observances, having attained, there is nothing further required but to maintain the point they have reached, by a repetition of the same observances. They are therefore satisfied to remain stationary, considering that whoever has obtained his end, is of course saved the labour of pursuit; he is to keep his ground without troubling himself in searching after imaginary perfection.

These frugal Christians are afraid of nothing so much as superfluity in their love, and supererogation in their obedience. This kind of fear however is always superfluous, but most especially in those who are troubled with the apprehension. They are apt to weigh in the nicely poised scales of scrupulous exactness, the duties which must of hard necessity be done, and those which without much risk may be left undone; compounding for a larger indulgence by the relinquishment of a smaller; giving up, through fear, a trivial gratification to which they are less inclined, and snatching doubtingly, as an equivalent, at one they like better. The gratification in both cases being perhaps such as a manly mind would hardly think worth contending for, even were religion out of the question. Nothing but love to God can conquer love of the world. One grain of that divine principle would make the scale of self-indulgence kick the beam.

These persons dread nothing so much as enthusiasm. Yet if to look for effects without their predisposing causes; to depend for heaven on that to which heaven was never promised, be features of enthusiasm, then are they themselves enthusiasts.

The religion of a second class, we have already described in the two preceding chapters. It consists in a heart devoted to its Maker; inwardly changed in its temper and disposition, yet deeply sensible of its remaining infirmities; continually aspiring however to higher improvements in faith, hope and charity, and thinking that 'the greatest of these is *charity*.' These, by the former class, are reckoned enthusiasts, but they are in fact, if Christianity be true, acting on the only rational principles. If the doctrines of the gospel have any solidity, if its promises have any meaning, these Christians are building on no false ground. They hope that submission to the power of God, obedience to his laws, compliance with his will, trust in his word, are through the efficacy of the eternal Spirit, real evidences, because they are vital acts of genuine faith in Jesus Christ. If they profess not to place their reliance on works, they are however more zealous in performing them than the others, who professing to depend on their good deeds for salvation, are not always diligent in securing it by the very means which they themselves establish to be alone effectual.

There is a third class—the high flown professor, who looks down from the giddy heights of antinomian delusion on the other two, abhors the one, and despises the other, concludes that the one is lost, and the other in a fair way to be so. Though perhaps not living himself in any course of immorality, which requires the sanction of such doctrines, he does not hesitate to imply in his discourse, that virtue is heathenish, and good works superfluous if not dangerous. He does not consider that though the Gospel is an act of oblivion to penitent sinners, yet it no where promises pardon to those who continue to live in a state of rebellion against God, and of disobedience to his laws. He forgets to insist to others that it is of little importance even

to believe that sin is an evil (which however they do not always believe) while they persist to live in it; that to know every thing of duty except the doing it, is to offend God with an aggravation from which ignorance itself is exempt. It is not giving ourselves up to Christ in a nameless, inexplicable way, which will avail us. God loves an humble, not an audacious faith. To suppose that the blood of Christ redeems us from sin, while sin continues to pollute the soul, is to suppose an impossibility; to maintain that it is effectual for the salvation, and not for the sanctification of the sinner, is to suppose that it acts like an amulet, an incantation, a talisman, which is to produce its effect by operating on the imagination, and not on the disease.

The religion which mixes with human passions, and is set on fire by them, will make a stronger blaze than that light which is from above, which sheds a steady and lasting brightness on the path, and communicates a sober but desirable warmth to the heart. It is equable and constant; while the other, like culinary fire, fed by gross materials, is extinguished the sooner from the fierceness of the flame.

That religion which is merely seated in the passions, is not only liable to wear itself out by its own impetuosity, but to be driven out by some other passion. The dominion of violent passions is short. They dispossess each other. When religion has had its day, it gives way to the next usurper. Its empire is no more solid than it is lasting, when principle and reason do not fix it on the throne.

The first of the above classes consider prudence as the paramount virtue in religion. Their antipodes, the flaming professors, believe a burning zeal to be the exclusive grace. *They* revere saint Paul's collocation of the three Christian graces, and think that the greatest of these is *faith*. Though even in respect of this grace, their conduct and conversation too often give us reason to lament that they do not bear in mind its genuine and distinctive properties. Their faith instead of working by love, seems to be adopted from a notion that it leaves the Christian nothing to do, rather than because it is its nature to lead him to do more and better than other men.

In this case, as in many others, that which is directly contrary to what is wrong, is wrong also. If each opponent would only barter half his favourite quality with the favourite quality of the other, both parties would approach nearer to the truth. They might even furnish a complete Christian between them, that is, provided the zeal of the one was sincere, and the prudence of the other honest. But the misfortune is, each is as proud of not possessing the quality he wants, because his adversary has it, as he is proud of possessing that of which the other is destitute, and *because* he is destitute of it.

Among the many mistakes in religion, it is commonly thought that there is something so unintelligible, absurd, and fanatical in the term conversion, that those who employ it, run no small hazard of being involved in the ridicule it excites. It is seldom used but ludicrously, or in contempt. This arises partly from the levity and ignorance of the censurer, but perhaps as much from the imprudence and enthusiasm of those, who have absurdly confined it to real or supposed instances of sudden or miraculous changes from profligacy to piety. But surely, with reasonable people, we run no risk in asserting that he, who being awakened by any of those various methods which the Almighty uses to bring his creatures to the knowledge of himself; who seeing the corruptions that are in the world, and feeling those with which his heart abounds, is brought, whether gradually or rapidly from an evil heart of unbelief, to a lively faith in the Redeemer; from a life, not only of gross vice, but of worldliness and vanity, to a life of progressive piety; whose humility keeps pace with his progress; who, though his attainments are advancing, is so far from counting himself to have attained, that he presses onward with unabated zeal, and evinces, by the change in his conduct, the change that has taken place in his heart—such a one is surely as sincerely converted, and the effect is as much produced by the same divine energy, as if some instantaneous revolution in his character had given it a miraculous appearance. The doctrines of Scripture are the same now as when David called them, 'a law *converting* the soul, and giving *light* to the eyes.' This is perhaps the most accurate and comprehensive definition of the change for which we are contending, for it includes both the illumination of the understanding, and the alteration in the disposition.

If then this obnoxious expression signify nothing more nor less than that change of character which consists in turning from the world to God, however the *term* may offend, there is nothing ridiculous in the *thing*. Now, as it is not for the term which we contend, but for the principle conveyed by it; so it is the principle and not the term which is the real ground of objection; though it is a little inconsistent that many who would sneer at the idea of conversion, would yet take it extremely ill if it were suspected that their hearts were not turned to God.

Reformation, a term against which no objection is ever made, would, if words continued to retain their primitive signification, convey the same idea. For it is plain that to *reform* means to make anew. In the present use, however, it does not convey the same meaning in the same extent, nor indeed does it imply the operation of the same principle. Many are reformed on human motives, many are partially reformed; but only those who, as our great poet says, are 'reformed altogether,' are converted. There is no complete reformation in the conduct effected without a revolution in the heart. Ceasing from some sins; retaining others in a less degree; or adopting such as are merely creditable; or flying from one sin to another; or ceasing from the external act without any internal change of disposition, is not Christian reformation. The new principle must abolish the old habit; the rooted inclination must be subdued by the substitution of an opposite one. The natural bias must be changed. The actual offence will no more be pardoned than cured, if the inward corruption be not eradicated. To be 'alive unto God through Jesus Christ' must follow 'the death unto sin.' There cannot be new aims and

ends where there is not a new principle to produce them. We shall not choose a new path until a light from heaven direct our choice and 'guide our feet.' We shall not 'run the way of God's commandments,' till God himself enlarge our heart.

We do not, however, insist that the change required is such as precludes the possibility of falling into sin; but it is a change which fixes in the soul such a disposition as shall make sin a burden, as shall make the desire of pleasing God the governing desire of a man's heart; as shall make him hate the evil which he does; as shall make the lowness of his attainments the subject of his deepest sorrow. A Christian has hopes and fears, cares and temptations, inclinations and desires, as well as other men. God in changing the heart does not extinguish the passions. Were that the case the Christian life would cease to be a warfare.

We are often deceived by that partial improvement which appears in the victory over some one bad quality. But we must not mistake the removal of a symptom for a radical cure of the disease. An occasional remedy might remove an accidental sickness, but it requires a general regimen to renovate the diseased constitution.

It is the natural but melancholy history of the unchanged heart, that from youth to advanced years, there is no other revolution in the character but such as increase both the number and quality of its defects: that the levity, vanity, and self-sufficiency of the young man is carried into advanced life, and only meet, and mix with the defects of a mature period: that, instead of crying out with the royal prophet, 'O remember not my old sins,' he is inflaming his reckoning by new ones: that age, protracting all the faults of youth, furnishes its own contingent of vices: that sloth, suspicion, and covetousness, swell the account which religion has not been called in to cancel: that the world, though it has lost the power to delight, has yet lost nothing of its power to enslave. Instead of improving in candour by the inward sense of its own defects, that very consciousness makes him less tolerant of the defects of others, and more suspicious of their apparent virtues. His charity in a warmer season having failed to bring him in that return of gratitude for which it was partly performed, and having never flowed from the genuine spring, is dried up. His friendships having been formed on worldly principles, or interest, or ambition, or convivial hilarity, fail him. One must make some sacrifices to the world, is the prevailing language of the nominal Christian. 'What will the world pay you for your sacrifices?' replies the real Christian. Though he finds that the world is insolvent, that it pays nothing of what is promised, for it cannot bestow what it does not possess—happiness: yet he continues to cling to it almost as confidently as if it had never disappointed him. Were we called upon to name the object under the sun which excites the deepest commiseration in the heart of Christian sensibility, which includes in itself the most affecting congruities, which contains the sum and substance of real human misery, we should not hesitate to say *an irreligious old age.* The mere debility of declining years, even the hopelessness of decrepitude, in the pious, though they excite sympathy, yet it is the sympathy of tenderness unmixed with distress. We take and give comfort, from the cheering persuasion that the exhausted body will soon cease to clog its immortal companion; that the dim and failing eyes will soon open on a world of glory. Dare we paint the reverse of the picture? Dare we suffer the imagination to dwell on the opening prospects of hoary impiety? Dare we figure to ourselves that the weakness, the miseries, the terrors, we are now commiserating, are ease, are peace, are happiness compared with the unutterable perspective?

There is a fatal way of lulling the conscience by entertaining diminishing thoughts of sins long since committed. We persuade ourselves to forget them, and we therefore persuade ourselves that they are not remembered by God. But though distance diminishes objects to the eye of the beholder, it does not actually lessen them. Their real magnitude remains the same. Deliver us, merciful God! from the delusion of believing that secret sins, of which the world has no cognizance, early sins, which the world has forgotten, but which are known to 'Him with whom we have to do,' become by secrecy and distance as if they had never been. 'Are not these things noted in THY book?' Perhaps if we remember them, God may forget them, especially if our remembrance be such as to induce a sound repentance. If we remember them not, He assuredly will. The holy contrition which should accompany this remembrance, while it will not abate our humble trust in our compassionate Redeemer, will keep our conscience tender, and our heart watchful.

We do not deny that there is frequently much kindness and urbanity, much benevolence and generosity, in men who do not even pretend to be religious. These qualities often flow from constitutional feeling, natural softness of temper, and warm affections: often from an elegant education, that best *human* sweetener, and polisher of social life. We feel a tender regret as we exclaim 'what a fine soil would such dispositions afford to plant religion in?' Well bred persons are accustomed to respect all the decorums of society, to connect inseparably the ideas of personal comfort with public esteem, of generosity with credit, of order with respectability. They have a keen sense of dishonour, and are careful to avoid every thing that may bring the shadow of discredit on their name. Public opinion is the breath by which they live, the standard by which they act; of course they would not lower by gross misconduct, that standard on which their happiness depends. They have been taught to respect themselves; this they can do with more security while they can retain, on this half-way principle the respect of others.

In some who make further advances towards religion, we continue to see it in that same low degree which we have always observed. It is dwarfish and stunted, it makes no shoots. Though it gives some signs of life, it does not grow. By a tame and spiritless round, or rather by this fixed and immoveable position, we rob ourselves of that fair reward of peace and joy

which attends on an humble consciousness of progress: on the feeling of difficulties conquered; on a sense of the divine favour. That religion which is profitable, is commonly perceptible. Nothing supports a traveller in his Christian course like the conviction that he is getting on; like looking back on the country he has passed; and, above all, like the sense of that protection which has hitherto carried him on, and of that grace which has promised to support him to the end.

The proper motion of the renewed heart is still directed upward. True religion is of an aspiring nature, continually tending towards that heaven from whence it was transplanted. Its top is high because its root is deep. It is watered by a perennial fountain; in its most flourishing state it is always capable of further growth. Real goodness proves itself to be such by a continual desire to be better. No virtue on earth is ever in a complete state. Whatever stage of religion any man has attained, if he be satisfied to rest in that stage, we would not call that man religious. The Gospel seems to consider the highest degree of goodness as the lowest with which a Christian ought to sit down satisfied. We cannot be said to be finished in any Christian grace, because there is not one which may not be carried further than we have carried it. This promotes the double purpose of keeping us humble as to our present stage, and of stimulating us to something higher which we may hope to attain.

That superficial thing, which by mere people of the world is dignified by the appellation of religion, though it brings just that degree of credit which makes part of the system of worldly Christians; neither brings comfort for this world, nor security for the next. Outward observances, indispensable as they are, are not religion. They are the accessory, but not the principal; they are important aids and adjuncts, but not the thing itself; they are its aliment but not its life, the fuel but not the flame, the scaffolding but not the edifice. Religion can no more subsist merely by them. They are divinely appointed, and must be conscientiously observed; but observed as a means to promote an end, and not as an end in themselves.

The heartless homage of formal worship, where the living power does not give life to the form, the cold compliment of ceremonial attendance, without the animating principle, as it will not bring peace to our own mind, so neither will it satisfy a jealous God. That God whose eye is on the heart, 'who trieth the reins and searcheth the spirits,' will not be satisfied that we make him little more than a nominal deity, while the world is the real object of our worship. Such persons seem to have almost the whole body of performance; all they want is the soul. They are constant in their devotions, but the heart, which even the heathens esteemed the best part of the sacrifice, they keep away. They read the Scriptures, but rest in the letter, instead of trying themselves by its spirit.—They consider it as an enjoined task, but not as the quick and powerful instrument put into their hands for the critical dissection of 'piercing and dividing asunder the soul and spirit;' not as the penetrating 'discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' These well-intentioned persons seem to spend no inconsiderable portion of time in religious exercises, and yet complain that they make little progress. They almost seem to insinuate as if the Almighty did not keep his word with them, and manifest that religion to them is not 'pleasantness,' nor her 'paths peace.'

Of such may we not ask, would you not do better to examine than to complain? to inquire whether you do, indeed, possess a heart which notwithstanding its imperfections, is sincerely devoted to God? He who does not desire to be perfect, is not sincere. Would you not do well to convince yourselves that God is not unfaithful? that his promises do not fail? that his goodness is not slackened? May you not be entertaining some secret infidelity, practising some latent disobedience, withholding some part of your heart, neglecting to exercise that faith, subtracting something from that devotedness, to which a Christian should engage himself, and to which the promises of God are annexed? Do you indulge no propensities contrary to his will? Do you never resist the dictates of his Spirit? never shut your eyes to its illumination, nor your heart to its influences? Do you not indulge some cherished sin which obscures the light of grace, some practice which obstructs the growth of virtue, some distrust which chills the warmth of love? The discovery will repay the search, and if you succeed in this scrutiny, let not the detection discourage but stimulate.

If, then, you resolve to take up religion in earnest, especially if you have actually adopted its customary forms, rest not in such low attainment as will afford neither present peace nor future happiness. To know Christianity only in its external forms, and its internal dissatisfaction, its superficial appearances without, and its disquieting apprehensions within; to be desirous of standing well with the world as a Christian, yet to be unsupported by a well-founded Christian hope; to depend for happiness on the opinion of men, instead of the favour of God; to go on dragging through the mere exercises of piety, without deriving from them real strength or solid peace; to live in the dread of being called an enthusiast, by outwardly exceeding in religion, and in secret consciousness of falling short of it; to be conformed to the world's view of Christianity, rather than to aspire to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, is a state, not of pleasure but of penalty, not of conquest but of hopeless conflict, not of ingenuous love but of tormenting fear. It is knowing religion only as the captive in a foreign land knows the country in which he is a prisoner. He hears from the cheerful natives of its beauties, but is himself ignorant of every thing beyond his own gloomy limits. He hears of others as free and happy, yet feels nothing himself but the rigours of incarceration.

The Christian character is little understood by the votaries of the world; if it were, they would be struck with its grandeur. It is the very reverse of that meanness and pusillanimity, that abject spirit and those narrow views, which those who know it not ascribe to it.

A Christian lives at the height of his being;

not only at the top of his spiritual, but of his intellectual life. He alone lives in the full exercise of his rational powers. Religion ennobles his reason while it enlarges it.

Let then your soul act up to its high destination; let not that which was made to soar to heaven, grovel in the dust. Let it not live so much below itself. You wonder it is not more fixed, when it is perpetually resting on things which are not fixed themselves. In the rest of a Christian there is stability, Nothing can shake his confidence but sin. Outward attack and troubles rather fix than unsettle him, as tempests from without only serve to root the oak faster, while an inward canker will gradually rot and decay it.

These are only a few of the mistakes among the multitude which might have been pointed out; but these are noticed as being of common and every day occurrence. The ineffectiveness of such a religion will be obvious.

That religion which sinks Christianity into a mere conformity to religious usages, must always fail of substantial effects. If sin be seated in the heart, if that be its home, that is the place in which it must be combatted. It is in vain to attack it in the suburbs, when it is lodged in the centre. Mere forms can never expel that enemy which they can never reach. By a religion of decencies, our corruptions may perhaps be driven out of sight, but they will never be driven out of possession. If they are expelled from their outworks, they will retreat to their citadel. If they do not appear in grosser forms, prohibited by the decalogue, still they will exist. The shape may be altered, but the principle will remain. They will exist in the spiritual modification of the same sins, equally forbidden by the divine expositor. He who dares not be revengeful, will be unforgiving. He who ventures not to break the letter of the seventh commandment in act, will violate it in the spirit. He who has not courage to forfeit heaven by profligacy, will scale it by pride, or forfeit it by unprofitableness.

It is not any vain hope, built on some external privilege or performance on the one hand, nor a presumptuous confidence that our names are written in the book of life, on the other, which can afford a reasonable ground of safety, but it is endeavouring to keep all the commandments of God; it is living to him who died for us; it is being conformed to his image, as well as redeemed by his blood. This is Christian virtue; this is the holiness of a believer. A lower motive will produce a lower morality, but such an unsanctified morality God will not accept.

For it will little avail us that Christ has died for us, that he has conquered sin, triumphed over the powers of darkness, and overcome the world, while any sin retains its unresisted dominion in our hearts, while the world is our idol, while our fostered corruptions cause us to prefer darkness to light. We must not persuade ourselves that we are reconciled to God while our rebellious hearts are not reconciled to goodness.

It is not casting a set of opinions into a mould, and a set of duties into a system, which constitutes the Christian religion. The circumference must have a centre, the body must have a soul, the performances must have a principle. Outward observances were wisely constituted to rouse our forgetfulness, to awaken our secular spirits, to call back our negligent hearts; but it was never intended that we should stop short in the use of them. They were designed to excite holy thoughts, to quicken us to holy deeds, but not to be used as equivalents for either. But we find it cheaper to serve God in a multitude of exterior acts, than to starve on interior corruption.

Nothing short of that uniform stable principle, that fixedness in religion which directs a man in all his actions, aims, and pursuits, to God as his ultimate end, can give consistency to his conduct or tranquillity to his soul. This state once attained, he will not waste all his thoughts and designs upon the world; he will not lavish all his affections on so poor a thing as his own advancement. He will desire to devote all to the only object worthy of them, to God. Our Saviour has taken care to provide that our ideas of glorifying him may not run out into fanciful chimeras or subtle inventions, by simply stating—'HEREIN IS MY FATHER GLORIFIED, THAT YE BEAR MUCH FRUIT.' This, he goes on to inform us, is the true evidence of our being of the number of his people, by adding—'so shall ye be my disciples.'

CHAP. IV.

Periodical Religion.

WE deceive ourselves not a little when we fancy that what is emphatically called *the world*, is only to be found in this or that situation. The world is every where. It is a nature as well as a place; a principle as well as a 'local habitation and a name.' Though the principle and the nature flourish most in those haunts which are their congenial soil, yet we are too ready, when we withdraw from the world abroad, to bring it home, to lodge it in our own bosom. The natural heart is both its temple and its worshipper.

But the most devoted idolater of the world, with all the capacity and industry which he may have applied to the subject, has never yet been able to accomplish the grand design of uniting the interests of heaven and earth. This experiment, which has been more assiduously and more frequently tried than that of the philosopher for the grand hermetic secret, has been tried with about the same degree of success. The most laborious process of the spiritual chemist to reconcile religion with the world, has never yet been competent to make the contending principles coalesce.

But to drop metaphor.—Religion was never yet thoroughly relinquished by a heart full of the world. The world in return cannot be completely enjoyed where there is just religion enough to disturb its false peace. In such minds heaven and earth ruin each other's enjoyments.

There is a religion which is too sincere for hypocrisy, but too transient to be profitable; too

superficial to reach the heart, too unproductive to proceed from it. It is slight, but not false. It has discernment enough to distinguish sin, but not firmness enough to oppose it; compunction sufficient to soften the heart, but not vigour sufficient to reform it. It laments when it does wrong, and performs all the functions of repentance of sin except forsaking it It has every thing of devotion except the stability, and gives every thing to religion except the heart. This is a religion of times, events, and circumstances; it is brought into play by accidents, and dwindles away with the occasion which called it out. Festivals and fasts which occur but seldom, are much observed, and it is to be feared *because* they occur but seldom; while the great festival which comes every week, comes too often to be so respectfully treated. The piety of these people comes out much in sickness, but is apt to retreat again as recovery approaches. If they die, they are placed by their admirers in the Saints' calender; if they recover, they go back into the world they had renounced, and again suspend their amendment as often as Death suspends his blow.

There is another class whose views are still lower, who cannot so far shake off religion as to be easy without retaining its brief and stated forms, and who contrive to mix up these forms with a faith of a piece with their practice. They blend their inconsistent works with a vague and unwarranted reliance on what the Saviour has done for them, and thus patch up a merit, and a propitiation of their own—running the hazard of incurring the danger of punishment by their lives, and inventing a scheme to avert it by their creed. Religion never interferes with their pleasures except by the compliment of a short and occasional suspension. Having got through these periodical acts of devotion, they return to the same scenes of vanity and idleness which they had quitted for the temporary duty: forgetting that it was the very end of those acts of devotion to cure the vanity and to correct the idleness. Had the periodical observance answered its true design, it would have disinclined them to the pleasure instead of giving them a disposition for its indulgence. Had they used the devout exercise in a right spirit, and improved it to the true end, it would have set the heart and life at work on all those pursuits which it was calculated to promote. But their project has more ingenuity. By the stated minutes they give to religion, they cheaply purchase a protection for the misemployment of the rest of their time. They make these periodical devotions a kind of spiritual insurance office, which is to make up to the adventurers in pleasure, any loss or damage which they may sustain in its voyage.

It is of these shallow devotions, these presumed equivalents for a new heart and a new life, that God declares by the prophet, that he is 'weary.' Though of his own express appointment, they become 'an abomination' to him as soon as the sign comes to be rested in for the thing signified. We Christians have our 'new moons and our sacrifices' under other names and other shapes; of which sacrifices, that is, of the spirit in which they are offered, the Almighty has said, 'I cannot away with them, they are iniquity.'

Now is this superficial devotion that 'giving up ourselves not with our lips only, but with our lives,' to our Maker, to which we solemnly pledge ourselves, at least once a week? Is consecrating an hour or two to public worship on the Sunday morning, making the Sabbath 'a delight?' Is desecrating the rest of the day, by 'doing our own ways, finding our own pleasure, speaking our own words,' making it 'honourable?'

Sometimes in an awakening sermon, these periodical religionists hear, with awe and terror, of the hour of death and the day of judgment. Their hearts are penetrated with the solemn sounds. They confess the awful realities by the impression they make on their own feelings. The sermon ends, and with it the serious reflections it excited. While they listen to these things especially if the preacher be alarming, they are all in all to them. They return to the world—and these things are as if they were not; as if they had never been; as if their reality lasted only while they were preached; as if their existence depended only on their being heard; as if truth were no longer truth than while it solicited their notice; as if there were as little stability in religion itself as in their attention to it. As soon as their minds are disengaged from the question, one would think that death and judgment were an invention, that heaven and hell were blotted from existence, that eternity ceased to be eternity, in the long intervals in which they cease to be the object of their consideration.

This is the natural effect of what we venture to denominate *periodical religion*. It is a transient homage kept totally distinct and separate from the rest of our lives, instead of its being made the prelude and the principle of a course of pious practice; instead of our weaving our devotions and our actions into one uniform tissue by doing all in one spirit and to one end. When worshippers of this description pray for 'a clean heart and a right spirit;' when they beg of God to 'turn away their eyes from beholding vanity,' is it not to be feared that they pray to be made what they resolve never to become, that they would be very unwilling to become as good, as they pray to be made, and would be sorry to be as penitent as they profess to desire? But alas! they are in little danger of being taken at their word; there is too much reason to fear their petitions will not be heard or answered, for prayer for the pardon of sin will obtain no pardon, while we retain the sin in hope that the prayer will be accepted without the renunciation.

The most solemn office of our Religion, the sacred memorial of the death of its Author, the blessed injunction and tender testimony of his dying love, the consolation of the humble believer, the gracious appointment for strengthening his faith, quickening his repentance, awakening his gratitude and kindling his charity, is too often resorted to on the same erroneous principle. He who ventures to live without the use of this holy institution, lives in a state of disobedience to the last appointment of his Redeemer. He who rests in it as a means for sup-

plying the place of habitual piety, totally mistakes its design, and is fatally deceiving his own soul.

This awful solemnity is, it is to be hoped, rarely frequented even by this class of Christians without a desire of approaching it with the pious feelings above described. But if they carry them to the altar, are they equally anxious to carry them away from it; are they anxious to maintain them after it? Does the rite so seriously approached commonly leave any vestige of seriousness behind it? Are they careful to perpetuate the feelings they were so desirous to excite? Do they strive to make them produce solid and substantial effects? Would that this inconstancy of mind were to be found only in the class of characters under consideration! Let the reader, however sincere in his desires, let the writer, however ready to lament the levity of others, seriously ask their own hearts if they can entirely acquit themselves of the inconsistency they are so forward to blame. If they do not find the charge brought against others but too applicable to themselves.

Irreverence antecedent to, or during this sacred solemnity, is far more rare than durable improvement after it. If there are, as we are willing to believe, none so profane as to violate the act, except those who impiously use it only as 'a pick-lock to a place,' there are too few who make it lastingly beneficial. Few so thoughtless as not to approach it with resolution of amendment; few comparatively who carry those resolutions into effect. Fear operates in the previous instance. Why should not love operate in that which is subsequent?

A periodical religion is accompanied with a periodical repentance. This species of repentance is adopted with no small mental reservation. It is partial and disconnected. These fragments of contrition, these broken parcels of penitence—while a succession of worldly pursuits is not only resorted to, but is intended to be resorted to, during the whole of the intervening spaces, is not that sorrow which the Almighty hath promised to accept. To render it pleasing to God and efficacious to ourselves, there must be an agreement in the parts, an entireness in the whole web of life. There must be an integral repentance. A quarterly contrition in the four weeks preceding the sacred seasons will not wipe out the daily offences, the hourly negligences of the whole sinful year. Sins half forsaken through fear, and half retained through partially resisted temptation and partially adopted resolution, make up but an unprofitable piety.

In the bosom of these professors there is a perpetual conflict between fear and inclination. In conversation you will generally find them very warm in the cause of religion; but it is religion as opposed to infidelify, not as opposed to worldly-mindedness. They defend the worship of God, but desire to be excused from his service. Their heart is the slave of the world, but their blindness hides from them the turpitude of that world. They commend piety but dread its requisitions. They allow that repentance is necessary, but then how easy is it to find reasons for deferring a necessary evil? *Who* will hastily adopt a painful measure which he can find a creditable pretence for evading? They censure whatever is ostensibly wrong, but avoiding only part of it, the part they retain robs them of the benefits of their partial renunciation.

We cannot sufficiently admire the wisdom of the church, in enjoining extraordinary acts of devotion at the return of those festivals so happily calculated to excite devotional feelings. Extraordinary repentance of sin is peculiarly suitable to the seasons that record those grand events which sin occasioned. But the church never intended that these more stated and strict self-examinations should preclude our habitual self-inspection. It never intended its holy offices to supply the place of general holiness, but to promote it. It intended that these solemn occasions should animate the flame of piety, but it never meant to furnish a reason for neglecting to keep the flame alive till the next return should again kindle the dying embers. It meant that every such season should gladden the heart of the Christian at its approach, and not discharge him from duty at its departure. It meant to lighten his conscience of the burden of sin, not to encourage him to begin a new score, again to be wiped off at the succeeding festival. It intended to quicken the vigilance of the believer and not to dismiss the sentinel from his post. If we are not the better for these divinely appointed helps, we are the worse If we use them as a discharge from that diligence which they were intended to promote, we convert our blessings into snares.

This abuse of our advantages arises from our not incorporating our devotions into the general habit of our lives. Till our religion become an inward principle, and not an external act, we shall not receive that benefit from her forms, however excellent, which they are calculated to convey. It is to those who possess the spirit of Christianity that her forms are so valuable. To them, the form excites the spirit, as the spirit animates the form. Till religion become the desire of our hearts, it will not become the business of our lives. We are far from meaning that it is to be its actual occupation; but that every portion, every habit, every act of life is to be animated by its spirit, influenced by its principle, governed by its power.

The very mark of our nature and our necessary commerce with the world, naturally fill our hearts and minds with thoughts and ideas, over which we have unhappily too little control. We find this to be the case when in our better hours we attempt to give ourselves up to serious reflection. How many intrusions of worldly thoughts, how many impertinent imaginations, not only irrelevant, but uncalled and unwelcome, crowd in upon the mind so forcibly as scarcely to be repelled by our sincerest efforts. How impotent then to repel such images must that mind be, which is devoted to worldly pursuits, which yields itself up to them, whose opinions, habits, and conduct are under their allowed influence!

If, as we have before observed, religion consists in a new heart and a new spirit, it will become not our occasional act, but our abiding disposition, proving its settled existence in the

mind by its habitually disposing our thoughts and actions, our devotions and our practice to a conformity to each other and to itself.

Let us not consider a spirit of worldliness as a little infirmity, as a natural, and therefore a pardonable weakness; as a trifling error which will be overlooked for the sake of our many good qualities. It is in fact the essence of our other faults; the temper that stands between us and our salvation; the spirit which is in direct opposition to the Spirit of God. Individual sins may more easily be cured, but this is the principle of all spiritual disease. A worldly spirit where it is rooted and cherished, runs through the whole character, insinuates itself in all we say and think and do. It is this which makes us so dead in religion, so averse from spiritual things, so forgetful of God, so unmindful of eternity, so satisfied with ourselves, so impatient of serious discourse, and so alive to that vain and frivolous intercourse, which excludes intellect almost as much as piety from our general conversation.

It is not therefore our more considerable actions alone which require watching, for they seldom occur. They do not form the habit of life in ourselves, nor the chief importance of our example to others. It is to our ordinary behaviour; it is to our deportment in common life; it is to our prevailing turn of mind in general intercourse, by which we shall profit or corrupt those with whom we associate. It is our conduct in social life which will help to diffuse a spirit of piety, or a distaste to it. If we have much influence, this is the place in which particularly to exert it. If we have little we have still enough to infect the temper and lower the tone of our narrow society.

If we really believe that it is the design of Christianity to raise us to a participation of the divine nature, the slightest reflection on this elevation of our character would lead us to maintain its dignity in the ordinary intercourse of life. We should not so much inquire whether we are transgressing any actual prohibition; whether any standing law is pointed against us; as whether we are supporting the dignity of the Christian character; whether we are acting suitably to our profession; whether more exactness in the common occurrences of the day, more correctness in our conversation, would not be such evidences of our religion, as by being obvious and intelligible, might not almost insensibly produce important effects.

The most insignificant people must not through indolence and selfishness undervalue their own influence. Most persons have a little circle of which they are a sort of centre. Its smallness may lessen their quantity of good, but does not diminish the duty of using that little influence wisely. Where is the human being so inconsiderable but that he may in some shape benefit others, either by calling their virtues into exercise, or by setting them an example of virtue himself? But we are humble just in the wrong place. When the exhibition of our talents or splendid qualities is in question, we are not backward in the display. When a little self-denial is to be exercised, when a little good might be effected by our example, by our discreet management in company, by giving a better turn to conversation, then at once we grow wickedly modest—'Such an insignificant creature as I am can do no good.'—'Had I higher rank or brighter talents, then indeed my influence might be exerted to some purpose.'—Thus under the mask of diffidence, we justify our indolence; and let slip those lesser occasions of promoting religion which if we all improved, how much might the condition of society be raised.

The hackneyed interrogation, 'What—must we be always talking about religion?' must have the hackneyed answer—Far from it. Talking about religion is not being religious. But we may bring the *spirit* of religion into company, and keep it in perpetual operation when we do not professedly make it our subject. We may be constantly advancing its interests, we may without effort or affectation be giving an example of candour, of moderation, of humility, of forbearance. We may employ our influence by correcting falsehood, by checking levity, by discouraging calumny, by vindicating misrepresented merit, by countenancing every thing which has a good tendency—in short, by throwing our whole weight, be it great or small, into the right scale.

CHAP. V.

Prayer.

Prayer is the application of want to him who only can relieve it; the voice of sin to him who alone can pardon it. It is the urgency of poverty, the prostration of humility, the fervency of penitence, the confidence of trust. It is not eloquence, but earnestness: not the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; not figures of speech, but compunction of soul. It is the 'Lord save us or we perish' of drowning Peter the cry of faith to the ear of mercy.

Adoration is the noblest employment of created beings; confession the natural language of guilty creatures; gratitude the spontaneous expression of pardoned sinners.

Prayer is desire. It is not a conception of the mind nor a mere effort of the intellect, nor an act of the memory; but an elevation of the soul towards its Maker; a pressing sense of our own ignorance and infirmity, a consciousness of the perfections of God, of his readiness to hear, of his power to help, of his willingness to save.

It is not an emotion produced in the senses; nor an effect wrought by the imagination; but a determination of the will, an effusion of the heart.

Prayer is the guide to self-knowledge by prompting us to look after our sins in order to pray against them; a motive to vigilance, by teaching us to guard against those sins which, through self-examination, we have been enabled to detect.

Prayer is an act both of the understanding and of the heart. The understanding must apply itself to the knowledge of the divine perfections, or the heart will not be led to the adoration of them. It would not be a *reasonable*

service if the mind was excluded. It must be rational worship, or the human worshipper would not bring to the service the distinguished faculty of his nature, which is reason. It must be spiritual worship; or it would want the distinctive quality to make it acceptable to Him, who has declared that He will be worshipped 'in spirit and in truth.'

Prayer is right in itself as the most powerful means of resisting sin and advancing in holiness. It is above all right, as every thing is, which has the authority of Scripture, the command of God, and the example of Christ.

There is a perfect consistency in all the ordinations of God; a perfect congruity in the whole scheme of his dispensations. If man were not a corrupt creature, such prayer as the gospel enjoins would not have been necessary. Had not prayer been an important means for curing those corruptions, a God of perfect wisdom would not have ordered it. He would not have prohibited every thing which tends to inflame and promote them, had they not existed, nor would he have commanded every thing that has a tendency to diminish and remove them, had not their existence been fatal. Prayer, therefore, is an indispensable part of his economy and of our obedience.

It is a hackneyed objection to the use of prayer that it is offending the omniscience of God to suppose he requires information of our wants. But no objection can be more futile. We do not pray to inform God of our wants, but to express our sense of the wants which he already knows. As he has not so much made his promise to our necessities, as to our requests, it is reasonable that our requests should be made before we can hope that our necessities will be relieved. God does not promise to those who want that they shall 'have,' but to those who 'ask;' nor to those who need that they shall 'find,' but to those who 'seek.' So far therefore from his previous knowledge of our wants being a ground of objection to prayer, it is in fact the true ground for our application. Were he not knowledge itself, our information would be of as little use as our application would be, were he not goodness itself.

We cannot attain to a just notion of prayer while we remain ignorant of our own nature, of the nature of God as revealed in Scripture, of our relation to him and dependence on him. If therefore we do not live in the daily study of the holy scriptures, we shall want the highest motives to this duty and the best helps for performing it; if we do, the cogency of these motives, and the inestimable value of these helps, will render argument unnecessary and exhortation superfluous.

One cause therefore of the dulness of many Christians in prayer, is, their slight acquaintance with the sacred volume. They hear it periodically, they read it occasionally, they are contented to know it historically, to consider it superficially, but they do not endeavour to get their minds imbued with its spirit. If they store their memory with its facts, they do not impress their hearts with its truths. They do not regard it as the nutriment on which their spiritual life and growth depend. They do not pray over it; they do not consider all its doctrines as of practical application; they do not cultivate that spiritual discernment which alone can enable them judiciously to appropriate its promises and its denunciations to their own actual case. They do not apply it as an unerring line to ascertain their own rectitude or obliquity.

In our retirements, we too often fritter away our precious moments, moments rescued from the world, in trivial, sometimes it is to be feared, in corrupt thoughts. But if we must give the reins to our imagination, let us send this excursive faculty to range among great and noble objects. Let it stretch forward under the sanction of faith and the anticipation of prophecy, to the accomplishment of those glorious promises and tremendous threatenings which will soon be realized in the eternal world. These are topics which under the safe and sober guidance of Scripture, will fix its largest speculations and sustain its loftiest flights. The same Scripture while it expands and elevates the mind, will keep it subject to the dominion of truth; while at the same time it will teach it that its boldest excursions must fall infinitely short of the astonishing realities of a future state.

Though we cannot pray with a too deep sense of sin, we may make our sins too exclusively the object of our prayers. While we keep, with a self-abasing eye, our own corruptions in view, let us look with equal intenseness on that mercy, which cleanseth from all sin. Let our prayers be all humiliation, but let them not be all complaint.—When men indulge no other thought but that they are rebels, the hopelessness of pardon hardens them into disloyalty. Let them look to the mercy of the king, as well as to the rebellion of the subject. If we contemplate his grace as displayed in the gospel, then, though our humility will increase, our despair will vanish. Gratitude in this as in human instances will create affection. 'We love him because he first loved us.'

Let us then always keep our unworthiness in view as a reason why we stand in need of the mercy of God in Christ; but never plead it as a reason why we should not draw nigh to him to implore that mercy. The best men are unworthy for their own sakes; the worst on repentance will be accepted for his sake and through his merits.

In prayer then, the perfections of God, and especially his mercy in our redemption, should occupy our thoughts as much as our sins; our obligation to him as much as our departures from him. We should keep up in our hearts a constant sense of our own weakness, not with a design to discourage the mind and depress the spirits; but with a view to drive us out of ourselves, in search of the divine assistance. We should contemplate our infirmity in order to draw us to look for his strength, and to seek that power from God which we vainly look for in ourselves. We do not tell a sick friend of his danger in order to grieve or terrify him, but to induce him to apply to his physician, and to have recourse to his remedy.

Among the charges which have been brough against serious piety, one is, that it teaches men

to despair. The charge is just in one sense as to the fact, but false in the sense intended. It teaches us to despair indeed of ourselves, while it inculcates that faith in a Redeemer, which is the true antidote to despair. Faith quickens the doubting spirit, while it humbles the presumptuous. The lowly Christian takes comfort in the blessed promise, that God will never forsake them that are his. The presumptuous man is equally right in the doctrine, but wrong in applying it. He takes that comfort to himself which was meant for another class of characters. The mal-appropriation of Scripture promises and threatenings, is the cause of much error and delusion.

Though some devout enthusiasts have fallen into error by an unnatural and impracticable disinterestedness, asserting that God is to be loved exclusively for himself, with an absolute renunciation of any view of advantage to ourselves; yet that prayer cannot be mercenary, which involves God's glory with our own happiness, and makes his will the law of our requests. Though we are to desire the glory of God supremely; though this ought to be our grand actuating principle, yet he has graciously permitted, commanded, invited us, to attach our own happiness to this primary object. The Bible exhibits not only a beautiful, but an inseparable combination of both, which delivers us from the danger of unnaturally renouncing our own benefit for the promotion of God's glory, on the one hand; and on the other, from seeking any happiness independent of him, and underived from him. In enjoining us to love him supremely, he has connected an unspeakable blessing with a paramount duty, the highest privilege with the most positive command.

What a triumph for the humble Christian to be assured, that 'the high and lofty One which inhabiteth eternity,' condescends at the same time to dwell in the heart of the contrite;—in *his* heart! To know that God is the God of his life, to *know* that he is even invited to take the Lord for his God. To close with God's offers, to accept his invitations, to receive God as his portion, must surely be more pleasing to our heavenly Father, than separating our happiness from his glory. To disconnect our interests from his goodness, is at once to detract from his perfections, and to obscure the brightness of our own hopes. The declarations of inspired writers are confirmed by the authority of the heavenly hosts. They proclaim that the glory of God and the happiness of his creatures, so far from interfering, are connected with each other. We know but of one anthem composed and sung by angels, and this most harmoniously combines 'the glory of God in the highest with peace on earth and good will to men.'

'The beauty of Scripture,' says the great Saxon reformer, 'consists in pronouns.' This God is *our* God—God, even our *own* God, shall bless us. How delightful the appropriation! To glorify him as being in himself consummate excellence, and to love him from the feeling that this excellence is directed to our felicity! Here modesty would be ingratitude; disinterestedness rebellion. It would be severing ourselves from Him, in whom we live, and move, and are; it would be dissolving the connexion which he has condescended to establish between himself and his creatures.

It has been justly observed, that the Scripture saints make this union the chief ground of their grateful exultation—'*My* strength'—'*my* rock'—'*my* fortress'—'*my* deliverer!' Again—'Let the God of *my* salvation be exalted!' Now take away the pronoun and substitute the article *the*, how comparatively cold is the impression! The consummation of the joy arises from the peculiarity, the intimacy, the endearment of the relation.

Nor to the liberal Christian is the grateful joy diminished, when he blesses his God as 'the God of all them that trust in him.' All general blessings, will he say, all providential mercies, are mine individually, are mine as completely as if no other shared in the enjoyment. Life, light, the earth and heavens, the sun and stars, whatever sustains the body, and recreates the spirits! My obligation is as great as if the mercy had been made purely for me. As great? nay, it is greater—it is augmented by a sense of the millions who participate in the blessing. The same enlargement of the personal obligation holds good, nay rises higher, in the mercies of redemption. The Lord is *my* Saviour as completely as if he had redeemed only me. That he has redeemed 'a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,' is diffusion without abatement; it is general participation without individual diminution—Each has all.

In adoring the providence of God, we are apt to be struck with what is new and out of course, while we too much overlook long, habitual, and uninterrupted mercies. But common mercies, if less striking, are more valuable, both because we have them always, and for the reason above assigned, because others share them. The ordinary blessings of life are overlooked for the very reason that they ought to be most prized—because they are most uniformly bestowed. They are most essential to our support, and when once they are withdrawn we begin to find that they are also most essential to our comfort. Nothing raises the price of a blessing like its removal; whereas it was its continuance which should have taught us its value. We require novelties to awaken our gratitude, not considering that it is the duration of mercies which enhances their value. We want fresh excitements. We consider mercies long enjoyed as things of course, as things to which we have a sort of presumptive claim; as if God had no right to withdraw what he had once bestowed; as if he were obliged to continue what he has once been pleased to confer.

But that the sun has shone unremittingly from the day that God created him, is not a less stupendous exertion of power than that the hand which fixed him in the heavens, and marked out his progress through them, once said by his servant, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon.' That he has gone on in his strength, driving his uninterrupted career, and 'rejoicing as a giant to run his course,' for six thousand years, is a more astonishing exhibition of Omnipotence than that he should have been once suspended

by the hand which set him in motion. That the ordinances of heaven, that the established laws of nature, should have been for one day interrupted to serve a particular occasion, is a less real wonder, and certainly a less substantial blessing, than that in such a multitude of ages they should have pursued their appointed course, for the comfort of the whole system:

> For ever singing as they shine
> The hand that made us is divine.

As the affections of the Christian ought to be set on things above, so it is for them that his prayers will be chiefly addressed. God in promising to 'give those who delight in him the desire of their heart,' could never mean temporal things; for these they might desire improperly as to the object, and inordinately as to the degree. The promise relates principally to spiritual blessings. He not only gives us these mercies, but the very desire to obtain them is also his gift. Here our prayer requires no qualifying, no conditioning, no limitation. We cannot err in our choice, for God himself is the object of it; we cannot exceed in the degree, unless it were possible to love him too well, or to please him too much.

We should pray for worldly comforts, and for a blessing on our earthly plans, though lawful in themselves, conditionally, and with a reservation: because after having been earnest in our requests for them, it may happen that when we come to the petition 'thy will be done,' we may in these very words be praying that our previous petitions may not be granted. In this brief request consists the vital principle, the essential spirit of prayer. God shows his munificence in encouraging us to ask most earnestly for the greatest things, by promising that the smaller 'shall be added unto us.' We therefore acknowledge his liberality most when we request the highest favours. He manifests his infinite superiority to earthly fathers by chiefly delighting to confer those spiritual gifts, which *they* less solicitously desire for their children than those worldly advantages on which God sets so little value.

Nothing short of a sincere devotedness to God, can enable us to maintain an equality of mind, under unequal circumstances. We murmur that we have not the things we ask amiss, not knowing that they are withheld by the same mercy by which the things that are good for us are granted. Things good in themselves may not be good for us. A resigned spirit is the proper disposition to prepare us for receiving mercies, or for having them denied. Resignation of soul, like the allegiance of a good subject, is always in readiness, though not in action: whereas an impatient mind is a spirit of disaffection always prepared to revolt, when the will of the sovereign is in opposition to that of the subject. This seditious principle is the infallible characteristic of an unrenewed mind.

A sincere love of God will make us thankful when our supplications are granted, and patient and cheerful when they are denied. He who feels his heart rise against any divine dispensation, ought not to rest till by serious meditation and earnest prayer it be moulded into submission. A habit of acquiescence in the will of God, will so operate on the faculties of his mind, that even his judgment will embrace the conviction, that what he once so ardently desired, would not have been that good thing, which his blindness had conspired with his wishes to make him believe it to be. He will recollect the many instances in which if his importunity had prevailed, the thing which ignorance requested, and wisdom denied, would have insured his misery. Every fresh disappointment will teach him to distrust himself, and to confide in God. Experience will instruct him that there may be a better way of hearing our requests than that of granting them. Happy for us that he to whom they are addressed knows which is best, and acts upon that knowledge.

> Still lift for good the supplicating voice,
> But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice;
> Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
> Secure whate'er he gives, he gives the best.

We should endeavour to render our private devotions effectual remedies for our own particular sins. Prayer against sin in general is too indefinite to reach the individual case. We must bring it home to our own heart, else we may be confessing another man's sins and overlooking our own. If we have any predominant fault, we should pray more especially against that fault. If we pray for any virtue of which we particularly stand in need, we should dwell on our own deficiencies in that virtue, till our souls become deeply affected with our want of it. Our prayers should be circumstantial, not, as was before observed, for the information of infinite wisdom, but for the stirring up of our own dull affections. And as the recapitulation of our wants tends to keep up a sense of our dependence, the enlarging on our especial mercies will tend to keep alive a sense of gratitude. While indiscriminate petitions, confessions, and thanksgivings leave the mind to wander in indefinite devotion and unaffecting generalities, without personality and without appropriation. It must be obvious that we except those grand universal points in which all have an equal interest, and which must always form the essence of public prayer.

On the blessing attending importunity in prayer, the Gospel is abundantly explicit. God perhaps delays to give that we may persevere in asking. He may require importunity for our own sakes, that the frequency and urgency of the petition may bring our hearts into that frame to which he will be favourable.

As we ought to live in a spirit of obedience to his commands, so we should live in a frame of waiting for his blessings on our prayers, and in a spirit of gratitude when we have obtained it. This is that 'preparation of the heart' which would always keep us in a posture for duty. If we desert the duty because an immediate blessing does not visibly attend it, it shows that we do not serve God out of conscience, but selfishness: that we grudge expending on him that service which brings us in no immediate interest. Though he grant not our petition, let us never be tempted to withdraw our application.

Our reluctant devotions may remind us of

the remark of a certain political wit, who apologized for his late attendance in parliament, by his being detained while a party of soldiers were *dragging a volunteer* to his duty. How many excuses do we find for not being in time! How many apologies for brevity! How many evasions for neglect! How unwilling, too often, are we to come into the divine presence, how reluctant to remain in it! Those hours which are least valuable for business, which are least seasonable for pleasure, we commonly give to religion. Our energies which were so exerted in the society we have just quitted, are sunk as we approach the divine presence. Our hearts, which were all alacrity in some frivolous conversation, become cold and inanimate, as if it were the natural property of devotion to freeze the affections. Our animal spirits, which so readily performed their functions before, now slacken their vigour and lose their vivacity. The sluggish body sympathizes with the unwilling mind, and each promotes the deadness of the other; both are slow in listening to the call of duty; both are soon weary in performing it. As prayer requires all the energies of the compound being of man, so we too often feel as if there were a conspiracy of body, soul and spirit, to disincline and disqualify us for it.

When the heart is once sincerely turned to religion, we need not, every time we pray, examine into every truth, and seek for conviction over and over again; but assume that those doctrines are true, the truth of which we have already proved. From a general and fixed impression of these principles, will result a taste, a disposedness, a love, so intimate, that the convictions of the understanding will become the affections of the heart.

To be deeply impressed with a few fundamental truths, to digest them thoroughly, to meditate on them seriously, to pray over them fervently, to get them deeply rooted in the heart, will be more productive of faith and holiness, than to labour after variety, ingenuity or elegance. The indulgence of imagination will rather distract than edify. Searching after ingenious thoughts will rather divert the attention from God to ourselves, than promote fixedness of thought, singleness of intention, and devotedness of spirit. Whatever is subtil and refined, is in danger of being unscriptural. If we do not guard the mind it will learn to wander in quest of novelties. It will learn to set more value on original thoughts than devout affections. It is the business of prayer to cast down imaginations which gratify the natural activity of the mind, while they leave the heart unhumbled.

We should confine ourselves to the present business of the present moment; we should keep the mind in a state of perpetual dependence; we should entertain no long views. 'Now is the accepted time.'—'To day we must hear his voice.'—'Give us *this* day our daily bread.' The manna will not keep till to-morrow: to-morrow will have its own wants, and must have its own petitions. To-morrow we must seek the bread of heaven afresh.

We should, however, avoid coming to our devotions with unfurnished minds. We should be always laying in materials for prayer, by a diligent course of serious reading, by treasuring up in our minds the most important truths. If we rush into the divine presence with a vacant, or ignorant, or unprepared mind, with a heart full of the world; as we shall feel no disposition or qualification for the work we are about to engage in, so we cannot expect that our petitions will be heard or granted. There must be some congruity between the heart and the object, some affinity between the state of our minds and the business in which they are employed, if we would expect success in the work.

We are often deceived, both as to the principle and the effect of our prayers. When from some external cause the heart is glad, the spirits light, the thoughts ready, the tongue voluable, a kind of spontaneous eloquence is the result; with this we are pleased, and this ready flow we are willing to impose on ourselves for piety.

On the other hand when the mind is dejected; the animal spirits low; the thoughts confused; when apposite words do not readily present themselves, we are apt to accuse our hearts of want of fervour, to lament our weakness, and to mourn that because we have had no pleasure in praying, our prayers have, therefore, not ascended to the throne of mercy. In both cases we perhaps judge ourselves unfairly. These unready accents, these faltering praises, these ill expressed petitions, may find more acceptance than the florid talk with which we were so well satisfied: the latter consisted, it may be, of shining thoughts floating on the fancy, eloquent words dwelling only on the lips: the former was the sighing of a contrite heart, abased by the feeling of its own unworthiness, and awed by the perfections of a holy and heart-searching God. The heart is dissatisfied with its own dull and tasteless repetitions, which, with all their imperfections, infinite goodness may perhaps hear with favour.* We may not only be elated with the fluency, but even with the fervency of our prayers. Vanity may grow out of the very act of renouncing it, and we may begin to feel proud at having humbled ourselves so eloquently.

There is, however, a strain and spirit of prayer equally distinct from that facility and copiousness for which we certainly are never the better in the sight of God, and from that constraint and dryness for which we may be never the worse. There is a simple, solid, pious strain of prayer, in which the supplicant is so filled and occupied with a sense of his own dependence, and of the importance of the things for which he asks, and so persuaded of the power and grace of God through Christ to give him those things, that while he is engaged in it, he does not merely imagine, but feels assured that God is nigh to him as a reconciled Father, so that every burden and doubt are taken off

* Of this sort of repetitions, our admirable church liturgy has been accused as a fault; but this defect, if it be one, happily accommodates itself to our infirmities. Where is the favoured being whose attention never wanders, whose heart accompanies his lips in every sentence? Is there no absence of mind in the petitioner, no wandering of the thoughts, no inconstancy of the heart? which these repetitions are wisely calculated to correct, to rouse the dead attention, to bring back the strayed affections.

from his mind. 'He knows,' as Saint John expresses it, 'that he has the petitions he desired of God,' and feels the truth of that promise, 'while they are yet speaking I will hear.' This is the perfection of prayer.

CHAP. VI.

Cultivation of a Devotional Spirit.

To maintain a devotional spirit, two things are especially necessary—habitually to cultivate the disposition, and habitually to avoid whatever is unfavourable to it. Frequent retirement and recollection are indispensable, together with such a general course of reading, as if it do not actually promote the spirit we are endeavouring to maintain, shall never be hostile to it. We should avoid as much as in us lies all such society, all such amusements, as excite tempers which it is the daily business of a Christian to subdue, and all those feelings which it is his constant duty to suppress.

And here may we venture to observe, that if some things which are apparently innocent, and do not assume an alarming aspect, or bear a dangerous character; things which the generality of decorous people affirm, (how truly we know not) to be safe for them; yet if we find that these things stir up in us improper propensities; if they awaken thoughts which ought not to be excited; if they abate our love for religious exercises, or infringe on our time for performing them; if they make spiritual concerns appear insipid; if they wind our heart a little more about the world: in short, if we have formerly found them injurious to our own souls, then let no example or persuasion, no belief of their alleged innocence, no plea of their perfect safety, tempt us to indulge in them. It matters little to *our* security what they are to others. Our business is with ourselves. Our responsibility is on our own heads.—Others cannot know the side on which we are assailable. Let our own unbiassed judgment determine our opinion; let our own experience decide for our own conduct.

In speaking of books, we cannot forbear noticing that very prevalent sort of reading, which is little less productive of evil, little less prejudicial to moral and mental improvement, than that which carries a more formidable appearance. We cannot confine our censure to those more corrupt writings which deprave the heart, debauch the imagination, and poison the principles. Of these the turpitude is so obvious, that no caution on this head, it is presumed, *can* be necessary. But if justice forbids us to confound the insipid with the mischievous, the idle with the vicious, and the frivolous with the profligate, still we can only admit of shades, deep shades we allow, of difference. These works, if comparatively harmless, yet debase the taste, slacken the intellectual nerve, let down the understanding, set the fancy loose, and send it gadding among low and mean objects. They not only run away with the time which should be given to better things, but gradually destroy all taste for better things. They sink the mind to their own standard, and give it a sluggish reluctance, we had almost said, a moral incapacity for every thing above their level. The mind, by long habit of stooping, loses its erectness, and yields to its degradation. It becomes so low and narrow by the littleness of the things which engage it, that it requires a painful effort to lift itself high enough, or to open itself wide enough to embrace great and noble objects. The appetite is vitiated. Excess, instead of producing a surfeit, by weakening the digestion, only induces a loathing for stronger nourishment. The faculties which might have been expanding in works of science, or soaring in the contemplation of genius, become satisfied with the impertinences of the most ordinary fiction, lose their relish for the severity of truth, the elegance of taste, and the soberness of religion. Lulled in the torpor of repose, the intellect doses, and enjoys in its waking dream,

> All the wild trash of sleep, without the rest.

In avoiding books which excite the passions, it would seem strange to include even some devotional works. Yet such as merely kindle warm feelings, are not always the safest. Let us rather prefer those, which, while they tend to raise a devotional spirit, awaken the affections without disordering them; which while they elevate the desires, purify them, which show us our own nature, and lay open its corruptions. Such as show us the malignity of sin, the deceitfulness of our hearts, the feebleness of our best resolutions; such as teach us to pull off the mask from the fairest appearances, and discover every hiding place, where some lurking evil would conceal itself; such as show us not what we appear to others, but what we really are; such as co-operating with our interior feeling, and showing us our natural state, point out our absolute need of a Redeemer, lead us to seek to him for pardon from a conviction that there is no other refuge, no other salvation. Let us be conversant with such writings as teach us that while we long to obtain the remission of our transgressions, we must not desire the remission of our duties. Let us seek for such a Saviour as will not only deliver us from the punishment of sin, but from its dominion also.

And let us ever bear in mind that the end of prayer is not answered when the prayer is finished. We should regard prayer as a means to a farther end. The *act* of prayer is not sufficient, we must cultivate a *spirit* of prayer. And though when the actual devotion is over, we cannot, amid the distractions of company and business, always be thinking of heavenly things; yet the desire, the frame, the propensity, the willingness to return, to them we must, however difficult, endeavour to maintain.

The proper temper for prayer should precede the act. The disposition should be wrought in the mind before the exercise is begun. To bring a proud temper to an humble prayer, a luxurious habit to a self-denying prayer, or a worldly disposition to a spiritually-minded prayer, is a positive anomaly. A habit is more powerful than an act, and a previously indulged temper during

the day will not, it is to be feared, be fully counteracted by the exercise of a few minutes devotion at night.

Prayer is designed for a perpetual renovation of the motives to virtue; if therefore the cause is not followed by its consequence, a consequence inevitable but for the impediments we bring to it, we rob our nature of its highest privilege, and run the danger of incurring a penalty where we are looking for a blessing.

That the habitual tendency of the life should be the preparation for the stated prayer, is naturally suggested to us by our blessed Redeemer in his sermon on the Mount. He announced the precepts of holiness, and their corresponding beatitudes; he gave the spiritual exposition of the law, the direction for alms-giving, the exhortation to love our enemies, nay the essence and spirit of the whole Decalogue, previous to his delivering his own divine prayer as a pattern for ours. Let us learn from this that the preparation of prayer is therefore to live in all those pursuits which we may safely beg of God to bless, and in a conflict with all those temptations into which we pray not to be led.

If God be the centre to which our hearts are tending, every line in our lives must meet in him. With this point in view there will be a harmony between our prayers and our practice, a consistency between devotion and conduct, which will make every part turn to this one end, bear upon this one point. For the beauty of the Christian scheme consists not in parts (however good in themselves) which tend to separate views, and lead to different ends; but it arises from its being one entire, uniform, connected plan, 'compacted of that which every joint, supplieth,' and of which all the parts terminate in this one grand ultimate point.

The design of prayer therefore as we before observed, is not merely to make us devout while we are engaged in it, but that its odour may be diffused through all the intermediate spaces of the day, enter into all its occupations, duties and tempers. Nor must its results be partial, or limited to easy and pleasant duties, but extend to such as are less alluring. When we pray, for instance, for our enemies, the prayer must be rendered practical, must be made a means of softening our spirit, and cooling our resentment toward them. If we deserve their enmity, the true spirit of prayer will put us upon endeavouring to cure the fault which has excited it. If we do not deserve it, it will put us on striving for a placable temper, and we shall endeavour not to let slip so favourable an occasion of cultivating it. There is no such softener of animosity, no such soother of resentment, no such allayer of hatred, as sincere, cordial prayer.

It is obvious, that the precept to pray without ceasing can never mean to enjoin a continual course of actual prayer. But while it more directly enjoins us to embrace all proper occasions of performing this sacred duty, or rather of claiming this valuable privilege, so it plainly implies that we should try to keep up constantly that sense of the divine presence which shall maintain the disposition. In order to this, we should inure our minds to reflection; we should encourage serious thoughts. A good thought barely passing through the mind will make little impression on it. We must arrest it, constrain it to remain with us, expand, amplify, and as it were, take it to pieces. It must be distinctly unfolded, and carefully examined, or it will leave no precise idea: it must be fixed and incorporated, or it will produce no practical effect. We must not dismiss it till it has left some trace on the mind, till it has made some impression on the heart.

On the other hand, if we give the reins to a loose ungoverned fancy, at other times; if we abandon our minds to frivolous thoughts; if we fill them with corrupt images; if we cherish sensual ideas during the rest of the day, can they expect that none of these images will intrude, that none of these impressions will be revived, but that 'the temple into which foul things' have been invited, will be cleansed at a given moment; that worldly thoughts will recede and give place at once to pure and holy thoughts? Will that Spirit grieved by impurity, or resisted by levity, return with his warm beams and cheering influences, to the contaminated mansion from which he has been driven out? Is it wonderful if finding no entrance into a heart filled with vanity he should withdraw himself? We cannot, in retiring into our closets, change our natures as we do our clothes. The disposition we carry thither will be likely to remain with us. We have no right to expect that a new temper will meet us at the door. We can only hope that the spirit we bring thither will be cherished and improved. It is not easy, rather it is not possible, to graft genuine devotion on a life of an opposite tendency; nor can we delight ourselves regularly for a few stated moments, in that God whom we have not been serving during the day. We may indeed to quiet our conscience, take up the employment of prayer, but cannot take up the state of mind which will make the employment beneficial to ourselves, or the prayer acceptable to God, if all the previous day we have been careless of ourselves, and unmindful of our Maker. *They* will not pray differently from the rest of the world, who do not live differently.

What a contradiction is it to lament the weakness, the misery, and the corruption of our nature, in our devotions, and then to rush into a life, though not perhaps of vice, yet of indulgence, calculated to increase that weakness, to inflame those corruptions, and to lead to that misery! There is either no meaning to our prayers, or no sense in our conduct. In the one we mock God, in the other we deceive ourselves.

Will not he who keeps up an habitual intercourse with his Maker, who is vigilant in thought, self-denying in action, who strives to keep his heart from wrong desires, his mind from vain imaginations, and his lips from idle words, bring a more prepared spirit, a more collected mind, be more engaged, more penetrated, more present to the occasion? Will he not feel more delight in this devout exercise, reap more benefit from it, than he who lives at random, prays from custom, and who, though he dares not intermit the form, is a stranger to its spirit? 'O God my heart is ready,' cannot be lawfully uttered by him who is no more prepared

We speak not here to the self-sufficient formalist, or the careless profligate. Among those whom we now take the liberty to address, are to be found, especially in the higher class of females, the amiable and the interesting, and in many respects the virtuous and correct; characters so engaging, so evidently made for better things, so capable of reaching high degrees of excellence, so formed to give the tone to Christian practice, as well as to fashion; so calculated to give a beautiful impression on that religion which they profess without sufficiently adoring; which they believe without fairly exemplifying; that we cannot forbear taking a tender interest in their welfare; we cannot forbear breathing a fervent prayer that they may yet reach the elevation for which they were intended; that they may hold out a uniform and consistent pattern, of 'whatsoever things are pure, honest, just, lovely, and of good report!' This the Apostle goes on to intimate can only be done by THINKING ON THESE THINGS. Things can only influence our practice as they engage our attention. Would not then a confirmed habit of serious thought tend to correct that inconsideration, which we are willing to hope, more than want of principle, lies at the bottom of the inconsistency we are lamenting.

If, as is generally allowed, the great difficulty of our spiritual life is to make the future predominate over the present, do we not by the conduct we are regretting, aggravate what it is in our power to diminish? Miscalculation of the relative value of things is one of the greatest errors of our moral life. We estimate them in an inverse proportion to their value, as well as to their duration: we lavish earnest and durable thoughts on things so trifling, that they deserve little regard, so brief, that they 'perish with the using,' while we bestow only slight attention on things of infinite worth, only transient thoughts on things of eternal duration.

Those who are so far conscientious as not to intermit a regular course of devotion, and who yet allow themselves at the same time to go on in a course of amusements, which excite a directly opposite spirit, are inconceivably augmenting their own difficulties.—They are eagerly heaping up fuel in the day, on the fire which they intend to extinguish in the evening; they are voluntarily adding to the temptations, against which they mean to request grace to struggle. To acknowledge at the same time, that we find it hard to serve God as we ought, and yet to be systematically indulging habits, which must naturally increase the difficulty, makes our characters almost ridiculous, while it renders our duty almost impracticable.

While we make our way more difficult by those very indulgences with which we think to cheer and refresh it, the determined Christian becomes his own pioneer: he makes his path easy by voluntarily clearing it of the obstacles which impede his progress.

These habitual indulgences seem a contradiction to that obvious law, that one virtue always involves another; for we cannot labour after any grace, that of prayer for instance, without resisting whatever is opposite to it. If then we lament, that it is so hard to serve God, let us not by our conduct furnish arguments against ourselves; for, as if the difficulty were not great enough in itself, we are continually heaping up mountains in our way, by indulging in such pursuits and passions, as make a small labour an insurmountable one.

But we may often judge better of our state by the result, than by the act of prayer. Our very defects, our coldness, deadness, wanderings, may leave more contrition on the soul than the happiest turn of thought. The feeling of our wants, the confession of our sins, the acknowledgment of our dependence, the renunciation of ourselves, the supplication for mercy, the application to 'the fountain opened for sin,' the cordial entreaty for the aid of the Spirit, the relinquishment of our own will, resolutions of better obedience, petitions that these resolutions may be directed and sanctified; these are the subjects in which the suppliant should be engaged, by which his thoughts should be absorbed. Can they be so absorbed, if many of the intervening hours are passed in pursuits of a totally different complexion; pursuits which raise the passions which we are seeking to allay? Will the cherished vanities go at our bidding? Will the required dispositions come at our calling? Do we find our tempers so obedient, our passions so obsequious in the other concerns of life? If not, what reason have we to expect their obsequiousness in this grand concern. We should therefore endeavour to believe as we pray, to think as we pray, to feel as we pray, and to act as we pray. Prayer must not be a solitary, independent exercise; but an exercise interwoven with many, and inseparably connected with that golden chain of Christian duties, of which, when so connected, it forms one of the most important links.

Business however must have its period as well as devotion. We were sent into this world to act as well as to pray; active duties must be performed as well as devout exercises. Even relaxation must have its interval, only let us be careful that the indulgence of the one do not destroy the effect of the other; that our pleasures do not encroach on the time or deaden the spirit of our devotions: let us be careful that our cares, occupations, and amusements may be always such that we may not be afraid to implore the divine blessing on them; this is the criterion of their safety and of our duty. Let us endeavour that in each, in all, one continually growing sentiment and feeling, of loving, serving, and pleasing God, maintain its predominant station in the heart.

An additional reason why we should live in the perpetual use of prayer, seems to be, that our blessed Redeemer after having given both the example and the command, while on earth, condescends still to be our unceasing intercessor in heaven. Can we ever cease petitioning for ourselves, when we believe that he never ceases interceding for us?

If we are so unhappy as now to find little pleasure in this holy exercise, that however is so far from being a reason for discontinuing it, that it affords the strongest argument for perseverance. That which was at first a form, will become a pleasure; that which was a burden

will become a privilege; that which we impose upon ourselves as a medicine, will become necessary as an aliment, and desirable as a gratification. That which is now short and superficial, will become copious and solid. The chariot wheel is warmed by its own motion. Use will make that easy which was at first painful. That which is once become easy will soon be rendered pleasant; instead of repining at the performance, we shall be unhappy at the omission. When a man recovering from sickness attempts to walk, he does not discontinue the exercise because he feels himself weak, nor even because the effort is painful. He rather redoubles his exertion. It is from his perseverance that he looks for strength. An additional turn every day diminishes his repugnance, augments his vigour, improves his spirits. That effort which was submitted to because it was salutary, is continued because the feeling of renovated strength renders it delightful.

CHAP. VII.

The Love of God.

Our love to God arises out of want. God's love to us out of fulness. Our indigence draws us to that power which can relieve, and to that goodness which can bless us.—His overflowing love delights to make us partakers of the bounties he graciously imparts, not only in the gifts of his Providence, but in the richer communications of his grace. We can only be said to love God when we endeavour to glorify him, when we desire a participation of his nature, when we study to imitate his perfections.

We are sometimes inclined to suspect the love of God to us. We are too little suspicious of our want of love to him. Yet if we examine the case by evidenc , as we should examine any common question, what real instances can we produce of our love to him?' What imaginable instance can we not produce of his love to us? If neglect, forgetfulness, ingratitude, disobedience, coldness in our affections, deadness in our duty, be evidences of our love to him, such evidences, but such only, we can abundantly allege. If life and all the countless catalogue of mercies that make life pleasant, be proofs of his love to us, these he has given us in hand; if life eternal, if blessedness that knows no measure and no end, be proofs of love, these he has given us in promise—to the Christian we had almost said, he has given them in possession.

It must be an irksome thing to serve a master whom we do not love; a master whom we are compelled to obey, though we think his requisitions hard, and his commands unreasonable; under whose eye we know that we continually live, though his presence is not only undelightful but formidable.

Now every Christian must obey God whether he love him or not; he must act always in his sight, whether he delight him or not; and to a heart of any feeling, to a spirit of any liberality, nothing is so grating as constrained obedience. To love God, to serve him because we love him, is therefore no less our highest happiness, than our most boundcn duty. Love makes all labour light. We serve with alacrity, where we love with cordiality.

When the heart is devoted to an object, we require not to be perpctually reminded of our obligations to obey him; they present themselves spontaneously, we fulfil them readily, I had almost said, involuntarily; we think not so much of the service as of the object. The principle which suggests the work inspires the pleasure; to neglect it would be an injury to our feelings. The performance is the gratification. The omission is not more a pain to the conscience, than a wound to the affections. The implantation of this vital root perpetuates virtuous practice, and secures internal peace.

Though we cannot be always thinking of God, we may be always employed in his service. There must be intervals of our communion with him, but there must be no intermission of our attachment to him. The tender father who labours for his children, does not always employ his thoughts about them; he cannot be always conversing with them, or concerning them, yet he is always engaged in promoting their interests. His affection for them is an inwoven principle, of which he gives the most unequivocal evidence, by the assiduousness of his application in their service.

'Thou shouldst love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' is the primary law of our religion. Yet how apt are we to complain that we *cannot* love God, that we cannot maintain a devout intercourse with him. But would God, who is all justice, have commanded that of which he knew we were incapable? Would he who is all mercy have made our eternal happiness to depend on something which he knew was out of our power to perform, capriciously disqualifying us for the duty he had prescribed? Would he have given the exhortation, and withheld the capacity? This would be to charge Omniscience with folly, and infinite goodness with injustice;—no, when he made duty and happiness inseparable, he neither made our duty impracticable, nor our happiness unattainable. But we are continually flying to false refuges, clinging to false holds, resting on false supports; as they are uncertain they disappoint us, as they are weak they fail us; but as they are numerous, when one fails another presents itself. Till they slip from under us, we never suspect how much we rested upon them. Life glides away in a perpetual succession of these false dependences and successive privations.

There is, as we have elsewhere observed, a striking analogy between the natural and spiritual life; the weakness and helplessness of the Christian resemble those of the infant; neither of them becomes strong, vigorous, and full grown at once, but through a long and often painful course. This keeps up a sense of dependance, and accustoms us to lean on the hand which fosters us. There is in both conditions, an imperceptible chain of depending events, by which we are carried on insensibly to the vigour of maturity. The operation which is not always obvious, is always progressive. By attempting to walk alone we discover our weakness, the ex-

perience of that weakness humbles us, and every fall drives us back to the sustaining hand, whose assistance we vainly flattered ourselves we no longer needed.

In some halcyon moments we are willing to persuade ourselves that religion has made an entire conquest over our heart; that we have renounced the dominion of the world, have conquered our attachment to earthly things. We flatter ourselves that nothing can now again obstruct our entire submission. But we know not what spirit we are of. We say this in the calm of repose and in the stillness of the passions: when our path is smooth, our prospect smiling, danger distant, temptation absent, when we have many comforts and no trials. Suddenly, some loss, some disappointment, some privation tears off the mask, reveals us to ourselves. We at once discover that though the smaller fibres and lesser roots which fasten us down to earth may have been loosened by preceding storms, yet our substantial hold on earth is not shaken, the tap-root is not cut, we are yet fast rooted to the soil, and still stronger tempests must be sent to make us let go our hold.

It might be useful to cultivate the habit of stating our own case as strongly to ourselves as if it were the case of another; to express in so many words, thoughts which are not apt to assume any specific or palpable form; thoughts which we avoid shaping into language, but slur over, generalize, soften, and do away. How indignant, for instance, should we feel, though we ourselves make the complaint, to be told by others, that we do not love our Maker and Preserver. But let us put the question fairly to ourselves. Do we really love him? Do we love him with a supreme, nay even with an equal affection? Is there no friend, no child, no reputation, no pleasure, no society, no possession which we do not prefer to him? It is easy to affirm in a general way that there is not. But let us particularize, individualize the question—bring it home to our own hearts in some actual instance, in some tangible shape. Let us commune with our own consciences, with our own feelings, with our own experience; let us question pointedly and answer honestly. Let us not be more ashamed to detect the fault, than to have been guilty of it.

This then will commonly be the result. Let the friend, child, reputation, possession, pleasure be endangered, but especially let it be taken away by some stroke of Providence. The scales fall from our eyes; we see, we feel, we acknowledge, with brokenness of heart, not only for our loss but for our sin, that though we did love God, yet we loved him not superlatively, and that we loved the blessing, threatened or resumed, still more. But this is one of the cases in which the goodness of God bringeth us to repentance. By the operation of his grace the resumption of the gift brings back the heart to the giver. The Almighty by his Spirit takes possession of the temple from which the idol is driven out. God is re-instated in his rights, and becomes the supreme and undisputed Lord of our reverential affection.

There are three requisites to our proper enjoyment of every earthly blessing which God bestows on us;—a thankful reflection on the goodness of the giver, a deep sense of the unworthiness of the receiver, and a sober recollection of the precarious tenure by which we hold it. The first would make us grateful, the second humble, the last moderate.

But how seldom do we receive his favours in this spirit! As if religious gratitude were to be confined to the appointed days of public thanksgiving, how rarely in common society do we hear any recognition of Omnipotence even on those striking and heart-rejoicing occasions, when, 'with his own right hand, and with his glorious arm he has gotten himself the victory!' Let us never detract from the merit of our valiant leaders, but rather honour them the more for this manifestation of divine power in their favour; but let us never lose sight of him 'who teacheth their hands to war, and their fingers to fight.' Let us never forget that 'He is the Rock, that his work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment.'

How many seem to show not only their want of affiance in God, but that 'he is not in all their thoughts,' by their appearing to leave him entirely out of their concerns, by projecting their affairs without any reference to him, by setting out on the stock of their own unassisted wisdom, contriving and acting independently of God; expecting prosperity in the event, without seeking his direction in the outset, and taking to themselves the whole honour of the success without any recognition of his hand! do they not thus virtually imitate what Sophocles makes his blustering Atheist* boast: 'Let other men expect to conquer with the assistance of the gods, I intend to gain honour without them.'

The Christian will rather rejoice to ascribe the glory of his prosperity to the same hand to which our own manly queen gladly ascribed her signal victory. When after the defeat of the Armada, impiously termed invincible, her enemies, in order to lower the value of her agency, alleged that the victory was not owing to her, but to God who had raised the storm, she heroically declared that the visible interference of God in her favour was that part of the success from which she derived the truest honour.

Incidents and occasions every day arise, which not only call on us to trust in God, but which furnish us with suitable occasion of vindicating, if I may presume to use the expression, the character and conduct of the Almighty in the government of human affairs; yet there is no duty which we perform with less alacrity Strange, that we should treat the Lord of heaven and earth with less confidence than we exercise towards each other! That we should vindicate the honour of a common acquaintance with more zeal than that of our insulted Maker and Preserver!

If we hear a friend accused of any act of injustice, though we cannot bring any positive proof why he should be acquitted of this specific charge, yet we resent the injury offered to his character; we clear him of the individual allegation on the ground of his general conduct, inferring that from the numerous instances we

* Ajax.

can produce of his rectitude on other occasions, he cannot be guilty of the alleged injustice. We reason from analogy, and in general we reason fairly. But when we presume to judge of the Most High, instead of vindicating his rectitude on the same grounds, under a providence seemingly severe; instead of reverting, as in the case of our friend, to the thousand instances we have formerly tasted of his kindness; instead of giving God the same credit we give to his erring creature, and inferring from his past goodness, that the present inexplicable dispensation must be consistent, though we cannot explain how, with his general character, we mutinously accuse him of inconsistency, nay of injustice. We admit virtually the most monstrous anomaly in the character of the perfect God.

But what a clue has revelation furnished to the intricate labyrinth which seems to involve the conduct which we impiously question! It unrols the volume of divine Providence, lays open the mysterious map of infinite wisdom, throws a bright light on the darkest dispensations, vindicates the inequality of appearances, and points to that blessed region, where to all who have truly loved and served God, every apparent wrong shall be approved to have been unimpeachably right, every affliction a mercy, and the severest trials the shortest blessings.

So blind has sin made us, that the glory of God is concealed from us, by the very means which, could we discern aright, would display it. That train of second causes, which he has so marvellously disposed, obstructs our view of himself. We are so filled with wonder at the immediate effect, that our short sight penetrates not to the first cause. To see him as he is, is reserved to be the happiness of a better world. We shall then indeed 'admire him in his saints, and in all them that believe;' we shall see how necessary it was for those whose bliss is now so perfect, to have been poor, and despised, and oppressed. We shall see why the 'ungodly were in such prosperity.' Let us give God credit here for what we shall then fully know; let us adore now, what we shall understand hereafter.

They who take up religion on a false ground will never adhere to it. If they adopt it merely for the peace and pleasantness it brings, they will desert it as soon as they find their adherence to it will bring them into difficulty, distress, or discredit. It seldom answers therefore to attempt making proselytes by hanging out false colours. The Christian 'endures as seeing him who is invisible.' He who adopts religion for the sake of immediate enjoyment, will not do a virtuous action that is disagreeable to himself; nor resist a temptation that is alluring, present pleasure being his motive. There is no sure basis for virtue but the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the bright reversion for which that love is pledged. Without this, as soon as the paths of piety become rough and thorny, we shall stray into pleasant pastures.

Religion, however, has her own peculiar advantages. In the transaction of all worldly affairs, there are many and great difficulties. There may be several ways out of which to choose. Men of the first understanding are not always certain which of these ways is the best. Persons of the deepest penetration are full of doubt and perplexity; their minds are undecided how to act, lest while they pursue one road, they may be neglecting another which might better have conducted them to their proposed end.

In religion the case is different, and, in this respect, easy. As a Christian can have but one object in view, he is also certain there is but one way of attaining it. Where there is but one end, it prevents all possibility of choosing wrong —where there is but one road, it takes away all perplexity as to the course of pursuit. That we so often wander wide of the mark, is not from any want of plainness in the path, but from the perverseness of our will in not choosing it, from the indolence of our mind in not following it up.

In our attachments to earthly things, even tho most innocent, there is always a danger of excess; but from this danger we are here perfectly exempt, for there is no possibility of excess in our love to that Being who has demanded *the whole heart*. This peremptory requisition cuts off all debate. Had God required only a portion, even were it a large portion, we might be puzzled in settling the quantum. We might be plotting how large a part we might venture to keep back without absolutely forfeiting our safety; we might be haggling for deductions, bargaining for abatements, and be perpetually compromising with our Maker. But the injunction is entire, the command is definitive, the portion is unequivocal. Though it is so compressed in the expression, yet it is so expansive and ample in the measure: it is so distinct a claim, so imperative a requisition of *all* the faculties of the mind and strength; *all* the affections of the heart and soul: that there is not the least opening left for litigation; no place for any thing but absolute unreserved compliance.

Every thing which relates to God is infinite. We must therefore while we keep our hearts humble, keep our aims high. Our highest services indeed are but finite, imperfect. But as God is unlimited in goodness, he should have our unlimited love. The best we can offer is poor, but let us not withhold that best. He deserves incomparably more than we have to give. Let us not give him less than all. If he has ennobled our corrupt nature with spiritual affections, let us not refuse their noblest aspirations, to their noblest object. Let him not behold us so prodigally lavishing our affections on the meanest of his bounties, as to have nothing left for himself. As the standard of every thing in religion is high, let us endeavour to act in it with the highest intention of mind, with the largest use of our faculties. Let us obey him with the most intense love, adore him with the most fervent gratitude. Let us 'praise him according to his excellent greatness.' Let us serve him with all the strength of our capacity, with all the devotion of our will.

Grace being a new principle added to our natural powers, as it determines the desires to a higher object, so it adds vigour to their activity. We shall best prove its dominion over us by desiring to exert ourselves in the cause of heaven with the same energy with which we once ex

erted ourselves in the cause of the world. The world was too little to fill our whole capacity. Scaliger lamented how much was lost because so fine a poet as Claudian, in his choice of a subject, wanted matter worthy of his talent; but it is the felicity of the Christian to have chosen a theme to which all the powers of his heart and of his understanding will be found inadequate. It is the glory of religion to supply an object worthy of the entire consecration of every power, faculty and affection of an immaterial, immortal being.

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CHAP. VIII.

The Hand of God to be acknowledged in the daily circumstances of life.

If we would indeed love God, let us 'acquaint ourselves with him.' The word of inspiration has assured us that there is no other way to 'be at peace.' As we cannot love an unknown God, so neither can we know him, or even approach toward that knowledge, but on the terms which he himself holds out to us; neither will he save us but in the method which he himself has prescribed. His very perfections, the just objects of our adoration, all stand in the way of creatures so guilty. His justice is the flaming sword which excludes us from the Paradise we have forfeited. His purity is so opposed to our corruptions, his omnipotence to our infirmity, his wisdom to our folly, that had we not to plead the great propitiation, those very attributes which are now our trust, would be our terror. The most opposite images of human conception, the widest extremes of human language, are used for the purpose of showing what God is to us in our natural state, and what he is under the Christian dispensation. The 'consuming fire' is transformed into essential love.

But as we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection, so we cannot love him with that pure flame, which animates glorified spirits. But there is a preliminary acquaintance with him, an initial love of him, for which he has furnished us with means by his works, by his word, and by his Spirit. Even in this weak and barren soil some germs will shoot, some blossoms will open, of that celestial plant, which, watered by the dews of heaven, and ripened by the Sun of righteousness, will, in a more genial clime, expand into the fulness of perfection, and bear immortal fruits in the Paradise of God.

A person of a cold phlegmatic temper, who laments that he wants that fervor in his love of the Supreme Being, which is apparent in more ardent characters, may take comfort, if he find the same indifference respecting his worldly attachments. But if his affections are intense towards the perishable things of earth, while they are dead to such as are spiritual, it does not prove that he is destitute of passions, but only that they are not directed to the proper object. If, however, he love God with that measure of feeling with which God has endowed him, he will not be punished or rewarded because the stock is greater or smaller than that of some other of his fellow creatures.

In those intervals when our sense of divine things is weak and low, we must not give way to distrust, but warm our hearts with the recollection of our best moments. Our motives to love and gratitude are not now diminished, but our spiritual frame is lower, our natural spirits are weaker. Where there is languor there will be discouragements. But we must not desist. 'Faint yet pursuing,' must be the Christian's motto.

There is more merit (if ever we dare apply so arrogant a word to our worthless efforts) in persevering under depression and discomfort, than in the happiest flow of devotion, when the tide of health and spirits runs high. Where there is less gratification there is more disinterestedness. We ought to consider it as a cheering evidence, that our love may be equally pure though it is not equally fervent, when we persist in serving our heavenly Father with the same constancy, though it may please him to withdraw from us the same consolations. Perseverance may bring us to the very dispositions the absence of which we are lamenting—'O tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong and he shall comfort thy heart.'

We are too ready to imagine that we are religious, because we know something of religion. We appropriate to ourselves the pious sentiments we read, and we talk as if the thoughts of other men's heads were really the feelings of our own hearts. But piety has not its seat in the memory, but in the affections, for which however the memory is an excellent purveyor, though a bad substitute. Instead of an undue elation of heart when we peruse some of the psalmist's beautiful effusions, we should feel a deep self-abasement at the reflection, that however our case may sometimes resemble his, yet how inapplicable to our hearts are the ardent expressions of his repentance, the overflowing of his gratitude, the depth of his submission, the entireness of his self-dedication, the fervour of his love. But he who indeed can once say with him, 'Thou art my portion,' will, like him, surrender himself unreservedly to his service.

It is important that we never suffer our faith, any more than our love, to be depressed or elevated, by mistaking for its own operations, the ramblings of a busy imagination. The steady principle of faith must not look for its character to the vagaries of a mutable and fantastic fancy —*La folle de la Maison*, as she has been well denominated. Faith which has once fixed her foot on the immutable Rock of Ages, fastened her firm eye on the Cross, and stretched out her triumphant hand to seize the promised crown, will not suffer her stability to depend on this ever-shifting faculty; she will not be driven to despair by the blackest shades of its pencil, nor be betrayed into a careless security, by its most flattering and vivid colours.

One cause of the fluctuations of our faith is, that we are too ready to judge the Almighty by our own low standard. We judge him not by his own declarations of what he is, and what he will do, but by our own feelings and practices. We ourselves are too little disposed to forgive those who have offended us. We therefore conclude that God cannot pardon our offences

We suspect him to be implacable, because we are apt to be so, and we are unwilling to believe that he can pass by injuries, because we find it so hard to do it. When we do forgive, it is grudgingly and superficially; we therefore infer that God cannot forgive freely and fully. We make a hypocritical distinction between forgiving and forgetting injuries. God clears away the score when he grants the pardon. He does not only say, 'thy sins and thy iniquities will I forgive,' but 'I will remember them no more.'

We are disposed to urge the smallness of our offences, as a plea for their forgiveness; whereas God to exhibit the boundlessness of his own mercy, has taught us to allege a plea directly contrary—'Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is *great*.' To natural reason this argument of David is most extraordinary. But while he felt that the greatness of his own iniquity left him no resource, but in the mercy of God, he felt that God's mercy was greater even than his own sin. What a large, what a magnificent idea does it give us of the divine power and goodness, that the believer, instead of pleading the smallness of his own offences as a motive for pardon, pleads only the abundance of the divine compassion!

We are told that it is the duty of the Christian to 'seek God.' We assent to the truth of the proposition. Yet it would be less irksome to corrupt nature, in pursuit of this knowledge, to go a pilgrimage to distant lands, than to seek him within our own hearts. Our own heart is the true *terra incognitia:* a land more foreign and unknown to us, then the regions of the polar circle. Yet that heart is the place, in which an acquaintance with God must be sought. It is there we must worship him, if we would worship him in spirit and in truth.

But, alas! the heart is not the home of a worldly man, it is scarcely the home of a Christian. If business and pleasure are the natural element of the generality—a dreary vacuity, sloth and insensibility, too often worse than both, disincline, disqualify too many Christians for the pursuit.

I have observed, and I think I have heard others observe, that a common beggar had rather screen himself under the wall of a churchyard, if overtaken by a shower of rain, though the church door stand invitingly open, than take shelter within it, while divine service is performing. It is a less annoyance to him to be drenched with the storm, than to enjoy the convenience of a shelter and a seat, if he must enjoy them at the heavy price of listening to the sermon.

While we condemn the beggar, let us look into our own hearts; happy if we cannot there detect somewhat of the same indolence, indisposedness, and distaste to serious things! Happy, if we do not find, that we prefer not only our pleasures and enjoyments, but, I had almost said, our very pains, and vexations, and inconveniences, to communing with our Maker! Happy, if we had not rather be absorbed in our petty cares, and little disturbances, provided we can contrive to make them the means of occupying our thoughts, filling up our minds, and drawing them away from that devout intercourse, which demands the liveliest exercise of our rational powers, the highest elevation of our spiritual affections! Is it not to be apprehended, that the dread of being driven to this sacred intercourse is one grand cause of that activity and restlessness, which sets the world in such perpetual motion?

Though we are ready to express a general sense of our confidence in Almighty goodness, yet what definite meaning do we annex to the expression? What practical evidences have we to produce, that we really do trust him? Does this trust deliver us from worldly anxiety? Does it exonerate us from the same perturbation of spirits, which those endure who make no such profession? Does it relieve the mind from doubt and distrust? Does it tranquillize the troubled heart, does it regulate its disorders, and compose its fluctuations? Does it sooth us under irritation? Does it support under trials? Does it fortify us against temptations? Does it lead us to repose a full confidence in that Being whom we profess to trust? Does it produce in us, 'that work of rightcousness, which is peace,' that effect of righteousness, which is 'quietness and assurance for ever?' Do we commit ourselves and our concerns to God in word, or in reality? Does this implicit reliance simplify our desires? Does it induce us to credit the testimony of his word and the promises of his Gospel? Do we not even entertain some secret suspicions of his faithfulness and truth in our hearts, when we persuade others and try to persuade ourselves that we unreservedly trust him.

In the preceding chapter we endeavoured to illustrate our want of love to God, by our not being as forward to *vindicate* the divine conduct as to justify that of an acquaintance. The same illustration may express our reluctance to *trust* in God. If a tried friend engage to do us a kindness, though he may not think it necesssary to explain the particular manner in which he intends to do it, we repose on his word. Assured of the result, we are neither very inquisitive about the mode nor the detail. But do we treat our Almighty friend with the same liberal confidence? Are we not murmuring because we cannot see all the process of his administration, and follow his movements step by step? Do we wait the development of his plan, in full assurance that the issue will be ultimately good? Do we trust that he is as abundantly willing as able, to do more for us than we can ask or think, if by our suspicions we do not offend him, if by our infidelity we do not provoke him? In short, do we not think ourselves utterly undone, when we have only but Providence to trust to?

We are perhaps ready enough to acknowledge God in our mercies, nay, we confess him in the ordinary enjoyments of life. In some of these common mercies, as in a bright day, a refreshing shower, a delightful scenery, a kind of sensitive pleasure, an hilarity of spirits, a sort of animal enjoyment, though of a refined nature, mixes itself with our devotional feelings; and though we confess and adore the bountiful Giver, we do it with a little mixture of self-complacency, and of human gratification, which he pardons and accepts.

But we must look for him in scenes less ani

mating, we must acknowledge him on occasions less exhilarating, less sensibly gratifying. It is not only in his promises that God manifests his mercy. His threatenings are proofs of the same compassionate love. He threatens, not to punish, but by the warning, to snatch from the punishment.

We may also trace marks of his hand, not only in the awful visitations of life, not only in the severer dispensations of his providence, but in vexations so trivial that we should hesitate to suspect that they are providential appointments, did we not know that our daily life is made up of unimportant circumstances rather than of great events. As they are, however, of sufficient importance to exercise the Christian tempers and affections, we may trace the hand of our heavenly Father in those daily little disappointments and hourly vexations, which occur even in the most prosperous state, and which are inseparable from the condition of humanity. —We must trace that same beneficent hand, secretly at work for our purification, our correction, our weaning from life; in the imperfections and disagreeableness of those who may be about us; in the perverseness of those with whom we transact business, and in those interruptions which break in upon our favourite engagements.

We are perhaps too much addicted to our innocent delights, or we are too fond of our leisure. of our learned, even of our religious leisure. But while we say it is good for us to be here, the divine vision is withdrawn, and we are compelled to come down from the mount. Or, perhaps, we do not improve our retirement to the purposes for which it was granted, and to which we had resolved to devote it, and our time is broken in upon to make us more sensible of its value. Or we feel a complacency in our leisure, a pride in our books; perhaps we feel proud of the good things we are intending to say, or meditating to write, or preparing to do. A check is necessary, yet it is given in a way almost imperceptible. The hand that gives it is unseen, is unsuspected, yet it is the same gracious hand which directs the more important events of life. An importunate application, a disqualifying, though not severe indisposition, a family avocation, a letter important to the writer, but unseasonable to us, breaks in on our projected privacy; calls us to a sacrifice of our inclination, to a renunciation of our own will. These incessant trials of temper, if well improved, may be more salutary to the mind, than the finest passage we had intended to read, or the sublimest sentiment we had fancied we should write.

Instead then of going in search of great mortifications, as a certain class of pious writers recommend, let us cheerfully bear and diligently improve these inferior trials which God prepares for us. Submission to a cross which he inflicts, to a disappointment which he sends, to a contradiction of our self-love, which he appoints, is a far better exercise than great penances of our own choosing. Perpetual conquests over impatience, ill-temper, and self-will, indicate a better spirit than any self-imposed mortification. We may traverse oceans, and scale mountains on uncommanded pilgrimages, without pleasing God; we may please him without any other exertion than by crossing our own will.

Perhaps you had been busying your imagination with some projected scheme, not only lawful, but laudable. The design was radically good, but the supposed value of your own agency, might too much interfere, might a little taint the purity of your best intentions. The motives were so mixed that it was difficult to separate them. Sudden sickness obstructed the design. You naturally lament the failure, not perceiving that, however good the work might be for others, the sickness was better for yourself. An act of charity was in your intention, but God saw that your soul required the exercise of a more difficult virtue; that humility and resignation, that the patience, acquiescence, and contrition of a sick bed, were more necessary for you. He accepts the meditated work as far as it was designed for his glory, but he calls his servant to other duties, which were more salutary for him, and of which the master was the better judge. He sets aside his work, and orders him to wait, the more difficult part of his task. As far as your motive was pure, you will receive the reward of your unperformed charity, though not the gratification of the performance. If it was not pure, you are rescued from the danger attending a right action performed on a worldly principle. You may be the better Christian though one good deed is subtracted from your catalogue.

By a life of activity and usefulness, you had perhaps attracted the public esteem.—An animal activity had partly stimulated your exertions. The love of reputation begins to mix itself with your better motives. You do not, it is presumed, act entirely or chiefly for human applause; but you are too sensible to it. It is a delicious poison which begins to infuse itself into your purest cup. You acknowledge indeed the sublimity of higher motives, but do you never feel that, separated from this accompaniment of self, they would be too abstracted, too speculative, and might become too little productive both of activity and of sensible gratification? You begin to feel the human incentive necessary, and your spirits would flag if it were withdrawn.

This sensibility to praise would gradually tarnish the purity of your best actions. He who sees your heart, as well as your works, mercifully snatches you from the perils of prosperity. Malice is awakened. Your most meritorious actions are ascribed to the most corrupt motives. You are attacked just where your character is least vulnerable. The enemies whom your success raised up, are raised up by God, less to punish than to save you. We are far from meaning that he can ever be the author of evil; he does not excite or approve the calumny, but he uses your calumniators as instruments of your purification. Your fame was too dear to you. It is a costly sacrifice, but God requires it. It must be offered up. You would gladly compound for any, for every other offering, but this is the offering he chooses: and while he graciously continues to employ you for his glory, he thus teaches you to renounce your own. He sends this trial as a test, by

which you are to try yourself. He thus instructs you not to abandon your Christian exertions, but to elevate the principle which inspired them, to defecate it from all impure admixtures.

By thus stripping the most engaging employments of this dangerous delight, by infusing some drops of salutary bitterness into our sweetest draught, by some of these ill-tasted but wholesome mercies, he graciously compels us to return to himself. By taking away the stays by which we are perpetually propping up our frail delights, they fall to the ground. We are as it were driven back to Him, who condescends to receive us, after we have tried every thing else, and after every thing else has failed us, and though he knows we should not have returned to Him if every thing else had *not* failed us. He makes us feel our weakness, that we may have recourse to his strength; he makes us sensible of our hitherto unperceived sins, that we may take refuge in his everlasting compassion

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CHAP. IX.

Christianity Universal in its Requisitions.

It is not unusual to see people get rid of some of the most awful injunctions, and emancipate themselves from some of the most solemn requisitions of Scripture, by affecting to believe that they do not apply to *them*. They consider them as belonging exclusively to the first age of the Gospel, and to the individuals to whom they were immediately addressed; consequently the necessity to observe them does not extend to persons under an established Christianity, to hereditary Christians.

These exceptions are particularly applied to some of the leading doctrines, so forcibly and repeatedly pressed in the Epistles. The reasoners endeavour to persuade themselves that it was only the Ephesians, 'who are dead in trespasses and sins'—that it was only the Galatians who are enjoined 'not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh'—that it was only the Philippians who were 'enemies to the cross of Christ.' They shelter themselves under the comfortable assurances of a geographical security. As they know that they are neither Ephesians, Galatians, nor Philippians, they have of course little or nothing to do with the reproofs, expostulations, or threatenings which were originally directed to the converts among those people. They console themselves with the belief that it was only these pagans who 'walked according to the course of this world'—who were 'strangers from the covenants of promise'—and who were 'without God in the world.'

But these self-satisfied critics would do well to learn that not only 'circumcision or uncircumcision,'—but baptism or no baptism 'availeth nothing,' (I mean as a mere form) 'but a new creature.' An irreligious professor of Christianity is as much 'a stranger and foreigner, as a heathen; he is no more 'a fellow citizen of the saints,' and of the household of God than a Colosian or Galatian was, before the Christian dispensation had reached them.

But the persons to whom the Apostles preached had, before their conversion no vices to which we are not liable, they had certainly difficulties afterwards from which we are happily exempt There were indeed differences between them and us in external situation, in local circumstances, references which we ought certainly to take into the account in perusing the epistles We allow that they were immediately, but we do not allow that they were exclusively, applicable to them. It would have been too limited an object for inspiration to have confined its instructions to any one period, when its purpose was the conversion and instruction of the whole unborn world. That these converts were miraculously 'called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel'—that they were changed from gross blindness to a rapid illumination—that the embracing the new faith exposed them to persecution, reproach and ignominy—that the few had to struggle against the world—that laws, principalities and powers which support our faith opposed theirs—these are distinctions of which we ought not to lose sight: nor should we forget that not only all the disadvantages lay on their side in this antecedent condition, but that also all the superiority lies on ours in that which is subsequent.

But however the condition of the external state of the Church might differ, there can be no necessity for any difference in the interior state of the individual Christian. On whatever high principles of devotedness to God and love to man *they* were called to act, we are called to act on precisely the same. If their faith was called to more painful exertions, if their self-denial to harder sacrifices, if their renunciation of earthly things to severer trials, let us thankfully remember this would naturally be the case at the first introduction of a religion which had to combat with the pride, prejudices and enmity of corrupt nature, invested with temporal power:—That the hostile party would not fail to perceive how much the new religion opposed itself to their corruptions, and that it was introducing a spirit which was in direct and avowed hostility to the spirit of the world.

But while we are deeply thankful for the diminished difficulties of an established faith, let us never forget that Christianity allows of no diminution in the temper, of no abatement in the spirit, which constituted a Christian in the first ages of the church.

Christianity is precisely the same religion now as it was when our Saviour was upon earth. The spirit of the world is exactly the same now as it was then. And if the most eminent of the apostles, under the immediate guidance of inspiration were driven to lament their conflicts with their own corrupt nature, the power of temptation, combining with their natural propensities to evil, how can we expect that a lower faith, a slackened zeal, an abated diligence, and an inferior holiness will be accepted in *us*? Believers *then* were not called to higher degress of purity, to a more elevated devotion, to a deeper humility, to greater rectitude, patience and sincerity, than they are called to in the age in which we live. The promises are not limited to the period in which they were made, the aid of the Spirit is not confined to those on whom it

was first poured out. It was expressly declared by St. Peter on its first effusion, to be promised not only 'to them and their children, but to all who were afar off, even to as many as the Lord their God should call.'

If then the same salvation be now offered as was offered at first, is it not obvious that it must be worked out in the same way? And as the same Gospel retains the same authority in all ages, so does it maintain the same universality among all ranks. Christianity has no by-laws, no particular exemptions, no individual immunities. That there is no appropriate way of attaining salvation for a prince or a philosopher, is probably one reason why greatness and wisdom have so often rejected it. But if rank cannot plead its privileges, genius cannot claim its distinctions. That Christianity does not owe its success to the arts of rhetoric or the sophistry of the schools, but that God intended by it 'to make foolish the wisdom of this world,' actually explains why 'the disputers of this world' have always been its enemies.

It would have been unworthy of the infinite God to have imparted a partial religion. There is but one 'gate,' and that a 'strait' one; but one 'way,' and that a 'narrow' one; there is but one salvation and that a common one. The Gospel enjoins the same principles of love and obedience on all of every condition; offers the same aids under the same exigencies; the same supports under all trials; the same pardon to all penitents; the same Saviour to all believers; the same rewards to all who 'endure to the end.' The temptations of one condition and the trials of another may call for the exercise of different qualities, for the performance of different duties, but the same personal holiness is enjoined on all. External acts of virtue may be promoted by some circumstances, and impeded by others, but the graces of inward piety are of universal force, are of eternal obligation.

The universality of its requisitions is one of its most distinguishing characteristics. In the pagan world it seemed sufficient that a few exalted spirits, a few fine geniuses should soar to a vast superiority above the mass; but it was never expected that the mob of Rome or Athens, should aspire to any religious sentiments or feelings in common with Socrates or Epictetus. I say *religious* sentiments, because in matters of taste the distinctions were less striking, for the mob of Athens were competent critics in the dramatic art, while they were sunk in the most stupid and degrading idolatry. As to those of a higher class, while no subject in science, arts or learning was too lofty or too abstruse for their acquisition, no object in nature was too low, no conception of a depraved imagination was too impure for their worship. While the civil and political wisdom of the Romans was carried to such perfection that their code of laws has still a place in the most enlightened countries, their deplorably gross superstitions, rank them in point of religion with the savages of Africa. It shows how little a way that reason, which manifested itself with such unrivalled vigour in their poets, orators and historians, as to make them still models to ours, could go in what related to religion, when these polished people, in the objects of their worship, are only on a par with the inhabitants of Otaheite.

It furnishes the most incontrovertible proof that the world by wisdom knew not God, that it was at the very time, and in the very country, in which knowledge and taste has attained their utmost perfection, when the porch and the academy had given laws to human intellect, that atheism first assumed a shape, and established itself into a school of philosophy. It was at the moment when the mental powers were carried to the highest pitch in Greece, that it was settled as an infallible truth in this philosophy, that the *senses were the highest natural light of mankind.* It was in the most enlightened age of Rome that this atheistical philosophy was transplanted thither, and that one of her most elegant poets adopted it, and rendered popular by the bewitching graces of his verse.

It seems as if the most accomplished nations stood in the most pressing need of the light of Revelation; for it was not to the dark and stupid corners of the earth that the apostles had their earliest missions. One of St. Paul's first and noblest expositions of Christian truth was made before the most august deliberative assembly in the world, though, by the way, it does not appear that more than one member of the Areopagus was converted. In Rome, some of the apostle's earliest converts belonged to the imperial palace. It was to the metropolis of cultivated Italy, it was to the 'regions of Achaia,' to the opulent and luxurious city of Corinth, in preference to the barbarous countries of the uncivilized world, that some of his first epistles were addressed.

Even natural religion was little understood by those who professed it; it was full of obscurity till viewed by the clear light of the Gospel. Not only natural religion remained to be clearly comprehended, but reason itself remained to be carried to its highest pitch in the countries where Revelation is professed. Natural Religion could not see itself by its own light, Reason could not extricate itself from the labyrinth of error and ignorance in which false religion had involved the world. Grace has raised Nature. Revelation has given a lift to Reason, and taught her to despise the follies and corruptions which obscured her brightness. If nature is now delivered from darkness, it was the helping hand of Revelation which raised her from the rubbish in which she lay buried.

Christianity has not only given us right conceptions of God, of his holiness, of the way in which he will be worshipped; it has not only given us principles to promote our happiness here, and to insure it hereafter; but it has really taught us what a proud philosophy arrogates to itself, the right use of reason. It has given us those principles of examining and judging, by which we are enabled to determine on the absurdity of false religions. 'For to what else can it be ascribed,' says the sagacious bishop Sherlock, 'that in every nation that names the name of Christ, even reason and nature see and condemn the follies, to which others are still, for want of the same help, held in subjection?'

Allowing however that Plato and Antonius seemed to have been taught of heaven, yet the

object for which we contend is, that no provision was made for the vulgar. While a feint ray shone on the page of philosophy, the people were involved in darkness which might be felt. The million were left to live without knowledge, and to die without hope. For what knowledge or what hope would be acquired from the preposterous, though amusing, and in many respects elegant mythology, which they might pick up in their poets, the belief of which seemed to be confined to the populace.

But there was no common principle of hope or fear, of faith or practice; no motive of consolation, no bond of charity, no communion of everlasting interest, no reversionary equality between the wise and the ignorant, the master and the slave, the Greek and the barbarian.

A religion was wanted which should be of general application. Christianity happily accommodated itself to the common exigencies. It furnished an adequate supply to the universal want. Instead of perpetual but unexpiating sacrifices to appease imaginary deities,

> Gods, such as guilt makes welcome,

it presents 'one oblation once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.' It presents one consistent scheme of morals growing out of one uniform system of doctrines; one perfect rule of practice, depending on one principle of faith; it offers grace to direct the one and to assist the other. It encircles the whole sphere of duty with the broad and golden zone of coalescing charity, stamped with the inscription 'a new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another.' Christianity instead of destroying the distinctions of rank, or breaking in on the regulations of society, by this universal precept, furnishes new fences to its order, additional security to its repose, and fresh strength to its subordinations.

Were this command, so inevitably productive of that peculiarly Christian injunction of 'doing to others as we would they should do unto us,' uniformly observed, the whole frame of society would be cemented and consolidated into one indissoluble bond of universal brotherhood. This divinely enacted law is the seminal principle of justice, charity, patience, forbearance, in short, of all social virtue. That it does not produce these excellent effects, is not owing to any defect in the principle, but in our corrupt nature, which so reluctantly, so imperfectly obeys it. If it were conscientiously adopted, and substantially acted upon, received in its very spirit, and obeyed from the ground of the heart, human laws might be abrogated, courts of justice abolished, and treaties of morality burnt; war would be no longer an art, nor military tactics a science. We should suffer long and be kind, and so far from 'seeking that which is another's,' we should not even 'seek our own.'

But let not the soldier or the lawyer be alarmed.—Their craft is in no danger. The world does not intend to act upon the divine principle which would injure their professions; and till this only revolution which good men desire actually takes place, our fortunes will not be secure without the exertions of the one, nor our lives without the protection of the other.

All the virtues have their appropriate place and rank in Scripture. They are introduced as individually, beautifully, and as reciprocally connected, like the graces in the mythologic dance. But perhaps no Christian grace ever sat to the hand of a more consummate master than Charity. Her incomparable painter, St. Paul, has drawn her at full length in all her fair proportions. Every attitude is full of grace, every lineament of beauty. The whole delineation is perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Who can look at this finished piece without blushing at his own want of likeness to it? Yet if this conscious dissimilitude induce a cordial desire of resemblance, the humiliation will be salutary. Perhaps a more frequent contemplation of this exquisite figure, accompanied with earnest endeavours for a growing resemblance, would gradually lead us, not barely to admire the portrait, but would at length assimilate us to the divine original.

CHAP. X.

Christian Holiness.

Christianity then, as we have attempted to show in the preceding chapter, exhibits no different standards of goodness applicable to different stations or characters. No one can be allowed to rest in a low degree, and plead his exemption for aiming no higher. No one can be secure in any state of piety below that state which would not have been enjoined on all, had not all been entitled to the means of attaining it.

Those who keep their pattern in their eye, though they may fail of the highest attainments, will not be satisfied with such as are low. The striking inferiority will excite compunction; compunction will stimulate them to press on, which those never do, who losing sight of their standard, are satisfied with the height they have reached

He is not likely to be the object of God's favour, who takes his determined stand on the very lowest step in the scale of perfection; who does not even aspire above it; whose aim seems to be, not so much to please God as to escape punishment. Many however will doubtless be accepted, though their progress has been small: their difficulties may have been great, their natural capacity weak, their temptation strong, and their instruction defective.

Revelation has not only furnished injunctions but motives to holiness; not only motives, but examples and authorities. 'Be ye therefore perfect' (according to your measure and degree,) 'as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' And what says the Old Testament? It accords with the New—'Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.'

This was the injunction of God himself, not given exclusively to Moses, to the leader and legislator, or to a few distinguished officers, or to a selection of eminent men, but to an immense body of people even to the whole assem-

bled host of Israel; to men of all ranks, professions, capacities, and characters, to the minister of religion, and to the uninstructed, to enlightened rulers, and to feeble women. 'God,' says an excellent writer,* 'had antecedently given to his people particular laws, suited to their several exigencies and various conditions; but the command to be holy was a general (might he not have said a universal) law.'

'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?' This is perhaps the sublimest apostrophe of the praise (rendered more striking by its interrogatory form,) which the Scriptures have recorded. It makes a part of the first song of gratulation which is to be found in the treasury of sacred poetry. The epithet of *holy* is more frequently affixed to the name of God than any other. His *mighty* name is less often invoked, than his *holy* name. To offend against this attribute is represented as more heinous than to oppose any other. It has been remarked that the impiety of the Assyrian monarch is not described by his hostility against the great, the Almighty God, but it is made an aggravation of his crime that he had committed it against *the Holy One of Israel.*

When God condescended to give a pledge for the performance of his promise, he swears by his *holiness*, as if it were the distinguishing quality which was more especially binding. It seems connected and interwoven with all the divine perfections. Which of his excellences can we contemplate as separated from this? Is not his justice stamped with sanctity! It is free from any tincture of vindictiveness, and is therefore a holy justice. His mercy has none of the partiality of favouritism, or capricious fondness of human kindness, but is a holy mercy. His holiness is not more the source of his mercies than of his punishments. If his holiness in his severities to us wanted a justification, there cannot be at once a more substantial and more splendid illustration of it than the noble passage already quoted, for he is called 'glorious in holiness' immediately after he had vindicated the honour of his name, by the miraculous destruction of the army of Pharaoh.

Is it not then a necessary consequence growing out of his perfections, 'that a righteous God loveth righteousness,' that he will of course require in his creatures a desire to imitate as well as to adore that attribute by which He himself loves to be distinguished? We cannot indeed, like God, be essentially holy. In an infinite being it is a substance, in a created being it is only an accident: God is the essence of holiness, but we can have no holiness, nor any other good thing, but what we derive from him—It is his prerogative, but our privilege.

If God loves holiness because it is his image, he must consequently hate sin because it defaces his image. If he glorifies his own mercy and goodness in rewarding virtue, he no less vindicates the honour of his holiness in the punishment of vice. A perfect God can no more approve of sin in his creatures than he can commit it himself. He may forgive sin on his own conditions, but there are no conditions on which he can be reconciled to it. The infinite goodness of God may delight in the beneficial purposes to which his infinite wisdom has made the sins of his creatures subservient, but sin itself will always be abhorrent to his nature. His wisdom may turn it to a merciful end, but his indignation at the offence cannot be diminished. He loves man, for he cannot but love his own work; he hates sin, for that was man's own invention, and no part of the work which God had made. Even in the imperfect administration of human laws impunity of crimes would be construed into approbation of them.*

The law of holiness then, is a law binding on all persons without distinction, not limited to the period nor to the people to whom it was given. It reaches through the whole Jewish dispensation, and extends with wider demands and higher sanctions to every Christian, of every denomination, of every age, and every country.

A more sublime motive cannot be assigned why we should be holy, than because 'the Lord our God is holy.' Men of the world have no objection to the terms virtue, morality, integrity, rectitude; but they associate something overacted, not to say hypocritical, with the term holiness, and neither use it in a good sense when applied to others, nor would wish to have it applied to themselves; but make it over, with a little suspicion, and not a little derision, to puritans and enthusiasts.

This suspected epithet, however, is surely rescued from every injurious association, if we consider it as the chosen attribute of the Most High. We do not presume to apply the terms virtue, probity, morality, to God; but we ascribe holiness to him because he first ascribed it to himself as the aggregate and consummation of all his perfections.

Shall so imperfect a being as man then, ridicule the application of this term to others, or be ashamed of it himself? There is a cause indeed which should make him ashamed of the appropriation; that of not deserving it. This comprehensive appellation includes all the Christian graces; all the virtues in their just proportion, order, and harmony; in all their bearings, relations, and dependences. And as in God glory and holiness are united, so the apostle combines 'sanctification and honour' as the glory of man.

Traces more or less of the holiness of God may be found in his works, to those who view them with the eye of faith. They are more plainly visible in his providences; but it is in his word that we must chiefly look for the manifestations of his holiness. He is every where described as perfectly holy in himself, as a model to be imitated by his creatures, and, though with an interval immeasurable, as imitable by them.

The great doctrine of redemption is inseparably connected with the doctrine of sanctification. As an admirable writer has observed, 'If the blood of Christ reconcile us to the justice of God, the Spirit of Christ is to reconcile us to the

Saurin.

* See Charnock on the Attributes.

noliness of God.'—When we are told therefore that Christ is made unto us 'righteousness,' we are in the same place taught that he is made unto us sanctification; that is, he is both justifier and sanctifier. In vain shall we deceive ourselves by resting on his sacrifice, while we neglect to imitate his example.

The glorious spirits which surrounded the throne of God are not represented as singing hallelujahs to his omnipotence, nor even to his mercy, but to that attribute which, as with a glory, encircles all the rest. They perpetually cry, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts; and it is observable, that the angels which adore him for his holiness are the ministers of his justice. Those pure intelligences perceive, no doubt, that this union of attributes constitutes the divine perfection.

This infinitely blessed Being then, to whom angels and archangels, and all the hosts of heaven are continually ascribing holiness, has commanded us to be holy. To be holy because God is holy, is both an argument and a command. An argument founded on the perfections of God, and a command to imitate him. This command is given to creatures, fallen indeed, but to whom God graciously promises strength for the imitation. If in God holiness implies an aggregate of perfections; in man, even in his low degree, it is an incorporation of the Christian graces.

The holiness of God indeed is confined by no limitation; ours is bounded, finite, imperfect. Yet let us be sedulous to extend our little sphere. Let our desires be large, though our capacities are contracted. Let our aims be lofty, though our attainments are low. Let us be solicitous that no day pass without some augmentation of our holiness, some added height in our aspirations, some wider expansion in the compass of our virtues. Let us strive every day for some superiority to the preceding day; something that shall distinctly mark the passing scene with progress; something that shall inspire an humble hope that we are rather less unfit for heaven to-day than we were yesterday.

The celebrated artist who has recorded that he passed no day without drawing a line, drew it, not for repetition, but for progress; not to produce a given number of strokes, but to forward his work, to complete his design. The Christian, like the painter, does not draw his lines at random; he has a model to imitate, as well as an outline to fill Every touch conforms him more and more to the great original. He who has transfused most of the life of God into his soul, has copied it most successfully.

'To *seek* happiness,' says one of the fathers, 'is to desire God, and to find him *is* that happiness.' Our very happiness therefore is not our independent property; it flows from that eternal mind which is the source and sum of happiness. In vain we look for felicity in all around us. It can only be found in that original fountain, whence we, and all we are and have, are derived.—Where then is the imaginary wise man of the school of Zeno? what is the perfection of virtue supposed by Aristotle? They have no existence but in the romance of philosophy. Happiness must be imperfect in an imperfect state. Religion, it is true, is initial happiness, and points to its perfection: but as the best men possess it but imperfectly, they cannot be perfectly happy. Nothing can confer completeness which is itself incomplete. 'With Thee, O Lord, is the fountain of life, and in Thy light only we shall see light.'*

Whatever shall still remain wanting in our attainments, and much will still remain, let this last, greatest, highest consideration stimulate our languid exertions, that God has negatively promised the beatific vision, the enjoyment of his presence, to this attainment, by specifically proclaiming, that without holiness no man shall see his face. To know God is the rudiments of that eternal life which will hereafter be perfected by seeing him. As there is no stronger reason why we must not look for perfect happiness in this life, than because there is no perfect holiness, so the nearer advances we make to the one, the greater progress we shall make towards the other; we must cultivate here those tendencies and tempers which must be carried to perfection in a happier clime.—But as holiness is the concomitant of happiness, so must it be its precursor. As sin has destroyed our happiness, so sin must be destroyed before our happiness can be restored. Our nature must be renovated before our felicity can be established. This is according to the nature of things, as well as agreeable to the law and will of God. Let us then carefully look to the subduing in our inmost hearts all those dispositions that are unlike God; all those actions, thoughts, and tendencies that are contrary to God.

Independently therefore of all the other motives to holiness which religion suggests, independently of the fear of punishment; independently even of the hope of glory, let us be holy from this ennobling, elevating motive, because the Lord our God is holy. And when our virtue flags, let it be renovated by this imperative injunction, backed by this irresistible argument. The motive for imitation, and the Being to be imitated, seem almost to identify us with infinity. It is a connexion which endears, an assimilation which dignifies, a resemblance which elevates. The apostle has added to the prophet an assurance which makes the crown and consummation of the promise, 'that though we know not yet what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

In what a beautiful variety of glowing expressions, and admiring strains, do the Scripture worthies delight to represent God; not only in relation to what he is to them, but to the supreme excellence of his own transcendent perfections! They expatiate, they amplify, they dwell with unwearied iteration on the adorable theme: they ransack language, they exhaust all the expressions of praise, and wonder, and admiration; all the images of astonishment and delight, to laud and magnify his glorious name. They praise him, they bless him, they worship him, they glorify him, they give thanks to him for his great glory, saying 'Holy, holy, holy,

* See Leighton on Happiness.]

Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.'

They glorify him relatively to themselves 'I will magnify Thee, O Lord my strength—My help cometh of God—The Lord himself is the portion of my inheritance.' At another time soaring with a noble disinterestedness, and quite losing sight of self and all created glories, they adore him for his own incommunicable excellences. 'Be thou exalted, O God, in thine own strength.'—'Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.' Then bursting to a rapture of adoration, and burning with a more intense flame, they cluster his attributes—'To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, be honour and glory for ever and ever.' *One* is lost in admiration of his wisdom—his ascription is 'to the only *wise* God.' *Another* in triumphant strains overflows with transport at the consideration of the attribute on which we have been descanting: 'O Lord, who is like unto Thee, there is none holy as the Lord.'—'Sing praises unto the Lord, oh ye saints of his, and give thanks unto him for a remembrance of his holiness.'

The prophets and apostles were not deterred from pouring out the overflowings of their fervent spirits, they were not restrained from celebrating the perfections of their Creator, through the cold-hearted fear of being reckoned enthusiasts. The saints of old were not prevented from breathing out their rapturous hosannahs to the King of Saints, through the coward dread of being branded as fanatical. The conceptions of their minds dilating with the view of the glorious constellation of the Divine attributes; and the affections of their hearts warming with the thought, that those attributes were all concentrated in mercy—they display a sublime oblivion of themselves—they forget every thing but God. Their own wants dwindled to a point. Their own concerns, nay the universe itself, shrinks into nothing. They seem absorbed in the effulgence of Deity, lost in the radient beams of infinite glory.

CHAP. XI.

On the comparatively small faults and virtues.

The 'Fishers of men, as if exclusively bent on catching the greater sinners, often make the interstices of the moral net so wide, that it cannot retain those of more ordinary size, which every where abound. Their draught might be more abundant, were not the meshes so large that the smaller sort, aided by their own lubricity, escape the toils and slip through. Happy to find themselves not bulky enough to be entangled, they plunge back again into their native element, enjoy their escape, and hope they may safely wait to grow bigger before they are in danger of being caught.

It is of more importance than we are aware, or are willing to allow, that we take care diligently to practice the smaller virtues, avoid scrupulously the lesser sins, and bear patiently inferior trials; for the sin of habitually yielding, or the grace of habitually resisting in comparatively small points, tends in no inconsiderable degree to produce that vigour or that debility of mind on which hangs victory or defeat.

Conscience is moral sensation. It is the hasty perception of good and evil, the peremptory decision of the mind to adopt the one or avoid the other. Providence has furnished the body with senses, and the soul with conscience, as a *tact* by which to shrink from the approach of danger; as a prompt feeling to supply the deductions of reasoning; as a spontaneous impulse to precede a train of reflections for which the suddenness and surprise of the attack allow no time. An enlightened conscience if kept tenderly alive by a continual attention to its admonitions, would especially preserve us from those smaller sins, and stimulate us to those lesser duties which we are falsely apt to think are too insignificant to be brought to the bar of religion, too trivial to be weighed by the standard of Scripture.

By cherishing this quick feeling of rectitude, light and sudden as the flash from heaven, and which is in fact the motion of the spirit, we intuitively reject what is wrong before we have time to examine why it is wrong, and seize on what is right before we have time to examine why it is right. Should we not then be careful how we extinguish this sacred spark? Will any thing be more likely to extinguish it than to neglect its hourly momentoes to perform the smaller duties, and to avoid the lesser faults, which, as they in a good measure make up the sum of human life, will naturally fix and determine our character, that creature of habits? Will not our neglect or observance of it, incline or indispose us for those more important duties of which these smaller ones are connecting links?

The vices derive their existence from wildness, confusion, disorganization. The discord of the passions is owing to their having different views, conflicting aims, and opposite ends. The rebellious vices have no common head; each is all to itself. They promote their own operations by disturbing those of others, but in disturbing they do not destroy them. Though they are all of one family, they live on no friendly terms. Profligacy hates covetousness as much as if it were a virtue. The life of every sin is a life of conflict, which occasions the torment, but not the death of its opposite. Like the fabled brood of the serpent, the passions spring up, armed against each other, but they fail to complete the resemblance, for they do not effect their mutual destruction.

But without union the Christian graces could not be perfected, and the smaller virtues are the threads and filaments which gently but firmly tie them together. There is an attractive power in goodness which draws each part to the other. This concord of the virtues is derived from their having one common centre in which all meet. In vice there is a strong repulsion. Though bad men seek each other, they do not love each other. Each seeks the other in order to promote his own purposes, while he hates him by whom his purposes are promoted.

The lesser qualities of the human character

are like the lower people in a country ; they are numerically, if not individually important. If well regulated they become valuable from that very circumstance of numbers, which, under a negligent administration, renders them formidable. The peace of the individual mind and of the nation, is materially affected by the discipline in which these inferior orders are maintained. Laxity and neglect in both cases are subversive of all good government.

But if we may be allowed to glance from earth to heaven, perhaps the beauty of the lesser virtues may be still better illustrated by that long and luminous track made up of minute and almost imperceptible stars, which though separately too inconsiderable to attract attention, yet from their number and confluence, form that soft and shining stream of light every where discernable, and which always corresponds to the same fixed stars, as the smaller virtues do to their concomitant great ones.—Without pursuing the metaphor to the classic fiction that the Galaxy was the road through which the ancient heroes went to heaven, may we not venture to say that Christians will make their way thither more pleasant by the consistent practice of the minuter virtues ?

Every Christian should consider religion as a fort which he is called to defend. The meanest soldier in the army if he add patriotism to valour, will fight as earnestly as if the glory of the contest depended on his single arm. But he brings his watchfulness as well as his courage into action. He strenuously defends every pass he is appointed to guard, without inquiring whether it be great or small. There is not any defect in religion or morals so little as to be of no consequence. Worldly things may be little because their aim and end may be little. Things are great or small, not according to their ostensible importance, but according to the magnitude of their object, and the importance of their consequences.

The acquisition of even the smallest virtue being, as has been before observed, an actual conquest over the opposite vice, doubles our moral strength. The spiritual enemy has one object less, and the conqueror one virtue more.

By allowed negligence in small things, we are not aware how much we injure religion in the eye of the world. How can we expect people to believe that we are in earnest in great points, when they see that we cannot withstand a trivial temptation, against which resistance would have been comparatively easy ? At a distance they hear with respect our general characters. They become domesticated with us, and discover the same failings, littleness, and bad tempers, as they have been accustomed to meet with in the most ordinary persons.

If Milton, in one of his letters to a learned foreigner who had visited him, could congratulate himself on the consciousness that in that visit he had been found equal to his reputation, and had supported in private conversation his high character as an author ; shall not the Christian be equally anxious to support the credit of holy profession, by not betraying in familiar life any temper inconsistent with religion ?

It is not difficult to attract respect on great occasions, where we are kept in order by knowing that the public eye is fixed upon us. It is easy to maintain a regard to our dignity in a 'Symposiack, or an academical dinner ;' but to labour to maintain it in the recesses of domestic privacy requires more watchfulness, and is no less the duty, than it will be the habitual practice, of the consistent Christian.

Our neglect of inferior duties is particularly injurious to the mind of our dependants and servants. If they see us 'weak and infirm of purpose,' peevish, irresolute, capricious, passionate, or inconsistent, in our daily conduct, which comes under their immediate observation, and which comes also within their power of judging, they will not give us credit for those higher qualities which we may possess, and those superior duties which we may be more careful to fulfil. Neither their capacity nor their opportunities, may enable them to judge of the orthodoxy of the head ; but there will be obvious and decisive proofs to the meanest capacity, of the state and temper of the heart. Our greater qualities will do them little good, while our lesser but incessant faults do them much injury. Seeing us so defective in the daily course of domestic conduct, though they will obey us because they are obliged to it, they will neither love nor esteem us enough to be influenced by our advice, nor to be governed by our instructions, on those great points which every conscientious head of a family will be careful to inculcate on all about him. It demands no less circumspection to be a *Christian* than to be a '*hero*, to one's valet de chambre.'

In all that relates to God and to himself the Christian knows of no small faults. He considers all allowed and wilful sins, whatever be their magnitude, as an offence against his Maker. Nothing that offends him can be insignificant. Nothing that contributes to fasten on ourselves a wrong habit can be trifling. Faults which we are accustomed to consider as small are repeated without compunction. The habit of committing them is confirmed by the repetition. Frequency renders us at first indifferent, then insensible. The hopelessness attending a long indulged custom generates carelessness, till for want of exercise the power of resistance is first weakened, then destroyed.

But there is a still more serious point of view in which the subject may be considered. Do small faults, continually repeated, always retain their original diminutiveness ? Is any axiom more established than that all evil is of a progressive nature ? Is a bad temper which is never repressed, no worse after years of indulgence, than when we at first gave the reins to it ? Does that which we first allowed ourselves under the name of harmless levity on serious subjects, never proceed to profaneness ? Does what was once admired as proper spirit, never grow into pride, never swell into insolence ? Does the habit of incorrect narrative, or loose talking, or allowed hyperbole, never lead to falsehood ; never settle in deceit ? Before we positively determine that small faults are innocent, we must undertake to prove that they shall never outgrow their primitive dimensions ; we

must ascertain that the infant shall never become a giant.

Procrastination is reckoned among the most venial of our faults, and sits so lightly on our minds that we scarcely apologize for it. But who can assure us, that had not the assistance we had resolved to give to one friend under distress, or the advice to another under temptation, to-day, been delayed, and from mere sloth and indolence been put off till to-morrow, it might not have preserved the fortunes of the one, or saved the soul of the other?

It is not enough that we perform duties; we must perform them at the right time.—We must do the duty of every day in its own season. Every day has its own imperious duties; we must not depend upon to-day for fulfilling those which we neglected yesterday, for to-day might not have been granted us. To-morrow will be equally peremptory in its demands; and the succeeding day, if we live to see it, will be ready with its proper claims.

Indecision, though it is not so often caused by reflection as by the want of it, yet may be as mischievous; for if we spend too much time in balancing probabilities, the period for action is lost. While we are ruminating on difficulties which may never occur, reconciling differences which perhaps do not exist, and poising in opposite scales things of nearly the same weight, the opportunity is lost of producing that good which a firm and manly decision would have effected.

Idleness, though itself 'the most unperforming of all the vices,' is however the pass through which they all enter, the stage on which they all act. Though supremely passive itself, it lends a willing hand to all evil, practical as well as speculative. It is the abettor of every sin whoever commits it, the receiver of all booty, whoever is the thief. If it does nothing itself, it connives at all the mischief that is done by others.

Vanity is exceedingly misplaced when ranked as she commonly is, in the catalogue of small faults. It is under her character of harmlessness that she does all her mischief. She is indeed often found in the society of great virtues. She does not follow in the train, but mixes herself with the company, and by mixing mars it. The use our spiritual enemy makes of her is a master stroke. When he cannot prevent us from doing right actions, he can accomplish his purpose almost as well 'by making us vain of them.' When he cannot deprive the public of our benevolence, he can defeat the effect to ourselves by poisoning the principle. When he cannot rob others of the good effect of the deed, he can gain his point by robbing the doer of his reward.

Peevishness is another of the minor miseries. Human life, though sufficiently unhappy, cannot contrive to furnish misfortunes so often as the passionate and the peevish can supply impatience. To commit our reason and temper to the mercy of every acquaintance, and of every servant, is not making the wisest use of them. If we recollect that violence and peevishness are the common resource of those whose knowledge is small, and whose arguments are weak, our very pride might lead us to subdue our passion, if we had not a better principle to resort to. Anger is the common refuge of insignificance. People who feel their character to be slight, hope to give it weight by inflation: but the blown bladder at its fullest distention is still empty Sluggish characters, above all, have no right to be passionate. They should be contented with their own congenial faults. Dullness however has its impetuosities and its fluctuations as well as genius. It is on the coast of heavy Bœotia that the Euripus exhibits its unparalleled restlessness and agitation.

Trifling is ranked among the venial faults. But if time be one grand talent given us in order to our securing eternal life; if we trifle away that time so as to lose that eternal life, on which by not trifling we might have laid hold, then will it answer the end of sin. A life devoted to trifles not only takes away the inclination, but the capacity for higher pursuits. The truths of Christianity have scarcely more influence on a frivolous than on a profligate character. If the mind be so absorbed, not merely with what is vicious, but with what is useless, as to be thoroughly disinclined to the activities of a life of piety, it matters little what the cause is which so disinclines it. If these habits cannot be accused of great moral evil, yet it argues a low state of mind; that a being who has an eternity at stake can abandon itself to trivial pursuits. If the great concern of life cannot be secured without habitual watchfulness, how is it to be secured by habitual carelessness? It will afford little comfort to the trifler, when at the last reckoning he gives in his long negative catalogue, that the more ostensible offender was worse employed. The trifler will not be weighed in the scale with the profligate, but in the balance of the sanctuary.

Some men make for themselves a sort of code of the lesser morals, of which they settle both the laws and the chronology. They fix 'the climacterics of the mind;'* determine at what period such a vice may be adopted without discredit, at what age one bad habit may give way to another more in character. Having settled it as a matter of course, that to a certain age certain faults are natural, they proceed to act as if they thought them necessary.

But let us not practice on ourselves the gross imposition to believe that any failing, much less any vice, is necessarily appended to any state or any age, or that it is irresistible at any. We may accustom ourselves to talk of vanity and extravagance as belonging to the young; and avarice and peevishness to the old, till the next step will be that we shall think ourselves justified in adopting them. Whoever is eager to find excuses for vice and folly, will feel his own backwardness to practise them much diminished.

C' est le premier pas qui coute. It is only to make out an imaginary necessity, and then we easily fall into the necessity we have imagined. Providence has established no such association. There is, it is true, more danger of certain faults under certain circumstances; and some temptations are stronger at some periods: but it is a

* Dr. Johnson.

proof that they are not irresistible because *all* do not fall into them. The evil is in ourselves, who mitigate the discredit by the supposed necessity. The prediction, like the dream of the astrologer, creates the event instead of foretelling it. But there is no supposition can be made of a bad case which will justify the making it our own: Nor will general positions ever serve for individual apologies.—Who has not known persons who, though they retain the sound health and vigour of active life, sink prematurely into sloth and inactivity, solely on the ground that these dispositions are fancied to be unavoidably incident to advancing years. They demand the indulgence before they feel the infirmity. Indolence thus forges a dismission from duty before the discharge is issued out by Providence. No.—Let us endeavour to meet the evils of the several conditions and periods of life with submission, but it is an offence to their divine dispenser to forestall them.

But we have still a saving clause for ourselves, whether the evil be of greater or lesser magnitude. If the fault be great, we lament the inability to resist it; if small, we deny the importance of so doing, we plead that we cannot withstand a great temptation, and that a small one is not worth withstanding. But if the temptation or the fault be great, we should resist it on account of that very magnitude; if small, the giving it up can cost but little; and the conscientious habit of conquering the less will confer considerable strength towards subduing the greater.

There is again, a sort of splendid character, which, winding itself up occasionally to certain shining actions, thinks itself fully justified in breaking loose from the shackles of restraint in smaller things: it makes no scruple to indemnify itself for these popular deeds by indulgences which, though allowed, are far from innocent. It thus secures to itself praise and popularity by what is sure to gain it, and immunity from censure in indulging the favourite fault, practically exclaiming, 'Is it not a little one?'

Vanity is at the bottom of almost all, may we not say, of all our sins? We think more of signalizing than of saving ourselves. We overlook the hourly occasions which occur of serving, of obliging, of comforting those around us, while we sometimes, not unwillingly perform an act of notorious generosity. The habit, however, in the former case, better indicates the disposition and bent of the mind, than the solitary act of splendor. The apostle does not say whatsoever *great* things ye do, but 'whatsoever things ye do, do *all* to the glory of God.' Actions are less weighed by their bulk than their motive. Virtues are less measured by their splendor than their principle. The racer proceeds in his course more effectually by a steady unslackened pace, than by starts of violent but unequal exertion.

That great abstract of moral law, of which we have elsewhere spoken,* that rule of the highest court of appeal, set up in his own bosom, to which every man can always resort, 'all things that ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them:'—This law, if faithfully obeyed, operating as an infallible remedy for all the disorders of self-love, would, by throwing its partiality into the right scale, establish the right exercise of all the smaller virtues. Its strict observance would not only put a stop to all injustice, but to all unkindness: not only to oppressive acts, but to unfeeling language. Even haughty looks and supercilious gestures would be banished from the face of society, did we ask ourselves how we should like to receive what we are not ashamed to give.

Till we thus morally transmute place, person, and circumstance with those of our brother, we shall never treat him with the tenderness this gracious law enjoins. Small virtues and small offences are only so by comparison. To treat a fellow-creature with harsh language, is not indeed a crime like robbing him of his estate or destroying his reputation. They are, however, all the offspring of the same family.—They are the same in quality though not in degree. All flow, though in streams of different magnitude, from the same fountain; all are indications of a departure from that principle which is included in the law of love. The consequences they involve are not less certain; though they are less important.

The reason why what are called religious people often differ so little from others in small trials is, that instead of bringing religion to their aid in their lesser vexations, they either leave the disturbance to prey upon their minds, or apply to false reliefs for its removal. Those who are rendered unhappy by frivolous troubles, seek comfort in frivolous enjoyments. But we should apply the same remedy to ordinary trials, as to great ones; for as small disquietudes spring from the same cause as great trials, namely, the uncertain and imperfect condition of human life, so they require the same remedy. Meeting common cares with a right spirit would impart a smoothness to the temper, a spirit of cheerfulness to the heart, which would mightily break the force of heavier trials.

You apply to the power of religion in great evils.—Why does it not occur to you to apply to it in the less? Is it that you think the instrument greater than the occasion demands? It is not too great if the lesser one will not produce the effect, or if it produce it in the wrong way; for there is such a thing as putting an evil out of sight without curing it. You would apply to religion on the loss of your child—apply to it on the loss of your temper. Throw in this wholesome tree to sweeten the bitter waters. As no calamity is too great for the power of Christianity to mitigate, so none is too small to experience its beneficial results. Our behaviour under the ordinary accidents of life forms a characteristic distinction between different classes of Christians. The least advanced, resort to religion on great occasions; the deeper proficient resorts to it on all. What makes it appear of so little comparative value is, that the medicine prepared by the Great Physician is thrown by instead of being taken. The patient thinks not of it but in extreme cases. A remedy, however potent, not applied, can produce no effect. But he who has adopted one fixed principle for the

* Chapter ix.

government of his life, will try to keep it in perpetual exercise. An acquaintance with the nature of human evils and of their remedy, would check that spirit of complaint which so much abounds, and which often makes so little difference between people professing religion and those who profess it not.

If the duties in question are not great they become important by the constant demand that is made for them. They have been called 'the small coin of human life,' and on their perpetual and unobstructed circulation depends much of the comfort, as well as convenience of its transactions. They make up in frequency what they want in magnitude. How few of us are called to carry the doctrines of Christianity into distant lands! But which of us is not called every day to adorn those doctrines, by gentleness in our own carriage, by kindness and forbearance to all about us?

In performing the unostensible duties, there is no incentive from vanity. No love of fame inspires that virtue, of which fame will never hear. There can be but one motive, and that the purest, for the exercise of virtues, the report of which will never reach beyond the little circle whose happiness they promote. They do not fill the world with our renown, but they fill our own family with comfort, and if they have the love of God for their principle, they will have his favour for their reward.

In this enumeration of faults, we include not sins of infirmity, inadvertency, and surprise, to which even the most sincere Christians are but too liable. What are here adverted to are allowed, habitual, and unresisted faults: Habitual, because unresisted, and allowed from the notion that they are too inconsiderable to call for resistance. Faults into which we are betrayed through surprise and inadvertency, though that is no reason for committing them, may not be without their uses; they renew the salutary conviction of our sinful nature, make us little in our own eyes, increase our sense of dependence, promote watchfulness, deepen humility, and quicken repentance.

We must however be careful not to entangle the conscience or embarrass the spirit by groundless apprehensions. We have a merciful Father, not a hard master to deal with. We must not harass our minds with a suspicious dread, as if by a needless rigour the Almighty were laying snares to entrap us, nor be terrified with imaginary fears, as if he were on the watch to punish every casual error!—To be immutable and impeccable belongs not to humanity. He, who made us, best knows of what we are made. Our compassionate High Priest will bear with much infirmity, will pardon much involuntary weakness.

But knowing, as every man must know, who looks into his own heart, the difficulties he has from the intervention of his evil tempers, in serving God faithfully, and still however earnestly desirous of serving him, is it not to be lamented that he is not more solicitous to remove his hindrances by trying to avoid those inferior sins, and resisting those lesser temptations, and practising those smaller virtues, the neglect of which obstructs his way, and keeps him back in the performance of higher duties Instead of little renunciations being grievous, and petty self-denials a hardship, they in reality soften grievances, diminish hardships. They are the private drill which trains for public service.

If, as we have repeatedly observed, the principle is the test of the action, we are hourly furnished with occasions of showing our piety by the spirit in which the quiet unobserved actions of life are performed. The sacrifices may be too little to be observed, except by Him to whom they are offered. But small solicitudes, and demonstrations of attachment, scarcely perceptible to any eye but his for whom they were made, bear the true character of love to God, as they are the infallible marks of affection to our fellow creatures.

By enjoining small duties, the spirit of which is every where implied in the gospel, God, as it were, seems contriving to render the great ones easy to us. He makes the light yoke of Christ still lighter, not by abridging duty, but by increasing its facility through its familiarity. These little habits at once indicate the sentiment of the soul and improve it.

It is an awful consideration and one which every Christian should bring home to his own bosom, whether small faults wilfully persisted in, may not in time, not only dim the light of conscience, but extinguish the Spirit of grace; whether the power of resistance against great sins may not be finally withdrawn as a just punishment for having neglected to exert it against small ones.

Let us endeavour to maintain in our minds the awful impression that perhaps among the first objects which may meet our eyes when we open them on the eternal world, may be that tremendous book, in which, together with our great and actual sins, may be recorded in no less prominent characters, the ample page of omissions, of neglected opportunities, and even of fruitless good intentions, of which indolence, indecision, thoughtlessness, vanity, trifling, and procrastination concurred to frustrate the execution.

CHAP. XII.

Self-Examination.

In this stage of general inquiry, every kind of ignorance is esteemed dishonourable. In almost every sort of knowledge there is a competion for superiority. Intellectual attainments are never to be undervalued. Learning is the best human thing. All knowledge is excellent as far as it goes, and as long as it lasts. But how short is the period before 'tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away!'

Shall we then esteem it dishonourable to be ignorant in any thing which relates to life and literature, to taste and science, and not feel ashamed to live in ignorance of our own hearts?

To have a flourishing estate and a mind in disorder; to keep exact accounts with a steward and no reckoning with our Maker; to have an accurate knowledge of loss or gain in our busi

ness, and to remain utterly ignorant whether our spiritual concerns are improving or declining; to be cautious in ascertaining at the end of every year, how much we have increased or diminished our fortune, and to be careless whether we have incurred profit or loss in faith and holiness, is a wretched miscalculation of the comparative value of things. To bestow our attention on objects in an inverse proportion to their importance, is surely no proof that our learning has improved our judgment.

That deep thinker and acute reasoner, Dr. Barrow, has remarked that 'it is a peculiar excellency of human nature, and which distinguishes man from the inferior creatures more than bare reason itself, that he can reflect upon all that is done within him, can discern the tendencies of his soul, and is acquainted with his own purposes.'

This distinguishing faculty of self-inspection would not have been conferred on man, if it had not been intended that it should be in habitual operation. It is surely, as we before observed, as much a common law of prudence, to look well to our spiritual as to our worldly possessions. We have appetites to control, imaginations to restrain, tempers to regulate, passions to subdue; and how can this internal work be effected, how can our thoughts be kept within due bounds, how can a proper bias be given to the affections, how can 'the little state of man' be preserved from continual insurrection, how can this restraining power be maintained if this capacity of discerning, if this faculty of inspecting be not kept in regular exercise? Without constant discipline, imagination will become an outlaw, conscience an attainted rebel.

This inward eye, this power of introversion, is given us for a continual watch upon the soul. On an unremitted vigilance over its interior motions, those fruitful seeds of action, those prolific principles of vice and virtue, will depend both the formation and the growth of our moral and religious character. A superficial glance is not enough for a thing so deep, an unsteady view will not suffice for a thing so wavering, nor a casual look for a thing so deceitful as the human heart. A partial inspection on any one side, will not be enough for an object which must be observed under a variety of aspects, because it is always shifting its positions, always changing its appearances.

We should examine not only our conduct but our opinions; not only our faults but our prejudices; not only our propensities but our judgments. Our actions themselves will be obvious enough; it is our intentions which require the scrutiny. These we should follow up to their remotest springs, scrutinize to their deepest recesses, trace through their most perplexing windings. And lest we should, in our pursuit, wander in uncertainty and blindness, let us make use of that guiding clue which the Almighty has furnished by his word and by his Spirit, for conducting us through the intricacies of this labyrinth. 'What I know not, teach thou me,' should be our constant petition in all our researches.

Did we turn our thoughts inward, it would abate much of the self-complacency with which we swallow the flattery of others. Flattery hurts not him who flatters not himself. If we examined our motives keenly, we should frequently blush at the praises our actions receive. Let us then conscientiously inquire not only what we do, but whence and why we do it, from what motive and to what end.

Self-inspection is the only means to preserve us from self-conceit. We could not surely so very extravagantly value a being whom we ourselves should not only see, but feel to be so full of faults. Self-acquaintance will give us a far more deep and intimate knowledge of our own errors than we can possibly have, with all the inquisitiveness of an idle curiosity, of the errors of others. We are eager enough to blame them without knowing their motives. We are no less eager to vindicate ourselves, though we cannot be entirely ignorant of our own. Thus two virtues will be acquired by the same act, humility and candour; an impartial review of our own infirmities, being the likeliest way to make us tender and compassionate to those of others.

Nor shall we be liable so to overrate our own judgment when we perceive that it often forms such false estimates, is so captivated with trifles, so elated with petty successes, so dejected with little disappointments. When we hear others commend our charity which we know is so cold; when others extol our piety which we feel to be so dead; when they applaud the energies of our faith, which we must know to be so faint and feeble, we cannot possibly be so intoxicated with the applause which never would have been given, had the applauder known us as we know, or ought to know ourselves. If we contradict him, it may be only to draw on ourselves the imputation of a fresh virtue, humility, which perhaps we as little deserve to have ascribed to us as that which we have been renouncing. If we keep a sharp look out, we should not be proud of praises which cannot apply to us, but should rather grieve at the involuntary fraud of imposing on others, by tacitly accepting a character to which we have so little real pretension. To be delighted at finding that people think so much better of us than we are conscious of deserving, is in effect to rejoice in the success of our own deceit.

We shall also become more patient, more forbearing and forgiving, shall better endure the harsh judgment of others respecting us, when we perceive that their opinion of us nearly coincides with our own real though unacknowledged sentiments. There is much less injury incurred by others thinking too ill of us, than in our thinking too well of ourselves.

It is evident then, that to live at random, is not the life of a rational, much less of an immortal, least of all, of an accountable being. To pray occasionally, without deliberate course of prayer; to be generous without proportioning our means to our expenditure; to be liberal without a principle; to let the mind float on the current of public opinion; lie at the mercy of events, for the probable occurrence of which we have made no provision; to be every hour liable to death without any habitual preparation for it; to carry within us a principle which we believe will exist through all the countless ages

of eternity, and yet to make little inquiry whether that eternity is likely to be happy or miserable—all this is an inconsiderateness which, if adopted in the ordinary concerns of life, would bid fair to ruin a man's reputation for common sense: yet of this infatuation he who dives without self-examination is absolutely guilty.

Nothing more plainly shows us what weak vacillating creatures we are, than the difficulty we find in fixing ourselves down to the very self-scrutiny we had deliberately resolved on. Like the worthless Roman emperor we retire to our closet under the appearance of serious occupation, but might now and then be surprised, if not in catching flies, yet in pursuits nearly as contemptible. Some trifle which we should be ashamed to dwell upon at any time, intrudes itself on the moments dedicated to serious thought; recollection is interrupted; the whole chain of reflection broken, so that the scattered links cannot again be united. And so inconsistent are we that we are sometimes not sorry to have a plausible pretence for interrupting the very employment in which we had just before made it a duty to engage. For want of this home acquaintance, we remain in utter ignorance of our inability to meet even in ordinary trials of life with cheerfulness; indeed by this neglect we confirm that inability. Nursed in the lap of luxury, we have an indefinite notion that we have but a loose hold on the things of this world, and of the world itself. But let some accident take away, not the world, but some trifle on which we thought we set no value while we possessed it, and we find to our astonishment that we hold, not the world only, but even this trivial possession with a pretty tight grasp.—Such detections of our self-ignorance, if they do not serve to wean, ought at least to humble us.

There is a spurious sort of self-examination which does not serve to enlighten but to blind. A person who has left off some notorious vice, who has softened some shades of a glaring sin, or substituted some outward forms in the place of open irreligion, looks on this change of character with pleasure.—He compares himself with what he was, and views the alteration with self-complacency. He deceives himself by taking his standard from his former conduct, or from the character of still worse men, instead of taking it from the unerring rule of Scripture. He looks rather at the discredit than the sinfulness of his former life, and being more ashamed of what is disreputable than grieved at what is vicious, he is, in this state of shallow reformation, more in danger in proportion as he is more in credit. He is not aware that it is not having a fault or two less that will carry him to heaven, while his heart is still glued to the world and estranged from God.

If we ever look into our hearts at all, we are naturally most inclined to it when we think we have been acting right. Here inspection gratifies self-love. We have no great difficulty in directing our attention to an object, when that object persents us with pleasing images. But it is a painful effort to compel the mind to turn in on itself, when the view only presents subjects for regret and remorse. This painful duty however must be performed, and will be more salutary in proportion as it is less pleasant.—Let us establish it into a habit to ruminate on our faults. With the recollection of our virtues we need not feed our vanity. They will, if that vanity does not obliterate them, be recorded elsewhere.

We are almost disposed to look at those parts of our character which will best bear it, and which consequently least need it: at those parts which afford most self-gratulation. If a covetous man, for instance, examines himself, instead of turning his attention to the peccant part, he applies the probe where he knows it will not go very deep; he turns from his avarice to that sobriety of which his very avarice is perhaps the source. Another, who is the slave of passion, fondly rests upon some act of generosity, which he considers as a fair commutation for some favourite vice, that would cost him more to renounce than he is willing to part with. We are all too much disposed to dwell on that smiling side of the prospect which pleases and deceives us, and to shut our eyes upon that part which we do not choose to see, because we are resolved not to quit. Self-love always holds a screen between the superficial self-examiner and his faults. The nominal Christian wraps himself up in forms which he makes himself believe are Religion. He exults in what he does, overlooks what he ought to do, nor ever suspects that what is done at all can be done amiss.

As we are so indolent that we seldom examine a truth on more than one side, so we generally take care that it shall be that side which shall contain some old prejudices. While we will not take pains to correct those prejudices and to rectify our judgment, lest it should oblige us to discard a favourite opinion, we are yet as eager to judge, and as forward to decide, as if we were fully possessed of the grounds on which a sound judgment may be made, and a just decision formed.

We should watch ourselves whether we observe a simple rule of truth and justice, as well in our conversation, as in our ordinary transactions; whether we are exact in our measures of commendation and censure; whether we do not bestow extravagant praise where simple approbation alone is due; whether we do not withhold commendation, where, if given, it would support modesty and encourge merit; whether what deserves only a slight censure as imprudent, we do not reprobate as immoral; whether we do not sometimes affect to overrate ordinary merit, in the hope of securing to ourselves the reputation of candour, that we may on other occasions, with less suspicion, depreciate established excellence. We extol the first because we fancy that it can come into no competition with us, and we derogate from the last because it obviously eclipses us.

Let us ask ourselves if we are conscientiously upright in our estimation of benefits; whether when we have a favour to ask, we do not depreciate its value, when we have one to grant we do not aggravate it.

It is only by scrutinizing the heart that we can know it. It is only by knowing the heart

that we can reform the life. Any careless observer, indeed, when his watch goes wrong, may see that it does so, by casting an eye on the dial plate; but it is only the artist who takes it to pieces and examines every spring and every wheel separately, and who, by ascertaining the precise causes of the irregularity, can set the machine right, and restore the obstructed movements.

The illusions of intellectual vision would be materially corrected by a close habit of cultivating an acquaintance with our hearts. We fill much too large a space in our own imaginations; we fancy we take up more room in the world than Providence assigns to an individual who has to divide his allotment with so many millions, who are all of equal importance in their own eyes; and who, like us, are elbowing others to make room for themselves. Just as in the natural world, where every particle of matter would stretch itself, and move out of its place, if it were not kept in order by surrounding particles; the pressure of other parts reduces this to remain in a confinement from which it would escape, if it were not thus pressed and acted upon on all sides. The conscientious practice we have been recommending, would greatly assist in reducing us to our proper dimensions, and in limiting us to our proper place. We should be astonished if we could see our real diminutiveness, and the speck we actually occupy. When shall we learn from our own feelings of how much consequence every man is to himself?

Nor must the examination be occasional, but regular. Let us not run into long arrears, but settle our accounts frequently. Little articles will run up to a large amount, if they are not cleared off. Even our *innocent* days, as we may choose to call them, will not have passed without furnishing their contingent—our deadness in devotion—our eagerness for human applause—our care to conceal our faults rather than to correct them—our negligent performance of some relative duty—our imprudence in conversation, especially at table—our inconsideration—our driving to the very edge of permitted indulgences—let us keep these—let us keep all our numerous items in small sums. Let us examine them while the particulars are fresh in our memory; otherwise, however we may flatter ourselves that lesser evils will be swallowed up by the greater, we may find when we come to settle the grand account that they will not be the less remembered for not having been recorded.

And let it be one subject of our frequent inquiry, whether since we last scrutinized our hearts, our secular affairs, or our eternal concerns have had the predominance there. We do not mean which of them has occupied most of our time, the largest portion of which must, necessarily, to the generality, be absorbed in the cares of the present life; but on which our affections have been most bent; and especially how we have conducted ourselves when there has arisen a competition between the interests of both.

That general burst of sins which so frequently rushes in on the consciences of the dying, would be much moderated by previous habitual self-examination. It will not do to repent in the lump. The sorrow must be as circumstantial as the sin. Indefinite repentance is no repentance. And it is one grand use of self-inquiry, to remind us, that all unforsaken sins are unrepented sins.

To a Christian there is this substantial comfort attending a minute self-inspection, that when he finds fewer sins to be noted, and more victories over temptation obtained, he has a solid evidence of his advancement, which well repays his trouble.

The faithful searcher into his own heart, that 'chamber of imagery,' feels himself in the situation of the prophet,* who being conducted in vision from one idol to another, the spirit at sight of each, repeatedly exclaims, 'here is another abomination!' The prophet being commanded to dig deeper, the further he penetrated the more evils he found, while the spirit continued to cry out, 'I will show thee yet more abomination.'

Self-examination by detecting self-love, self-denial by weakening its power, self-government by reducing its despotism, turns the temper of the soul from its natural bias, controls the disorderly appetite, and, under the influence of Divine Grace, in a good measure restores to the man that dominion over himself which God at first gave him over the inferior creatures. Desires, passions, and appetites, are brought to move somewhat more in their appointed order; subjects not tyrants. What the stoics, vainly pretended to, Christianity effects. It restores man to a dominion over his own will, and in a good measure enthrones him in that empire which he had forfeited by sin.

He now begins to survey his interior, the awful world within; not indeed with self-complacency, but with the control of a sovereign; he still finds too much rebellion to indulge security, he therefore continues his inspection with vigilance, but without perturbation. He continues to experience a remainder of insubordination and disorder, but this rather solicits to a stricter government than drives him to relax his discipline.

This self-inspection somewhat resembles the correction of a literary performance. After many and careful revisals, though some grosser faults may be done away; though the errors are neither quite so numerous, nor so glaring as at first, yet the critic perpetually perceives faults which he had not perceived before; negligences appear which he had overlooked, and even defects start up which had passed on him for beauties. He finds much to amend, and even to expunge, in what he had before admired. When by rigorous castigation the most acknowledged faults are corrected, his critical acumen, improved by exercise, and a more habitual acquaintance with his subjects, still detect, and will forever detect, new imperfections. But he neither throws aside his work, nor remits his criticism, which if it do not make the work perfect, will at least make the author humble. Conscious that if it is not quite so bad as it was,

* Ezekiel.

it is still at an immeasurable distance from the required excellence.

Is it not astonishing that we should go on repeating periodically, 'Try me, O God,' while we are yet neglecting to try ourselves? Is there not something more like defiance than devotion to invite the inspection of Omniscience to that heart which we ourselves neglect to inspect? How can a Christian solemnly cry out to the Almighty, 'seek the ground of my heart, prove me and examine my thoughts, and see if there be any ways of wickedness in me,' while he himself neglects to 'examine his heart,' is afraid of 'proving his thoughts,' and dreads to inquire if there 'be any way of wickedness' in himself, knowing that the inquiry ought to lead to the expulsion.

In our self-inquisition let us fortify our virtue by a rigorous exactness in calling things by their proper names. Self-love is particularly ingenious in inventing disguises of this kind. Let us lay them open, strip them bare, face them, and give them as little quarter as if they were the faults of another.—Let us not call wounded pride delicacy.—Self-love is made up of soft and sickly sensibilities. Not that sensibility which melts at the sorrows of others, but that which cannot endure the least suffering itself. It is alive in every pore where self is concerned. A touch is a wound. It is careless in inflicting pain, but exquisitely awake in feeling it. It defends itself before it is attacked, revenges affronts before they are offered, and resents as an insult the very suspicion of an imperfection.

In order then to unmask our hearts, let us not be contented to examine our vices, let us examine our virtues also, 'those smaller faults.' Let us scrutinize to the bottom those qualities and actions which have more particularly obtained public estimation.—Let us inquire if they were genuine in the principle, simple in the intention, honest in the prosecution. Let us ask ourselves if in some admired instances our generosity had no tincture of vanity, our charity no taint of ostentation? Whether when we did such a right action which brought us credit, we should have persisted in doing it, had we foreseen that it would incur censure. Do we never deceive ourselves by mistaking a constitutional indifference of temper for Christian moderation? Do we never construe our love of ease into deadness of the world? Our animal activity into Christian zeal? Do we never mistake our obstinacy for firmness, our pride for fortitude, our selfishness for feeling, our love of controversy for the love of God, our indolence of temper for superiority to human applause?—When we have stripped our good qualities bare; when we have made all due deductions for natural temper, easiness of disposition, self-interest; desire of admiration; of every extrinsic appendage, every illegitimate motive, let us fairly cast up the account, and we shall be mortified to see how little there will remain. Pride may impose itself upon us, even in the shape of repentance. The humble Christian is grieved at his faults, the proud man is angry at them.—He is indignant when he discovers he has done wrong, not so much because his sin offends God, as because it has let him see that he is not quite so good as he had tried to make himself believe.

It is more necessary to excite us to the humbling of our pride, than to the performance of certain good actions: the former is more difficult as it is less pleasant. That very pride will of itself stimulate to the performance of many things that are laudable. These performances will reproduce pride, as they were produced by it; whereas humility has no outward stimulus. Divine grace alone produces it. It is so far from being actuated by the love of fame, that it is not humility, till it has laid the desire of fame in the dust.

If an actual virtue consists, as we have frequently had occasion to observe, in the dominion over the contrary vice, humility is the conquest over pride, charity over selfishness: not only a victory over the natural temper, but a substitution of the opposite quality. This proves that all virtue is founded in self-denial, self-denial in self-knowledge, and self-knowledge in self-examination. Pride so insinuates itself in all we do, and say, and think, that our apparent humility has not seldom its origin in pride. That very impatience which we feel at the perception of our faults is produced by the astonishment at finding that we are not perfect.—This sense of our sins should make us humble but not desperate. It should teach us to distrust every thing in ourselves, and to hope for every thing from God. The more we lay open the wounds which sin has made, the more earnestly shall we seek the remedy which Christianity has provided.

But instead of seeking for self-knowledge, we are glancing about us for grounds of self-exultation! We almost resemble the Pharisee, who with so much self-complacency delivered in the catalogue of his own virtues and other men's sins, and, like the Tartars, who think they possess the qualities of those they murder, fancied that the sins of which he accused the publican would swell the amount of his own good deeds. Like him we take a few items from memory, and a few more from imagination. Instead of pulling down the edifice which pride has raised, we are looking round on our good works for buttresses to prop it up. We excuse ourselves from the imputation of many faults by alleging that they are common, and by no means peculiar to ourselves. This is one of the weakest of our deceits. Faults are not less personally ours because others commit them. There is divisibility in sin as well as in matter. Is it any diminution of our error that others are guilty of the same?

Self-love being a very industrious principle, has generally two concerns in hand at the same time. It is as busy in concealing our own defects, as in detecting those of others, especially those of the wise and good. We might indeed direct its activity in the latter instance to our own advantage, for if the faults of good men are injurious to themselves, they might be rendered profitable to us, if we were careful to convert them to their true use. But instead of turning them into a means of promoting our own watchfulness, we employ them mischievously in two ways. We lessen our respect for pious characters when we see the infirmities which are

blended with their fine qualities, and we turn their failings into a justification of our own, which are not like theirs overshadowed with virtues. To admire the excellences of others without imitating them is fruitless admiration; to condemn their errors without avoiding is unprofitable censoriousness.

When we are compelled by our conscience to acknowledge and regret any fault we have recently committed, this fault so presses upon our recollection, that we seem to forget that we have any other. This single error fills our mind, and we look at it as through a telescope, which, while it shows an object, confines the sight to that one object exclusively. Others indeed are more effectually shut out, than if we were not examining this. Thus while the object in question is magnified, the others are as if they did not exist.

It seems to be established into a kind of system not to profit by any thing without us, and not to cultivate an acquaintance with any thing within us. Though we are perpetually remarking on the defects of others, yet when does the remark lead us to study and to root out the same defects in our own hearts? We are almost every day hearing of the death of others, but does it induce us to reflect on death as a thing in which we have an individual concern? We consider the death of a friend as a loss, but seldom apply it as a warning. The death of others we lament, the faults of others we censure, but how seldom do we make use of the one for our own amendment, or of the other for our own preparation.*

It is the fashion of the times to try experiments in the arts, in agriculture, in philosophy. In every science the diligent professor is always afraid there may be some secret which he has not yet attained, some occult principle which would reward the labour of discovery, something even which the assiduous and intelligent have actually found out, but which has hitherto eluded *his* pursuit. And shall the Christian stop short in his scrutiny, shall he not examine and inquire till he lays hold on the very heart and core of religion?

Why should experimental philosophy be the prevailing study, and experimental religion be branded as the badge of enthusiasm, the cant of a hollow profession? Shall we never labour to establish the distinction between appearance and reality, between studying religion critically, and embracing it practically, between having our conduct creditable and our hearts sanctified? Shall we not aspire to do the best things from the highest motives, and elevate our aims with our attainments? Why should we remain in the vestibule when the sanctuary is open? Why should we be contented to dwell in the outer courts when we are invited to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus?

Natural reason is not likely to furnish arguments sufficiently cogent, nor motives sufficiently powerful to drive us to a close self-inspection. Our corruptions foster this ignorance. To this they owe their undisputed possession of our hearts. No principle short of Christianity is strong enough to impel us to a study so disagreeable as that of our faults. Of Christianity humility is the prime grace, and this grace can never take root and flourish in a heart that lives in ignorance of itself. If we do not know the greatness and extent of our sins, if we do not know the imperfections of our virtues, the fallibility of our best resolutions, the infirmity of our purest purposes, we cannot be humble; if we are not humble, we cannot be Christians.

But it may be asked, is there to be no end to this vigilance? Is there no assigned period when this self-denial may become unnecessary? No given point when we may be emancipated from the vexatious self-inspection? Is the matured Christian to be a slave to the same drudgery as the novice? The true answer is—we may cease to watch when our spiritual enemy ceases to assail. We may be off our guard when there is no longer any temptation without. We may cease our self-denial when there is no more corruption within. We may give the reins to our imagination when we are sure its tendencies will be towards heaven. We may dismiss repentance when sin is abolished. We may indulge selfishness when we can do it without danger to our souls. We may neglect prayer when we no longer need the favour of God. We may cease to praise him when he ceases to be gracious to us.—To discontinue our vigilance at any period short of this, will be to defeat all the virtues we have practised on earth, to put to hazard all our hopes of happiness in heaven.

* For this hint, and a few others on the same subject, the author is indebted to that excellent christian moralist, M. Nicole.

CHAP. XIII.

Self-Love.

'The idol Self,' says an excellent old divine,* 'has made more desolation among men than ever was made in those places where idols were served by human sacrifices. It has preyed more fiercely on human lives, than Moloch or the Minotaur.'

To worship images is a more obvious, but it is scarcely a more degrading idolatry, than to set up self in opposition to God. To devote ourselves to this service is as perfect slavery as the service of God is perfect freedom. If we cannot imitate the sacrifice of Christ in his death, we are called upon to imitate the sacrifice of himself in his will. Even the Son of God declared 'I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.' This was his grand lesson, this was his distinguishing character.

Self-will is the ever flowing fountain of all the evil tempers which deform our hearts, of all the boiling passions which inflame and disorder society; the root of bitterness on which all its corrupt fruits grow. We set up our own understanding against the wisdom of God, and our own passions against the will of God. If we could ascertain the precise period when sensuality ceased to govern in the animal part of

* Howe.

our nature, and pride in the intellectual, that period would form the most memorable era of the Christian life; from that moment he begins a new date of liberty and happiness; from that stage he sets out on a new career of peace, liberty, and virtue.

Self-love is a Proteus of all shapes, shades, and complexions. It has the power of dilation and contraction as best serves the occasion. There is no crevice so small through which its subtle essence cannot force its way, no space so ample that it cannot stretch itself to fill.—It is of all degrees of refinement, so coarse and hungry as to gorge itself with the grossest adulation; so fastidious as to require a homage as refined as itself; so artful as to elude the detection of ordinary observers; so specious as to escape the observation of the very heart in which it reigns paramount: yet, though so extravagant in its appetites, it can adopt a moderation which imposes, a delicacy which veils its deformity, an artificial character which keeps its real one out of sight.

We are apt to speak of self-love as if it were only a symptom, whereas it is the distemper itself; a malignant distemper which has possession of the moral constitution, of which malady every part of the system participates. In direct opposition to the effect produced by the touch of the fabled king, which converted the basest materials into gold, this corrupting principle pollutes, by coming in contact with it, whatever is in itself great and noble.

Self-love is the centre of the unrenewed heart. This stirring principle, as has been observed, serves indeed

The virtuous mind to wake;

but it disturbs it from its slumbers to ends and purposes directly opposite to those assigned to it by our incomparable bard.* Self-love is by no means 'the small pebble which stirs the peaceful lake.' It is rather the pent up wind within, which causes the earthquake; it is the tempest which agitates the sleeping ocean. Had the image been as just as its clothing is beautiful; or rather had *Mr. Pope* been as sound a theologian as he was an exquisite poet, the allusion in his hands might have conveyed a sounder meaning without losing a particle of its elegance. This might have been effected by only substituting the effect for the cause; that is, by making benevolence the principle instead of the consequence, and by discarding self-love from its central situation in the construction of the metaphor.

But by arraying a beggarly idea in princely robes, he knew that his own splendid powers could at any time transform meanness into majesty, and deformity into beauty.

After all however, *le vrai est le seul beau.* Had he not blindly adopted the misleading system of the noble sceptic, 'his guide, philosopher, and friend,' he might have transferred the shining attributes of the base-born thing which he has dressed out with so many graces, to the legitimate claimant—benevolence;—of which self-love is so far from being, as he represents, the moving spring, that they are both working in a course of incessant counteraction, the spirit striving against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit.

To Christian benevolence all the happy effects attributed to self-love might have been fairly traced. It was only to dislodge the idol and make the love of God the centre, and the poet's delightful numbers might have conveyed truths worthy of so perfect a vehicle. 'This centre moved,' does indeed extend its pervading influence in the very manner ascribed to the opposite principle; does indeed spread from its throne in the individual breast, to all those successive circles, 'wide and more wide,' of which the poet makes self-love the first mover.*

The apostle James appears to have been of a different opinion from the ethic bard; he speaks as if he suspected that the pebble stirred the lake a little too roughly. He traces this mischievous principle from its birth to the largest extent of its malign influence.—The question, 'whence come wars and fightings among you,' he answers by another question;—'Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?'

The same pervading spirit which creates hostility between nations, creates animosity among neighbours, and discord in families. It is the same principle which, having in the beginning made 'Cain the first male child,' a murderer in his father's house, has been ever since in perpetual operation; has been transmitted in one unbroken line of succession, through that long chain of crimes of which history is composed to the present triumphant spoiler of Europe.—In cultivated societies, laws repress, by punishing, the overt act in private individuals, but no one thing but the Christian religion has ever been devised to cleanse the spring.

'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?' This proposition, this interrogation, we read with complacency, and both the aphorism and the question being a portion of Scripture, we think it would not be decent to controvert it. We read it however with a secret reservation, that it is only the heart of all the rest of the world that is meant, and we rarely make the application which the Scripture intended. Each hopes that there is *one* heart which may escape the charge, and he makes the single exception in favour of his own. But if the exception which every one makes were true, there would not be a deceitful or wicked heart in the world.

As a theory we are ready enough to admire self-knowledge, yet when the practice comes in question we are as blindfolded as if our happiness depended on our ignorance. To lay hold

* Essay on Man, 1, 362.

* Self-love thus pushed to social, to divine.
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine:
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre mov'd, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
His country next, and next all human race.

The author hopes to be forgiven for these remarks: she has hazarded them for the sake of her more youthful readers.—She has not forgotten the time when, in the admiration of youthful enthusiasm, she never suspected that the principle of these finished verses was less excellent than the poetry.

on a religious truth, and to maintain our hold, is no easy matter. Our understandings are not more ready to receive than our affections to lose it. We like to have an intellectual knowledge of divine things, but to cultivate a spiritual acquaintance with them cannot be effected at so cheap a rate. We can even more readily force ourselves to believe that which has no affinity with our understanding, than we can bring ourselves to choose that which has no interest in our will, no correspondence with our passions. One of the first duties of a Christian is to endeavour to conquer this antipathy to the self-denying doctrines against which the human heart so sturdily holds out. The learned take incredible pains for the acquisition of knowledge. The philosopher cheerfully consumes the midnight oil in his laborious pursuits; he willingly sacrifices food and rest to conquer a difficulty in science. Here the labour is pleasant, the fatigue is grateful, the very difficulty is not without its charms. Why do we feel so differently in our religious pursuits? Because in the most operose human studies, there is no contradiction of self, there is no opposition to the will, there is no combat of the affections. If the passions are at all implicated, if self-love is at all concerned, it is rather in the way of gratification than of opposition.

There is such a thing as a mechanical christianity. There are good imitations of religion, so well executed and so resembling, as not only to deceive the spectator, but the artist. Self-love in its various artifices to deceive us to our ruin, sometimes makes use of a means, which, if properly used, is one of the most beneficial that can be devised to preserve us from its influence—the perusal of pious books.

But these books in the hands of the ignorant, the indolent, and the self-satisfied, produce an effect directly contrary to that which they were intended to produce, and which they actually do produce on minds prepared for the perusal. They inflate where they were intended to humble. As some hypochondriacs, who amuse their melancholy hours with consulting indiscriminately every medical book which falls in their way, fancy they find their own case in every page, their own ailment in the ailment of every patient, till they believe they actually feel every pain of which they read, though the work treats of cases diametrically opposite to their own:—so the religious valetudinarian, as unreasonably elated as the others are depressed, reads books descriptive of a highly religious state, with the same unhappy self-application. He feels his spiritual pulse by a watch that has no movements in common with it, yet he fancies that they go exactly alike. He dwells with delight on symptoms, not one of which belongs to him, and flatters himself with their supposed agreement. He observes in those books what are the signs of grace, and he observes them with complete self-application; he traces what are the evidences of being in God's favour, and those evidences he finds in himself.

Self-ignorance appropriates truths faithfully stated but wholly inapplicable. The presumption of the novice arrogates to itself the experience of the advanced Christian. He is persuaded that it is his own case, and seizes on the consolations which belong only to the most elevated piety. Self-knowledge would correct the judgment. It would teach us to use the pattern held out as an original to copy, instead of leading us to fancy that we are already wrought into the assimilation. It would teach us when we read the history of an established Christian, to labour after a conformity to it, instead of mistaking it for the delineation of our own character.

Human prudence, daily experience, self-love, all teach us to distrust others, but all motives combined do not teach us to distrust ourselves; we confide unreservedly in our own heart, though as a guide it misleads, as a counsellor it betrays. It is both party and judge. As the one, it blinds through ignorance, as the other, it acquits through partiality.

Though we value ourselves upon our discretion in not confiding too implicitly in others yet it would be difficult to find any friend, any neighbour, or even any enemy who has deceived us so often as we have deceived ourselves. If any acquaintance betray us, we take warning are on the watch, and are careful not to trust him again. But however frequently the bosom traitor deceive and misled, no such determined stand is made against his treachery: we lie as open to his next assault as if he had never betrayed us. We do not profit by the remembrance of the past delusion to guard against the future.

Yet if another deceive us, it is only in matters respecting this world; but we deceive ourselves in things of eternal moment. The treachery of others can only affect our fortune or our fame, or at worst our peace; but the internal traitor may mislead us to our everlasting destruction. We are too much disposed to suspect others who probably have neither the inclination nor the power to injure us, but we seldom suspect our own heart though it possesses and employs both. We ought however fairly to distinguish between the simple vanity and the hypocrisy of self-love. Those who content themselves with talking as if the praise of virtue implied the practice, and who expect to be thought good, because they commend goodness, only propagate the deceit which has misled themselves, whereas hypocrisy does not even believe herself. She has deeper motives; she has designs to answer, competitions to promote, projects to effect. But mere vanity can subsist on the thin air of the admiration she solicits, without intending to get any thing by it. She is gratuitous in her loquacity; for she is ready to display her own merit to those who have nothing to give in return, whose applause brings no profit, and whose censure no disgrace.

It is not strange that we should judge of things not according to the opinion of others in cases foreign to ourselves; cases on which we have no correct means of determining; but we do it in things which relate immediately to ourselves, thus making not truth but the opinion of others our standard in points which others cannot know, and of which we ought not to be ignorant. We are as fond of the applauses even of the upper gallery as the dramatic poet. Like

him we affect to despise the mob considered as individual judges, yet as a mass, we covet their applause. Like him we feel strengthened by the number of voices in our favour, and are less anxious about the goodness of the work, than the loudness of the acclamation. Success is merit in the eye of both.

But even though we may put more refinement into our self-love, it is self-love still. No subtlety of reasoning, no elegance of taste, though it may disguise the radical principle, can destroy it. We are still too much in love with flattery, even though we may profess to despise that praise which depends on the acclamations of the vulgar. But if we are over anxious for the admiration of the better born and the better bred, this by no means proves that we are not vain; it only proves that our vanity has a better taste. Our appetite is not coarse enough perhaps to relish that popularity which ordinary ambition covets, but do we never feed in secret upon the applauses of more distinguished judges? Is not their having extolled *our* merit a confirmation of our discernment, and the chief ground of our high opinion of *theirs*?

But if any circumstance arise to induce them to change the too favourable opinion which they had formed of us, though their general character remain unimpeachable, and their general conduct as meritorious as when we most admired them, do we not begin to judge them unfavourably? Do we not begin to question their claim to that discernment which we had ascribed to them, to suspect the soundness of their judgment which we had so loudly commended? It is well if we do not entertain some doubt of the rectitude of their principles, as we probably do of the reality of their friendship. We do not candidly allow for the effect which prejudice, which misrepresentation, which party may produce even on an upright mind. Still less does it enter into our calculation that we may actually have deserved their disapprobation, that something in our conduct may have incurred the change in theirs.

It is no low attainment to detect this lurking injustice in our hearts, to strive against it, to pray against it, and especially to conquer it. We may reckon that we have acquired a sound principle of integrity when prejudice no longer blinds our judgment, nor resentment biases our justice; when we do not make our opinion of another depend on the opinion which we conceive he entertains of us. We must keep a just measure, and hold an even balance in judging of ourselves as well as of others. We must have no false estimate which shall incline to condemnation without, or to partiality within. The examining principle must be kept sound, or our determination will not be exact. It must be at once a testimony of our rectitude, and an incentive to it.

In order to improve this principle, we should make it a test of our sincerity to search out and to commend the good qualities of those who do not like us. But this must be done without affectation, and without insincerity. We must practice no false candour. If we are not on our guard we may be laying out for the praise of generosity, while we are only exercising a simple act of justice. These refinements of self love are the dangers only of spirits of the higher order, but to such they are dangers.

The ingenuity of self-deceit is inexhaustible. If people extol us, we feel our good opinion of ourselves confirmed. If they dislike us, we do not think the worse of ourselves, but of them; it is not *we* who want merit but *they* who want penetration. If we cannot refuse them discernment, we persuade ourselves that they are not so much insensible to our worth as envious of it. There is no shift, stratagem, or device which we do not employ to make us stand well with ourselves.

We are too apt to calculate our own character unfairly in two ways; by referring to some one signal act of generosity, as if such acts were the common habit of our lives, and by treating our habitual faults, not as common habits, but occasional failures. There is scarcely any fault in another which offends us more than vanity, though perhaps there is none that really injures us so little. We have no patience that another should be as full of self-love as we allow ourselves to be; so full of himself as to have little leisure to attend to us. We are particularly quick sighted to the smallest of his imperfections which interferes with our self-esteem, while we are lenient to his more grave offences, which by not coming in contact with our vanity, do not shock our self-love.

Is it not strange that though we love ourselves so much better than we love any other person, yet there is hardly one, however little we value him, that we had not rather be alone with, that we had not rather converse with, that we had not rather come to close quarters with, than ourselves? Scarcely one whose private history, whose thoughts, feelings, actions, and motives we had not rather pry into than our own. Do we not use every art and contrivance to avoid getting at the truth of our own character? Do we not endeavour to keep ourselves ignorant of what every one else knows respecting our faults, and do we not account that man our enemy, who takes on himself the best office of a friend, that of opening to us our real state and condition?

The little satisfaction people find when they faithfully look within, makes them fly more eagerly to things without. Early practice and long habit might conquer the repugnance to look at home, and the fondness for looking abroad. Familiarity often makes us pleased with the society which, while strangers we dreaded. Intimacy with ourselves might produce a similar effect.

We might perhaps collect a tolerably just knowledge of our own character, could we ascertain the *real* opinion of others respecting us; but that opinion being, except in a moment of resentment, carefully kept from us by our own precautions, profits us nothing. We do not choose to know their secret sentiments, because we do not choose to be cured of our error; because we 'love darkness rather than light;' because we conceive that in parting with our vanity, we should part with the only comfort we have, that of being ignorant of our own faults.

Self-knowledge would materially contribute to our happiness, by curing us of that self-sufficiency which is continually exposing us to mortifications. The hourly rubs and vexations which pride undergoes, is far more than an equivalent for the short intoxication of pleasure which it snatches.

The enemy within is always in a confederacy with the enemy without, whether that enemy be the world or the devil. The domestic foe accommodates itself to their allurements, flatters our weaknesses, throws a veil over our vices, tarnishes our good deeds, gilds our bad ones, hoodwinks our judgment, and works hard to conceal our internal springs of action.

Self-love has the talent of imitating whatever the world admires, even though it should be the Christian virtues. It leads us from our regard to reputation to avoid all vices, not only which would bring punishment but discredit by the commission. It can even assume the zeal and copy the activity of Christian charity. It communicates to our conduct those properties and graces, manifested in the conduct of those who are actuated by a sounder motive. The difference lies in the ends proposed. The object of the one is to please God, of the other to obtain the praise of man.

Self-love judging of the feelings of others by its own, is aware that nothing excites so much odium as its own character would do, if nakedly exhibited. We feel, by our own disgust at its exhibition in others, how much disgust we ourselves should excite did we not invest it with the soft garb of gentle manners and polished address. When therefore we would not condescend 'to take the lowest place, to think others better than ourselves, to be courteous and pitiful,' on the true scripture ground, politeness steps in as the accidental substitute of humility, and the counterfeit brilliant is willingly worn by those who will not be at the expense of the jewel.

There is a certain elegance of mind which will often restrain a well-bred man from sordid pleasures and gross voluptuousness. He will be led by his good taste perhaps not only to abhor the excesses of vice, but to admire the theory of virtue. But it is only the *crapule* of vice which he will abhor. Exquisite gratifications, sober luxury, incessant but not unmeasured enjoyment, form the principle of his plan of life, and if he observe a temperance in his pleasures, it is only because excess would take off the edge, destroy the zest, and abridge the gratification. By resisting gross vices he flatters himself that he is a temperate man, and that he has made all the sacrifices which self-denial imposes. Inwardly satisfied, he compares himself with those who have sunk into coarser indulgences, enjoys his own superiority in health, credit, and unimpaired faculties, and triumphs in the dignity of his own character.

There is, if the expression may be allowed, a sort of religious self-deceit, an affection of humility which is in reality full of life, which resolves all importance into what concerns self, which only looks at things as they refer to life. This religious vanity operates in two ways:—We not only fly out at the imputation of the smallest individual fault, while at the same time we affect to charge ourselves with more corruption than is attributed to us; but on the other hand, while we are lamenting our general want of all goodness, we fight for every particle that is disputed. The one quality that is in question always happens to be the very one to which we *must* lay claim, however deficient in others.—Thus, while renouncing the pretensions to every virtue, 'we depreciate ourselves into all.' We had rather talk even of our faults than not occupy the foreground of the canvass.

Humility does not consist in telling our faults, but in bearing to be told of them; in hearing them patiently and even thankfully; in correcting ourselves when told; in not hating those who tell us of them. If we were little in our own eyes, and felt our real insignificance, we should avoid false humility as much as mere obvious vanity; but we seldom dwell on our faults except in a general way, and rarely on those of which we are really guilty. We do it in the hope of being contradicted, and thus of being confirmed in the secret good opinion we entertain of ourselves. It is not enough that we inveigh against ourselves, we must in a manner forget ourselves. This oblivion of self from a pure principle, would go further towards our advancement in christian virtue, than the most splendid actions performed on the opposite ground.

That self-knowledge which teaches us humility, teaches us compassion also. The sick pity the sick. They sympathize with the disorder of which they feel the symptoms in themselves. Self-knowledge also checks injustice by establishing the equitable principle of showing the kindness we expect to receive; it represses ambition by convincing us how little we are entitled to superiority; it renders adversity profitable by letting us see how much we deserve it; it makes prosperity safe, by directing our hearts to HIM who confers it, instead of receiving it as the consequence of our own desert.

We even carry our self-importance to the foot of the throne of God. When prostrate there we are not required, it is true, to forget ourselves, but we are required to remember HIM. We have indeed much sin to lament, but we have also much mercy to adore. We have much to ask, but we have likewise much to acknowledge. Yet our infinite obligations to God do not fill our hearts half as much as a petty uneasiness of our own; nor HIS infinite perfections as much as our own smallest want.

The great, the only effectual antidote to self-love, is to get the love of God and of our neighbour firmly rooted in the heart. Yet let us ever bear in mind that dependance on our fellow creatures is as carefully to be avoided as love of them is to be cultivated, There is none but God on whom the principles of love and dependance form but one duty.

CHAP. XIV.

On the conduct of Christians in their intercourse with the irreligious.

THE combination of integrity with discretion

is the precise point at which a serious Christian must aim in his intercourse, and especially in his debates on religion, with men of the opposite description. He must consider himself as not only having his own reputation but the honour of religion in his keeping. While he must on the one hand 'set his face as a flint' against any thing that may be construed into compromise or evasion, into denying or concealing any christian truth, or shrinking from any commanded duty, in order to conciliate favour; he must, on the other hand, be scrupulously careful never to maintain a christian doctrine with an unchristian temper. In endeavouring to convince he must be cautious not needlessly to irritate. He must distinguish between the honour of God and the pride of his own character, and never be pertinaciously supporting the one, under the pretence that he is only maintaining the other. The dislike thus excited against the disputant is at once transferred to the principle, and the adversary's unfavourable opinion of religion is augmented by the faults of its champion. At the same time, the intemperate champion puts it out of his power to be of any further service to the man whom his offensive manners have disgusted.

A serious Christian, it is true, feels an honest indignation at hearing those truths on which his everlasting hopes depend, lightly treated. He cannot but feel his heart rise at the affront offered to his Maker. But instead of calling down fire from heaven on the reviler's head, he will raise a secret supplication to the God of heaven in his favour, which, if it change not the heart of his opponent, will not only tranquilize his own, but soften it towards his adversary; for we cannot easily hate the man for whom we pray.

He who advocates the sacred cause of Christianity, should be particularly aware of fancying that his being religious will atone for his being disagreeable; that his orthodoxy will justify his uncharitableness, or his zeal make up for his indiscretion. He must not persuade himself that he has been serving God, when he has only been gratifying his own resentment, when he has actually by a fiery defence prejudiced the cause which he might perhaps have advanced by temperate argument and persuasive mildness. Even a judicious silence under great provocation is, in a warm temper, real forbearance. And though 'to keep silence from good words' may be pain and grief, yet the pain and grief must be borne, and the silence must be observed.

We sometimes see imprudent religionists glory in the attacks which their own indiscretion has invited. With more vanity than truth they apply the strong and ill-chosen term of persecution, to the sneers and ridicule which some impropriety of manner or some inadvertency of their own has occasioned. Now and then it is to be feared the censure may be deserved, and the high professor may possibly be but an indifferent moralist. Even a good man, a point we are not sufficiently ready to concede, may have been blameable in some instance on which his censures will naturally have kept a keen eye. On these occasions how forcibly does the pointed caution recur, which was implied by the divine moralist on the mount, and enforced by the apostle Peter, to distinguish for whose sake we are calumniated.

By the way, this sharp look-out of worldly men on the professors of religion, is not without very important uses. While it serves to promote circumspection in the real Christian, the detection to which it leads in the case of the hollow professor, forms a broad and useful line of distinction between two classes of characters so essentially distinct, and yet so frequently, so unjustly, and so malevolently confounded.

The world believes, or at least affects to believe, that the correct and elegant minded religious man is blind to those errors and infirmities, that eccentricity and bad taste, that propensity to diverge from the straight line of prudence, which is discernible in some pious but ill-judging men, and which delight and gratify the enemies of true piety, as furnishing them with so plausible a ground for censure. But if the more judicious and better informed Christian bears with these infirmities, it is not that he does not clearly perceive and entirely condemn them. But he bears with what he disapproves for the sake of the zeal, the sincerity, the general usefulness of these defective characters: these good qualities are totally overlooked by the censurer, who is ever on the watch to aggravate the failings which Christian charity laments without extenuating. It bears with them from the belief that impropriety is less mischievous than carelessness, a bad judgment than a bad heart, and some little excesses of zeal than gross immorality or total indifference.

We are not ignorant how much truth itself offends, though unassociated with any thing that is displeasing. This furnishes an important rule not to add to the unavoidable offence, by mixing the faults of our own character with the cause we support; because we may be certain that the enemy will take care never to separate them. He will always voluntarily maintain the pernicious association in his own mind. He will never think or speak of religion without connecting with it the real or imputed bad qualities of all the religious men he knows or has heard of.

Let not then the friends of truth unnecessarily increase the number of her enemies. Let her not have at once to sustain the assaults to which her divine character inevitably subjects her, and the obloquy to which the infirmities and foibles of her injudicious, and if there are any such, her unworthy champions expose her.

But we sometimes justify our rash violence under colour that our correct piety cannot endure the faults of others. The Pharisees, overflowing with wickedness themselves, made the exactness of their own virtue a pretence for looking with horror on the publicans whom our Saviour regarded with compassionate tenderness, while he reprobated with keen severity the sins, and especially the censoriousness of their accusers. 'Charity,' says an admirable French writer, 'is that law which Jesus Christ came down to bring into the world, to repair the divisions which sin has introduced into it: to be the proof of the reconciliation of man with God, by bringing him into obedience to the divine law; to reconcile him to himself by subju

gating his passions to his reason; and in fine to reconcile him to all mankind, by curing him of the desire to domineer over them.'

But we put it out of our power to become the instruments of God in promoting the spiritual good of any one, if we stop up the avenue to his heart by violence or imprudence. We not only put it out of our power to do good to all whom we disgust, but are we not liable to some responsibility for the failure of all the good we might have done them, had we not forfeited our influence by our indiscretion? What we do not to others, in relieving their spiritual as well as bodily wants, Christ will punish as not having been done to himself. This is one of the cases in which our own reputation is so inseparably connected with that of religion, that we should be tender of one for the sake of the other.

The modes of doing good in society are various. We should sharpen our discernment to discover them; and our zeal to put them in practice. If we cannot open man's eyes to the truth of religion by our arguments, we may perhaps open them to its beauty by our moderation. Though he may dislike Christianity in itself, he may, from admiring the forbearance of the Christian, be at last led to admire the principle from which it flowed. If he have hitherto refused to listen to the written evidences of religion, the temper of her advocate may be a new evidence of so engaging a kind, that his heart may be opened by the sweetness of the one to the varieties of the other. He will at least be brought to allow that that religion cannot be very bad, the fruits of which are so amiable. The conduct of the disciple may in time bring im to the feet of the Master. A new combination may be formed in his mind. He may begin to see what he had supposed antipathies reconciled, to unite two things which he thought as impossible to be brought together as the two poles—he may begin to couple candour with Christianity.

But if the mild advocate fail to convince, he may persuade; even if he fail to persuade, he will at least leave on the mind of the adversary such favourable impressions, as may induce him to inquire farther. He may be able to employ on some future occasion, to more effectual purpose, the credit which his forbearance will have obtained for him: whereas uncharitable vehemence would probably have forever shut the ears and closed the heart of his opponent against any further intercourse.

But if the temperate pleader should not be so happy as to produce any considerable effect on the mind of his antagonist, he is in any case promoting the interests of his own soul; he is at least imitating the faith and patience of the saints; he is cultivating that 'meek and quiet spirit' of which his blessed Master gave at once the rule, the injunction, and the praise.

If 'all bitterness, and clamour, and malice, and evil speaking,' are expressly forbidden in ordinary cases, surely the prohibition must more peculiarly apply to the case of religious controversialists. Suppose Voltaire and Hume had been left to take their measure of our religion (as one would really suppose they had) from the defences of Christianity by their very able contemporary, bishop Warburton.—When they saw this Goliah in talents and learning, dealing about his ponderous blows, attacking with the same powerful weapons, not the enemies only, but the friends of Christianity, who happened to see some points in a different light from himself; not meeting them as his opponents, but pouncing on them as his prey; not seeking to defend himself, but tearing them to pieces; waging offensive war; delighting in unprovoked hostility —when they saw him thus advocate the Christian cause, with a spirit diametrically opposite to Christianity, would they not exultingly exclaim, in different opposition to the exclamation of the apostolic age, 'See how these Christians *hate* one another!' Whereas had his vast powers of mind and astonishing compass of knowledge been sanctified by the angelic meekness of archbishop Leighton, they would have been compelled to acknowledge, if Christianity be false, it is after all so amiable that it deserves to be true. Might they not have applied to these two prelates what was said of Bossuet and Fenelon, '*l'un prouve la Religion, l'autre la fait aimer.*'

If we studiously contrive how to furnish the most complete triumph to infidels, contentious theology would be our best contrivance. They enjoy the wounds the combatants inflict on each other, not so much from the personal injury which either might sustain, as from the conviction that every attack, however it may terminate, weakens the common cause. In all engagements with a foreign foe, they know that Christianity *must* come off triumphantly. All their hopes are founded on a civil war.

If a forbearing temper should be maintained towards the irreligious, how much more by the professors of religion towards each other. As it is a lamentable instance of human infirmity that there is often much hostility carried on by good men, who profess the same faith; so it is a striking proof of the litigious nature of man that this spirit is less excited by broad distinctions, (such as conscience ought not to reconcile) than by shades of opinion, shades so few and light, that the world would not know they existed at all, if by their animosities the disputants were not so impatient to inform it.

While we should never withhold a clear and honest avowal of the great principles of our religion, let us discreetly avoid dwelling on inconsiderable distinctions, on which, as they do not affect the essentials either of faith or practice, we may allow another to maintain his opinion while we steadily hold fast our own. But in religious as in military warfare, it almost seems as if the hostility were great in proportion to the littleness of the point contested. We all remember when two great nations were on the point of being involved in war for a spot of ground* in another hemisphere, so little known that the very name had scarcely reached us; so inconsiderable that its possession would have added nothing to the strength of either. In civil too, as well as in national and theological disputes, there is often most stress laid on the most indifferent things. Why would the Spanish

* Nootka Sound.

government some years ago so little consult the prejudices of the people, as nearly to produce an insurrection, by issuing an edict for them to relinquish the ancient national dress? Why was the security of the state, and the lives of the subjects put to hazard for a cloak and a jerkin? For the obstinate people made as firm a stand against this trifling requisition, as they could have made for the preservation of their civil or religious liberty, if they had been so happy as to possess either—a stand as firm as they are now nobly making in defence of their country and their independence.

Without invidiously enumerating any of the narrowing names which split Christianity in pieces, and which so unhappily drive the subjects of the Prince of Peace into interminable war, and range them into so many hostile bands, not against the common enemy, but against each other; we cannot forbear regretting that less temper is preserved among these near neighbours in local situation and in Christian truth, than if the attack of either were levelled at Jews, Turks, or Infidels.

Is this that catholic spirit which embraces with the love of charity, though not of approbation, the whole offspring of our common Father —which in the arms of its large affection, without vindicating their faults or adopting their opinions, 'takes every creature in of every kind,' and which like its gracious Author, 'would not that any thing should perish?'

The preference of remote to approximating opinion is, however, by no means confined to the religious world. The Author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, though so passionate an admirer of the prophet of Arabia as to raise a suspicion of his own Islamism; though so rapturous an eulogist of the apostate Julian as to raise a suspicion of his own polytheism, yet with an inconsistency not uncommon to unbelief, he treats the stout orthodoxy of the vehement Athanasius, with more respect than he shows to the 'scanty creed' of a contemporary philosopher and theologian, whose cold and comfortless doctrines were much less removed from his own.

Might not the twelve monsters which even the incredible strength and labour of Hercules found so hard to subdue, be interpreted as an ingenious allegory, by which were meant twelve popular prejudices? But though the hero went forth armed preternaturally, the goddess of Wisdom herself furnishing him with his helmet, and the god of eloquence with his arrows, yet it is not certain that he conquered the *religious* prejudices, not of the world, but even of Argos and Mycenæ; at least they were not among his earlier conquests; they were not serpents which an *infant* hand could strangle. They were more probably the fruitful hydra, which lost nothing by losing a head, a new head always starting up to supply the incessant decapitation. But though he slew the animal at last, might not its envenomed gore in which his arrows were dipped be the perennial fountain in which persecuting bigotry, harsh intolerance, and polemical acrimony, have continued to dip their pens!

It is a delicate point to hit upon, neither to vindicate the truth in so coarse a manner as to excite a prejudice against it, nor to make any concessions in the hope of obtaining popularity 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,' can no more mean that we should exercise that false candour which conciliates at the expense of sincerity, than that we should defend the truth with so intolerant a spirit, as to injure the cause by discrediting the advocate.

As the apostle beautifully obtests his brethren, not by the power and dignity, but 'by the meekness and gentleness of Christ,' so every Christian should adorn his doctrine by the same endearing qualities, evincing by the brightness of the polish, the solidity of the substance. But he will carefully avoid adopting the external appearance of these amiable tempers as substitutes for piety, when they are only its ornaments. Condescending manners may be one of the numberless modifications of selfishness, and reputation is thus often obtained, where it is not fairly earned. Carefully to examine whether he pleased others, for their good to edification, or in order to gain praise and popularity, is the bounden duty of a Christian.

We should not be angry with the blind for not seeing, nor with the proud for not acknowledging their blindness. We ourselves perhaps were once as blind; happy if we are not still as proud. If not in this instance, in others perhaps they might have made more of our advantages than we have done; we, under their circumstances might have been more perversely wrong than they are, had we not been treated by the enlightened with more patient tenderness than we are disposed to exercise towards them. Tyre and Sidon, we are assured by truth itself, would have repented, had they enjoyed the privileges which Chorazin and Bethsaida threw away. Surely we may do that for the love of God, and for the love of our opponent's soul, which well-bred men do through a regard to politeness. Why should a Christian be more ready to offend against the rule of charity than a gentleman against the rule of decorum? Candour in judging is like disinterestedness in acting; both are statutes of the royal law.

There is also a kind of right which men feel they possess to their own opinion. With this right it is often more difficult to part than even with the opinion itself. If our object be the real good of our opponent; if it be to promote the cause of truth, and not to contest for victory, we shall remember this. We shall consider what a value we put upon our own opinion: why should his, though a false one, be less dear to him, if he believe it true? This consideration will teach us not to expect too much at first. It will teach us the prudence of seeking some general point, in which we cannot fail to agree. This will let him see that we do not differ from him for the sake of differing; which conciliating spirit of ours may bring him to a temper to listen to arguments on topics where our disagreement is wider.

In disputing, for instance, with those who wholly reject the divine authority of the scriptures, we can gain nothing by quoting them, and insisting vehemently on the proof which is to be drawn from them, in support of the point

in debate: their unquestionable truth availing nothing with those who do not allow it. But if we take some common ground, on which both the parties can stand, and reason, from the analogies of natural religion, and the way in which God proceeds in the known and acknowledged course of his providence, to the way in which he deals with us, and has declared he will deal with us, as the God revealed in the Bible; our opponent may be struck with the similarity and be put upon a track of consideration, and be brought to a temper *in* considering which may terminate in the happiest manner. He may be brought at length to be less averse from listening to us, on those grounds and principles of which probably he might otherwise never have seen the value.

Where a disputant of another description cannot endure what he sneeringly calls the strictness of evangelical religion, he will have no objection to acknowledge the momentous truths of man's responsibility to his Maker, of the omniscience, omnipresence, majesty and purity of God. Strive then to meet him on these grounds, and respectfully inquire if he can sincerely affirm that he is acting up to the truths he acknowledges?—If he is living in all respects as an accountable being ought to live?—If he is really conscious of acting as a being ought to act, who knows that he is continually acting under the eye of a just and holy God? You will find he cannot stand on these grounds. Either he must be contented to receive the truth as revealed in the gospel, or be convicted of inconsistency, or self-deceit, or hypocrisy; you will at least drive him off his own ground which he will find untenable, if you cannot bring him over to yours. But while the enemy is effecting his retreat, do not you cut off the means of his return?

Some Christians approve Christianity as it is knowledge, rather than as it is principle. They like it as it yields a grand object of pursuit; as it enlarges their view of things, as it opens to them a wider field of inquiry; a fresh source of discovery, an additional topic of critical investigation. They consider it rather as extending the limits of their research, than as a means of ennobling their affections. It furnishes their understanding with a fund of riches on which they are eager to draw, not so much for the improvement of the heart as of the intellect. They consider it as a thesis on which to raise interesting discussion, rather than as premises from which to draw practical conclusions; as an incontrovertible truth, rather than as a rule of life.

There is something in the exhibition of sacred subjects given us by these persons, which according to our conception, is not only mistaken but pernicious. We refer to their treatment of religion as a mere science divested of its practical application, and taken rather as a code of philosophical speculations than of active principles. To explain our meaning, we might perhaps venture to except against the choice of topics almost exclusively made by these writers.

After they have spent half a life upon the evidences, the mere vestibule, so necessary, we allow, to be passed into the temple of Christianity, we accompany them into *their* edifice, and find it composed of materials but too coincident with their former taste. Questions of criticism, of grammar, of history, of metaphysics, of mathematics, and of all the sciences meet us, in the very place of that which saint Paul tells us 'is the end of all,'—that is, 'Charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned, from which' he adds, 'some having swerved, have turned aside to vain jangling.'*

We are very far from applying the latter term to all scientific discussions in religion, of which we should be the very last to deny the use, or question the necessity. Our main objection lies to the preponderance given to such topics by our controversialists in their divinity, and to the spirit too often manifested in their discussions. A preponderance it is, which makes us sometimes fear they consider these things rather as religion itself, than as helps to understand it, as the substitutes, not the allies of devotion. At the same time, a cold and philosophical spirit, often studiously maintained, seems to confirm the suspicion, that religion with them is not accidentally, but essentially, and solely an exercise of the wits, and a field for the display of intellectual prowess—as if the salvation of souls were a thing by the by.

These prize fighters in theology remind us of the philosophers of other schools: we feel as if we were reading Newton against Des Cartes, or the theory of caloric in opposition to phlogiston. 'Nous le regardons,' says the eloquent Saurin upon some religious subject, 'pour la plupart, de la meme maniere, dont on envisage les ide es d'un ancien philosophe sur le gouvernement.'—The practical part of religion in short is forgotten, is lost in its theories; and what is worst of all, a temper hostile to the spirit of Christianity is employed to defend or illustrate its positions.

The latter effect might be traced beyond the foregoing causes, to another nearly allied to them—the habit of treating religion as a science capable of demonstration. On a subject evidently admitting but of moral evidence, we lament to see questions dogmatically proved, instead of being temperately argued. Nay we could almost smile at the sight of some intricate and barren novelty in religion, *demonstrated* to the satisfaction of some one ingenious theorist, who draws upon himself instantly a hundred confutations of every position he maintains. The ulterior stages of the debate are often such as might 'make angels weep.' And when we remember that even in the most important questions, involving eternal interests, 'probability is the very guide of life,'† we could most devoutly wish, that on subjects, to say the least, not 'generally necessary to salvation,' infallibility were not the claim of the disputant, or personal animosity the condition of his failure.

Such speculatists who are more anxious to make proselytes to an opinion, than converts to a principle, will not be so likely to convince an

* See 1 Tim. i, 5, 6, also verse 4, in which the apostle hints at certain 'fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is by faith.' We dare not say how closely this description applies to some modern controvertists in theology.

† Butler's Introduction to 'The Analogy.'

opponent, as the Christian who is known to act up to his convictions, and whose genuine piety will put life and heart into his reasonings. The opponent probably knows already all the ingenious arguments which books supply. Ingenuity therefore, if he be a candid man, will not be so likely to touch him, as that 'godly sincerity' which he cannot but perceive the heart of his antagonist is dictating to his lips. There is a simple energy in pure Christian truth which a factitious principle imitates in vain. The 'knowledge which puffeth up' will make few practical converts unaccompanied with the 'charity which edifieth.'

To remove prejudices, then, is the bounden duty of a Christian, but he must take care not to remove them by conceding what integrity forbids him to concede. He must not wound his conscience to save his credit. If an ill bred roughness disgusts another, a dishonest complaisance undoes himself. He must remove all obstructions to the reception of truth, but the truth itself he must not adulterate. In clearing away the impediment he must secure the principle.

If his own reputation be attacked, he must defend it by every lawful means; nor will he sacrifice the valuable possession to any demand but that of conscience, to any call but the imperative call of duty. If his good name be put in competition with any other earthly good, he will preserve it, however dear may be the good he relinquishes; but, if the competition lie between his reputation and his conscience, he has no hesitation in making the sacrifice, costly as it is. A feeling man struggles for his fame as for his life, but if he be a Christian, he parts with it, for he knows that it is not the life of his soul.

For the same reason that we must not be over anxious to vindicate our fame, we must be careful to preserve it from any unjust imputation. The great apostle of the Gentiles has set us an admirable example in both respects, and we should never consider him in one point of view, without recollecting his conduct in the other. So profound is his humility that he declares himself 'less than the least of all saints.' Not content with this comparative depreciation, he proclaims his actual corruptions. 'In me, that is, in my flesh, there is no good thing.' Yet this deep self-abasement did not prevent him from asserting his own calumniated worth, from declaring that he was not behind the very 'chiefest of the apostles;'—again—'As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting,' &c. He then enumerates, with a manly dignity, tempered with a noble modesty, a multitude of instances of his unparalleled sufferings and his unrivalled zeal.

Where only his own personal feelings were in question, how self-abasing, how self-annihilating! But where the unjust imputation involved the honour of Christ and the credit of religion 'what carefulness is wrought in him, yea what clearing of himself; yea what vehement desire; yea what zeal!'

While we rejoice in the promises annexed to the beatitudes, we should be cautious of applying to ourselves promises which do not belong to us, particularly that which is attached to the last beatitude. When our fame is attacked, let us carefully inquire, if we are 'suffering for rightcousness' sake,' or for our own faults; let us examine, whether we may not deserve the censures we have incurred. Even if we are suffering in the cause of God, may we not have brought discredit on that holy cause by our imprudence, our obstinacy, our vanity; by our zeal without knowledge, and our earnestness without temper? Let us inquire, whether our revilers have not some foundation for the charge? Whether we have not sought our own glory more than that of God? Whether we are not more disappointed at missing that revenue of praise, which we thought our good works were entitled to bring us in, than at the wound religion may have sustained? Whether, though our views were right on the whole, their purity was not much alloyed by human mixtures? Whether neglecting to count the cost, we did not expect unmixed approbation, uninterrupted success, and a full tide of prosperity and applause, totally forgetting the reproaches received, and the obloquy sustained by 'the Man of Sorrows.'

If we can on an impartial review, acquit ourselves as to the general purity of our motives, the general integrity of our conduct, the unfeigned sincerity of our endeavours, then we may indeed, though with deep humility, take to ourselves the comfort of this divine beatitude. When we really find, that men only speak evil of us for *his* sake in whose cause we have laboured, however that labour may have been mingled with imperfection, we may indeed 'rejoice and be exceeding glad.' Submission may be elevated into gratitude, and forgiveness into love.

CHAP. XV.

On the propriety of introducing Religion in general conversation.

May we be allowed to introduce here an opinion warmly maintained in the world, and which indeed strikes at the root of all rules for the management of religious debate recommended in the preceding chapter? It is, that the subject of religion ought on no occasion to be introduced in mixed company: that the diversity of sentiment upon it is so great, and so nearly connected with the tenderest feelings of our minds, as to be liable to lead to heat and contention. Finally, that it is too grave and solemn a topic to be mixed in the miscellaneous circle of social discourse, much less in the festive effusions of convivial cheerfulness. Now, in answer to these allegations, we must at least insist, that should religion, on other grounds, be found entitled to social discussion, the last observation, if true, would prove convivial cheerfulness incompatible with the spirit and practice of religion, rather than religion inadmissible into cheerful parties. And it is certainly a retort difficult of evasion, that where to introduce Religion herself is to endanger her honour,

there she rather suffers in reputation by the presence of her friend. The man endeared by conviction to his religion will never bear to be long, much less to be statedly separated from the object of his affections: and he whose zeal once determined him 'to know *nothing*' amongst his associates, 'but Jesus Christ and him crucified,' never could have dreamt of a latitude of interpretation, which would admit a Christian into scenes where *every thing* but Jesus Christ and him crucified, might be recognized with credit.

These principles appear so plain and incontrovertible, that the question seems rather to call for a different statement, viz.—Why religion should not be deemed admissible into every social meeting and friendly circle in which a Christian himself would choose to be found? That it is too weighty and important a subject for discussion, is an argument, which, standing alone, assumes the gross absurdity that either men never talk of that which most nearly interests them, or that when they do, they talk improperly. They will not, it is true, introduce a private concern, however important, in which no one is interested but themselves. But in the subject of religion, who is not interested? Or where will topics be found more universal in their application to all times, persons, places and circumstances, as well as more important, than those which relate to the eternal welfare of mankind?

Nor will it be avowed with great colour of reason, that topics so important suffer in point of gravity, or in the respect of mankind, by frequent discussion. We never observed men grow indifferent to their health, their affairs, their friends, their country, in proportion as these were made the subjects of their familiar discourse. On the contrary, oblivion has been noticed as the offspring of silence. The man who never mentions his friend, is, we think, in general most likely to forget him. And far from deeming the name of ONE, greater than any earthly friend 'taken in vain,' when mentioned discreetly in conversation, we generally find him most remembered and respected in secret, by those whose memories are occasionally refreshed by a reference to his word and authority in public. 'Familiarity,' indeed, we have been told, 'produces contempt;' a truism, on which we are convinced many persons, honestly, though blindly, rest their habitual, and even systematic reserve on religious subjects. But 'familiarity' in our mind has reference rather to the manner, than to the act, of introducing religion. To us it is synonymous with a certain trite and trivial repetition of serious remarks, evidently 'to no profit,' which we sometimes hear from persons familiarized, rather by education than feeling, to the language of piety.

More particularly we refer it to a still more criminal habit which, to their disgrace, some professors of religion share with the profane, of raising a laugh by the introduction of a religious observation or even a Scriptural quotation. 'To court a grin when we should woo a soul,' is surely an abuse of religion, as well in the parlour as the pulpit. Nor has the senate itself been always exempt from this impropriety. Dr. Johnson has long since pronounced a jest drawn from the Bible, the vulgarest because the easiest of all jests.—And far from perverting religious topics to such a purpose himself, a feeling Christian would not often be found, where such would be the probable consequence of offering a pious sentiment in company.

That allusions involving religious questions are often productive of dispute and altercation, is a fact, which though greatly exaggerated, must yet in a degree be admitted. This circumstance may in some measure account for the singular reception which a religious remark is often observed to meet with in the world. It is curious to notice the surprise and alarm which, on such occasions, will frequently pervade the party present. The remark is received as a stranger guest, of which no one knows the quality or intentions. And, like a species of intellectual foundling, it is cast upon the company without a friend to foster its infancy, or to own any acquaintance with the parent. A fear of consequences prevails. It is obvious that the feeling is—'We know not into what it may grow: it is therefore safer to stifle it in the birth.' This, if not the avowed, is the implied sentiment.

But is not this delicacy, this *mauvaise honte*, so peculiar perhaps to our countrymen on religious subjects, the very cause which operates so unfavourably upon that effect which it labours to obviate? Is not the very infrequency of moral or religious observations, a sufficient account to be given both of the perplexity and the irritation said to be consequent upon their introduction? And were not religion (we mean such religious topics as may legitimately arise in mixed society,) banished so much as it is from conversation, might not its occasional recurrence become by degrees as natural, perhaps as interesting, certainly as instructive, and after all as safe, as 'a close committee on the weather,' or any other of the authorized topics which are about as productive of amusement as of instruction? People act as if religion were to be regarded at a distance; as if even a respectful ignorance were to be preferred to a more familiar approach. This reserve, however, does not give an air of respect, so much as of mystery, to religion. An able writer* has observed, '*that* was esteemed the most sacred part of Pagan devotion which was the most impure, and the only thing that was commendable in it is, that it was kept a great mystery.' He approves of nothing in this religion but the modesty of withdrawing itself from the eyes of the world.—But Christianity requires not to be shrouded in any such mysterious recesses. She does not, like the Eastern monarchs, owe her dignity to her concealment. She is, on the contrary, most honoured where most known, and most revered where most clearly visible.

It will be obvious that hints rather than argument belong to our present undertaking. In this view, we may perhaps be excused if we offer a few general observations, upon the different occasions on which a well regulated mind would be solicitous to introduce religion into social discourse. The person possessed of such

* Bishop Sherlock.

a mind, would be mainly anxious, in a society of Christians, that something should appear indicative of their profession. He would accordingly feel a strong desire to effect it, when he plainly perceived his company engaged on no other topic either innocently entertaining, or rationally instructive. The desire, however, would by no means cloud his brow, give an air of impatience to his countenance, or render him inattentive to the general tone and temper of the circle. On the contrary, he would endeavour to feel additional interest in his neighbour's suggestions, in proportion as he hoped in turn to attract notice to his own. He would show long forbearance to the utmost extent of conscientious toleration. In the prosecution of his favourite design, he would never attempt a forced or unreasonable allusion to serious subjects; a caution requiring the nicest judgment and discrimination, most particularly where he felt the sentiments or the zeal of his company to be not congenial with his own. His would be the spirit of the prudent mariner, who does not even approach his native shore without carefully watching the winds, and sounding the channels; knowing well that a temporary delay, even on an unfriendly element, is preferable to a hasty landing his company, on shore indeed, but upon the point of a rock.

Happily for our present purpose, the days we live in, afford circumstances both of foreign and domestic occurrence, of every possible variety of colour and connection, so as to leave scarcely any mind unfurnished with a store of progressive remarks by which the most instructive truths may be approached through the most obvious topics. And a prudent mind will study to make its approaches to such an ultimate object, progressive, it will know also where to stop, rather indeed out of regard to others than to itself. And in the manly avowal of its sentiments, avoiding as well what is canting in utterance as technical in language, it will make them at once appear not the ebullition of an ill educated imagination, but the result of a long exercised understanding.

Nothing will be more likely to attract attention or secure respect to your remarks, than the good taste in which they are delivered. On common topics, we reckon him the most elegant speaker whose pronunciation and accent are so free from all peculiarities, that it cannot be determined to what place he owes his birth. A polished critic of Rome accuses one of the finest of her historians of provinciality. This is a fault obvious to less enlightened critics, since the Attic herb-woman could detect the provincial dialect of a great philosopher. Why must religion have her *Patavinity*? Why must the Christian adopt the quaintness of a party, or a scholar the idiom of the illiterate? Why should a valuable truth be combined with a vulgar or fanatical expression? If either would offend when separate, how inevitably must they disgust when the one is mistakingly intended to set off the other. Surely this is not enchasing our apples of gold in pictures of silver.'

We must not close this part of our subject without alluding to another, and still more delicate introduction of religion, in the way of *reproof*. Here is indeed a point in religious conduct to which we feel it a boldness to make any reference at all. Bold indeed, is that casuist, who would lay down general rules on a subject where the consciences of men seem to differ so widely from each other: and feeble too often will be its justest rules, where the feelings of timidity or delicacy rush in with a force which sweeps down many a land-mark erected for its own guidance, even by conscience itself.

Certainly much allowance, perhaps respect, is due in cases of very doubtful decision, to those feelings which, after the utmost self regulation of mind, are found to be irresistible. And certainly the habits and modes of address attached to refined society, are such as to place personal observations on a very different footing to that on which they stand by nature. A frown, even a cold and disapproving look, may be a reception which the profane expression or loose action of a neighbour of rank and opulence, may have never before encountered from his flatterers or convivial companions. A vehement censure in his case might inflame his resentment without amending his fault.—Whether the attempt be to correct a vice or rectify an error, one object should ever be steadily kept in view—to conciliate rather than to contend, to inform but not to insult, to evince that we assume, not the character of a dictator, but the office of a Christian friend; that we have the best interests of the offender, and the honour of religion at heart, and that to reprove is so far from a gratification, that it is a trial to ourselves, the effort of conscience, not the effect of choice.

The feelings, therefore, of the person to be admonished should be most scrupulously consulted. The admonition, if necessarily strong, explicit and personal, should yet be friendly, temperate, and well bred. An offence, even though publicly committed, is generally best reproved in private, perhaps in writing. Age, superiority of station, previous acquaintance, above all, that sacred profession to which the honour of religion is happily made a personal concern, are circumstances which especially call for, and sanction the attempt recommended. And he must surely be unworthy his Christian vocation, who would not conscientiously use any influence or authority which he might chance to possess, in discountenancing or rectifying the delinquency he condemns.

We are, indeed, as elsewhere, after the closest reflection and longest discussion often forced into the general conclusion, that 'a good heart is the best casuist.'—And doubtless where true Christian benevolence towards man meets in the same mind with an honest zeal for the glory of God, a way will be found, let us rather say will be opened, for the right exercise of this, as of every virtuous disposition.

Let us ever remember what we have so often insisted on, that self-denial is the ground work, the indispensable requisite for every Christian virtue; that without the habitual exercise of this principle, we shall never be followers of him 'who pleased not himself.' And when we are called by conscience to the largest use of it in practice, we must arm ourselves with the highest considerations for the trial; we must consi

der him, who (through his faithful reproofs) 'endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.' And when even from Moses we hear the truly evangelical precept, 'thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy brother, and not suffer sin upon him;' we must duly weigh how strongly its performance is enforced upon ourselves, by the conduct of one greater than Moses, who expressly 'suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his footsteps.'

CHAP. XVI.

Christian Watchfulness.

Of all the motives to vigilance and self-discipline which Christianity presents, there is not one more powerful than the danger, from which even religious persons are not exempt, of slackening in zeal and declining in piety. Would we could affirm, that coldness in religion is confined to the irreligious! If it be melancholy to observe an absence of Christianity where no profession of it was ever made, it is far more grievous to mark its declension, where it once appeared not only to exist, but to flourish. We feel on the comparison, the same distinct sort of compassion with which we contemplate the pecuniary distresses of those who have been always indigent, and of those who have fallen into want from a state of opulence. Our concern differs not only in degree but in kind.

This declension is one of the most awakening calls to watchfulness, to humility, and self-inspection, which religion can make to him 'who thinketh he standeth;' which it can make to him who, sensible of his own weakness, ought to feel the necessity 'of strengthening the things which remain that are ready to die.'

If there is not any one circumstance which ought more to alarm and quicken the Christian, than that of finding himself grow languid and indifferent, after having made not only a profession but a progress, so there is not a more reasonable motive of triumph to the profane, not one cause which excites in him a more plausible ground of suspicion, either that there never was any truth in the profession of the person in question, or which is a more fatal, and, to such a mind, a more natural conclusion—that there is no truth in religion itself. At best, he will be persuaded that this can only be a faint and feeble principle, the impulse of which is so soon exhausted, and which is by no means found sufficiently powerful to carry on its votary throughout his course. He is assured that piety is only an outer garment, put on for show or convenience, and that when it ceases to be wanted for either it is laid aside. In these unhappy instances the evil seldom ceases with him who causes it. The inference becomes general, that all religious men are equally unsound or equally deluded, only that some are more prudent, or more fortunate, or greater hypocrites than others. After the falling away of one promising character, the old suspicion recurs and is confirmed, and the defection of others pronounced to be infallible.

There seems to be this marked distinction in the different opinions which religious and worldly men entertain respecting human corruption. The candid Christian is contented to believe it, as an indisputable general truth, while he is backward to suspect the wickedness of the individual, nor does he allow himself to give full credit to particular instances without proof. The man of the world, on the contrary, who denies the general principle is extremely prone to suspect the individual: Thus his knowledge of mankind not only furnishes a proof, but outstrips the truth of the doctrine: though he denies it as a proposition of Scripture, he is eager to establish it as a fact of experiment.

But the probability is, that the man by his departure from the principles with which he appeared to set out, so much gratifies the thoughtless, and grieves the serious mind, never was a sound and genuine Christian. His religion was perhaps taken up on some accidental circumstance, built on some false ground, produced by some evanescent cause; and though it cannot be fairly pronounced that he intended by his forward profession and prominent zeal, to deceive others, it is probable that he himself was deceived. Perhaps he had made too sure of himself. His early profession was probably rather bold and ostentatious; he had imprudently fixed his stand on ground so high as to be not easily tenable, and from which a descent would be but too observable. While he thought he never could be too secure of his own strength, he allowed himself to be too censorious on the infirmities of others, especially of those whom he had apparently outstripped, and who, though they had started together, he had left behind him in the race.

Might it not be a safer course, if in the outset of the Christian life, a modest and self-distrusting humility were to impose a temporary restraint on the forwardness of outward profession? A little knowledge of the human heart, a little suspicion of the deceitfulness of his own, would not only moderate the intemperance of an ill-understood zeal, should the warm convert become an established Christian, but would save the credit of religion, which will receive a fresh wound in the possible event of his desertion from her standard.

Some of the most distinguished Christians in this country began their religious career with this graceful humility. They would not suffer their change of character, and their adoption of new principles, and a new course to be blazoned abroad, as the affectionate zeal of their confidential friends would have advised, till the principles they had adopted were established, and worked into habits of piety; till time and experience had evinced that the grace of God had not been bestowed on them in vain. Their progress proved to be such as might have been inferred from the modesty of their outset. They have gone on with a perseverance which difficulties have only contributed to strengthen, and experience to confirm; and will, through divine aid, doubtless go on, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

But to return to the less steady convert. Perhaps religion was only, as we have hinted else

where, one pursuit among many which he had taken up when other pursuits failed, and which he now lays down because, his faith not being rooted and grounded, fails also;—or the temptation arising from without might concur with the failure within. If vanity be his infirmity, he will shrink from the pointed disapprobation of his superiors. If the love of novelty be his besetting weakness, the very peculiarity and strictness of religion, the very marked departure from the 'gay and primrose path' in which he had before been accustomed to walk, which first attracted, now repels him. The attention which his early deviation from the manners of the world drew upon him, and which once flattered, now disgusts him. The very opposition which once animated, now cools him. He is discouraged at the near view, subdued by the required practice, of that Christian self-denial which, as a speculation, had appeared so delightful. Perhaps his fancy had been fired by some act of Christian heroism, which he felt an ambition to imitate: a feeling which tales of martial prowess, or deeds of chivalry, something that, promising celebrity and exciting emulation, had often kindled before. The truth is, religion had only taken hold of his imagination, his heart had been left out of the question.

Or he had in the twilight of his first awakening, seen religion only as something to be believed; he now finds that much is to be done in the new life, and much which was habitual to the old one left undone. Above all, he did not reckon on the CONSISTENCY which the Christian life demands. Warm affections rendered the practice of some right actions easy to him; but he did not include in his faulty and imperfect scheme, the self-denial, the perseverance, the renouncing of his own will and his own way, the evil report as well as the good report, to which every man pledges himself, when he enlists under the banner of Christ. The cross which it was easy to venerate, he finds it hard to bear.

Or religion might be adopted when he was in affliction, and he is now happy:—when he was in bad circumstances, and he is now grown affluent. Or it might be assumed as something wanting to his recommendation to that party or project by which he wished to make his way; as something that would better enable him to carry certain points which he had in view; something that, with the new acquaintance he wished to cultivate, might obliterate certain defects, in his former conduct, and white-wash a somewhat sullied reputation.

Or in his now more independent situation, it may be he is surrounded by temptations, softened by blandishments, allured by pleasures, which he never expected would arise to weaken his resolutions. These new enchantments make it not so easy to be pious, as when he had little to lose and every thing to desire, as when the world wore a frowning, and religion an inviting aspect. Or he is perhaps by the vicissitudes of life, transferred from a sober and humble society, where to be religious was honourable, to a more fashionable set of associates, where, as the disclosure of his piety would add nothing to his credit, he set out with taking pains to conceal it, till it has fallen into that gradual oblivion, which is the natural consequence of its being kept out of sight.

But we proceed to a far more interesting and important character. The one indeed whom we have been slightly sketching, may by his inconstancy do much harm; the one on which we are about to animadvert, might by his consistency and perseverance effect essential good. Even the sincere, and to all appearance, the established Christian, especially if his situation in life be easy, and his course smooth and prosperous, had need keep a vigilant eye upon his own heart. For such a one it will not be sufficient that he keep his ground if he do not advance in it. Indeed it will be a sure proof that he has gone back, if he has not advanced.

In a world so beset with snares, various are the causes which may possibly occasion in even good men a slow but certain decline in piety. A decline scarcely perceptible at first, but which becomes more visible in its subsequent stages. When therefore we suspect our hearts of any declension in piety, we should not compare ourselves with what we were in the preceding week or month, but what we were at the supposed height of our character. Though the alteration was not perceptible in its gradual progress, one shade melting into the next, and each losing its distinctness, yet when the two remote states are brought into contrast, the change will be strikingly obvious.

Among other causes, may be assigned the indiscreet forming of some worldly connexion, especially that of marriage. In this connexion, for *union* it cannot be called, it is to be lamented that the irreligious more frequently draw away the religious to their side, than that the contrary takes place; a circumstance easily accounted for by those who are at all acquainted with the human heart.

Or the sincere but incautious Christian may be led by a strong affection which assumes the shape of virtue, into a fond desire of establishing his children advantageously in the world, into methods which if not absolutely incorrect, are yet ambiguous at the best. In order to raise those whom he loves to a station above their level, he may be tempted, while self-deceit will teach him to sanctify the deed by the motive, to make some little sacrifices of principle, some little abatements of that strict rectitude, for which in the abstract no man would more strenuously contend. And as it may be in general observed, that the most amiable minds are most susceptible of the strongest natural affections; of course the very tenderness of the heart lays such characters peculiarly open to a danger, to which the unfeeling and the obdurate are less exposed.

If the person in question be of the sacred order, no small danger may arise from his living under the eye of an irreligious, but rich and bountiful patron. It is his duty to make religion appear amiable in his eyes.—He ought to conciliate his good will by every means which rectitude can sanction. But though his very piety will stimulate his discretion in the adoption of those means, he will take care never to let his discretion intrench on his integrity

If he be under obligations to him, he may be in danger of testifying his gratitude, and furthering his hopes by some electioneering manœuvres, and by too much electioneering society. He may, unawares be tempted to too much conformity to his friend's habits, too much conviviality in his society. And when he witnesseth so much kindness and urbanity in his manners, possibly so much usefulness and benevolence in his life, he may be even tempted to suspect that he himself may be wrong; to accuse himself of being somewhat churlish in his own temper, a little too austere in his habits, and rather hard in his judgment of a man so amiable. He will be still more likely to fall into this error if he expects a favour than if he has obtained it; for though it is not greatly to the honour of human nature, we daily see how much keener are the feelings which are excited by hope than those which are raised by gratitude.—The favour which has been already conferred, excites a temperate, that which we are looking for, a fervid feeling.

These relaxing feelings and these softened dispositions, aided by the seducing luxury of the table, and the bewitching splendour of the apartment; by the soft accommodations which opulence exhibits; and the desires which they are too apt to awaken in the dependant, may, not impossibly, lead by degrees to a criminal timidity in maintaining the purity of his own principles, in supporting the strictness of his own practice. He may gradually lose somewhat of the dignity of his professional, and of the sobriety of the Christian character. He may be brought to forfeit the independence of his mind; and in order to magnify his fortune, may neglect to magnify his office.

Even here, from an increasing remissness in self-examination, he may deceive himself by persisting to believe—for the films are now growing thick over his spiritual sight—that his motives are defensible. Were not his discernment labouring under a temporary blindness, he would reprobate the character which interested views have insensibly drawn him in to act. He would be as much astonished to be told that his character was become his own, as was the royal offender, when the righteous boldness of the prophet pronounced the heart-appalling words, 'Thou art the man.'

Still he continues to flatter himself that the reason of his diminished opposition to the faults of his friend, is not because he has a more lucrative situation in view, but because he may, by a slight temporary concession, and a short suspension of a severity which he begins to fancy he has carried too far, secure for his future life a more extensive field of usefulness, in the benefice which is hanging over his head.

In the mean time hope and expectation so fill his mind, that he insensibly grows cold in the prosecution of his positive duties. He begins to lament that in his present situation he can make but few converts, that he sees but small effects of his labours, not perceiving that God may have withdrawn his blessing from a ministry which is exercised on such questionable grounds. With his new expectations he continues to blend his old ideas. He feasts his imagination with the prospect of a more fruitful harvest on an unknown, and perhaps an unbroken soil—as if human nature were not pretty much the same every where; as if the labourer were accountable for the abundance of his crop, and not solely for his own assiduity; as if actual duty, faithfully performed, even in this circumscribed sphere in which God has cast our lot, is not more acceptable to him, than theories of the most extensive good, than distant speculations and improbable projects, for the benefit even of a whole district; while, in the indulgence of these airy schemes, our own specific and appointed work lies neglected, or is performed without energy and without attention.

Self-love so naturally infatuates the judgment, that it is no paradox to assert that we look too far, and yet do not look far enough. We look too far when passing over the actual duties of the immediate scene, we form long connected trains of future projects, and indulge our thoughts in such as are most remote, and perhaps least probable. And we do not look far enough when the prospective mind does not shoot beyond all these little earthly distances, to that state, falsely called remote, whither all our steps are not the less tending, because our eyes are confined to the home scenes. But while the precariousness of our duration ought to set limits to our designs, it should furnish incitements to our application. Distant projects are too apt to slacken present industry; while the magnitude of schemes, probably impracticable, may render our actual exertions cold and sluggish.

Let it be observed that we would be the last to censure any of those fair and honourable means of improving his condition which every man, be he worldly or religious, owes to himself, and to his family. Saints as well as sinners have in common, what a great genius calls, 'certain inconvenient appetites of eating and drinking;' which while we are in the body must be complied with. It would be a great hardship on good men, to be denied any innocent means of fair gratification. It would be a peculiar injustice that the most diligent labourer should be esteemed the least worthy of his hire, the least fit to rise in his profession.

The more serious clergyman has also the same warm affection for his children with his less scrupulous brother, and consequently the same laudable desire for their comfortable establishment; only in his plans for their advancement he should neither entertain ambitious views nor prosecute any views, even the best, by methods not consonant to the strictness of his avowed principles. Professing to 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' he ought to be more exempt from an over anxious solicitude than those who profess it less zealously. Avowing a more determined confidence that all other things will, as far as they are absolutely necessary, 'be added unto him,' he should, as it is obvious he commonly does, manifest practically, a more implicit trust, confiding in the gracious and cheering promise, that promise expressed both negatively and positively, as if to comfort with a double confirmation, that God who is 'both his light and defence, who will give grace and worship, will also withhold no good thing from them that live a godly life.'

It is one of the trials of faith appended to the sacred office, that its ministers, like the father of the faithful, are liable to go out, 'not knowing whither they go;' and this not only at their first entrance into their profession, but through life; an inconvenience to which no other profession, is necessarily liable; a trial which is not perhaps fairly estimated.

This remark will naturally raise a laugh among those who at once hold the function in contempt, deride its ministers, and think their well-earned remuneration lavishly and even unnecessarily bestowed. They will probably exclaim with as much complacency in their ridicule, as if it were really the test of truth—'A great cause of commisseration truly, to be transferred from a starving curacy to a plentiful benefice, or from the vulgar society of a country parish to be a stalled theologian in an opulent town!'

We are far from estimating at a low rate the exchange from a state of uncertainty to a state of independence, from a life of penury to comfort, or from a barely decent to an affluent provision.—But does the ironical remarker rate the feelings and affections of the heart at nothing? If he insists that money is that *chief* good of which ancient philosophy says so much, we beg leave to insist that it is not the *only* good. We are above the affectation of pretending to condole with any man on his exaltation, but there are feelings which a man of acute sensibility, rendered more acute by an elegant education, values more intimately than silver or gold.

Is it absolutely nothing to resign his local comforts, to break up his local attachments, to have new connexions to form, and that frequently at an advanced period of life? Connexions, perhaps less valuable than those he is quitting? Is it nothing for a faithful minister to be separated from an affectionate people, a people not only whose friendship, but whose progress has constituted his happiness here, as it will make his joy and crown of rejoicing hereafter?

Men of delicate minds estimate things by their affections as well as by their circumstances: to a man of a certain cast of character, a change however advantageous, may be rather an exile than a promotion. While he gratefully accepts the good, he receives it with an edifying acknowledgment of the imperfection of the best human things. These considerations we confess add the additional feelings of kindness to their persons, and of sympathy with their vicissitudes, to our respect and veneration for their holy office.

To themselves, however, the precarious tenor of their situation presents an instructive emblem of the uncertain condition of human life, of the transitory nature of the world itself. Their liableness to a sudden removal, gives them the advantage of being more especially reminded of the necessity and duty of keeping in a continual posture of preparation, having 'their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand.' They have also the same promises which supported the Israelites in the desert.—The same assurance which cheered Abraham, may still cheer the true servants of God under all difficulties.—'Fear not—I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.'

But there are perils on the right hand and on the left. It is not among the least, that though a pious clergyman may at first have tasted with trembling caution of the delicious cup of applause, he may gradually grow, as thirst is increased by indulgence, to drink too deeply of the enchanted chalice. The dangers arising from any thing that is good are formidable, because unsuspected. And such are the perils of popularity, that we will venture to say that the victorious general who has conquered a kingdom, or the sagacious statesman who has preserved it, is almost in less danger of being spoilt by acclamation than the popular preacher; because *their* danger is likely to happen but once, his is perpetual. Theirs is only on a day of triumph, his day of triumph occurs every week; we mean the admiration he excites. Every fresh success ought to be a fresh motive to humiliation; he who feels his danger will vigilantly guard against swallowing too greedily the indiscriminate, and often undistinguishing plaudits which his doctrines or his manner, his talent or his voice, may equally procure for him.

If he be not prudent as well as pious, he may be brought to humour his audience, and his audience to flatter him with a dangerous emulation, till they will scarcely endure truth itself from any other lips. Nay, he may imperceptibly be led not to be always satisfied with the attention and improvement of his hearers, unless the attention be sweetened by flattery, and the improvement followed by exclusive attachment.

The spirit of exclusive fondness generates a spirit of controversy. Some of the followers will rather improve in casuistry than in Christianity. They will be more busied in opposing Paul to Apollos, than looking unto 'Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith;' than in bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. Religious gossip may assume the place of religion itself. A party spirit is thus generated, and Christianity may begin to be considered as a thing to be discussed and disputed, to be heard and talked about, rather than as the productive principle of virtuous conduct.*

We owe, indeed, lively gratitude and affectionate attachment to the minister who has faithfully laboured for our edification; but the author has sometimes noticed a manner adopted by some injudicious adherents, especially of her own sex, which seems rather to erect their favourite into the head of a sect, than to reverence him as the pastor of a flock. This mode of evincing an attachment, amiable in itself, is doubtless as distressing to the delicacy of the minister as it is unfavourable to religion, to which it is apt to give an air of party.

May we be allowed to animadvert more immediately on the cause of declension in piety, in some persons who formerly exhibited evident marks of that seriousness in their lives which they continue to inculcate from the pulpit. If such has been sometimes (we hope it has been very rarely) the case, may it not be partly ascribed to an unhappy notion that the same exactness in his private devotion, the same watch-

* This polemic tattle is of a totally different character from that species of religious conversation recommended in the preceding chapter.

fulness in his daily conduct, is not equally necessary in the advanced progress as in the first stages of a religious course? He does not desist from warning his hearers of the continual necessity of these things, but is he not in some danger of not applying the necessity to himself? May he not begin to rest satisfied with the inculcation without the practice? It is not probable indeed that he goes so far as to establish himself as an exempt case, but he slides from indolence into the exemption, as if its avoidance were not so necessary for him as for others.

Even the very sacredness of his profession is not without a snare. He may repeat the holy offices so often that he may be in danger on the one hand, of sinking into the notion that it is a mere profession, or on the other, of so resting in it as to make it supercede the necessity of that strict personal religion with which he set out: He may at least be satisfied with the occasional, without the uniform practice. There is a danger—we advert only to its possibility—that his very exactness in the public exercise of his function, may lead to a little justification of his remissness in secret duties. His zealous exposition of the Scriptures to others may satisfy him, though it does not always lead to a practical application of them to himself.

But God, by requiring exemplary diligence in the devotion of his appointed servants, would keep up in their minds a daily sense of their dependance on him. If he does not continually teach by his Spirit those who teach others, they have little reason to expect success, and that Spirit will not be given where it is not sought; or, which is an awful consideration, may be withdrawn, where it had been given, and not improved as it might have been.

Should this unhappily ever be the case, it would almost reduce the minister of Christ to a mere engine, a vehicle through which knowledge was barely to pass, like the ancient oracles who had nothing to do with the information but to convey it. Perhaps the public success of the best men has been, under God, principally owing to this, that their faithful ministration in the temple has been uniformly preceded and followed by petitions in the closet; that the truths implanted in the one, have chiefly flourished from having been watered by the tears, and nourished by the prayers of the other.

We will hazard but one more observation on this dangerous and delicate subject; in this superficial treatment of which, it is the thing in the world the most remote from the writer's wish, to give the slightest offence to any pious member of an order which possesses her highest veneration. If the indefatigable labourer in his great Master's vineyard, has, as must often be the case, the mortification of finding that his labours have failed of producing their desired effect, in some instance, where his warmest hopes had been excited;—if he feels that he has not benefitted others as he had earnestly desired, this is precisely the moment to benefit himself, and is perhaps permitted for that very end. Where his usefulness has been obviously great, the true Christian will be humbled by the recollection that he is only an instrument. Where it has been less, the defeat of his hopes offers the best occasion, which he will not fail to use for improving his humility. Thus he may always be assured that good has been done somewhere, so that in any case his labour will not have been vain in the Lord.

CHAP. XVII.

True and False Zeal.

It is one of the most important ends of cultivating that self-knowledge which we have elsewhere recommended, to discover what is the real bent of our mind, and which are the strongest tendencies of our character; to discover where our disposition requires restraint, and where we may be safely trusted with some liberty of indulgence. If the temper be fervid, and that fervour be happily directed to religion, the most consummate prudence will be requisite to restrain its excesses without freezing its energies.

If, on the contrary, timidity and diffidence be the natural propensity, we shall be in danger of falling into coldness and inactivity with regard to ourselves, and into too unresisting a compliance with the requisitions, or too easy a conformity with the habits of others. It will therefore be an evident proof of Christian self-government, when the man of too ardent zeal restrains its outward expression where it would be unseasonable, or unsafe; while it will evince the same Christian self-denial in the fearful and diffident character, to burst the fetters of timidity, where duty requires a holy boldness; and when he is called upon to lose all lesser fears in the fear of God.

It will then be one of the first objects of a Christian to get his understanding and his conscience thoroughly enlightened; to take an exact survey not only of the whole comprehensive scheme of Christianity, but of his own character; to discover, in order to correct the defects in his judgment, and to ascertain the deficiencies even of his best qualities. Through ignorance in these respects, though he may really be following up some good tendency, though he is even persuaded that he is not wrong either in his motive or his object, he may yet be wrong in the measure, wrong in the mode, wrong in the application, though right in the principle. He must therefore watch with a suspicious eye over his better qualities, and guard his very virtues from deviation and excess.

His zeal, that indispensable ingredient in the composition of a great character, that quality, without which no great eminence either secular or religious has ever been attained; which is essential to the acquisition of excellence in arts and arms, in learning and piety; that principle without which no man will be able to reach the perfection of his nature, or to animate others to aim at that perfection, will yet hardly fail to mislead the animated Christian, if his knowledge of what is right and just, if his judgment in the application of that knowledge do not keep pace with the principle itself.

Zeal, indeed, is not so much an individual virtue as the principle which gives life and colouring, as the spirit which gives grace and benignity, as the temper which gives warmth and energy to every other. It is that feeling which exalts the relish of every duty, and sheds a lustre on the practice of every virtue; which, embellishing every image of the mind with its glowing tints, animates every quality of the heart with its invigorating motion. It may be said of zeal among the virtues as of memory among the faculties, that though it singly never made a great man, yet no man has ever made himself conspicuously great where it has been wanting.

Many things however must concur before we can be allowed to determine whether zeal be really a virtue or a vice. Those who are contending for the one or the other, will be in the situation of the two knights, who meeting on a cross road, were on the point of fighting about the colour of a cross which was suspended between them. One insisted it was gold; the other maintained it was silver. The duel was prevented by the interference of a passenger, who desired them to change their positions. Both crossed over to the opposite side, found the cross was gold on one side, and silver on the other. Each acknowledged his opponent to be right.

It may be disputed whether fire be a good or an evil. The man who feels himself cheerful by its kindly warmth, is assured that it is a benefit, but he whose house it has just burnt down will give another verdict. Not only the cause, therefore, in which zeal is exerted must be good, but the principle itself must be under due regulation: or, like the rapidity of the traveller who gets into a wrong road, it will only carry him so much the further out of his way; or if he be in the right road, it will, through inattention, carry him involuntarily beyond his destined point.—That degree of motion is equally misleading which detains us short of our end, or which pushes us beyond it.

The apostle suggests a useful precaution by expressly asserting that it is 'in a good cause,' that we 'must be zealously affected;' which implies this further truth, that where the cause is not good, the mischief is proportioned to the zeal. But lest we should carry our limitations of the quality to any restriction of the seasons for exercising it, he takes care to animate us to its perpetual exercise, by adding that we must be *always* so affected.

If the injustice, the intolerance and persecution, with which a misguided zeal has so often afflicted the church of Christ, in its more early periods, be lamented as a deplorable evil; yet the overruling wisdom of Providence educing good from evil, made the very calamities which false zeal occasioned, the instruments of producing that true and lively zeal to which we owe the glorious band of martyrs and confessors, those brightest ornaments of the best periods of the church. This effect, though a clear vindication of that divine goodness which suffers evil, is no apology for him who perpetrates it.

It is curious to observe the contrary operations of true and false zeal, which though apparently only different modifications of the same quality, are, when brought into contact, repugnant, and even destructive to each other. There is no attribute of the human mind where the different effects of the same principle have such a total opposition: for is it not obvious that the same principle under another direction, which actuates the tyrant in dragging the martyr to the stake, enables the martyr to embrace it?

As a striking proof that the necessity for caution is not imaginary, it has been observed that the Holy Scriptures record more instances of a bad zeal than of a good one. This furnishes the most authoritative argument for regulating this impetuous principle, and for governing it by all those restrictions which a feeling so calculated for good and so capable of evil demands.

It was zeal, but of a blind and furious character, which produced the massacre on the day of St. Bartholomew;—a day to which the mournful strains of Job have been so well applied.—'Let that day perish. Let it not be joined to the days of the years. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it.'—It was a zeal the most bloody, combined with a perfidy the most detestable, which inflamed the execrable Florentine,* when, having on this occasion invited so many illustrious protestants to Paris under the alluring mask of a public festivity, she contrived to involve her guest, the pious queen of Navarre, and the venerable Coligni in the general mass of undistinguished destruction. The royal and pontifical assassins not satisfied with the sin, converted it into a triumph.—Medals were struck in honour of a deed which has no parallel even in the annals of Pagan persecution.

Even glory did not content the pernicious plotters of this direful tragedy. Devotion was called in to be

The crown and consummation of their crime.

The blackest hypocrisy was made use of to sanctify the foulest murder. The iniquity could not be complete without solemnly thanking God for its success. The pope and cardinals proceeded to St. Mark's church, where they praised the Almighty for so great a blessing conferred on the see of Rome, and the Christian world. A solemn jubilee completed the preposterous mummery.—This zeal of devotion was as much worse than even the zeal of murder, as thanking God for enabling us to commit a sin is worse than the commission itself. A wicked piety is still more disgusting than a wicked act. God is less offended by the sin itself than by the thank-offering of its perpetrators. It looks like a black attempt to involve the Creator in the crime.†

It was this exterminating zeal which made the fourteenth Louis, bad in the profligacy of his youth, worse in the superstition of his age, revoke the tolerating edict which might have drawn down a blessing on his kingdom. One species of crime was called on, in his days of blind devotion, to expiate another committed in his days of mad ambition.—But the expiation was even more intolerable than the offence. The havoc made by the sword of civil persecution

* Catharine de Medici.

† See Thuanus for a most affecting and exact account of this direful massacre.

was a miserable atonement for the blood which unjust aggression had shed in foreign wars.

It was this impious and cruel zeal which inspired the monk Dominick, in erecting the most infernal tribunal which ever inventive bigotry projected to dishonour the Christian name, and which with pertinacious barbarity has continued for above six centuries, to afflict the human race.

For a complete contrast to this pernicious zeal we need not, blessed be God, travel back into remote history, nor abroad into distant realms. This happy land of civil and religious liberty can furnish a countless catalogue of instances of a pure, a wise, and a well directed zeal. Not to swell the list, we will only mention that it has in our own age, produced the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the Abolition of the African slave trade. Three as noble, and which will, we trust, be as lasting monuments as ever national virtue erected to true piety. These are institutions which bear the genuine stamp of Christianity, not originating in party, founded in disinterestedness, and comprehending the best interests of almost the whole habitable globe,—'without partiality and without hypocrisy.'

Why we hear so much in praise of zeal from a certain class of religious characters, is partly owing to their having taken up a notion, that its acquired exertions relate to the care of other people's salvation rather than to their own; and indeed the casual prying into a neighbour's house, though much more entertaining, is not near so troublesome as the constant inspection of one's own. It is observable that the outcry against zeal among the irreligious is raised on nearly the same ground, as the clamour in its favour by these professors of religion. The former suspect that the zeal of the religionist evaporates in censuring *their* impiety, and in eagerness for *their* conversion, instead of being directed to themselves. This supposed anxiety they resent, and give a practical proof of their resentment by resolving not to profit by it.

Two very erroneous opinions exist, respecting zeal. It is commonly supposed to indicate a want of charity, and the two principles are accused of maintaining separate interests. This is so far from being the case, that charity is the firm associate of that zeal of which it is supposed to be the enemy.—Indeed, this is so infallible a criterion by which to try its sincerity, that we should be apt to suspect the legitimacy of the zeal which is unaccompanied by this fair ally.

Another opinion equally erroneous is not a little prevalent—that where there is much zeal there is little or no prudence. Now a sound and sober zeal is not such an idiot as to neglect to provide for its own success; and would that success be provided for, without employing for its accomplishment, every precaution which prudence can suggest?—True zeal, therefore, will be as discreet as it is fervent, well knowing that its warmest efforts will be neither effectual, nor lasting, without those provisions which discretion alone can make. No quality is ever possessed in perfection where its opposite is wanting; zeal is not Christrian fervour, but animal heat, if not associated with charity and prudence.

Zeal indeed, like other good things, is frequently calumniated because it is not understood: and it may sometimes deserve censure, as being the effervescence of that weak but well meaning mind which will defeat the efforts not only of this, but of every other good propensity.

That most valuable faculty therefore of intellectual man, the judgment, the enlightened, impartial, unbiassed judgment, must be kept in perpetual activity, not only in order to ascertain that the cause be good, but to determine also the degree of its importance in any given case, that we may not blindly assign an undue value to an inferior good: for want of this discrimination we may be fighting a windmill, when we fancy we are attacking a fort. We must prove not only whether the thing contended for be right, but whether it be essential; whether in our eagerness to attain this subordinate good we may not be sacrificing, or neglecting, things of more real consequence. Whether the value we assign to it may not be even imaginary.

Above all, we should examine whether we do not contend for it chiefly because it happens to fall in with our own humour, or our own party, more than on account of its intrinsic worth; whether we do not wish to distinguish ourselves by our pertinacity, and to append ourselves to the party rather than to the principle; and thus, as popularity is often gained by the worst part of a man's character, whether we do not principally persist from the hope of becoming popular. The favourite adage that *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*, might serve as an appropriate motto to one half of the contentions which divide and distract the world.

This zeal, hotly exercised for mere circumstantials, for ceremonies different in themselves, for distinctions rather than differences, has unhappily assisted in causing irreparable separations and dissentions in the Christian world, even where the champions on both sides were great and good men.—Many of the points which have been the sources of altercation were not worth insisting upon, where the opponents agreed in the grand fundamentals of faith and practice.

But to consider zeal as a general question, as a thing of every day experience. He whose piety is most sincere will be likely to be the most zealous. But though zeal is an indication, and even a concomitant of sincerity, a burning zeal is sometimes seen where the sincerity is somewhat questionable.

For where zeal is generated by ignorance it is commonly fostered by self-will. That which we have embraced through false judgment we maintain through false honour.—Pride is generally called in to nurse the offspring of error. It is from this confederacy that we frequently see those who are perversely zealous for points which can add nothing to the cause of Christian truth, whether they are rejected or retained, cold and indifferent about the great things which involve the salvation of man.

Though all momentous truths, all indispensable duties, are, in the luminous volume of inspi-

ration, made so obvious that those may read who run; the contested matters are not only so comparatively little as to be by no means worthy of the heat they excite, but are rendered so doubtful, not in themselves, but by the opposite systems built on them, that he who fights for them is not always sure whether he be right or not; and if he carry his point he can make no moral use of his victory. This indeed is not his concern. It is enough that he has conquered. The importance of the object having never depended on its worth, but on the opinion of his right to maintain that worth.

The Gospel assigns very different degrees of importance to allowed practices and commanded duties. It by no means censures those who were rigorous in their payment of the most inconsiderable tythes; but seeing this duty was not only put in competition with, but preferred before, the most important duties, even judgment, mercy and faith, the flagrant hypocrisy was pointedly censured by MEEKNESS itself.

This opposition of a scrupulous exactness in paying the petty demand on three paltry herbs, to the neglect of the three cardinal Christian virtues, exhibits as complete and instructive a specimen of that frivolous and false zeal which, evaporating in trifles, wholly overlooks those grand points on which hangs eternal life, as can be conceived.

This passage serves to corroborate a striking fact, that there is scarcely in scripture any precept enforced, which has not some actual exemplification attached to it. The historical parts of the Bible, therefore, are of inestimable value, were it only on this single ground, that the appended truths and principles so abundantly scattered through them, are in general so happily illustrated by them. They are not dry aphorisms and cold propositions, which stand singly, and disconnected, but truths suggested by the event, but precepts growing out of the occasion. The recollection of the principles recalls to the mind the instructive story which they enrich, while the remembrance of the circumstance impresses the sentiment upon the heart. Thus the doctrine, like a precious gem, is at once preserved and embellished by the narrative being made a frame in which to enshrine it.

True zeal will first exercise itself in earnest desires, in increasing ardour to obtain higher degrees of illumination in our own minds; in fervent prayer that this growing light may operate to the improvement of our practice, that the influences of divine grace may become more outwardly perceptible by the increasing correctness of our habits; that every holy affection may be followed by its correspondent act, whether of obedience or of resignation, of doing, or of suffering.

But the effects of a genuine and enlightened zeal will not stop here. It will be visible in our discourse with those to whom we may have a probability of being useful. But though we should not confine the exercise of our zeal to our conversation, nor our attention to the opinions and practices of others, yet this, when not done with a bustling kind of interference, and offensive forwardness, is proper and useful. It is indeed a natural effect of zeal to appear where it exists, as a fire which really burns will not be prevented from emitting both light and heat; yet we should labour principally to keep up in our own minds the pious feelings which religion has excited there. The brightest flame will decay if no means are used to keep it alive. Pure zeal will cherish every holy affection, and by increasing every pious disposition will animate us to every duty. It will add new force to our hatred of sin, fresh contrition to our repentance, additional vigour to our resolutions, and will impart augmented energy to every virtue. It will give life to our devotions, and spirit to all our actions.

When a true zeal has fixed these right affections in our own hearts, the same principle will, as we have already observed, make us earnest to excite them in others. No good man wishes to go to heaven alone, and none ever wished others to go thither without earnestly endeavouring to awaken right affections in them. That will be a false zeal which does not begin with the regulation of our own hearts. That will be an illiberal zeal which stops where it begins. A true zeal will extend itself through the whole sphere of its possessor's influence Christian zeal, like Christian charity, will begin at home, but neither the one nor the other must end there.

But that we must not confine our zeal to mere conversation is not only implied but expressed in Scripture. The apostle does not exhort us to be zealous only of good *words* but of good *works*. True zeal ever produces true benevolence. It would extend the blessings which we ourselves enjoy, to the whole human race. It will consequently stir us up to exert all our influence to the extension of religion, to the advancement of every well concerted and well conducted plan, calculated to enlarge the limits of human happiness, and more especially to promote the eternal interests of human kind.

But if we do not first strenuously labour for our own illumination, how shall we presume to enlighten others! It is a dangerous presumption, to busy ourselves in improving others, before we have diligently sought our own improvement. Yet it is a vanity not uncommon that the first feelings, be they true or false, which resemble devotion, the first faint ray of knowledge which has imperfectly dawned, excites in certain raw minds an eager impatience to communicate to others what they themselves have not yet attained. Hence the novel swarms of uninstructed instructors, of teachers who have had no time to learn. The act previous to the imparting knowledge should seem to be that of acquiring it. Nothing would so effectually check an irregular and improve a temperate zeal, as the personal discipline, the self acquaintance we have so repeatedly recommended.

True Christian zeal will always be known by its distinguishing and inseparable properties. It will be warm, indeed, not from temperament but principle. It will be humble, or it will not be *Christian* zeal.—It will restrain its impetuosity that it may the more effectually promote its object.—It will be temperate, softening what is strong in the act by gentleness in the man

ner. It will be tolerating, willing to grant what it would itself desire.—It will be forbearing, in the hope that the offence it censures may be occasional failing and not a habit of the mind. —It will be candid, making a tender allowance for those imperfections which beings, fallible themselves ought to expect from human infirmity.—It will be reasonable—employing fair argument and affectionate remonstrance, instead of irritating by the adoption of violence, instead of mortifying by the assumption of superiority.

He, who in private society allows himself in violent anger or unhallowed bitterness, or acrimonious railing, in reprehending the faults of another, might, did his power keep pace with his inclination, have recourse to other weapons. He would probably banish and burn, confiscate and imprison, and think then as he thinks now, that he is doing God service.

If there be any quality which demands a clearer sight, a tighter rein, a stricter watchfulness than another, zeal is that quality. The heart where it is wanting has no elevation; where it is not guarded, no security. The prudence with which it is exercised is the surest evidence of its integrity; for if intemperate it not only raises enemies to ourselves but to God. It augments the natural enmity to religion instead of increasing her friends.

But if tempered by charity, if blended with benevolence, if sweetened by kindness, if evinced to be honest by its influence on your own conduct, and gentle by its effect on your manners, it may lead your irreligious acquaintance to inquire more closely in what consists the distinction between them and you. You will already by this mildness have won their affection. Your next step may be to gain over their judgment. They may be led to examine what solid grounds of difference subsists between you and them. What substantial reason you have for not going their lengths. What sound argument they can offer for not going yours.

But it may possibly be asked, after all, where do we perceive any symptoms of this inflammatory distemper? Should not the prevalence, or at least the existence of a disease be ascertained previous to the application of the remedy? That it exists is sufficiently obvious, though it must be confessed that among the higher ranks it has not hitherto spread very widely; nor is its progress likely to be very alarming, or its effects very malignant. It is to be lamented that in every rank, indeed, coldness and indifference, carelessness and neglect, are the reigning epidemics. These are diseases far more difficult to cure; diseases not more dangerous to the patient than distressing to the physician, who generally finds it more difficult to raise a sluggish habit than to lower an occasional heat. The imprudently zealous man, if he be sincere, may, by a discreet regimen, be brought to a state of complete sanity; but to rouse from a state of morbid indifference, to brace from a total relaxation of the system, must be the immediate work of the great Physician of souls; of him who can effect even this, by his Spirit accompanying this powerful word, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

CHAP. XVIII.

Insensibility to Eternal Things.

Insensibility to eternal things, in beings who are standing on the brink of eternity, is a madness which would be reckoned among prodigies, if it were not so common. It would be altogether incredible, if the numberless instances we have of it were only related, and not witnessed, were only heard of, and not experienced.

If we had a certain prospect of a great estate, and a splendid mansion which we knew must be ours in a few days; and not only ours as a bequest, but an inheritance, not only as a possession, but a perpetuity; if, in the mean time, we rented, on a precarious lease, a paltry cottage in bad repair, ready to fall, and from which we knew we must at all events soon be turned out, depending on the proprietor's will, whether the ejectment might not be the next minute; would it argue wisdom or even common sense, totally to overlook our near and noble reversion, and to be so fondly attached to our falling tenement, as to spend great part of our time and thoughts in supporting its ruins by props, and concealing its decays by decorations? To be so absorbed in the little sordid pleasures of this frail abode, as not even to cultivate a taste for the delights of the mansion, where such treasures are laid up for us, and on the possession of which we fully reckon in spite of our neglect,—this is an excess of inconsideration, which must be seen to be credited.

It is a striking fact, that the acknowledged uncertainty of life drives worldly men to make sure of every thing depending on it, except their eternal concerns. It leads them to be regular in their accounts, and exact in their bargains. They are afraid of risking ever so little property, on so precarious a tenure as life, without ensuring a reversion. There are even some who speculate on the uncertainty of life as a trade. Strange, that this accurate calculation of the duration of life should not involve a serious attention to its end! Strange, that the critical annuitant should totally overlook his perpetuity! Strange, that in the prudent care not to risk a fraction of property, equal care should not be taken to risk eternal salvation!

We are not supposing flagitious characters, remarkable for any thing which the world calls wicked: we are not supposing their wealth obtained by injustice, or increased by oppression. We are only supposing a soul drawn aside from God, by the alluring baits of a world, which, like the treacherous love of Atalanta, causes him to lose the victory by throwing golden apples in his way. The shining baits are obtained, but the race is lost!

To worldly men of a graver cast, business may be as formidable an enemy as pleasure is to those of a lighter turn: business has so sober an air that it looks like virtue, and virtuous it certainly is, when carried on in a proper spirit, with due moderation, and in the fear of God. To have a lawful employment, and to pursue it with diligence, is not only right and honourable in itself, but is one of the best preservatives from temptation.*

* That accurate judge of human life, Dr. Johnson, has

When a man pleads in his favour, the diligence business demands, the self-denying practices it imposes, the patience, the regularity, the industry indispensable to its success; when he argues that these are habits of virtue, that they are a daily discipline to the moral man; and that the world could not subsist without business, he argues justly;—but when he forgets his interest in the eternal world, when he neglects to lay up a treasure in heaven, in order that he may augment a store which he does not want, and, perhaps, he does not intend to use, or uses to purposes merely secular, he is a bad calculator, of the relative value of things.

Business has an honourable aspect as being opposed to idleness, the most hopeless offspring of the whole progeny of sin. The man of business comparing himself with the man of dissipation, feels a fair and natural consciousness of his own value, and of the superiority of his own pursuits. But it is by comparison that we deceive ourselves to our ruin. Business, whether professional, commercial, or political, endangers minds of a better cast, minds which look down on pleasure as beneath a thinking being. But if business absorb the affections, if it swallow up time, to the neglect of eternity; if it generate a worldly spirit; if it cherish covetousness; if it engage the mind in long views, and ambitious pursuits, it may be as dangerous, as its more inconsiderate frivolous rival. The grand evil of both lies in the alienation of the heart from God. Nay, in one respect, the danger is greater to him who is the best employed. The man of pleasure, however thoughtless, can never make himself believe that he is doing right. The man plunged in the serious bustle of business, cannot easily persuade himself that he may be doing wrong.

Commutation, compensation and substitution, are the grand engines which WORLDLY RELIGION incessantly keeps in play. Her's is a life of barter, a state of spiritual traffic, so much indulgence for so many good works. The implication is, 'we have a rigorous master,' and it is but fair to indemnify ourselves for the severity of his requisitions; just as an overworked servant steals a holyday.—'These persons,' says an eminent writer,* 'maintain a *meum* and *tuum* with heaven itself.' The set bounds to God's prerogative, lest it should too much encroach on man's privilege.

We have elsewhere observed, that if we invite people to embrace religion on the mere mercenary ground of present pleasure, they will desert it as soon as they find themselves disappointed. Men are too ready to clamour for the pleasures of piety before they have, I dare not say entitled themselves to them, but put themselves into the way of receiving them. We should be angry at that servant, who made the receiving of his wages a preliminary to the performance of his work. This is not meant to establish the merit of the works, but the necessity of our seeking that transforming and purifying change which characterises the real Christian; instead of complaining that we do not possess those consolations, which can be consequent only on such a mutation of the mind.

But if men consider this world on the true scripture ground as a state of probation; if they consider religion as a school for happiness, indeed, but of which the consummation is only to be enjoyed in heaven, the Christian hope will support them; the Christian faith will strengthen them. They will serve diligently, wait patiently, love cordially, obey faithfully, and be steadfast under all trials, sustained by the cheering promise held out to him, 'who endures to the end.'

There are certain characters who seem to have a graduated scale of vices. Of this scale they keep clear of the lowest degrees, and to rise above the highest they are not ambitious, forget ful that the same principle which operates in the greater, operates also in the less. A life of incessant gratification does not alarm the conscience, yet it is equally unfavorable to religion, equally destructive of its principle, equally opposite to its spirit, with more obvious vices.

These are the habits which, by relaxing the mind and dissolving the heart, particularly foster indifference to our spiritual state, and insensibility to the things of eternity. A life of voluptuousness, if it be not a life of actual sin, is a disqualification for holiness, for happiness, for heaven. It not only alienates the heart from God, but lays it open to every temptation to which natural temper may invite, or incidental circumstances allure. The worst passions lie dormant in hearts given up to selfish indulgences, always ready to start into action as occasion calls.

Voluptuousness and irreligion play into each other's hands: they are reciprocally cause and effect. The looseness of the principle confirms the carelessness of the conduct, while the negligent conduct in its own vindication shelters itself under the supposed security of unbelief. The instance of the rich man in the parable of Lazarus, strikingly illustrates this truth.

Whoever doubts that a life of sensuality is consistent with the most unfeeling barbarity to the wants and sufferings of others; whoever doubts that boundless expense and magnificence, the means of procuring which were wrung from the robbery and murder of a lacerated world, may not be associated with that robbery and murder,—let him turn to the gorgeous festivities and unparalleled pageantries of Versailles and Saint Cloud.—There the Imperial Harlequin, from acting the deepest and the longest tragedy that ever drew tears of blood from an audience composed of the whole civilized globe, by a sudden stroke of his magic wand, shifts the scene of this most preposterous pantomime:—

> Where moody madness laughing wild
> Amidst severest wo,

gloomily contemplates the incongruous spectacle, sees the records of the Tyburn Chronicle embellished with the wanton splendours of the Arabian tables; beholds

> Perverse all monstrous, all prodigious things;

beholds tyranny with his painted vizor of patriotism, and polygamy with her Janus face of

often been heard by the writer of these pages to observe, that it was the greatest misfortune which could befal a man to have been bred to no profession, and pathetically to regret that this misfortune was his own.

* The learned and pious John Smith.

political conscience and counterfeit affection fill the fore ground; while sceptred parasites, and pinchbeck potentates, tricked on with the shining spoils of plundered empires, and decked with the pilfered crowns of deposed and exiled monarchs, fill and empty the changing scene, with 'exits and with entrances,' as fleeting and unsubstantial as the progeny of Banquo,—beholds inventive but fruitless art, solicitously decorate the ample stage to conceal the stains of blood—stains as indelible as those which the ambitious wife of the irresolute thane vainly strove to wash from her polluted hands; while in her sleeping delirium she continued to cry,

> Still here's the smell of blood;
> The perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten it.

But to return to the general question. Let us not inquire whether these unfeeling tempers and selfish habits offend society, and discredit us with the world; but whether they feed our corruptions and put us in a posture unfavourable to all interior improvement; whether they offend God and endanger the soul; whether the gratification of self is the life which the Redeemer taught or lived; whether sensuality is a suitable preparation for that state where God himself, who is a Spirit, will constitute all the happiness of spiritual beings.

But these are not the only, perhaps not the greatest dangers. The intellectual vices, the spiritual offences may destroy the soul without much injuring the credit. These have not, like voluptuousness, their seasons of alteration and repose. Here the principle is in continual operation. Envy has no interval. Ambition never cools. Pride never sleeps. The principle at least is always awake. An intemperate man is sometimes sober, but a proud man is never humble. Where vanity reigns, she reigns always. These interior sins are more difficult of extirpation, they are less easy of detection; more hard to come at; and, as the citadel holds out after the outworks are taken, these sins of the heart are the latest conquered in the moral warfare.

Here lies the distinction between the worldly and the religious man. It is alarm enough for the Christian that he feels any propensities to vice. Against these propensities he watches, strives and prays: and though he is thankful for the victory when he has resisted the temptation, he can feel no elation of heart while conscious of inward dispositions, which nothing but divine grace enables him to keep from breaking out in a flame. He feels that there is no way to obtain the pardon of sin but to leave off sinning: he feels that though repentance is not a Saviour, yet that there can be no salvation where there is no repentance. Above all, he knows that the promise of remission of sin by the death of Christ is the only solid ground of comfort. However correct his present life may be, the weight of past offences would hang so heavy on his conscience, that without the atoning blood of his Redeemer, despair of pardon for the past would leave him hopeless. He would continue to sin, as an extravagant bankrupt who can get no acquittal, would continue to be extravagant, because no present frugality could redeem his former debts.

It is sometimes pleaded that the labour attached to persons in high public stations and important employments, by leaving them no time furnishes a reasonable excuse for the omission of their religious duties. These apologies are never offered for any such neglect in the poor man, though to him every day brings the inevitable return of his twelve hours' labour, without intermission and without mitigation.

But surely the more important the station, the higher and wider the sphere of action, the more imperious is the call for religion, not only in the way of example, but even in the way of success; if it be indeed granted that there is such a thing as divine influences, if it be allowed that God has a blessing to bestow. If the ordinary man who has only himself to govern, requires that aid, how urgent is *his* necessity who has to govern millions! What an awful idea, could we even suppose it realized, that the weight of a nation might rest on the head of him whose heart looks not up for a higher support!

Were we alluding to sovereigns, and not to statesmen, we need not look beyond the throne of Great Britain, for the instance of a monarch who has never made the cares attendant on a king, an excuse for neglecting his duty to the King of kings.

The politician, the warrior, and the orator, find it peculiarly hard to renounce in themselves that wisdom and strength, to which they believe that the rest of the world are looking up. The man of station or of genius, when invited to the self-denying duties of Christianity, as well as he who has 'great possessions,' goes away 'sorrowing.'

But to know that they must end, stamps vanity on all the glories of life; to know that they must end soon, stamps infatuation, not only on him who sacrifices his conscience for their acquisition, but on him who, though upright in the discharge of his duties, discharges them without any reference to God.—Would the conqueror or the orator reflect when the 'laurel crown is placed on his brow, how soon will it be followed by the cypress wreath,' it would lower the delirium of ambition; it would cool the intoxication of prosperity.

There is a general kind of belief in Christianity, prevalent among men of the world, which, by soothing the conscience, prevents self-inquiry That the holy Scriptures contain the will of God, they do not question; that they contain the best system of morals, they frequently assert: but that they do not feel the necessity of acquiring a correct notion of the doctrines those Scriptures involve. The depravity of man, the atonement made by Christ, the assistance of the Holy Spirit—these they consider as the metaphysical part of religion, into which it is not of much importance to enter, and by a species of self-flattery, they satisfy themselves with an idea of acceptableness with their Maker, as a state to be attained without the humility, faith, and newness of life which they require, and which are indeed their proper concomitants.

A man absorbed in a multitude of secular concerns, decent but unawakened, listens with a kind of respectful insensibility, to the overtures of religion. He considers the church as venera-

ble from her antiquity, and important from her connexion with the state. No one is more alive to her political, nor more dead to her spiritual importance. He is anxious for her existence, but indifferent to her doctrines. These he considers as a general matter in which he has no individual concern. He considers religious observances as something decorous but unreal; as a grave custom made respectable by public usage, and long prescription. He admits that the poor, who have little to enjoy, and the idle who have little to do, cannot do better than make over to God that time which cannot be turned to a more profitable account. Religion, he thinks, may properly enough employ leisure, and occupy old age. But though both advance towards himself with no imperceptible step, he is still at a loss to determine the precise period when the leisure is sufficient, or the age enough advanced. It recedes as the destined season approaches. He continues to intend moving, but he continues to stand still.

Compare his drowsy Sabbaths with the animation of the days of business, you would not think it was the same man. The one are to be got over, the others are enjoyed. He goes from the dull decencies, the shadowy forms—for such they are to him, of public worship, to the solid realities of his worldly concerns, to the cheerful activities of secular life. These he considers as bounden, almost as exclusive duties. The others indeed may not be wrong, but these he is sure are right. The world is his element. Here he breathes freely his native air. Here he is substantially engaged. Here his whole mind is alive, his understanding broad awake, all his energies are in full play; his mind is all alacrity; his faculties are employed, his capacities are filled; here they have an object worthy of their widest expansion. Here his desires and affections are absorbed. The faint impression of the Sunday's sermon fades away, to be as faintly revived on the Sunday following, again to fade in the succeeding week. To the sermon he brings a formal ceremonious attendance; to the world, he brings all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. To the one he resorts in conformity to law and custom; to induce him to resort to the other, he wants no law, no sanction, no invitation, no argument. His will is of the party. His passions are volunteers. The invisible things of heaven are clouded in shadow, are lost in distance. The world is lord of the ascendant. Riches, honours, power fill his mind with brilliant images. They are present, they are certain, they are tangible. They assume form and bulk. In these therefore he cannot be mistaken; in the others he may. The eagerness of competition, the struggle for superiority, the perturbations of ambition, fill his mind with an emotion, his soul with an agitation, his affections with an interest, which, though very unlike happiness, he yet flatters himself is the road to it. This fictitious pleasure, this tumultuous feeling, produces at least that negative satisfaction of which he is constantly in search—it keeps him from himself.

Even in circumstances where there is no success to prevent a very tempting bait, the mere occupation, the crowd of objects, the succession of engagements, the mingling pursuits, the very tumult and hurry have their gratifications. The bustle gives false peace by leaving no leisure for reflection. He lays his conscience asleep with the 'flattering unction, of good intentions. He comforts himself with the credible pretence of want of time, and the vague resolution of giving up to God the dregs of that life, of the vigorous season of which he thinks the world more worthy. Thus commuting with his Maker, life wears away, its close draws near—and even the poor commutation which was promised is not made. The assigned hour of retreat either never arrives, or if it does arrive, sloth and sensuality are resorted to, as the fair reward of a life of labour and anxiety; and whether he dies in the protracted pursuit of wealth, or in the enjoyment of the luxuries it has earned, he dies in the trammels of the world.

If we do not cordially desire to be delivered from the dominion of these worldly tempers, it is because we do not believe in the condemnation annexed to their indulgence. We may indeed believe it as we believe any other general proposition, or any indifferent fact; but not as truth in which we have a personal concern; not as a danger which has any reference to *us*. We evince this practical unbelief in the most unequivocal way, by thinking so much more about the most frivolous concern in which we are assured we have an interest, than about this most important of all concerns.

Indifference to eternal things, instead of tranquilizing the mind, as it professes to do, is, when a thoughtful moment occurs, a fresh subject of uneasiness; because it adds to our peril the horror of not knowing it. If shutting our eyes to a danger would prevent it, to shut them would not only be a happiness but a duty; but to barter eternal safety for momentary ease, is a wretched compromise. To produce this delusion, mere inconsideration is as efficient a cause as the most prominent sin. The reason why we do not value eternal things is, because we do not think of them. The mind is so full of what is present, that it has no room to admit a thought of what is to come. Not only we do not give that attention to a never-dying soul which prudent men give to a common transaction, but we do not even think it worth the care which inconsiderate men give to an inconsiderable one. We complain that life is short, and yet throw away the best part of it, only making over to religion that portion which is good for nothing else; life would be long enough if we assigned its best period to its best purpose.

Say not that the requisitions of religion are severe, ask rather if they are necessary. If a thing must absolutely be done, if eternal misery will be incurred by not doing it, it is fruitless to inquire whether it be hard or easy. Inquire only whether it be indispensable, whether it be commanded, whether it be practicable. It is a well known axiom in science, that difficulties are of no weight against demonstrations. The duty on which our eternal state depends, is not a thing to be debated, but done. The duty which is too imperative to be evaded, too important to be neglected, is not to be argued about, but performed. To sin on quietly, because you do not

intend to sin always, is to live on a reversion which will probably never be yours.

'It is folly to say that religion drives men to despair; when it only teaches them by a salutary fear to avoid destruction. The fear of God differs from all other fear, for it is accompanied with trust, and confidence, and love. 'Blessed is the man that feareth alway,' is no paradox to him who entertains this holy fear. It sets him above the fear of ordinary troubles. It fills his heart. He is not discomposed with those inferior apprehensions which unsettle the soul and unhinge the peace of worldly men. His mind is occupied with one grand concern, and is therefore less liable to be shaken than little minds which are filled with little things. Can that principle lead to despair, which proclaims the mercy of God in Christ Jesus to be greater than all the sins of all the men in the world?

If *despair* then prevent your return, add not to your list of offences that of doubting of the forgiveness which is sincerely implored. You have already wronged God in his holiness, wrong him not in his mercy. You may offend him more by despairing of his pardon than by all the sins which have made that pardon necessary. Repentance, if one may venture the bold remark, almost disarms God of the power to punish. Hear his style and title as proclaimed by himself;—'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty'—that is, those who by unrepented guilt exclude themselves from the offered mercy.

If infidelity or indifference, which is practical infidelity, keep you back, yet, as reasonable beings, ask yourselves a few short questions; 'For what end was I sent into the world? Is my soul immortal? Am I really placed here in a state of trial, or is this span my all? Is there an eternal state? If there be, will the use I make of this life decide on my condition in that? I know that there is death, but is there a judgment?'—

Rest not till you have cleared up, I do not say your own evidences for heaven;—you have much to do before you arrive at that stage—but whether there be any heaven? Ask yourself whether Christianity is not important enough to deserve being inquired into? Whether eternal life is not too valuable to be entirely overlooked? Whether eternal destruction, if a reality, is not worth avoiding?—If you make these interrogations sincerely, you will make them practically. They will lead you to examine your own personal interest in these things. Evils which are ruining us for want of attention to them, lessen, from the moment our attention to them begins. True or false, the question is worth settling. Vibrate then no longer between doubt and certainty. If the evidence be inadmissible, reject it. But if you can once ascertain these cardinal points, then throw away your time if you *can*, then trifle with eternity if you *dare*.*

* An awakening call to public and individual feelings has been recently made, by an observation of an eloquent speaker in the house of commons. He remarked that himself and the honourable member for Yorkshire, then sitting on a committee appointed on occasion of a great national calamity, were the only surviving members of the committee on a similar occasion twenty-two years ago! The call is the more alarming, because the mortality did not arise from some extraordinary cause, which might not again occur, but was in the common course of human things. Such a proportion of deaths is perpetually taking place, but the very frequency which ought to excite attention prevents it, till it is thus forced on our notice.

It is one of the striking characters of the Omnipotent that 'he is strong and patient.' It is a standing evidence of his patience that 'he is provoked every day.' How beautifully do these characters reflect lustre on each other. If he were not strong, his patience would want its distinguishing perfection. If he were not patient, his strength would instantly crush those who provoke him, not sometimes, but often; not every year, but 'every day.'

Oh you, who have a long space given you for repentance; confess that the forbearance of God, when viewed as coupled with his strength, is his most astonishing attribute! Think of the companions of your early life; if not your associates in actual vice, if not your confederates in guilty pleasures, yet the sharers of your thoughtless meetings, of your convivial revelry, of your worldly schemes, of your ambitious projects—think how many of them have been cut off, perhaps without warning, probably without repentance.—*They* have been represented to their Judge; *their* doom, whatever it be, is irreversibly fixed; yours is mercifully suspended.—Adore the mercy: embrace the suspension.

Only suppose if they could be permitted to come back to this world, if they could be allowed another period of trial, how would they spend their restored life! How cordial would be their penitence, how intense their devotion, how profound their humility, how holy their actions! Think then that you have still in your power that for which they would give millions of worlds. 'Hell,' says a pious writer, 'is truth seen too late.'

In almost every mind there sometimes float indefinite and general purposes of repentance. The operation of these purposes is often repelled by a real though disavowed scepticism. 'Because sentence is not executed speedily,' they suspect it has never been pronounced. They therefore think they may safely continue to defer their intended but unshapen purpose.—Though they sometimes visit the sick bed of others; though they see how much disease disqualifies for all duties, yet to this period of incapacity, to this moment of disqualification do they continue to defer this tremendously important concern.

What an image of the divine condescension does it convey, that 'the goodness of God leadeth to repentance!' It does not barely invite, but it conducts. Every warning is more or less an invitation; every visitation is a lighter stroke to avert a heavier blow. This was the way in which the heathen world understood portents and prodigies, and on this interpretation of them they acted. Any alarming warning, whether rational or superstitious, drove them to their temples, their sacrifices, their expiations. Does our

clearer light always carry us farther? Does it in these instances, always carry us as far as natural conscience carried them?

The final period of the worldly man at length arrives; but he will not believe his danger. Even if he fearfully glance round for an intimation of it in every surrounding face, every face, it is too probable, is in a league to deceive him. What a noble opportunity is now offered to the Christian physician to show a kindness as far superior to any he has ever shown, as the concerns of the soul are superior to those of the body? Oh let him not fear *prudently* to reveal a truth for which the patient may bless him in eternity! Is it not sometimes to be feared that in the hope of prolonging for a little while the existence of the perishing body, he robs the never-dying soul of its last chance of pardon? Does not the concern for the immortal part united with his care of the afflicted body, bring the medical professor to a nearer imitation than any other supposable situation can do, of that Divine Physician, who never healed the one without manifesting a tender concern for the other?

But the deceit is short, is fruitless. The amazed spirit is about to dislodge. Who shall speak its terror and dismay? Then he cries out in the bitterness of his soul, 'What capacity has a diseased man, what time has a dying man, what disposition has a sinful man to acquire good principles, to unlearn false notions, to renounce bad practices, to establish right habits, to begin to love God, to begin to hate sin? How is the stupendous concern of salvation to be worked out by a mind incompetent to the most ordinary concerns.

The infinite importance of what he has to do—the goading conviction that it must be done—the utter inability of doing it—the dreadful combination in his mind of both the necessity and incapacity—the despair of crowding the concerns of an age into a moment—the impossibility of beginning a repentance which should have been completed—of setting about a peace which should have been concluded—of suing for a pardon which should have been obtained;—all these complicated concerns—without strength, without time, without hope, with a clouded memory, a disjointed reason, a wounded spirit, undefined terrors, remembered sins, anticipated punishment, an angry God, and accusing conscience, altogether, intolerably augment the sufferings of a body which stands in little need of the insupportable burthen of a distracted mind to aggravate its torments.

Though we pity the superstitious weakness of the German emperor in acting over the anticipated solemnities of his own funeral—that eccentric act of penitence of a great but perverted mind; it would be well if we were now and then to represent to our minds while in sound health, the solemn certainties of a dying bed; if we were sometimes to imagine to ourselves this awful scene, not only as inevitable, but as near; if we accustomed ourselves to see things now, as we shall then wish we had seen them. Surely the most sluggish insensibility must be roused by figuring to itself the rapid approach of death, the nearness of our unalterable doom, our instant transition to that state of unutterable bliss or unimaginable wo to which death will in a moment consign us. Such a mental representation would assist us in dissipating the illusion of the senses, would help to realise what is invisible, and approximate what we think remote. It would disenchant us from the world, tear off her painted mask, shrink her pleasures into their proper dimensions, her concerns into their real value, her enjoyments into their just compass, her promises into nothing.

Terrible as the evil is, if it must, and that at no distant day, be met, spare not to present it to your imagination; not to lacerate your feelings, but to arm your resolution; not to excite unprofitable distress, but to strengthen your faith. If it terrify you at first, draw a little nearer to it every time. Familiarity will abate the terror. If you cannot face the image, how will you encounter the reality?

Let us then figure to ourselves the moment (who can say that moment may not be the next?) when all we cling to shall elude our grasp; when every earthly good shall be to us as if it had never been, except in the remembrance of the use we have made of it; when our eyes shall close upon a world of sense, and open on a world of spirits; when there shall be no relief for the fainting body, and no refuge for the parting soul, except that single refuge to which, perhaps, we have never thought of resorting—that refuge which if we have not despised we have too probably neglected—the everlasting mercies of God in Christ Jesus.

Reader! whoever you are, who have neglected to remember that to die is the end for which you were born, know that you have a personal interest in this scene. Turn not away from it in disdain, however feebly it may have been represented. You may escape any other evil of life, but its end you cannot escape. Defer not then its weightiest concern to its weakest period. Begin not the preparation when you should be completing the work. Delay not the business which demands your best faculties to the period of their debility, probably of their extinction. Leave not the work which requires an age to do, to be done in a moment, a moment too which may not be granted. The alternative is tremendous. The difference is that of being saved or lost. It is no light thing to perish!

CHAP. XIX.

Happy Deaths.

Few circumstances contribute more fatally to confirm in worldly men that insensibility to eternal things which was considered in the preceding chapter, than the boastful accounts we sometimes hear of the firm and heroic deathbeds of popular but irreligious characters. Many causes contribute to these *happy deaths* as they are called. The blind are bold, they do not see the precipice they despise.—Or perhaps there is less unwillingness to quit a world which has so often disappointed them, or which they have

sucked to the last dregs. They leave life with less reluctance, feeling that they have exhausted all its gratifications.—Or it is a disbelief of the reality of the state on which they are about to enter.—Or it is a desire to be released from excessive pain, a desire naturally felt by those who calculate their gain rather by what they are escaping from, than by what they are to receive. —Or it is equability of temper, or firmness of nerve, or hardness of mind.—Or it is the arrogant wish to make the last act of life confirm its preceding professions.—Or it is the vanity of perpetuating their philosophic character.— Or if some faint ray of light break in, it is the pride of not retracting the sentiments which from pride they have maintained;—The desire of posthumous renown among their own party; the hope to make their disciples stand firm by their example; the ambition to give their last possible blow to revelation—or perhaps the fear of expressing doubts which might beget a suspicion that their disbelief was not so sturdy as they would have it thought. Above all, may they not, as a punishment for their long neglect of the warning voice of truth, be given up to a strong delusion to believe the lie they have so often propagated, and really to expect to find in death that eternal sleep, with which they have affected to quiet their own consciences, and have really weakened the faith of others?

Every new instance is an additional buttress on which the sceptical school lean for support, and which they produce as a fresh triumph. With equal satisfaction they collect stories of infirmity, depression, and want of courage in the dying hour of religious men, whom the nature of the disease, timorousness of spirit, profound humility, the sad remembrance of sin, though long repented of and forgiven, a deep sense of the awfulness of meeting God in judgment;—whom some or all of these causes may occasion to depart in trembling fear: in whom, though heaviness may endure through the night of death, yet joy cometh in the morning of the resurrection.

It is a maxim of the civil law that definitions are hazardous. And it cannot be denied that various descriptions of persons have hazarded much in their definitions of a *happy death*. A very able and justly admired writer, who has distinguished himself by the most valuable works on political economy, has recorded as proofs of the happy death of a no less celebrated contemporary, that he cheerfully amused himself in his last hours with *Lucian, a game of whist*, and some good humoured drollery upon *Charon* and his boat.

But may we not venture to say, with 'one of the people called Christians,'* himself a wit and philosopher, though of the school of Christ, that the man who could meet death in such a frame of mind, 'might smile over Babylon in ruins, esteem the earthquake which destroyed Lisbon an agreeable occurrence, and congratulate the hardened Pharaoh on his overthrow in the Red Sea.'

This eminent historian and philosoper, whose great intellectual powers it is as impossible not to admire, as not to lament their unhappy misapplication, has been eulogized by his friend, as coming nearer than almost any other man, to the perfection of human nature in his life; and has been almost deified for the cool courage and heroic firmness with which he met death. His eloquent panegyrist, with as insidious an inuendo as has ever been thrown out against revealed religion, goes on to observe, that 'perhaps it is one of the very worst circumstances against Christianity, that very few of its professors were ever either so moral, so humane, or could so philosophically govern their passions, as the sceptical David Hume.'

Yet notwithstanding this rich embalming of so noble a compound of 'matter and motion,' we must be permitted to doubt one of the two things presented for our admiration; we must either doubt the so much boasted happiness of his death, or the so much extolled humanity of his heart. We must be permitted to suspect the soundness of that benevolence which led him to devote his latest hours to prepare, under the label of *an Essay on Suicide*, a potion for posterity of so deleterious a quality, that if taken by the patient, under all the circumstances in which he undertakes to prove it innocent, might have gone near to effect the extinction of the whole human race. For if all rational beings, according to this posthumous prescription, are at liberty to procure their own release from life, 'under pain or sickness, shame or poverty,' how large a portion of the world would be authorized to quit it uncalled! For how many are subject to the two latter grievances; from the two former how few are altogether exempt!*

The energy of that ambition which could concentrate the last efforts of a powerful mind, the last exertions of a spirit greedy of fame, into a project not only for destroying the souls, but for abridging the lives of his fellow creatures, leaves at a disgraceful distance the inverted thirst of glory of the man, who to immortalize his own name, set fire to the Temple at Ephesus. Such a burning zeal to annihilate the eternal hope of his fellow creatures might be philosophy; but surely to authorise them to curtail their moral existence, which to the infidel who looks for no other, must be invaluable, was not philanthropy.

But if this death was thought worthy of being blazoned to the public eye in all the warm and glowing colours with which affection decorates panegyric; the disciples of the same school have been in general, anxiously solicitous to produce only the more creditable instances of invincible hardness of heart, while they have laboured to cast an impenetrable veil over the closing scene of those among the less inflexible of the fraternity, who have established in their departing moments, any symptoms of doubt, any indica-

* The late excellent Bishop Horne. See his letters to Dr Adam Smith.

* Another part of the *Essay on Suicide*, has this passage,—'Whenever pain or sorrow so far overcome my patience, as to make me tired of life, I may conclude that I am recalled from my station in the plainest and most express terms.' And again—'When I fall upon my own sword, I receive my death equally from the hands of the Deity, as if it had proceeded from a lion, a precipice, or a fever.' And again—'Where is the crime of turning a few ounces of blood from their natural channel.'

tions of distrust, respecting the validity of their principles:—Principles which they had long maintained with so much zeal, and disseminated with so much industry.

In spite of the sedulous anxiety of his satellites to conceal the clouded setting of the great luminary of modern infidelity, from which so many minor stars have filled their little urns, and then set up for original lights themselves; in spite of the pains taken—for we must drop metaphor—to shroud from all eyes, except those of the initiated, the terror and dismay with which the Philosopher of Geneva met death, met his summons to appear before that God whose providence he had ridiculed, that Saviour whose character and offices he had vilified,—the secret was betrayed. In spite of the precautions taken by his associates to bury in congenial darkness the agonies which in his last hours contradicted the audacious blasphemies of a laborious life spent in their propagation, at last like his great instigator, he *believed and trembled.*

Whatever the sage of Ferney might be in the eyes of Journalists, of Academicians, of Encyclopœdists, of the Royal Author of Berlin, of Revolutionists in the egg of his own hatching, of full grown infidels of his own spawning; of a world into which he had been for more than half a century industriously infusing a venom, the effects of which will be long felt, the expiring philosopher was no object of veneration to his NURSE.—She could have recorded 'a tale to harrow up the soul,' the horrors of which were sedulously attempted to be consigned to oblivion. But for this woman and a few other unbribed witnesses, his friends would probably have endeavoured to edify the world with this addition to the brilliant catalogue of *happy deaths.**

It has been a not uncommon opinion that the works of an able and truly pious Christian, by their happy tendency to awaken the careless and to convince the unbelieving, may, even for ages after the excellent author is entered into his eternal rest, by the accession of new converts which they bring to Christianity, continue to add increasing brightness to the crown of the already glorified saint. If this be true, how shall imagination presume to conceive, much less how shall language express, what must be expected in the contrary case? How shall we dare turn our thoughts to the progressive torments which may be ever heaping on the heads of those unhappy men of genius, who have devoted their rare talents to promote vice and infidelity, continue with fatal success to make successive proselytes through successive ages—if their works last so long, and thus accumulate on themselves anguish ever growing miseries ever multiplying, without hope of any mitigation, without hope of any end!

A more recent instance of the temper and spirit which the College of Infidelity exhibits on these occasions is perhaps less generally known. A person of our own time and country, of high rank and talents, and who ably filled a great public situation, had unhappily in early life, imbibed principles and habits analogous to these of a notoriously profligate society of which he was a member, a society, of which the very appellation it delighted to distinguish itself by, is

Offence and torture to the sober ear.

In the near view of death, at an advanced age, deep remorse and terror took possession of his soul; but he had no friend about him to whom he could communicate the state of his mind, or from whom he could derive either counsel or consolation. One day in the absence of his attendants he raised his exhausted body on his dying bed, and threw himself on the floor, where he was found in great agony of spirit, with a prayer-book in his hand. This detection was at once a subject for ridicule and regret to his colleagues, and he was contemptuously spoken of as a pusillanimous deserter from the *good cause.* The phrase used by them to express their displeasure at his apostacy is too offensive to find a place here.* Were we called upon to decide between the two rival horrors, we should feel no hesitation in pronouncing this death a less unhappy one than those to which we have before alluded.

Another well known sceptic, while in perfect health, took measures by a special order, to guard against any intrusion in his last sickness, by which he might, even in the event of delirium, betray any doubtful apprehension that there might be any hereafter; or in any other way be surprised in uttering expressions of terror, and thus exposing the state of his mind, in case any such revolution should take place, which his heart whispered him might possibly happen.

But not only in those *happy deaths* which close a life of avowed impiety, is there great room for suspicion, but even in cases where without acknowledged infidelity, there has been a careless life; when in such cases we hear of a sudden death-bed revolution, of much seeming contrition, succeeded by extraordinary professions of joy and triumph, we should be very cautious of pronouncing on their real state. Let us rather leave the penitent of a day to that mercy against which he has been sinning through a whole life. These 'Clinical Converts,' (to borrow a favourite phrase of the eloquent bishop Taylor,) may indeed be true penitents; but how shall we pronounce them to be so?—How can we conclude that 'they are dead unto sin' unless they are spared to 'live unto righteousness?'

* It is a well attested fact, that this woman, after his decease, being sent for to attend another person in dying circumstances, anxiously inquired if the patient was a gentleman; for that she had recently been so dreadfully terrified in witnessing the dying horrors of Mons. de Voltaire, which surpassed all description, that she had resolved never to attend any other person of that sex unless she could be assured that he was not a philosopher. Voltaire, indeed, as he was deficient in the moral honesty and the other good qualities, which obtained for Mr. Hume the affection of his friends, wanted his sincerity. Of all his other vices, hypocrisy was the consummation. While he daily dishonoured the Redeemer by the invention of unheard of blasphemies: after he had bound himself by a solemn pledge never to rest till he had exterminated his very name from the face of the earth, he was not ashamed to assist regularly at the awful commemoration of his death at the altar!

* The writer had this anecdote from an acquaintance of the noble person at the time of his death.

Happily we are not called upon to decide. He to whose broad eye the future and the past lie open, as he has been their constant witness, so will he be their unerring judge.*

But the admirers of certain *happy deaths*, do not even pretend that any such change appeared in the friends of whom they make not so much the panegyric as the apotheosis. They would even think repentance a derogation from the dignity of their character. They pronounce them to have been good enough as they were; insisting that they have a *demand* for happiness upon God, if there be any such Being; a *claim* upon heaven, if there be any such place. They are satisfied that their friend, after a life spent 'without God in the world,' without evidencing any marks of a changed heart, without even affecting any thing like repentance, without intimating that there was any call for it, DIED PRONOUNCING HIMSELF HAPPY.

But nothing is more suspicious than a *happy death*, where there has neither been religion in the life nor humility in its close, where its course has been without piety, and its termination without repentance.

Others in a still bolder strain, disdaining the posthumous renown to be conferred by survivers, of their *having* died happily, prudently secure their own fame, and changing both the tense and the person usual in monumental inscriptions, with prophetic confidence record on their own sepulchral marble, that they *shall* die not only 'HAPPY,' but 'GRATEFUL,'—the prescience of philosophy thus assuming as certain what the humble spirit of Christianity only presumes to hope.

There is another reason to be assigned for the charitable error of indiscriminately consigning our departed acquaintance to certain happiness. Affliction, as it is a tender, so it is a misleading feeling; especially in minds naturally soft, and but slightly tinctured with religion. The death of a friend awakens the kindest feelings of the heart. But by exciting true sorrow, it often excites false charity. Grief naturally softens every fault, love as naturally heightens every virtue. It is right and kind to consign error to oblivion, but not to immortality. Charity indeed we owe to the dead as well as to the living, but not that erroneous charity by which truth is violated, and undeserved commendation lavished on those whom truth could no longer injure. To calumniate the dead is even worse than to violate the rights of sepulture; not to vindicate calumniated worth, when it can no longer vindicate itself, is a crime next to that of attacking it;† but on the dead, charity, though well understood, is often mistakingly exercised.

If we were called upon to collect the greatest quantity of hyperbole—falsehood might be too harsh a term—in the least given time and space, we should do well to search for it in those sacred edifices expressly consecrated to truth. There we should see the ample mass of canonizing kindness which fills their mural decorations, expressed in all those flattering records inscribed by every variety of motive to every variety of claim. In addition to what is dedicated to real merit by real sorrow, we should hear of tears which were never shed, grief which was never felt, praise which was never earned; we should see what is raised by the decent demands of connexion, by tender, but undiscerning friendship, by poetic licence, by eloquent gratitude for testamentary favours.

It is an amiable though not a correct feeling in human nature, that, fancying we have not done justice to certain characters during their lives, we run into the error of supposed compensation by over estimating them after their decease.

On account of neighbourhood, affinity, long acquaintance, or some pleasing qualities, we may have entertained a kindness for many persons, of whose state however, while they lived, we could not with the utmost stretch of charity think favourably. If their sickness has been long and severe, our compassion having been kept by that circumstance in a state of continued excitement, though we lament their death, yet we feel thankful that their suffering is at an end. Forgetting our former opinion, and the course of life on which it was framed, we fall into all the common-place of consolation,—'God is merciful!—we trust that they are at rest—what a happy release they have had!'—Nay, it is well if we do not go so far as to entertain a kind of vague belief that their better qualities joined to their sufferings have, on the whole, ensured their felicity.

Thus at once losing sight of that word of God which cannot lie, of our former regrets on their subject, losing the remembrance of their defective principles and thoughtless conduct; without any reasonable ground for altering our opinion, any pretence for entertaining a better hope—we assume that they are happy. We reason as if we believed that the suffering of the body had purchased the salvation of the soul, as if it had rendered any doubt almost criminal. We seem

* The primitive church carried their incredulity of the appearances of repentance so far as to require not only years of sorrow for sin, but perseverance in piety, before they would admit offenders to their communion; and as a test of their sincerity, required the uniform practice of those virtues most opposite to their former vices. Were this made the criterion now, we should not so often hear such flaming accounts of converts, so exultingly reported, before time has been allowed to try their stability. More especially we should not hear of so many triumphant relations of death-bed converts, in whom the symptoms must frequently be too equivocal to admit the positive decision of human wisdom.

† What a generous instance of that disinterested attachment which survives the grave of its object and piously rescues his reputation from the assaults of malignity, was given by the late excellent bishop Porteus, in his animated defence of archbishop Secker! May his own fair fame never stand in need of any such warm vindication, which, however, it could not fail to find in the bosom of every good man!—The fine talents of this lamented prelate, uniformly devoted to the purposes for which God gave them—his life directed to those duties to which his high professional station called him—his Christian graces—those engaging manners which shed a soft lustre on the firm fidelity of his friendships—that kindness which was ever flowing from his heart to his lips—the benignity and candour which distinguished not his conversation only, but his conduct—these and all those amiable qualities, that gentle temper and correct cheerfulness with which he adorned society, will ever endear his memory to all who knew him intimately; and let his friends remember, that to imitate his virtues, will be the best proof of their remembering them

to make ourselves easy on the falsest ground imaginable, not because we believe their hearts were changed, but because they are now beyond all possibility of change.

But surely the mere circumstance of death will not have rendered them fit for that heaven for which we before feared they were unfit. Far be it from us, indeed, blind and sinful as we are, to pass sentence upon *them*, to pass sentence upon *any*. We dare not venture to pronounce what may have passed between God and their souls, even at the last hour. We know that infinite mercy is not restricted to times or seasons; to an early or a late repentance: we know not but in that little interval their peace was made, their pardon granted, through the atoning blood, and powerful intercession of their Redeemer. Nor should we too scrupulously pry into the state of others, never, indeed, except to benefit them or ourselves; we should rather imitate the example of Christ, who at once gave an admirable lesson of meekness and charitable judgment, when avoiding an answer which might have led to fruitless discussion, he gave a reproof under the shape of an exhortation. In reply to the inquiry, 'Are there few that be saved,' he thus checked vain curiosity—'Strive (you) to enter in at the strait gate.' On another occasion, in the same spirit, he corrected inquisitiveness, not by an answer, but by an interrogation and a precept—'What is that to thee? Follow thou me.'

But where there is strong ground to apprehend that the contrary may have been the case, it is very dangerous to pronounce peremptorily on the safety of the dead. Because if we allow ourselves to be fully persuaded that they are entered upon a state of happiness, it will naturally and fatally tempt us to lower our own standard. If we are ready to conclude that *they* are now in a state of glory whose principles we believed to be incorrect, whose practice, to say the least of it, we know to have been negligent, who, without our indulging a censorious or a presumptuous spirit, we thought lived in a state of mind, and a course of habits, not only far from right, but even avowedly inferior to our own; will not this lead to the conclusion, either that we ourselves, standing on so much higher ground, are in a very advanced state of grace, or that a much lower than ours may be a state of safety? And will not such a belief tend to slacken our endeavours, and to lower our tone, both of faith and practice?

By this conclusion we contradict the affecting assertion of a very sublime poet,

> For us they sicken and for us they die.

For while we are thus taking and giving false comfort, our friend as to us will have died in vain. Instead of his death having operated as a warning voice, to rouse us to a more animated piety, it will be rather likely to lull us into a dangerous security. If our affection has so blinded our judgment, we shall by a false candour to another, sink into a false peace ourselves.

It will be a wounding circumstance to the feelings of surviving friendship, to see a person of loose habits, whom though we love, yet we feared to admonish, and that because we loved him; for whom, though we saw his danger, yet perhaps we neglected to pray; to see him brought to that ultimate and fixed state in which admonition is impossible, in which prayer is not only fruitless, but unlawful.

Another distressing circumstance frequently occurs. We meet with affectionate but irreligious parents, who though kind and perhaps amiable, have neither lived themselves, nor educated their families in Christian principles, nor in habits of Christian piety. A child at the age of maturity dies. Deep is the affliction of the doting parent. The world is a blank. He looks round for comfort where he has been accustomed to look for it among his friends. He finds it not. He looks up for it where he has not been accustomed to seek it. Neither his heart nor his treasure has been laid up in heaven. Yet a paroxysm, of what may be termed natural devotion, gives to his grief an air of piety. The first cry of anguish is commonly religious.

The lamented object perhaps, through utter ignorance of the awful gulf which was opening to receive him, added to a tranquil temper, might have expired without evincing any great distress, and his *happy death* is industriously proclaimed through the neighbourhood, and the mourning parents have only to wish that their latter end may be like his. They cheat at once their sorrow and their souls, with the soothing notion that they shall soon meet their beloved child in Heaven. Of this they persuade themselves as firmly and as fondly, as if both they and the object of their grief had been living in the way which leads thither. Oh, for that unbought treasure, a sincere, a real friend, who might lay hold on the propitious moment! When the heart is softened by sorrow, it might possibly, if ever, be led to its true remedy. This would indeed be a more unequivocal, because more painful act of friendship than pouring in the lulling opiate of false consolation, which we are too ready to administer, because it saves our own feelings, while it sooths, without healing, those of the mourner.

But perhaps the integrity of the friend conquers his timidity. Alas! he is honestly explicit to unattending or to offended ears. They refuse to hear the voice of the charmer. But if the mourners will not endure the voice of exhortation now, while there is hope, how will they endure the sound of the last trumpet when hope is at an end? If they will not bear the gentle whisper of friendship, how will they bear the voice of the accusing angel, the terrible sentence of the incensed Judge? If private reproof be intolerable, how will they stand the being made a spectacle to angels and to men, even to the whole assembled universe, to the whole creation of God?

But instead of converting the friendly warning to their eternal benefit, they are probably wholly bent on their own vindication. Still their character is dearer to them than their soul. 'We never,' say they, 'were any man's enemy.' Yes—you have been the enemy of all to whom you have given a bad example. You have especially been the enemy to your children in whom

you have implanted no christian principles. Still they insist with the prophet that 'there is no iniquity in them that can be called iniquity.' 'We have wronged no one,' say they, 'we have given to every one his due. We have done our duty.' Your first duty was to God. You have robbed your Maker of the service due to Him. You have robbed your Redeemer of the souls he died to save. You have robbed your own soul and too probably the souls of those whom you have so wretchedly educated, of eternal happiness.

Thus the flashes of religion which darted in upon their conscience in the first burst of sorrow, too frequently die away; they expire before the grief which kindled them. They resort again to their old resource, the world, which if it cannot soon heal their sorrow, at least soon diverts it.

To shut our eyes upon death as an object of terror or of hope, and to consider it only as a release or an extinction, is viewing it under a character which is not its own. But to get rid of the idea at any rate, and then boast that we do not fear the thing we do not think of is not difficult. Nor is it difficult to think of it without alarm if we do not include its consequences. But to him who frequently repeats, not mechanically, but devoutly, 'we know that THOU shalt come to be our Judge,' death cannot be a matter of indifference.

Another cause of these *happy deaths* is that many think salvation a slight thing, that heaven is cheaply obtained, that a merciful God is easily pleased, that we are Christians, and that mercy comes of course to those who have always professed to believe that Christ died to purchase it for them. This notion of God being more merciful than he has any where declared himself to be, instead of inspiring them with more gratitude to him, inspires more confidence in themselves. This corrupt faith generates a corrupt morality. It leads to this strange consequence, not to make them love God better, but to venture on offending him more.

People talk as if the act of death made a complete change in the nature, as well as in the condition of man. Death is the vehicle to another state of being, but possesses no power to qualify us for that state. In conveying us to a new world it does not give us a new heart. It puts the unalterable stamp of decision on the character, but does not transform it into a character diametrically opposite.

Our affections themselves will be rather raised than altered. Their tendencies will be the same, though their advancement will be incomparably higher. They will be exalted in their degree, but not changed in their nature. They will be purified from all earthly mixtures, cleansed from all human pollutions, the principle will be cleared from its imperfections, but it will not become another principle. He that is unholy will not be made holy by death. The heart will not have a new object to seek, but will be directed more intensely to the same object.

They who love God here will love him far more in heaven, because they will know him far better. There he will reign without a competitor. They who served him here in sincerity will there serve him in perfection. If 'the pure in heart shall see God,' let us remember that this purity is not to be contracted after we have been admitted to its remuneration. The beatitude is pledged as a reward for the purity, not as a qualification for it. Purity will be sublimated in heaven, but will not begin to be produced there. It is to be acquired by passing through the refiner's fire here, not through the penal and expiatory fire which human ingenuity devised to purge offending man

From the foul deeds done in his days of nature.

The extricated spirit will be separated from the feculence of all that belongs to sin, to sense, to self. We shall indeed find ourselves new, because spiritualized beings; but if the cast of the mind were not in a great measure the same, how should we retain our identity? The soul will there become that which it here desired to be, that which it mourned because it was so far from being. It will have obtained that complete victory over its corruptions which it here only desired, which it here only struggled to obtain.

Here our love of spiritual things is superinduced, there it will be our natural frame. The impression of God on our hearts will be stamped deeper, but it will not be a different impression. Our obedience will be more voluntary, because there will be no rival propensities to obstruct it. It will be more entire, because it will have to struggle with no counteracting force.—Here we sincerely though imperfectly love the law of God, even though it controuls our perverse will, though it contradicts our corruptions. There our love will be complete, because our will will retain no perverseness, and our corruptions will be done away.

Repentance, precious at all seasons, in the season of health is noble. It is a generous principle when it overtakes us surrounded with the prosperities of life, when it is not put off till distress drives us to it. Seriousness of spirit is most acceptable to God when danger is out of sight, preparations for death when death appears to be at a distance.

Virtue and piety are founded on the nature of things, on the laws of God, not on any vicissitudes in human circumstances. Irreligion, folly, and vice, are just as unreasonable in the meridian of life as at the approach of death. They strike us differently but they always retain their own character. Every argument against an irreligious death is equally cogent against an irreligious life. Piety and penitence may be quickened by the near view of death, but the reasons for practising them are not founded on its nearness. Death may stimulate our fears for the consequences of vice, but furnishes no motive for avoiding it, which Christianity had not taught before. The necessity of religion is as urgent now as it will be when we are dying. It may not appear so, but the reality of a thing does not depend on appearances. Besides, if the necessity of being religious depended on the approach of death, what moment of our lives is there, in which we have any security against it? In every point of view, therefore, the same necessity for being religious

subsists when we are in full health as when we are about to die.

We may then fairly arrive at this conclusion, that there is no *happy death* but that which conducts to a *happy immortality*:—No joy in putting off the body, if we have not put on the Lord Jesus Christ;—No consolation in escaping from the miseries of time, till we have obtained a well grounded hope of a blessed eternity.

CHAP. XX.

On the Sufferings of Good Men.

Affliction is the school in which great virtues are acquired, in which great characters are formed. It is a kind of moral Gymnasium, in which the disciples of Christ are trained to robust exercise, hardy exertion, and severe conflict.

We do not hear of martial heroes in 'the calm and piping time of peace,' nor of the most eminent saints in the quiet and unmolested periods of ecclesiastical history. We are far from denying that the principle of courage in the warrior, or of piety in the saint continues to subsist, ready to be brought into action when perils beset the country or trials assail the church; but it must be allowed that in long periods of inaction, both are liable to decay.

The Christian, in our comparatively tranquil day, is happily exempt from the trials and the terrors which the annals of persecution record. Thanks to the establishment of a pure Christianity in the church, thanks to the infusion of the same pure principle into our laws, and to the mild and tolerating spirit of both—a man is so far from being liable to pains and penalties for his attachment to his religion, that he is protected in its exercise; and were certain existing statutes enforced, he would even incur penalties for his violation of religious duties, rather than for his observance of them.*

Yet still the Christian is not exempt from his individual, his appropriate, his undefined trials. We refer not merely to those 'cruel mockings,' which the acute sensibility of the apostle led him to rank in the same catalogue with bonds, imprisonments, exile and martyrdom itself. We allude not altogether to those misrepresentations and calumnies to which the zealous Christian is peculiarly liable; nor exclusively to those difficulties to which his very adherence to the principles he professes, must necessarily subject him; nor entirely to those occasional sacrifices of credit, of advancement, of popular applause, to which his refusing to sail with the tide of popular opinion may compel him; nor solely to the disadvantages which under certain circumstances his not preferring expediency to principle may expose him. But the truly good man is not only often called to struggle with trials of large dimensions, with exigencies of obvious difficulty, but to encounter others which are better understood than defined.

* We allude to the laws against swearing, attending public worship, &c.

> And duller would he be than the fat weed
> That rots itself at ease on Lethe's wharf,

were he left to batten undisturbed, in peaceful security, on the unwholesome pastures of rank prosperity. The thick exhalations drawn up from this gross soil render the atmosphere so heavy as to obstruct the ascent of piety, her flagging pinions are kept down by the influence of this moist vapour; she is prevented from soaring,

> ——————to live insphered
> In regions mild of calm and serene air,
> Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
> Which men call earth.

The pampered Christian thus continually gravitating to the earth, would have his heart solely bent to

> Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
> Unmindful of the crown *religion* gives,
> After this mortal change, to her true servants.

It is an unspeakable blessing that no events are left to the choice of beings, who from their blindness would seldom fail to choose amiss. Were circumstances at our own disposal we should allot ourselves nothing but ease and success, but riches and fame, but protracted youth, perpetual health, unvaried happiness.

All this as it would not be very unnatural, so perhaps it would not be very wrong, for beings who were always to live on earth. But for beings who are placed here in a state of trial and not established in their final home, whose condition in eternity depends on the use they make of time, nothing would be more dangerous than such a power, nothing more fatal than the consequences to which such a power would lead.

If a surgeon were to put in the hand of a wounded patient the probe or the lancet, with how much false tenderness would he treat himself! How skin-deep would be the examination, how slight the incision! The patient would escape the pain, but the wound might prove mortal. The practitioner therefore wisely uses his instruments himself. He goes deep perhaps, but not deeper than the case demands. The pain may be acute but the life is preserved.

Thus He in whose hands we are, is too good, and loves us too well to trust us with ourselves. He knows that we will not contradict our own inclinations, that we will not impose on ourselves any thing unpleasant, that we will not inflict on ourselves any voluntary pain, however necessary the infliction, however salutary the effect. God graciously does this for us himself, or he knows it would never be done.

A Christian is liable to the same sorrows and sufferings with other men: he has no where any promise of immunity from the troubles of life, but he has a merciful promise of support under them. He considers them in another view, he bears them with another spirit, he improves them to other purposes than those whose views are bounded by this world. Whatever may be the instruments of his sufferings, whether sickness, losses, calumnies, persecutions, he knows that it proceeds from God; all means are his instruments. All inferior causes operate by his directing hand.

We said that a Christian is liable to the same sufferings with other men. Might we not repeat what we have before said, that his very Christian profession is often the cause of his sufferings? They are the badge of his discipleship, the evidences of his Father's love; they are at once the marks of God's favour, and the materials of his own future happiness.

What were the arguments of worldly advantage held out through the whole New Testament, to induce the world to embrace the religion it taught? What was the condition of St. Paul's introduction to Christianity? It was not—I will crown him with honour and prosperity, with dignity and pleasure, but—I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.'

What were the virtues which Christ chiefly taught in his discourses? What were the graces he most recommended by his example? Self-denial, mortification, patience, long-suffering, renouncing ease and pleasure. These are the marks which have ever since its first appearance, distinguished Christianity from all the religions in the world, and on that account evidently prove its divine original. Ease, splendour, external prosperity, conquest, made no part of its establishment. Other empires have been founded in the blood of the vanquished.—the dominion of Christ was founded in his own blood. Most of the beatitudes which infinite compassion pronounced, have the sorrows of earth for their subject, but the joys of heaven for their completion.

To establish this religion in the world, the Almighty, as his own word assures us, subverted kingdoms and altered the face of nations. 'For thus saith the Lord of Hosts,' (by his prophet Haggai) 'yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.' Could a religion, the kingdom of which was to be founded by such awful means, be established, be perpetuated, without involving the sufferings of its subjects.

If the Christian course had been meant for a path of roses, would the life of the author of Christianity have been a path strewed with thorns? 'He made for us,' says bishop Jeremy Taylor, 'a covenant of sufferings, his very promises were sufferings; his rewards were sufferings, and his arguments to invite men to follow him were only taken from sufferings in this life, and the reward of sufferings hereafter.

But if no prince but the Prince of Peace ever set out with the proclamation of the reversionary nature of his empire—if no other king, to allay avarice and check ambition, ever invited subjects by the unalluring declaration that 'his kingdom was not of this world'—if none other ever declared that it was not dignity or honours, valour or talents that made them 'worthy of him,' but 'taking up the cross'—if no other ever made the sorrows which would attend his followers a motive for their attachment—yet no other ever had the goodness to promise, or the power to make his promise good, that he would give 'rest to the heavy laden.' Other sovereigns have 'overcome the world' for their own ambition, but none besides ever thought of making the 'tribulation' which should be the effect of that conquest, a ground for animating the fidelity of his followers—ever thought of bidding them 'be of good cheer,' because he had overcome the world in a sense which was to make his subjects lose all hope of rising in it.

The apostle to the Philippians enumerated it among the honours and distinctions prepared for his most favoured converts, not only that 'they should believe in Christ,' but that they should also 'suffer for him.' Any other religion would have made use of such a promise as an argument to deter, not to attract. That a religion should flourish the more under such discouraging invitations, with the threat of even degrading circumstances and absolute losses, is an unanswerable evidence that it was of no human origin.

It is among the mercies of God, that he strengthens the virtues of his servants by hardening them under the cold and bracing climate of adverse fortune, instead of leaving them to languish under the shining but withering sun of unclouded prosperity. When they cannot be attracted to him by gentler influences, he sends these salutary storms and tempests, which purify while they alarm. Our gracious Father knows that eternity is long enough for his children to be happy in.

The character of Christianity may be seen by the very images of military conflict, under which the Scriptures so frequently exhibit it. Suffering is the initiation into a Christian's calling. It is his education for heaven. Shall the scholar rebel at the discipline which is to fit him for his profession; or the soldier at the exercise which is to qualify him for victory?

But the Christian's trials do not all spring from without. He would think them comparatively easy, had he only the opposition of men to struggle against, or even the severer dispensations of God to sustain. If he has a conflict with the world, he has a harder conflict with sin. His bosom foe is his most unyielding enemy:

> His warfare is within, there unfatigued
> His fervent spirit labours.

This it is which makes his other trials heavy, which makes his power of sustaining them weak, which renders his conquest over them slow and inconclusive; which too often solicits him to oppose interest to duty, indolence to resistance, and self-indulgence to victory.

This world is the stage on which worldly men more exclusively act, and the things of the world, and the applause of the world, are the rewards which they propose to themselves. These they often attain—with these they are satisfied. They aim at no higher end, and of their aim they are not disappointed. But let not the Christian repine at the success of those whose motives he rejects, whose practices he dares not adopt, whose ends he deprecates. If he feel any disposition to murmur when he sees the irreligious in great prosperity, let him ask himself if he would tread their path to attain their end—if he would do their work to obtain their wages? He knows he would not. Let him then cheerfully leave them to scramble for the prizes, and jostle for the places, which the world temptingly holds

out, but which he will not purchase at the world's price.

Consult the page of history, and observe, not only if the best men have been the most successful, but even if they have not often eminently failed in great enterprizes, undertaken perhaps on the purest principles; while unworthy instruments have been often employed, not only to produce dangerous revolutions, but to bring about events ultimately tending to the public benefit; enterprizes in which good men feared to engage, which perhaps they were not competent to effect, or in effecting which they might have wounded their conscience and endangered their souls.

Good causes are not always conducted by good men. A good cause may be connnected with something that is not good, with party for instance. Party often does that for virtue, which virtue is not able to do for herself; and thus the right cause is promoted and effected by some subordinate, even by some wrong motive. A worldly man, connecting himself with a religious cause, gives it that importance in the eyes of the world, which neither its own rectitude, nor that of its religious supporters had been able to give it. Nay the very piety of its advocates—for worldly men always connect piety with imprudence—had brought the wisdom, or at least the *expediency* of the cause into suspicion, and it is at last carried by a means foreign to itself. The character of the cause must be lowered, we had almost said, it must in a certain degree be deteriorated, to suit the general taste, even to obtain the approbation of that multitude for whose benefit it is intended.

How long, as we have had occasion to observe in another connexion, had the world groaned under the most tremendous engine which superstition and despotism, in dreadful confederation, ever contrived to force the consciences, and torture the bodies of men; where racks were used for persuasion, and flames for arguments! The best of men for ages have been mourning under this dread tribunal, without being competent to effect its overthrow; the worst of men have been able to accomplish it with a word.—It is a humiliating lesson for good men, when they thus see how entirely instrumentality may be separated from personal virtue.

We still fall into the error of which the prophet so long ago complained, 'we call the proud happy,' and the wicked fortunate, and our hearts are too apt to rise at their successes. We pretend indeed that they rise with indignation; but is it not to be feared that with this indignation is mixed a little envy, a little rebellion against God? We murmur, though we know that when the instrument has finished his work, the divine employer throws him by, cuts him off, lets him perish.

But you envy him in the midst of that work, to accomplish which he has sacrificed every principle of justice, truth, and mercy. Is this a man to be envied? Is this a prosperity to be grudged? Would you incur the penalties of that happiness at which you are not ashamed to murmur?

But is it happiness to commit sin, to be abhorred by good men, to offend God, to ruin his own soul? Do you really consider a temporary success a recompence for deeds which will ensure eternal woe to the perpetrator? Is the successful bad man happy? Of what materials then is happiness made up? Is it composed of a disturbed mind and an unquiet conscience? Are doubt and difficulty, are terror and apprehension, are distrust and suspicion, felicities for which a Christian would renounce his peace, would displease his Maker, would risk his soul? —Think of the hidden vulture that feeds on the vitals of successful wickedness, and your repinings, your envy, if you are so unhappy as to feel envy, will cease. Your indignation will be converted into compassion, your execrations into prayer.

But if he feel neither the scourge of conscience nor the sting of remorse, pity him the more. Pity him for the very want of that addition to his unhappiness: for if he added to his miseries that of anticipating his punishment, he might be led by repentance to avoid it. Can you reckon the blinding the eyes and the hardening his heart, any part of his happiness? This opinion, however, you practically adopt, whenever you grudge the propensity of the wicked. God, by delaying the punishment of bad men, for which we are so impatient, may have designs of mercy of which we know nothing;—mercy perhaps to them, or if not to them, yet mercy to those who are suffering by them, and whom he intends by these bad instruments to punish, and by punishing, eventually to save.

There is another sentiment which prosperous wickedness excites in certain minds; that is almost more preposterous than envy itself,—and that is respect; but this feeling is never raised unless both the wickedness and the prosperity be on a grand scale.

This sentiment also is founded in secret impiety, in the belief either that God does not govern human affairs, or that the motives of action are not regarded by him, or that prosperity is a certain proof of his favour, or that where there is success there must be worth. These flatterers however forsake the prosperous with their good fortune; their applause is withheld with the success which attracted it. As they were governed by events in their admiration, so events lead them to withdraw it.

But in this admiration there is a bad taste as well as a bad principle. If ever wickedness pretends to excite any idea of sublimity, it must be, not in its elevation but its fall. If ever Caius Marius raises any such sentiment, it is not when he carried the world before him, it is not in his seditious and bloody triumphs at Rome, but it is when in poverty and exile his intrepid look caused the dagger to drop from the hand of the executioner;—it is when sitting among the venerable ruins of Carthage he enjoined a desolation so congenial to his own—Dionysius, in the plenitude of arbitrary power, raises our unmixed abhorrence. We detest the oppressor of the people while he continued to trample on them, we execrate the monster who was not ashamed to sell Plato as a slave. If ever we feel any thing like interest on this subject, it is not with the tyrant of Syracuse but with the school-master of Corinth.

But though God may be patient with triumphant wickedness, he does not wink or connive at it. Between being permitted and supported, between being employed and approved, the distance is wider than we are ready to acknowledge. Perhaps 'the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.' God has always the means of punishment as well as of pardon in his own hands. But to punish just at the moment when *we* would hurl the bolt, might break in on a scheme of Providence of wide extent and indefinite consequences. 'They have drunk their hemlock,' says a fine writer, 'but the poison does not yet work.' Perhaps the convulsion may be the more terrible for the delay. Let us not be impatient to accomplish a sentence which infinite justice sees right to defer; it is always time enough to enter into hell. Let us think more of restraining our own vindictive tempers, than of precipitating their destruction. They may yet repent of their crimes they are perpetrating. God may still by some scheme, intricate, and unintelligible to us, pardon the sin which we think exceeds the limits even of his mercy.

But we contrive to make revenge itself look like religion. We call down thunder on many a head under pretence, that those on whom we invoke it are God's enemies, when perhaps we invoke it because they are ours.

But though they should go on with a full tide of prosperity to the end, will it not cure our impatience that that end must come?—Will it not satisfy us that they must die, that they must come to judgment? Which is to be envied, the Christian who dies and his brief sorrows have a period, or he who closes a prosperous life and enters on a miserable eternity? The one has nothing to fear if the promises of the Gospel be true, the other nothing to hope if they be not false. The work of God must be a lie, heaven a fable, hell an invention, before the impenitent sinner can be safe. Is that man to be envied whose security depends on their falsehood? Is the other to be pitied whose hope is founded on their reality? Can that state be happiness, which results from believing that there is no God, no future reckoning? Can that state be misery which consists in knowing that there is both?

In estimating the comparative happiness of good and bad men, we should ever bear in mind that of all the calamities which can be inflicted or suffered, sin is the greatest, and of all punishments insensibility to sin is the heaviest which the wrath of God inflicts in this world for the commission of it. God so far then from approving a wicked man, because he suffers him to go on triumphantly, seems rather by allowing him to continue his smooth and prosperous course, to have some awful destiny in store for him, which will not perhaps be revealed till his repentance is too late; then his knowledge of God's displeasure, and the dreadful consequences of that displeasure, may be revealed together, may be revealed when there is no room for mercy.

But without looking to futurity—consulting only the present condition of suffering virtue,—if we put the inward consolation derived from communion with God, the humble confidence of prayer, the devout trust in the divine protection, supports commonly reserved for the afflicted Christian, and eminently bestowed in his greatest exigence; if we place these feelings in the opposite scale with all that unjust power ever bestowed or guilty wealth possessed; we shall have no hesitation in deciding on which side even present happiness lies.

With a mind thus fixed, with a faith thus firm, one great object so absorbs the Christian, that his peace is not tossed about with the things which discompose ordinary men. 'My fortune,' may he say, 'it is true, is shattered; but as I made not 'fine gold my confidence' while I possessed it, in losing it I have not lost myself. I leaned not on power, for I knew its instability. Had prosperity been my dependence, my support being removed, I must fall.'

In the case of the afflicted Christian you lament perhaps with the wife of the persecuted hero, that he suffers being innocent. But would it extract the sting from suffering, were guilt added to it! Out of two worlds to have all sorrow in this and no hope in the next would be indeed intolerable. Would you have him purchase a reprieve from suffering by sinful compliances? Think how ease would be destroyed by the price paid for it! For how short a time he would enjoy it, even if it were not bought at the expence of his soul!

It would be preposterous to say that suffering is the recompence of virtue, and yet it may with truth be asserted that the capacity for enjoying the reward of virtue is enlarged by suffering, and thus it becomes not only the instrument of promoting virtue, but the instrument of rewarding it. Besides, God chooses for the confirmation of our faith, as well as for the consummation of his gracious plans, to reserve in his own hand this most striking proof of a future retribution. To suppose that he *cannot* ultimately recompense his virtuous afflicted children, is to believe him less powerful than an earthly father; to suppose that he *will* not is to believe him less merciful.

Great trials are oftener proofs of favour than of displeasure. An inferior officer will suffice for inferior expeditions, but the sovereign selects the ablest general for the most difficult service. And not only does the king evidence his opinion by the selection, but the soldier proves his attachment by rejoicing in the preference. His having gained one victory is no reason for his being set aside. Conquest, which qualifies him for new attacks, suggests a reason for his being again employed.

The sufferings of good men by no means contradict the promises that 'Godliness has the promise of the life that now is,' nor that promise 'that the meek shall inherit the earth.' They possess it by the spirit in which they enjoy its blessings, by the spirit with which they resign them.

The belief too that trials will facilitate salvation is another source of consolation. Sufferings also abate the dread of death by cheapening the price of life. The affections even of the real Christian are too much drawn downwards. His heart too fondly cleaves to the dust, though he knows that trouble springs out of it. How would it be, if he invariably possessed present

enjoyments, and if a long vista of delights lay always open before him? He has a farther comfort in his own honest consciousness; a bright conviction that his Christian feeling under trials, is a cheering evidence that his piety is sincere. The gold has been melted down, and its purity is ascertained.

Among his other advantages, the afflicted Christian has that of being able to apply to the mercy of God: not as a new and untried, and therefore an uncertain resource. He does not come as an alien before a strange master, but as a child into the well known presence of a tender father. He did not put off prayer till this pressing exigence. He did not make his God a sort of *dernier resort*, to be had recourse to only in the great water-floods. He had long and diligently sought him in the calm; he had adhered to him, if the phrase may be allowed, before he was driven to it. He had sought God's favour while he enjoyed the favour of the world. He did not wait for the day of evil to seek the supreme Good. He did not defer his meditations on heavenly things to the disconsolate hour when earth has nothing for him. He can cheerfully associate religion with those former days of felicity, when with every thing before him out of which to choose, he chose God. He not only feels the support derived from his present prayers, but the benefit of all those which he offered up in the day of joy and gladness. He will especially derive comfort from the supplications he had made for the anticipated though unknown trial of the present hour, and which in such a world of vicissitudes, it was reasonable to expect.

Let us confess, then, that in all the trying circumstances of this changeful scene, there is something infinitely soothing to the feelings of a Christian, something inexpressibly tranquilizing to his mind, to know that he has nothing to do with events, but to submit to them; that he has nothing to do with the revolutions of life but to acquiesce in them, as the dispensations of eternal wisdom; that he has not to take the management out of the hands of Providence, but submissively to follow the divine leading; that he has not to contrive for to-morrow, but to acquiesce to-day; not to condition about events yet to come, but to meet those which are present with cheerful resignation. Let him be thankful that as he could not by foreseeing, prevent them, so he was not permitted to foresee them, thankful for ignorance where knowledge would only prolong without preventing suffering; thankful for that grace which has promised that our strength shall be proportioned to our day, thankful that as he is not responsible for trials which he has not brought on himself, so by the goodness of God these trials may be improved to the noblest purposes. The quiet acquiescence of the heart, the annihilation of the will under actual circumstances, be the trial great or small, is more acceptable to God, more indicative of true piety, than the strongest general resolutions of firm acting and deep submission under the most trying unborn events. In the remote case it is the imagination which submits: in the actual case it is the will.

We are too ready to imagine that there is no other way of serving God but by active exertions; exertions which are often made because they indulge our natural taste, and gratify our own inclinations.—But it is an error to imagine that God, by putting us in any supposable situation, puts it out of our power to glorify him; that he can place us under any circumstances which may not be turned to some account, either for ourselves or others. Joseph in his prison, under the strongest disqualifications, loss of liberty, and a blasted reputation, made way for both his own high advancement and for the deliverance of Israel. Daniel in his dungeon, not only the destined prey, but in the very jaws of furious beasts, converted the king of Babylon, and brought him to the knowledge of the true God. Could prosperity have effected the former? Would not prosperity have prevented the latter?

But to descend to more familiar instances;—It is among the ordinary, though most mysteri ous dispensations of Providence, that many of his appointed servants who are not only emi nently fitted, but also most zealously disposed, to glorify their Redeemer, by instructing and reforming their fellow creatures, are yet disqualified by disease, and set aside from that public duty of which the necessity is so obvious, and of which the fruits were so remarkable; whilst many others possess uninterrupted health and strength, for the exercise of those functions for which they are little gifted and less disposed.

But God's ways are not as our ways. He is not accountable to his creatures. The caviller would know why it is right. The suffering Christian believes and feels it to be right. He humbly acknowledges the necessity of the affliction which his friends are lamenting; he feels the mercy of the measure which others are suspecting of injustice. With deep humility he is persuaded that if the affliction is not yet with drawn, it is because it has not yet accomplished the purpose for which it was sent. The privation is probably intended both for the individual interest of the sufferer, and for the reproof of those who have neglected to profit by his labours. Perhaps God more especially thus draws still nearer to himself, him who had drawn so many others.

But to take a more particular view of the case, we are too ready to consider suffering as an indication of God's displeasure, not so much against sin in general, as against the individual sufferer. Were this the case, then would those saints and martyrs who have pined in exile, and groaned in dungeons, and expired on scaffolds, have been the objects of God's peculiar wrath instead of his special favour. But the truth is, some little tincture of latent infidelity mixes itself in almost all our reasonings on these topics. We do not constantly take into the account a future state. We want God, if I may hazard the expression, to clear himself as he goes. We cannot give him such long credit as the period of human life. He must every moment be vindicating his character against every sceptical cavil; he must unravel his plans to every shallow critic, he must anticipate the knowledge of his design before its operations are completed.

If we may adopt a phrase in use among the vulgar, we will trust him no farther than we can see him. Though he has said, 'judge nothing before the time, we judge instantly, of course rashly, and in general falsely. Were the brevity of earthly prosperity and suffering, the certainty of retributive justice, and the eternity of future blessedness perpetually kept in view, we should have more patience with God.

Even in judging fictitious compositions, we are more just. During the perusal of a tragedy, or any work of invention, though we feel for the distresses of the personages, yet we do not form an ultimate judgment of the propriety or injustice of their sufferings. We wait for the catastrophe. We give the poet credit either that he will extricate them from their distresses, or eventually explain the justice of them. We do not condemn him at the end of every scene for the trials of that scene, which the sufferers do not appear to have deserved; for the sufferings which do not always seem to have arisen from their own misconduct. We behold the trials of the virtuous with sympathy, and the successes of the wicked with indignation; but we do not pass our final sentence till the poet has passed his. We reserve our decisive judgment till the last scene closes, till the curtain drops. Shall we not treat the schemes of Infinite Wisdom with as much respect as the plot of a drama?

But to borrow our illustrations from realities.—In a court of justice the by-standers do not give their sentence in the midst of a trial. We wait patiently till all the evidence is collected, and circumstantially detailed, and finally summed up. And—to pursue the illusion—imperfect as human decisions may possibly be, fallible as we must allow the most deliberate and honest verdict must prove, we commonly applaud the justice of the jury, and the equity of the judge. The felon they condemn, we rarely acquit; where they remit judgment, we rarely denounce it.—It is only INFINITE WISDOM on whose purposes we cannot rely; it is only INFINITE MERCY whose operations we cannot trust. It is only 'the Judge of all the earth' who cannot do right. We reverse the order of God by summoning HIM at our bar, at whose awful bar we shall soon be judged.

But to return to our more immediate point—the apparently unfair distribution of prosperity between good and bad men. As their case is opposite in every thing—the one is constantly deriving his happiness from that which is the source of the other's misery, a sense of the divine omniscience. The eye of God if a 'pillar of light' to the one, 'and a cloud and darkness' to the other. It is no less a terror to him who dreads HIS justice, than a joy to him who derives all his support from the awful thought, THOU GOD SEEST!

But as we have already observed, can we want a broader line of discrimination between them than their actual condition here, independently of the different portions reserved for them hereafter? Is it not distinction enough, that the one, though sad, is safe; that the other, though confident, is insecure? Is not the one as far from rest as he is from virtue, as far from the enjoyment of quiet as from the hope of heaven, as far from peace as he is from God? Is it nothing that every day brings the Christian nearer to his crown, and that the sinner is every day working his way nearer to his ruin? The hour of death which the one dreads as something worse than extinction, is to the other the hour of his nativity, the birth-day of immortality. At the height of his sufferings, the good man knows that they will soon terminate. In the zenith of his success the sinner has a similar assurance. But how different is the result of the same conviction! An invincible faith sustains the one, in the severest calamities, while an inextinguishable dread gives the lie to the proudest triumphs of the other.

He then, after all, is the only happy man,—not whom worldly prosperity renders apparently happy, but whom no change of worldly circumstances can make essentially miserable; whose peace depends not on external events, but on an internal support; not on that success which is common to all, but on that hope which is the peculiar privilege, on that promise which is the sole prerogative of a Christian.

CHAP. XXI.

The temper and conduct of the Christian in Sickness and in Death.

THE pagan philosophers have given many admirable precepts both for resigning blessings and for sustaining misfortunes; but wanting the motives and sanctions of Christianity, though they excite much intellectual admiration, they produce little practical effect. The stars which glittered in their moral night, though bright, imparted no warmth. Their most beautiful dissertations on death had no charm to extract its sting. We receive no support from their most elaborate treatises on immortality, for want of Him who 'brought life and immortality to light.' Their consolatory discussion could not strip the grave of its terrors, for to them it was not 'swallowed up in victory.' To conceive of the soul as an immortal principle, without proposing a scheme for the pardon of its sins, was but cold consolation. Their future state was but a happy guess: their heaven but a fortunate conjecture.

When we peruse their finest compositions, we admire the manner in which the medicine is administered, but we do not find it effectual for the cure, nor even for the mitigation of our disease. The beauty of the sentiment we applaud, but our heart continues to ache. There is no healing balm in their elegant prescription. These four little words, 'THY WILL BE DONE,' contain a charm of more powerful efficacy than all the discipline of the stoic school! They cut up a long train of clear but cold reasoning, and supercede whole volumes of argument on fate and necessity.

What sufferer ever derived any ease from the subtle distinction of the hair-splitting casuist, who allowed 'that pain was very troublesome, but resolved never to acknowledge it to be an evil?' There is an equivocation in his manner of stating the proposition. He does not directly

say that pain is not an evil, but by a sophistical turn professes that philosophy will never *confess* it to be an evil. But what consolation does the sufferer draw from the quibbling nicety? 'What difference is there,' as archbishop Tillotson well inquires, 'between things being troublesome and being evils, when all the evil of an affliction lies in the trouble it creates to us?'

Christianity knows none of these fanciful distinctions. She never pretends to insist that pain is not an evil, but she does more; she converts it into a good. Christianity therefore teaches a fortitude as much more noble than philosophy, as meeting pain with resignation to the hand that inflicts it, is more heroic than denying it to be an evil.

To submit on the mere human ground that there is no alternative, is not resignation, but hopelessness. To bear affliction solely because impatience will not remove it is but an inferior, though a just reason for bearing it. It savours rather of despair than submission, when not sanctioned by a higher principle.—'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good,' is at once a motive of more powerful obligation, than all the documents which philosophy ever suggested; a firmer ground of support than all the energies that natural fortitude ever supplied.

Under any visitation, sickness for instance, God permits us to think the affliction 'not joyous but grievous.' But though he allows us to feel, we must not allow ourselves to repine. There is again a sort of heroism in bearing up against affliction, which some adopt on the ground that it raises their character, and confers dignity on their suffering. This philosophic firmness is far from being the temper which Christianity inculcates.

When we are compelled by the hand of God to endure sufferings, or driven by a conviction of the vanity of the world to renounce its enjoyments, we must not endure the one on the low principle of its being inevitable, nor, in flying from the other must we retire to the contemplation of our own virtues. We must not, with a sullen intrepidity, collect ourselves into a centre of our own; into a cold apathy to all without, and a proud approbation of all within. We must not contract our scattered faults into a sort of dignified selfishness; nor concentrate our feelings into a proud magnanimity, we must not adopt an independent rectitude. A gloomy stoicism is not Christian heroism. A melancholy non-resistance is not Christian resignation.

Nor must we indemnify ourselves for our outward self-control by secret murmurings. We may be admired for our resolution in this instance, as for our generosity and disinterestedness in other instances; but we deserve little commendation for whatever we give up, if we do not give up our own inclination. It is inward repining that we must endeavour to repress; it is the discontent of the heart, the unexpressed but not unfelt murmur, against which we must pray for grace and struggle for resistance. We must not smother our discontents before others, and feed on them in private. It is the hidden rebellion of the will we must subdue, if we would submit as Christians. Nor must we justify our impatience by saying that if our affliction did not disqualify us from being useful to our families, and active in the service of God, we could more cheerfully bear it. Let us rather be assured that it does not disqualify us for that duty which we most need, and to which God calls us by the very disqualification.

A constant posture of defence against the attacks of our great spiritual enemy, is a better security than an incidental blow, or even an occasional victory. It is also a better preparation for all the occurrences of life. It is not some signal act of mortification, but an habitual state of discipline which will prepare us for great trials. A soul ever on the watch, fervent in prayer, diligent in self-inspection, frequent in meditation, fortified against the vanities of time by repeated views of eternity, all the avenues to such a heart will be in a good measure shut against temptation, barred in a great degree against the the tempter. 'Strong in the Lord and in the power of his might,' it will be ennabled to resist the one, to expel the other. To a mind so prepared, the thoughts of sickness will not be new, for he knows it is the 'condition of the battle; the prospect of death will not be surprising, for he knows it is its termination.

The period is now come when we must summon all the fortitude of the rational being, all the resignation of the Christian. The principles we have been learning must now be made practical. The speculations we have admired we must now realize. All that we have been studying was in order to furnish materials for this grand exigence.—All the strength we have been collecting must now be brought into action. We must now draw to a point all the scattered arguments, all the several motives, all the individual supports, all the cheering promises of religion. We must exemplify all the rules we have given to others; we must embody all the resolutions we have formed for ourselves; we must reduce our precepts to experience; we must pass from discourses on submission to its exercise; from dissertations on suffering to sustaining it. We must heroically call up the determinations of our better days. We must recollect what we have said of the supports of faith and hope when our strength was in full vigour, when our heart was at ease, and our mind undisturbed. Let us collect all that remains to us of mental strength. Let us implore the aid of holy hope and fervent faith, to show that religion is not a beautiful theory, but a soul-sustaining truth.

Endeavour without harrassing scrutiny or distressing doubt, to act on the principles which your sounder judgment formerly admitted. The strongest faith is wanted in the hardest trials. Under those trials, to the confirmed Christian the highest degree of grace is commonly imparted. Impair not that faith on which you rested when your mind was strong, by suspecting its validity now it is weak. That which had your full assent in perfect health, which was then firmly rooted in your spirit, and grounded in your understanding, must not be unfixed by the doubts of an enfeebled reason and the scruples of an impaired judgment. You may not now be able to determine on the reasonableness of propositions, but you may derive

strong consolation from conclusions which were once fully established in your mind.

The reflecting Christian will consider the natural evil of sickness as the consequence and punishment of moral evil. He will mourn, not only that he suffers pain, but because that pain is the effect of sin. If man had not sinned, he would not have suffered. The heaviest aggravation of his pain is to know that he has deserved it. But it is a counterbalance to this trial to know that our merciful Father has no pleasure in the sufferings of his children; that he chastens them in love; that he never inflicts a stroke which he could safely spare; that he inflicts it to purify as well as to punish, to caution as well as to cure, to improve as well as to chastise.

What a support in the dreary season of sickness is it to reflect, that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings; that if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him, which implies also the reverse, that if we do not suffer with him, we shall not reign with him; that is, if we suffer merely because we cannot help it, without reference to him, without suffering for his sake and in his spirit. If it be not sanctified suffering it will avail but little. We shall not be paid for having suffered, as is the creed of too many, but our meetness for the kingdom of glory will be increased if we suffer according to his will and after his example.

He who is brought to serious reflection by the salutary affliction of a sick bed, will look back with astonishment on his former false estimate of worldly things. Riches! Beauty! Pleasure! Genius! Fame!—What are they in the eyes of the sick and the dying?

Riches! These are so far from affording him a moment's ease, that it will be well if no former misapplication of them aggravate his present pains. He feels as if he only wished to live that he might henceforth dedicate them to the purposes for which they were given.

Beauty! What is beauty, he cries, as he considers his own sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, and pallid countenance. He acknowledges with the Psalmist, that the consuming of beauty is 'the rebuke with which the Almighty corrects man for sin.'

Genius! What is it? Without religion, genius is only a lamp on ths gate of a palace. It may serve to cast a gleam of light on those without, while the inhabitant sits in darkness.

Pleasure! That has not left a trace behind it. 'It died in the birth, and is not therefore worthy to come into the bill of Mortality.'*

Fame! Of this his very soul acknowledges the emptiness. He is astonished how he could ever be so infatuated as to run after a sound, to court a breath, to pursue a shadow, to embrace a cloud. Augustus, asking his friends as they surrounded his dying bed, if he had acted his part well, on their answering in the affirmative, cried *plaudite*. But the acclamations of the whole universe would rather mock than sooth the dying Christian if unsanctioned by the hope of the divine approbation. He now rates at its just value that fame which was so often eclipsed by envy, and which will be so soon forgotten in death. He has no ambition left but for heaven, where there will be neither envy, death, nor forgetfulness.

When capable of reflection, the sick Christian will revolve all the sins and errors of his past life; he will humble himself for them as sincerely as if he had never repented of them before; and implore the divine forgiveness as fervently as if he did not believe they were long since forgiven. The remembrance of his former offences will grieve him, but the humble hope that they are pardoned will fill him 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

Even in this state of helplessness he may improve his self-acquaintance. He may detect new deficiencies in his character, fresh imperfections in his virtues. Omissions will now strike him with the force of actual sins. Resignation, which he fancied was so easy when only the sufferings of others required it, he now finds to be difficult when called on to practise it himself. He has sometimes wondered at their impatience, he is now humbled at his own. He will not only try to bear patiently the pains he actually suffers, but will recollect gratefully those from which he has been delivered, and which he may have formerly found less supportable than his present sufferings.

In the extremity of pain he feels there is no consolation but in humble acquiescence in the divine will. It may be that he can pray but little, but that little will be fervent. He can articulate perhaps not at all, but his prayer is addressed to one who secs the heart, who can interpret its language, who requires not words, but affections. A pang endured without a murmur, or only such an involuntary groan as nature extorts, and faith regrets, is itself a prayer.

If surrounded with all the accommodations of affluence, let him compare his own situation with that of thousands, who probably with greater merit, and under severer trials, have not one of his alleviations. When invited to the distasteful remedy, let him reflect how many perishing fellow creatures may be pining for that remedy, to whom it might be restorative, or who, fancying that it might be so, suffer additional distress from their inability to procure it.

In the intervals of severer pain he will turn his few advantages to the best account. He will make the most of every short respite. He will patiently bear with little disappointments, little delays, with the awkwardness of accidental neglect of his attendants, and, thankful for general kindness, he will accept good will instead of perfection. The suffering Christian will be grateful for small reliefs, little alleviations, short snatches of rest. To him, abated pain will be positive pleasure. The freer use of limbs which had nearly lost their activity, will be enjoyments. Let not the reader who is rioting

> In all the madness of superfluous health,

think lightly of these trivial comforts. Let him not despise them as not worthy of gratitude, or as not capable of exciting it. He may one day, and that no distant day, be brought to the same

*Bishop Hall.

state of debility and pain. May he experience the mercies he now derides, and may he feel higher comforts of safe grounds!

The sufferer has perhaps often regretted that one of the worst effects of sickness is the selfishness it too naturally induces. The temptation to this he will resist, by not being exacting and unreasonable in his requisitions. Through his tenderness to the feelings of others, he will be careful not to add to their distress by any appearance of discontent.

What a lesson against selfishness have we in the conduct of our dying Redeemer!—It was while bearing his cross to the place of execution, that he said to the sorrowing multitude, 'Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children.' It was while enduring the agonies of crucifixion that he endeavoured to mitigate the sorrows of his mother and of his friend, by tenderly committing them to each other's care.—It was while sustaining the pangs of dissolution, that he gave the immediate promise of heaven to the expiring criminal.

The Christian will review, if able, not only the sins, but the mercies of his past life. If previously accustomed to unbroken health, he will bless God for the long period in which he has enjoyed it. If continued infirmity has been his portion, he will feel grateful that he has had such a long and gradual weaning from the world. From either state he will extract consolation. If pain be new, what a mercy to have hitherto escaped it! If habitual, we bear more easily what we have borne long.

He will review his temporal blessings and deliverances; his domestic comforts, his Christian friendships. Among his mercies, his now 'purged eyes' will reckon his difficulties, his sorrows and trials. A new and heavenly light will be thrown on that passage, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' It seems to him as if hitherto he had only heard it with the hearing of his ear, but now his 'eye seeth it.' If he be a real Christian, and has had enemies, he will always have prayed for them, but now he will be thankful for them. He will the more earnestly implore mercy for them as instruments which have helped to fit him for his present state. He will look up with holy gratitude to the great Physician, who by a divine chemistry in making up events, has made that one unpalatably ingredient, at the bitterness of which he once revolted, the very means by which all other things have worked together for good; had they worked separately they would not have worked efficaciously.

Under the most severe visitations, let us compare, if the capacity of comparing be allowed us, our own sufferings with the cup which our Redeemer drank for our sakes—drank to avert the divine displeasure from us. Let us pursue the comparative view of our condition with that of the Son of God. He was deserted in his most trying hour; deserted probably by those whose limbs, sight, life, he had restored, whose souls he had come to save. We are surrounded by unwearied friends; every pain is mitigated by sympathy, every want not only relieved but prevented; the 'asking eye' explored; the inarticulate sound understood; the ill-expressed wish anticipated; the but suspected want supplied. When *our* souls are 'exceeding sorrowful,' *our* friends participate our sorrow; when desired 'to watch' with us, they watch not 'one hour,' but many, not falling asleep, but both flesh and spirit ready and willing; not forsaking us in our 'agony,' but sympathizing where they cannot relieve!

Besides this, we must acknowledge with the penitent malefactor, 'we indeed suffer justly, but this man hath done nothing amiss.' We suffer for our offences the inevitable penalty of our fallen nature. He bore *our* sins and those of the whole human race. Hence the heart-rending interrogation, 'Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.'

How cheering in this forlorn state to reflect that he not only suffered for us then, but is sympathizing with us now; that 'in all our afflictions he is afflicted.' The tenderness of the sympathy seems to add a value to the sacrifice, while the vastness of the sacrifice, endears the sympathy by ennobling it.

If the intellectual powers be mercifully preserved, how many virtues may now be brought into exercise which had either lain dormant, or been considered as of inferior worth in the prosperous day of activity. The Christian temper indeed seems to be that part of religion which is more peculiarly to be exercised on a sick bed. The passive virtues, the least brilliant, but the most difficult, are then particularly called into action. To *suffer* the whole will of God on the tedious bed of languishing, is more trying than to perform the most shining exploit on the theatre of the world. The hero in the field of battle has the love of fame as well as patriotism to support him. He knows that the witnesses of his valour will be the heralds of his renown. The martyr at the stake is divinely strengthened. Extraordinary grace is imparted for extraordinary trials. His pangs are exquisite, but they are short.'—The crown is in sight, it is almost in possession. By faith 'he sees the heavens opened. He sees the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.' But to be strong in faith, and patient in hope, in a long and lingering sickness, is an example of more general use and ordinary application, than even the sublime heroism of the martyr. The sickness is brought home to our feelings, we see it with our eyes, we apply it to our hearts. Of the martyr we read, indeed, with astonishment. Our faith is strengthened, and our admiration kindled; but we read it without that special approbation, without that peculiar reference to our own circumstances, which we feel in cases that are likely to apply to ourselves. With the dying friend we have not only a feeling of pious tenderness, but there is also a community of interests. The certain conviction that his case must soon be our own, makes it our own now. Self mixes with the social feeling, and the Christian death we are contemplating we do not so much admire as a prodigy, as propose for a model. To the martyr's stake we feel that we

are not likely to be brought. To the dying bed we must inevitably come.

Accommodating his state of mind to the nature of his disease, the dying Christian will derive consolation in any case, either from thinking how forcibly a sudden sickness breaks the chain which binds him to the world, or how gently a gradual decay unties it. He will feel and acknowledge the necessity of all he suffers to wean him from life. He will admire the divine goodness which commissions the infirmities of sickness to divest the world of its enchantments, and to strip death of some of its most formidable terrors. He feels with how much less reluctance we quit a body exhausted by suffering than one in the vigour of health

Sickness, instead of narrowing the heart—its worst effect on an unrenewed mind, enlarges his. He earnestly exhorts those around him to defer no act of repentance, no labour of love, no deed of justice, no work of mercy, to that state of incapacity in which he now lies.

How many motives has the Christian to restrain his murmurs! Murmuring offends God both as it is injurious to his goodness, and as it perverts the occasion which God has now offered for giving an example of patience. Let us not complain that we have nothing to do in sickness, when we are furnished with the opportunity as well as called to the duty of resignation; the duty indeed is always ours, but the occasion is now more eminently given. Let us not say even in this depressed state that we have nothing to be thankful for. If sleep be afforded, let us acknowledge the blessing: if wearisome nights be our portion, let us remember they are 'appointed to us.' Let us mitigate the grievance of watchfulness, by considering it as a sort of prolongation of life; as the gift of more minutes granted for meditation and prayer. If we are not able to employ it to either of these purposes, there is a fresh occasion for exercising that resignation which will be accepted for both.

If reason be continued, yet with sufferings too intense for any religious duty, the sick Christian may take comfort that the business of life was accomplished, before the sickness began. He will not be terrified if duties are superseded, if means are at an end, for he has nothing to do but to die.—This is the act for which all acts, all other duties, all other means, will have been preparing him. He who has long been habituated to look death in the face, who has often anticipated the agonies of dissolving nature; who has accustomed himself to pray for support under them, will now feel the blessed effect of those petitions which have long been treasured in heaven. To those anticipatory prayers he may perhaps now owe the humble confidence of hope in this inevitable hour. Habituated to the contemplation, he will not, at least, have the dreadful additions of surprise and novelty to aggravate the trying scene. It has long been familiar to his mind, though hitherto it could only operate with the inferior force of a picture to a reality. He will not however have so much scared his imagination by the terrors of death, as invigorated his spirit by looking beyond them to the blessedness which follows. Faith will not so much dwell on the opening grave as shoot forward to the glories to which it leads. The hope of heaven will soften the pangs which lie in the way to it. On heaven then he will fix his eyes rather than on the awful intervening circumstances. He will not dwell on the struggle which is for a moment, but on the crown which is forever. He will endeavour to think less of death than of its conqueror; less of the grave than of its spoiler; less of the body in ruins than of the spirit in glory; less of the darkness of his closing day than of the opening dawn of immortality. In some brighter moments, when viewing his eternal redemption drawing nigh, as if the freed spirit had already burst its prison walls, as if the manumission had actually taken place, he is ready exultingly to exclaim, 'My soul is escaped, the snare is broken, and I am delivered.'

If he ever inclines to wish for recovery, it is only that he may glorify God by his future life, more than he has done by the past; but as he knows the deceitfulness of his heart, he is not certain that this would be the case, and he therefore does not wish to live. Yet should he be restored he humbly resolves, in a better strength than his own, to dedicate his life to the restorer.

But he suffers not his thoughts to dwell on life. Retrospections are at an end. His prospects as to this world are at an end also. He commits himself unreservedly to his heavenly Father. But though secure of the port, he may still dread the passage. The Christian will rejoice that his rest is at hand, the man may shudder at the unknown transit. If faith is strong, nature is weak. Nay, in this awful exigence, strong faith is sometimes rendered faint through the weakness of nature.

At the moment when his faith is looking round for every additional confirmation, he may rejoice in those blessed certainties, those glorious realizations which scripture affords. He may take comfort that the strongest attestations given by the apostles to the reality of the heavenly state, were not conjectural. They, to use the words of our Saviour, spake what they knew, and testified what they had seen. 'I reckon,' says St. Paul, 'that the afflictions of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.' He said this *after* he had been caught up in the third heaven; *after* he had beheld the glories to which he alludes. The author of the Apocalyptic vision, having described the ineffable glories of the new Jerusalem, thus puts new life and power into his description.—'I John *saw* these things, and *heard* them.'

The power of distinguishing objects increases with our approach to them. The Christian feels that he is entering on a state where every care will cease, every fear vanish, every desire be fulfilled, every sin be done away, every grace perfected: where there will be no more temptations to resist, no more passions to subdue, no more insensibility to mercies, no more deadness in service, no more wandering in prayer, no more sorrows to be felt for himself, no tears to be shed for others. He is going where his devotion will be without languor, his love without alloy, his doubts certainty, his expectation enjoyment, his hope fruition. All will be perfect, for God will be all in all.

From God he knows that he shall derive immediately all his happiness. It will no longer pass through any of those channels which now sully its purity. It will be offered him through no second cause which may fail, no intermediate agent which may deceive, no uncertain medium which may disappoint. The felicity is not only certain, but perfect,—not only perfect, but eternal.

As he approaches the land of realities, the shadows of this earth cease to interest or mislead him. The films are removed from his eyes. Objects are stripped of their false lustre. Nothing that is really little any longer looks great. The mists of vanity are dispersed. Every thing which is to have an end appears small, appears nothing. Eternal things assume their proper magnitude, for he beholds them in the true point of vision. He has ceased to lean on the world, for he has found it both a reed and a spear; it has failed and it has pierced him. He leans not on himself, for he has long known his weakness. He leans not on his virtues, for they can do nothing for him. Had he no better refuge he feels that his sun would set in darkness; his life close in despair.

But he knows in whom he has trusted, and therefore knows not what he should fear.—He looks upward with holy but humble confidence to that great Shepherd, who having long since conducted him into green pastures,—having by his rod corrected, and by his staff supported him, will, he humbly trusts, guide him through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and safely land him on the peaceful shores of everlasting rest.

TRAGEDIES.

PREFACE TO THE TRAGEDIES.

I AM desirous to anticipate a censure which the critical reader will be ready to bring forward, on the apparent inconsistency between the contents of the latter part of this volume, composed of dramatic pieces, and several sentiments not unfrequently introduced in some of my writings, respecting the dangerous tendency of certain public amusements, in which dramatic entertainments will be naturally included. The candid reader will be able to solve the paradox when it is intimated at what different periods of life these different pieces were written. The dates, if they were regularly preserved, would explain that the seeming disagreement does not involve a contradiction, as it proceeds not from an inconsistency, but from a revolution in the sentiments of the author.

From my youthful course of reading, and early habits of society and conversation, aided, perhaps, by that natural but secret bias which the inclination gives to the judgment, I had been led to entertain that common, but, as I must now think, delusive and groundless hope, that the stage, under certain regulations, might be converted into a school of virtue; and thus, like many others, inferred, by a seemingly reasonable conclusion, that though a bad play would always be a bad thing, yet the representation of a good one might become not only harmless, but useful; and that it required nothing more than a correct judgment and a critical selection, to transform a pernicious pleasure into a profitable entertainment.

On these grounds (while, perhaps, as was intimated above, it was nothing more than the indulgence of a propensity), I was led to flatter myself it might be rendering that inferior service to society which the fabricator of safe and innocent amusements may reasonably be supposed to confer, to attempt some theatrical compositions, which, whatever other defects might be justly imputable to them, should at least be found to have been written on the side of virtue and modesty; and which should neither hold out any corrupt image to the mind, nor any impure description to the fancy.

As the following pieces were written and performed at an early period of my life, under the above impressions, I feel it a kind of duty (imploring pardon for the unavoidable egotism to which it leads), not to send them afresh into the world in this collection, without prefixing to them a candid declaration of my altered view. In so doing, I am fully aware that I equally subject myself to the opposite censures of two different classes of readers, one of which will think that the best evidence of my sincerity would have been the suppression of the tragedies themselves, while the other will reprobate the change of sentiment which gives birth to the qualifying preface.

I should, perhaps, have been inclined to adopt the first of these two opinions, had it not occurred to me that the suppression would be thought disingenuous; and had I not been also desirous of grounding on the publication, though in a very cursory manner, my sentiments on the general tendency of the drama; for it appeared but fair and candid to include in this view my own compositions; and thus, in some measure, though without adverting to them, to involve myself in the general object of my own animadversions.

I am not, even now, about to controvert the assertion of some of the ablest critics, that a well-written tragedy is, perhaps, one of the noblest efforts of the human mind—I am not, even now, about to deny, that of all public amusements it is the most interesting, the most intellectual, and the most accommodated to the tastes and capacities of a rational being; nay, that it is almost the only one which has *mind* for its object; which has the combined advantage of addressing itself to the imagination, the judgment, and the heart; that it is the only public diversion which calls out the higher energies of the understanding in the composition, and awakens the most lively and natural feelings of the heart in the representation.

With all this decided superiority in point of mental pleasure which the stage possesses over every other species of public entertainment, it is not to be wondered at that its admirers and advocates, even the most respectable, should cherish a hope, that, under certain restrictions, and under an improved form, it might be made to contribute to instruction as well as to pleasure; and it is on this plausible ground that we have heard so many ingenious defences of this species of amusement.

What the stage might be under another and an imaginary state of things, it is not very easy for us to know, and therefore not very important to inquire. Nor is it, indeed, the soundest logic

to argue on the possible goodness of a thing, which, in the present circumstances of society, is doing positive evil, from the imagined good that thing might be conjectured to produce in a supposed state of unattainable improvement. Would it not be more safe and simple to determine our judgment as to the character of the thing in question, on the more visible, and therefore more rational grounds, of its actual state, and from the effects which it is known to produce in that state?

For, unfortunately, this Utopian good cannot be produced, until not only the stage itself has undergone a complete purification, but until the audience shall be purified also. For we must first suppose a state of society in which the spectators will be disposed to relish all that is pure, and to reprobate all that is corrupt, before the system of a pure and uncorrupt theatre can be adopted with any reasonable hope of success. There must always be a congruity between the taste of the spectator and the nature of the spectacle, in order to effect that point of union which can produce pleasure: for it must be remembered that people go to a play, not to be *instructed*, but to be *pleased*. As we do not send the blind to an exhibition of pictures, nor the deaf to a concert, so it would be leaving the projected plan of a pure stage in a state of imperfection, unless the general corruption of human nature itself were so reformed as to render the amusements of a perfectly purified stage palatable. If the sentiments and passions exhibited were no longer accommodated to the sentiments and passions of the audience, corrupt nature would soon withdraw itself from the vapid and inappropriate amusement; and *thin*, I will not say *empty* benches, would too probably be the reward of the conscientious reformer.

Far be it from me to wish to restore that obsolete rubbish of ignorance and folly with which the monkish legends furnished out the rude materials of our early drama: I mean those uncouth pieces, in which, under the titles of *mysteries* and *moralities*, the most sacred persons were introduced as interlocutors; in which events too solemn for exhibition, and subjects too awful for detail, were brought before the audience with a formal gravity more offensive than levity itself. The superstitions of the cloister were considered as suitable topics for the diversions of the stage; and celestial intelligences, uttering the sentiments and language, and blended with the buffooneries, of Bartholomew fair, were regarded as appropriate subjects of merrimaking for a holyday audience. But from this holy mummery, at which piety, taste, and common sense, would be equally revolted, I return to the existing state of things.*

I have never perused any of those treatises, excellent as some of them are said to be, which pious divines have written against the pernicious tendency of theatrical entertainments. The convictions of my mind have arisen solely from experience and observation. I shall not, therefore, go over the well-trodden ground of those who have inveighed, with too much justice, against the immoral lives of too many stage professors, allowing always for some very honourable exceptions. I shall not remark on the gross and palpable corruptions of those plays which are obviously written with an open disregard to all purity and virtue: nor shall I attempt to show whether any very material advantage would arise to the vain and the dissipated, were they to exclude the theatre from its turn in their undiscriminated round of promiscuous pleasure. But I would coolly and respectfully address a few words to those many worthy and conscientious persons, who would not, perhaps, so early and incautiously expose their youthful offspring to the temptations of an amusement of which they themselves could be brought to see and to feel the existence.

The question, then, which with great deference I would propose, is not whether those who risk every thing may not risk this also; but whether the more correct and considerate Christian might not find it worth while to consider if the amusement in question be entirely compatible with his avowed character? whether it be entirely consistent with the clearer views of one who professes to live in the sure and certain hope of that immortality which is brought to light by the gospel?

For, however weighty the arguments in favour of the superior *rationality* of plays may be found in the scale, when a rational being puts one amusement in the balance against another; however fairly he may exalt the stage against other diversions, as being more adapted to a man of sense; yet this, perhaps, will not quite vindicate it in the opinion of the more scrupulous Christian, who will not allow himself to think that of two evils *either* may be chosen. *His* amusements must be blameless, as well as ingenious; safe, as well as rational; moral, as well as intellectual. They must have nothing in them which may be likely to excite any of the tempers which it is his daily task to subdue; any of the passions which it is his constant business to keep in order. *His* chosen amusements must not deliberately add to the "weight" which he is commanded "to lay aside;" they should not irritate the "besetting sin" against which he is struggling; they should not obstruct that "spiritual mindedness" which he is told "is life and peace;" they should not inflame that "lust of the flesh, that lust of the eye, and that pride of life," which he is forbidden to gratify. A religious person who occasionally indulges in an amusement not consonant to his general views and pursuits, inconceivably increases his own difficulties by whet-

* An enthusiast to the literature of my own country, and so jealous of its fame as grudgingly to allow its comparative inferiority in any one instance, I am yet compelled to acknowledge, that, as far as my slender reading enables me to form a judgment, the English dramatic poets are in general more licentious than those of most other countries. In that profligate reign,

"When all the Muses were debauched at court,"

the stage attained its highest degree of dissoluteness. Mr. Garrick did a great deal towards its purification. It is said not to have since kept the ground it then gained.

ting tastes and exciting appetites, which it will cut him out so much work to counteract, as will greatly overbalance, in a conscientious mind, the short and trivial enjoyment. I speak now on the mere question of pleasure. Nay, the more keen his relish for the amusement, the more exquisite his discernment of the beauties of composition or the graces of action may be, the more prudent he may perhaps find it to deny himself the gratification which is enjoyed at the slightest hazard of his higher interests; a gratification which to him will be the more dangerous, in proportion as it is more poignantly felt.

A Christian, in our days, is seldom called, in his ordinary course, to great and signal sacrifices, to very striking and very ostensible renunciations; but he is daily called to a quiet, uniform, constant series of self-denial in small things. A dangerous and bewitching, especially if it be not a disreputable pleasure, may perhaps have a just place among those sacrifices: and, if he be really in earnest, he will not think it too much to renounce such petty enjoyments, were it only from the single consideration that it is well to seize every little occasion which occurs of evidencing to himself that he is constantly on the watch; and of proving to the world, that in small things, as well as in great, he is a follower of Him who "pleased not himself

Little, unobserved, and unostentatious abstinences, are among the silent deeds of his daily warfare. And whoever brings himself to exercise this habitual self-denial, even in doubtful cases, will soon learn, from happy experience, that in many instances abstinence is much more easily practised than temperance. There is in this case no excited sensibility to allay; there is no occasional remorse to be quieted; there is no lost ground to be recovered; no difficult backing out, only to get again to the same place where we were before. This observation adopted into practice might, it is presumed, effectually abolish the qualifying language of many of the more *sober* frequenters of the theatre, "that they go but *seldom*, and never but to a *good* play." We give these moderate and discreet persons all due praise for comparative sobriety. But while they *go at all*, the principle is the same; for they sanction, by going sometimes, a diversion which is not to be defended on strict Christian principles. Indeed, their acknowledging that it should be but sparingly frequented, probably arises from a conviction that it is not *quite* right.

I have already remarked that it is not the object of this address to pursue the usual track of attacking bad plays, of which the more prudent and virtuous seldom vindicate the principle, though they do not always scrupulously avoid attending the exhibition. I impose rather on myself the unpopular task of animadverting on the dangerous effects of those which come under the description of good plays; for from those chiefly arises the danger (if danger there be), to good people.

Now, with all the allowed superiority justly ascribed to pieces of a better cast, it does not seem to be a complete justification of the amusement, that the play in question is more chaste in the sentiment, more pure in the expression, and more moral in the tendency, than those which are avowedly objectionable; though I readily concede all the degrees of distinction, and very important they are, between such compositions and those of the opposite character. But the point for which I am contending is of another and of a distinct nature; namely, that there will, generally speaking, still remain, even in tragedies, otherwise the most unexceptionable, provided they are sufficiently impassioned to produce a powerful effect on the feelings, and have spirit enough to deserve to become popular; there will still remain an essential radical defect. What I insist on is, that there almost inevitably runs through the whole web of the tragic drama (for to this least blameable half of stage composition I confine my remarks, as against comedy still stronger objections may be urged), a prominent thread of false principle. It is generally the leading object of the poet to erect a standard of honour in direct opposition to the standard of Christianity; and this is not done subordinately, incidentally, occasionally; but worldly honour is the very soul, and spirit, and lifegiving principle of the drama. Honour is the religion of tragedy. It is her moral and political law. Her dictates form its institutes. Fear and shame are the capital crimes in her code. Against these, all the eloquence of her most powerful pleaders, against these her penal statutes, pistol, sword, and poison, are in full force. Injured honour can only be vindicated at the point of the sword; the stains of injured reputation can only be washed out in blood. Love, jealousy, hatred, ambition, pride, revenge, are too often elevated into the rank of splendid virtues, and form a dazzling system of worldly morality, in direct contradiction to the spirit of that religion whose characteristics are "charity, meekness, peaceableness, longsuffering, gentleness, forgiveness." "The fruits of the Spirit" and the fruits of the stage, if the parallel were followed up, as it might easily be, would perhaps exhibit as pointed a contrast as human imagination could conceive.

I by no means pretend to assert that religion is excluded from tragedies; it is often incidentally introduced; and many a period is beautifully turned, and many a moral is exquisitely pointed, with the finest sentiments of piety. But the single grains of this counteracting principle, scattered up and down the piece, do not extend their antiseptic property in a sufficient degree to preserve from corruption the body of a work, the general spirit and leading tempers of which, as was said above, are evidently not drawn from that meek religion, the very essence of which consists in "casting down high imaginations:" while, on the other hand, the leaven of the predominating evil secretly works and insinuates itself, till the whole mass becomes impregnated by the pervading principle. Now, if the directing principle be unsound, the virtues growing out of it will be unsound also; and no subordinate merit, no collateral excellences, can operate with effectual potency against

an evil which is of prime and fundamental force and energy, and which forms the very essence of the work.

A learned and witty friend, who thought differently on this subject, once asked me if I went so far as to think it necessary to try the merit of a song or a play by the ten commandments. To this may we not venture to answer, that neither a song nor a play should at least contain any thing hostile to the ten commandments. That, if harmless merriment be not expected to advance religion, we must take care that it do not oppose it; that if we concede that our amusements are not expected to make us better than we are, ought we not to condition that they do not make us worse than they find us? If so, then, whatever pleasantry of idea, whatever gayety of sentiment, whatever airiness of expression we innocently admit, should we not jealously watch against any unsoundness in the general principle, any mischief in the prevailing tendency?

We cannot be too often reminded, that we are, to an inconceivable degree, the creatures of habit. Our tempers are not principally governed, nor our characters formed, by single marked actions; nor is the colour of our lives often determined by prominent, detached circumstances; but the character is gradually moulded by a series of seemingly insignificant but constantly recurring practices, which, incorporated into our habits, become part of ourselves.

Now, as these lesser habits, if they take a wrong direction, silently and imperceptibly eat out the very heart and life of vigorous virtue, they will be almost more sedulously watched by those who are careful to keep their consciences tenderly alive to the perception of sin (however they may elude the attention of ordinary Christians), than actions which deter by bold and decided evil.

When it is recollected how many young men pick up their habits of thinking, and their notions of morality, from the playhouse, it is not perhaps going too far to suspect, that the principles and examples exhibited on the stage may contribute in their full measure and proportion towards supplying a sort of regular aliment to the appetite (how dreadfully increased!) for duelling, and even suicide. For, if religion teaches, and experience proves, the immense importance to our tempers and morals of a regular attendance on public worship, which attendance is only required of us one day in a week; and if it be considered how much the heart and mind of the attentive hearer become gradually imbued with the principles infused by this stated, though unfrequent attendance; who, that knows any thing of the nature of the human heart, will deny how much more deep and lasting will be the impression likely to be made by a far more frequent attendance at those places where sentiments of a direct contrary tendency are exhibited; exhibited too, with every addition which can charm the imagination and captivate the senses. Once in a week, it may be, the young minds are braced by the invigorating principles of a strict and self-denying religion: on the intermediate nights, their good resolutions (if such they have made), are melted down with all that can relax the soul, and dispose it to yield to the temptations against which it was the object of the Sunday's lecture to guard and fortify it. In the one case, there is every thing held out which can inflame or sooth corrupt nature, in opposition to those precepts which, in the other case, were directed to subdue it. And this one grand and important difference between the two cases should never be overlooked, that religious instruction, applied to the human heart, is seed sown in an uncultivated soil, where much is to be cleared, to be broken up, and to be rooted out, before good fruit will be produced: whereas the theatrical seed, by lighting on the fertile soil prepared by nature for the congenial implantation, is likely to shoot deep, spread wide, and bring forth fruit in abundance.

But, to drop all metaphor.—They are told—and from whose mouth do they hear it?—that "blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, and the peacemakers." Will not these, and such like humbling propositions, delivered one day in seven only, in all the sober and beautiful simplicity of our church, with all the force of truth indeed, but with all its plainness also, be more than counterbalanced by the speedy and much more frequent recurrence of the nightly exhibition, whose precise object it too often is, not only to preach, but to personify doctrines in diametrical and studied opposition to poverty of spirit, to purity, to meekness, forbearance, and forgiveness? Doctrines, not simply expressed, as those of the Sunday are, in the naked form of axioms, principles, and precepts, but realized, imbodied, made alive, furnished with organs, clothed, decorated, brought into lively discourse, into interesting action; enforced with all the energy of passion, adorned with all the graces of language, and exhibited with every aid of emphatical delivery, every attraction of appropriate gesture. To such a complicated temptation is it wise, voluntarily, studiously, unnecessarily, to expose frail and erring creatures? Is not the conflict too severe? Is not the competition too unequal?

It is pleaded by the advocates for church music, that the organ and its vocal accompaniments assist devotion, by enlisting the senses on the side of religion; and it is justly pleaded as an argument in favour of both, because the affections may fairly and properly derive every honest aid from any thing which helps to draw them off from the world to God. But is it not equally true, that the same species of assistance, in a wrong direction, will produce an equally forcible effect in its way, and at least equally contribute in drawing off the soul from God to the world? I do not presume to say that the injury will be inevitable, much less that it will be irretrievable; but I dare repeat, that it is exposing feeble virtue to a powerful temptation; and to a hazard so great, that were the same reason applied to any worldly subject, it would be thought a folly to venture on any undertaking where the chances against our coming off unhurt were so obviously against us. Besides, if we may pursue the doctrine of chances a little farther, that is at best

playing a most unprofitable game, where, if we even could be sure that nothing would be lost, it is clear to demonstration that nothing *can* be gained; so that the certain risk is not even counterbalanced by the possible success.

It is not in point to the present design to allude to the multitude of theatrical sentiments which seem to be written as if in avowed opposition to such precepts as "Swear not at all:" "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart," &c. &c. We are willing to allow that this last offence, at least, is generally, I would it were invariably, confined to those more incorrect dramas which we do not now profess to consider. Yet it is to be feared we should not find many pieces (are we sure we can find one?) entirely exempt from the first heavy charge. And it is, perhaps, one of the most invincible objections to many tragedies, otherwise not very exceptionable, that the awful and tremendous name of the infinitely glorious God is shamefully, and almost incessantly, introduced in various scenes, both in the way of asseveration and of invocation.

Besides, the terms *good* and *bad* play are relative; for we are so little exact in our general definitions, that the character given to the piece often takes its colour from the character of him who gives it. Passages which to the decent moral man (him, I mean, who is decent and moral on mere worldly principles) are to the "purged eye" of a Christian disgusting by their vanity, and offensive by their levity, to speak in the gentlest terms.

But more especially the prime animating spirit of many of our more decorous dramas seems to furnish a strong contrast to the improved and enlarged comment of our Saviour in the New Testament, on the divine prohibition against murder in the Old, in the wo denounced against anger, as containing in itself the seed and principle of murder; anger, and its too usual concomitant, revenge, being the main spring on which some of our best tragedies turns.

The eloquent apologies, and the elaborate vindication of the crimes resulting from the point of honour and the dread of shame, and with such apologies and vindications some of our most approved pieces abound, too temptingly invite the high unbroken spirit of a warm youth, from admiring such sentiments to adopt them; and he is liable to be stimulated first to the commission of the crime, and, after he has committed it, to the hope of having his reputation cleared, by the perpetual eulogies these flattering scenes bestow on rash and intemperate bravery; on the *dignity* of that spirit which cannot brook an insult; and on that *generous* sense of wounded honour which is ever on the watch to revenge itself. And when he hears the bursts of applause with which these sallies of resentment, these vows of revenge, these determinations to destroy or be destroyed, this solemn obtesting the great Judge of hearts to witness the innocence of—perhaps a very criminal action or intention;—when, I say, a hotheaded young man witnesses the enthusiasm of admiration which such expressions excite in a transported audience, will it not operate as a kind of stimulus to him to adopt a similar conduct, should he ever be placed in similar circumstances? and will it not furnish him with a sort of criterion how such maxims would be received, and such conduct approved, in real life? For the danger does not lie merely in his hearing such sentiments delivered from the stage, but also in seeing how favourably they are received by the audience; received, too, by those persons who, should he realize these sentiments, would probably be the arbiters of his conduct. These are to him a kind of anticipated jury. The scene is, as it were, the rehearsal of an acquittal at the bar of that world whose tribunal is, perhaps, unhappily for him, considered as his last appeal; for it is not probably hazarding too much to conclude, that by the sort of character we are considering, human opinion will be looked upon as the highest motive of action, human praise as the highest reward, and human censure as an evil to be deprecated, even by the loss of his soul.

If one of the most virtuous of poets and of men, by the cool, deliberate, argumentative manner in which he makes his Roman hero destroy himself; this hero, too, a pagan, consistently illustrating by this action an historical fact, and acting in a natural conformity to his own stoical principles;—if, I say, under all these palliating circumstances, the ingenious sophistry by which the poet was driven to mitigate the crime of suicide, in order to accommodate the sentiment to the real character of his hero;—if this Christian poet, even to his own private friend and literary associate, could appear, by the specious reasoning of his famous soliloquy, to vindicate self-murder, so that the unhappy Budgell exclaimed, when falling by his own hand,

> "What Cato did, and Addison approv'd,
> Must sure be right:——"

If, I say, under all the extenuating circumstances here detailed, such a dreadful effect could be produced from a cause so little expected or intended by its author to produce it, how much more probably are similar ill consequences likely to arise from similar causes in the hands of a poet less guarded and worse principled; and whose heroes have, perhaps, neither the apology of acknowledged paganism, nor the sanction of historic truth? For Addison, who in general has made his piece a vehicle of the noblest and most patriotic sentiments, could not avoid making his catastrophe just what he has made it, without violating a notorious fact, and falsifying the character he exhibits.

Even in those plays in which the principles which false honour teaches are neither professedly inculcated nor vindicated; nay, where moreover the practices above alluded to, and especially the practice of duelling, are even reprobated in the progress of the piece; yet the hero who has

been reprieved from sin during four acts by the sage remonstrance of some interfering friend, or the imperious power of beauty; beauty, which is to a stage hero that restraining or impelling power which law, or conscience, or scripture, are to other men; still, in the conclusion, when the intrigue is dexterously completed, when the passion is worked up to its acme, and the valedictory scene is so near at hand that it becomes inconvenient to the poet that the impetuosity of his hero should be any longer restrained; when his own patience and the expostulating powers of his friend are both exhausted together, and he seasonably winds up the drama by stabbing either his worst enemy or his best benefactor, or, as it still more frequently happens, himself; still, notwithstanding his criminal catastrophe, the hero has been exhibited through all the preceding scenes as such a combination of perfections; his behaviour has been so brave and so generous (and bravery and generosity are two qualities which the world boldly stakes against both tables of the decalogue), that the youthful spectator, especially if he have that amiable warmth and sensibility of soul which lay him so peculiarly open to seduction, is too much tempted to consider as venial the sudden and unpremeditated crime to which the unresisted impulse of the moment may have driven so accomplished a character. And a little tame tag of morality, set to a few musical periods by the unimpassioned friend, is borne down, absorbed, lost, in the impetuous but too engaging character of the feeling, fiery hero; a character, the errors of which are now consummated by an act of murder, so affectingly managed, that censure is swallowed up in pity: the murderer is absolved by the weeping auditory, who are ready, if not to justify the crime, yet to vindicate the criminal. The drowsy moral at the close, slowly attempts to creep after the poison of the piece; but it creeps in vain; it can never expel that which it can never reach; for one stroke of feeling, one natural expression of the passions, be the principle right or wrong, carries away the affections of the auditor beyond any of the poet's force of reasoning to control. And they know little of the power of the dramatic art, or of the conformation of the human mind, who do not know that the heart of the feeling spectator is always at the command of the passions in the hand of a true poet; who snatches him with uncontrolled dominion

"To Thebes and Athens when he will, and where."

Now, to counteract the bias given by the passions, all the flowers of rhetoric, all the flights of mere poetry, and all the blunted weapons of logic united, are ineffectual. Of course, the concluding antidote never defeats the mischief of the piece; the effect of the smooth moral is instantly obliterated, while that of the indented passion is perhaps indelible.

Let me now for a moment turn to the younger part of that sex, to whose service I have generally devoted my principal attention. A virtuous young woman, it will be said, who has been correctly educated, will turn with abhorrence from the unchaste scenes of a loose play. It is indeed so to be hoped; and yet many plays which really deserve that character, escape that denomination. But I concede this point, and proceed to the more immediate object of my animadversions. The remark may be thought preposterous, should I observe, that, to a chaste and delicate young mind, there is in *good* plays one danger which, I will venture to assert, is almost more formidable than that which is often attached to pieces more obviously censurable. The more refined and delicate the passion of love is made to appear, the more insinuating, and, of course, the more dangerous, will the exquisite and reiterated representation of that passion be found. Now, love being the grand business of plays, those young ladies who are frequently attending them, will be liable to nourish a feeling which is often strong enough of itself, without this constant supply of foreign fuel, namely, that love is the grand business of life also. If the passion be avowedly illicit, her well-instructed conscience will arm her with scruples, and her sense of decorum will set her on her guard. While, on the other hand, the greater the purity with which the passion is exhibited, provided the exhibition be very touching and warm, the more deep and irresistible will be its effect on a tender and inexperienced heart; nay, the more likely will the passion acted on the stage be to excite a corresponding passion in the heart of the young spectatress. If she have not yet felt the passion she sees so finely portrayed, she will wish to feel it; and, the not having felt it, she will consider as something wanting to the perfection of her nature. She will ascribe the absence of it to a defect in her own heart which must be supplied, or to some untowardness in her own circumstances which must be removed. Thus her imagination will do the work of the passions, and the fancy will anticipate the feelings of the heart: the source this, of some of the most fatal disorders in the female character!

Now, to captivate such a tender and affectionate heart as that we are considering, the semblance of virtue is necessary; for, while she will conceive of criminal passion as censurable, she will be equally apt to consider even the most imprudent passion as justifiable, so long as the idea of absolute crime is kept at a distance. If the love be represented as avowedly vicious, instead of lending herself to the illusion, she will allow it ought to be sacrificed to duty; but if she thinks it innocent, she persuades herself that every duty should be sacrificed to it. Nay, she will value herself in proportion as she thinks she could imitate the heroine who is able to love with so much violence and so much purity at the same time. By frequent repetition, especially if there be a taste for romance and poetry in the innocent young mind, the feelings are easily transplanted from the theatre to the closet; they are made to become a standard of action, and are brought home as the regulators of life and manners. The heart being thus filled with the pleasures of love a new era takes place in her mind, and she carries about with her an aptitude

to receive any impression herself, and a constantly waking and active desire to make this impression in return. The plain and sober duties of life begin to be uninteresting; she wishes them to be diversified with events, and enlivened by heroes. Though she retains her virtue, her sobermindedness is impaired; for she longs to be realizing those pains and pleasures, and to be acting over those scenes and sacrifices, which she so often sees represented. If the evils arising from frequent scenic representations to a young woman were limited to this single inconvenience, that it makes her sigh to be a heroine, it would be a strong reason why a discreet and pious mother should be slow in introducing her to them.

I purposely forbear, in this place, repeating any of those higher arguments drawn from the utter irreconcileableness of this indulgence of the fancy, of this gratification of the senses, this unbounded roving of the thoughts, with the divine injunction of bringing "every thought into the obedience of Christ."

But it will be said, perhaps, all this rigour may be very suitable to enthusiasts and fanatics, to the vulgar, the retired, and the obscure: but would you exclude the more liberal and polished part of society from the delight and instruction which may be derived from the great masters of the human heart, from Shakspeare particularly?

On this subject I think myself called upon to offer my opinion (such as it is) as unreservedly as I have taken the liberty of doing on the points considered in the former part of this preface. I think, then, that there is a substantial difference between seeing and reading a dramatic composition; and that the objections which lie so strongly against the one, are not, at least in the same degree, applicable to the other. Or, rather, while there is an essential and inseparable danger attendant on dramatic exhibitions, let the matter of the drama be ever so innocent, the danger in *reading* a play arises solely from the *sentiments* contained in it.

To read a moral play is little different from reading any other innocent poem; the dialogue form being a mere accident, and no way affecting the moral tendency of the piece. Nay, some excellent poets have chosen that form on account of its peculiar advantages, even when the nature of their subjects precluded the idea of theatrical exhibition. Thus Buchanan wrote his fine tragedies of "The Baptist," and "Jephthah," Grotius that of "Christ Suffering," and Milton that of "Samson Agonistes;" not to name the "Joseph," the "Bethulia Delivered," and some other pieces of the amiable Metastasio. Nothing, therefore, could be more unreasonable, than to proscribe from the study or the closet well-selected dramatic poetry. It may be read with safety, because it can there be read with soberness. The most animated speeches subside into comparative tameness, and, provided they are perfectly pure, produce no ruffle of the passions, no agitation of the senses, but merely afford a pleasant, and, it may be, a not unsalutary exercise to the imagination.

In all the different kinds of poetry, there will be a necessity for selection; and where could safer poetical amusement be found than in the works of Racine, whose Athalia, in particular (as we have had occasion elsewhere to observe), most happily illustrates an interesting piece of scripture history, at the same time that, considered as a composition, it is itself a model of poetical perfection. I may mention, as an exquisite piece, the Masque of Comus, and, as interesting poems in the dramatic form also, the Caractacus, and Elfrida, of Mason; the passing over which pieces in the volumes of that virtuous poet, merely because they are in a dramatic form, would be an instance of scrupulosity which one might venture to say no well-informed conscience could suggest.

Let neither, then, the devout and scrupulous, on the one hand, nor the captious caviller, on the other, object to this distinction; I mean between *reading* a dramatic composition, and *seeing* a theatrical exhibition, as if it were fanciful or arbitrary. In the latter, is it the mere repetition of the speeches which implies danger? is it this which attracts the audience? No: were even the best reader, if he did not bring in aid the novelty of a foreign language, to read the whole play himself, without scenic decorations, without dress, without gesticulation, would such an exhibition be numerously, or for any length of time, attended? What then chiefly draws the multitude? It is the semblance of real action which is given to the piece, by different persons supporting the different parts, and by their dress, their tones, their gestures, heightening the representation into a kind of enchantment. It is the concomitant pageantry, it is the splendour of the spectacle, and even the show of the spectators:—these are the circumstances which altogether fill the theatre—which altogether produce the effect—which altogether create the danger. These give a pernicious force to sentiments which, when read, merely explain the mysterious action of the human heart, but which, when thus uttered, thus accompanied, become contagious and destructive. These, in short, make up a scene of temptation and seduction, of overwrought voluptuousness and unnerving pleasure, which surely ill accords with "working out our salvation with fear and trembling," or with that frame of mind which implies that "the world is crucified to us, and we to the world."

I trust I have sufficiently guarded against the charge of inconsistency, even though I venture to hazard an opinion that, in company with a judicious friend or parent, many scenes of Shakspeare may be read not only without danger, but with improvement. Far be it from me to wish to abridge the innocent delights of life, where they may be enjoyed with benefit to the understanding, and without injury to the principles. Women, especially, whose walk in life is so circumscribed, and whose avenues of information are so few, may, I conceive, learn to know the

world with less danger, and to study human nature with more advantage, from the *perusal* of selected parts of this incomparable genius, than from most other attainable sources. I would in this view consider Shakspeare as a philosopher as well as poet, and I have been surprised to hear many pious people universally confound and reprobate this poet with the common herd of dramatists and novelists. To his acute and sagacious mind every varied position of the human heart, every shade of discrimination in the human character, all the minuter delicacies, all the exquisite touches, all the distinct affections, all the contending interests, all the complicated passions of the heart of man, seem, as far as is allowed to human inspection to discern them, to be laid open. Though destitute himself of the aids of literature, and of the polish of society, he seems to have possessed by intuition all the advantages that various learning and elegant society can bestow; and to have combined the warmest energies of passion, and the boldest strokes of imagination, with the justest proprieties of reasoning, and the exactest niceties of conduct. He makes every description a picture, and every sentiment an axiom. He seems to have known how every being which *did* exist would speak and act under every supposed circumstance and every possible situation; and how every being which did *not* exist must speak and act, if ever he were to be called into actual existence.

From the discriminated, the guarded, the qualified perusal of such an author, it would be impossible, nor does it appear to be necessary, to debar accomplished and elegantly educated young persons. Let not the above eulogium be censured as too strong or too bold. In almost every library they will find his writings; in almost every work of taste and criticism, the young reader will not fail to meet the panegyric of Shakspeare. The frequent allusions to him, and the beautiful quotations from him, will, if they light upon a corresponding taste, inflame it with a curiosity to peruse all his works. Now, would it not be safer to anticipate the danger which might result from a private and unqualified perusal, for the parent to select such pieces as have in them the fewest of those corruptions, which truth must allow that Shakspeare possesses in common with other dramatic poets? For who will deny that all the excellences we have ascribed to him are debased by passages of offensive grossness? are tarnished with indelicacy, false taste, and vulgarity? This is not the place for a discussion of those faults, too obvious to be overlooked, too numerous to be detailed, too strong to be palliated. Let me, however, be permitted to observe, that though Shakspeare often disgusts by single passages and expressions (which I will not vindicate by ascribing them to the false taste of the age in which he wrote; for though that may extenuate the fault of the poet, it does not diminish the danger of the reader), yet perhaps the general tendency of his pieces is less corrupt than that of the pieces of almost any dramatist; and the reader rises from the perusal of Shakspeare without those distinct images of evil on his mind, without having his heart so dissolved by amatory scenes, or his mind so warped by corrupt reasoning, or his heart so inflamed with seducing principles, as he will have experienced from other writers of the same description, however exempt *their* works may be from the more broad and censurable vices of composition which disfigure many parts of Shakspeare. Lest I be misrepresented, let it be observed, that I am now distinguishing the general *result* arising from the *tendency* of his pieces, from the effect of particular passages; and this is the reason why a discriminated perusal is so important. For, after all, the *general disposition of mind* with which we rise from the reading of a work, is the best criterion of its utility or mischief. To the tragedies of Shakspeare, too, belongs this superiority, that his pieces being faithful histories of the human heart, and portraits of the human character, love is only introduced as one passion among many which enslave mankind; whereas by most other play writers, it is treated as the monopolizing tyrant of the heart.

It is not because I consider Shakspeare as a correct moralist and an unerring guide, that I suggest the advantage of having the youthful curiosity allayed by a partial perusal, and under prudent inspection: but it is for this very different reason, lest, by having that curiosity stimulated by the incessant commendation of this author, with which both books and conversation abound, young persons should be excited to devour in secret an author who, if devoured in the gross, will not fail, by many detached passages, to put a delicate reader in the situation of his own ancient Pistol when eating the leek; that is, to swallow and execrate at the same time.

But to conclude,—which I will do with a recapitulation of the principal objects already touched upon. That I may not be misunderstood, let me repeat that this preface is not addressed to the gay and dissolute; to such as profess themselves to be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;"—but it is addressed to the more soberminded; to those who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ; who wish to be enlightened by its doctrines, to be governed by its precepts, and who profess to be "seeking a better country, even a heavenly one." The question then which we have been asking is, whether the stage, in its present state, be a proper amusement for such a character? What it would be, if perfectly reformed, and cast into the Christian mould, we have considered as another question, which it will be time enough to answer when the reformation itself takes place.

Neither (as has been observed) is it to the present purpose to insist that theatrical amusements are the most *rational;* for the question we have undertaken to agitate is, whether they are *blameless?* In this view, the circumstance of going but *seldom* cannot satisfy a conscientious mind; for if the amusement be *right*, we may partake of it with moderation, as of other awful pleasures; if *wrong*, we should *never* partake of it.

Some individuals may urge that the amusements of the theatre never had the bad effects on their minds which they are said to have on the minds of others; but supposing this to be really the case (which however may admit of doubt), ought not such persons to reflect, that by their presence they sanction that which is obviously hurtful to others, and which must, if so, be displeasing to God?

The stage is by universal concurrence allowed to be no indifferent thing. The impressions it makes on the mind are deep and strong; deeper and stronger, perhaps, than are made by any other amusement. If then such impressions be in the general hostile to Christianity, the whole resolves itself into this short question—Should a Christian frequent it

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[In addition to what has here been advanced on the subject of theatrical amusements, the editor hopes to be excused for inserting the conclusion of Jeremy Collier's "Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage:" printed in 1699.

"These entertainments are, as it were, literally renounced in baptism. They are the *vanities of the wicked world, and the works of the devil*, in the most open and emphatical signification. *What communion has light with darkness, and what concord has Christ with Belial?* Call you this diversion? can profaneness be such an irresistible delight? Does the crime of the performance make the spirit of the satisfaction, and is the scorn of Christianity the entertainment of Christians? Is it such a pleasure to hear the scriptures burlesqued? Is ribaldry so very obliging, and atheism so charming a quality? Are we indeed willing to quit the privilege of our nature, to surrender our charter of immortality, and throw up the pretences to another life? It may be so; but then we should do well to remember that NOTHING is not in our power. Our desires did not make us, neither can they unmake us. But I hope our wishes are not so mean, and that we have a better sense of the dignity of our being. And if so, how can we be pleased with those things which would degrade us into brutes, which ridicule our creed, and turn all our expectations into romance.

"And, after all, the jest on't is, these men would make us believe their design is virtue and reformation. In good time! they are likely to combat vice with success, who destroy the principles of good and evil! Take them at the best, and they do no more than expose a little humour and formality. But then, as the matter is managed, the correction is much worse than the fault. They laugh at pedantry and teach atheism; cure a pimple, and give the plague. I heartily wish they would have let us alone. To exchange virtue for behaviour, is a hard bargain. Is not plain honesty much better than hypocrisy well dressed? what's sight good for, without substance? what is a wellbred libertine, but a wellbred knave? One that can't prefer conscience to pleasure, without calling himself fool; and will sell his friend, or his father, if need be, for his convenience.

"In short: nothing can be more disserviceable to probity and religion than the management of the STAGE. It cherishes those passions, and rewards those vices, which 'tis the business of reason to discountenance. It strikes at the root of principle, draws off the inclinations from virtue, and spoils good education. It is the most effectual means to emasculate people's spirits, and debauch their manners. How *many* of the unwary have these sirens devoured? and how often has the best blood been tainted with this infection? what disappointments of parents, what confusion in families, and what beggary in estates, have been hence occasioned? and, which is still worse, the mischief spreads daily, and the malignity grows more envenomed. The fever works up towards madness, and will scarcely endure to be touched. And what hope is there of health, when the patient strikes in with the disease, and flies in the face of the remedy? Can religion retrieve us? yes, when we don't despise it. But while our notions are naught, our lives will hardly be otherwise. What can the assistance of the church signify to those who are more ready to rally the preacher, than practise the sermon? to those who are overgrown with pleasure, and hardened in ill custom? who have neither patience to hear, nor conscience to take hold of? you may almost as well feed a man without a mouth, as give advice where there's no disposition to receive it. It is true, as long as there is life there's hope. Sometimes the force of argument, and the grace of God, and the anguish of affliction, may strike through the prejudice, and make their way into the soul. But these circumstances don't always meet, and then the case is extremely dangerous. For this miserable temper, we may thank the STAGE, in a great measure; and, therefore, if I mistake not, they have the least pretence to favour, and the most need of repentance of all men living."]

THE INFLEXIBLE CAPTIVE:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

AS IT WAS ACTED IN 1774, AT THE THEATRE ROYAL AT BATH.

"The man resolv'd, and steady to his trust,
Inflexible to ill, and obstinately just."

TO

THE HON. MRS. BOSCAWEN.

DEAR MADAM,

IT seems somewhat extraordinary, that although, with persons of great merit and delicacy, no virtue stands in higher estimation than truth; yet, in such an address as the present, there would be some danger of offending them, by a strict adherence to it: I mean, by uttering truths so generally acknowledged, that every one except the person addressed would acquit the writer of flattery. And it will be a singular circumstance to see a dedication without praise, to a lady possessed of every quality and accomplishment which can justly entitle her to it.

I am, dear madam, with great respect,

Your most obedient, and very obliged humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

THE ARGUMENT.

AMONG the great names which have done honour to antiquity in general, and to the Roman Republic in particular, that of Marcus Attilius Regulus has, by the general consent of all ages, been considered as one of the most splendid, since he not only sacrificed his labours, his liberty, and his life, for the good of his country, but, by a greatness of soul almost peculiar to himself, contrived to make his very misfortunes contribute to that glorious end.

After the Romans had met with various successes in the first Punic war, under the command of Regulus, victory at length declared for the opposite party—the Roman army was totally overthrown, and Regulus himself taken prisoner by Xantippus, a Lacedæmonian general in the service of the Carthaginians: the victorious enemy, exulting in so important a conquest, kept him many years in close imprisonment, and loaded him with the most cruel indignities. They thought it was now in their power to make their own terms with Rome, and determined to send Regulus thither, with their ambassador, to negotiate a peace, or at least an exchange of captives, thinking he would gladly persuade his countrymen to discontinue a war which necessarily prolonged his captivity. They previously exacted from him an oath to return, should his embassy prove unsuccessful; at the same time giving him to understand, that he must expect to suffer a cruel death if he failed in it: this they artfully intimated, as the strongest motive for him to leave no means unattempted to accomplish their purpose.

At the unexpected arrival of this venerable hero, the Romans expressed the wildest transports of joy, and would have submitted to almost any conditions, to procure his enlargement; but Regulus, so far from availing himself of his influence with the senate to obtain any personal advantages, employed it to induce them to reject proposals so evidently tending to dishonour their country, declaring his fixed resolution to return to bondage and death, rather than violate his oath.

He at last extorted from them their consent; and departed amid the tears of his family, the importunities of his friends, the applauses of the senate, and the tumultuous opposition of the people: and, as a great poet of his own nation beautifully observes, "he embarked for Carthage as calm and unconcerned, as if, on finishing the tedious lawsuits of his clients, he was retiring to Venafrian fields, or the sweet country of Tarentum."

*** This piece is a pretty close imitation of the *Attilio Regolo* of Metastasio, but enlarged and extended into a tragedy of five acts. Historical truth has in general been followed, except in some less essential instances, particularly that of placing the return of Regulus to Rome posterior to the death of his wife. The writer herself never considered the plot as sufficiently bustling and dramatic for representation.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THE REV. DR. LANGHORNE.

Deep in the bosom of departed days,
Where the first gems of human glory blaze;
Where, crown'd with flowers, in wreaths immortal dress'd,
The sacred shades of ancient virtue rest;
With joy they search, who joy can feel, to find
Some honest reason still to love mankind.
There the fair foundress of the scene to-night,
Explores the paths that dignify delight;
The regions of the mighty dead pervades;
The sibyl she that leads us to the shades.
O may each blast of ruder breath forbear
To waft her light leaves on the ruthless air;
Since she, as heedless, strives not to maintain
This tender offspring of her teeming brain!
For this poor birth was no provision made,
A flower that sprung and languish'd in the shade.
On Avon's banks, forsaken and forlorn,
This careless mother left her elder born;
And though unlike what Avon hail'd of yore,
Those giant sons that Shakspeare's banners bore,
Yet may we yield this little offspring grace,
And love the last and least of such a race.
Shall the strong scenes, where senatorial Rome
Mourn'd o'er the rigour of a patriot's doom;
Where melting nature, aw'd by virtue's eye,
Hid the big drop, and held the bursting sigh,
Where all that majesty of soul can give,
Truth, honour, pity, fair affection live:
Shall scenes like these, the glory of an age,
Gleam from the press, nor triumph on the stage?
Forbid it, Britons! and, as Romans brave,
Like Romans boast one citizen to save.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Regulus.—*Mr. Henderson.*
Publius, his son.—*Mr. Dimond.*
Manlius, the Consul.—*Mr. Blissett.*
Licinius, a Tribune.—*Mr. Brown.*
Hamilcar, the Carthaginian Ambassador.—*Mr. Rowbotham.*
Attilia, daughter of Regulus.—*Miss Mansell.*
Barce, a Carthaginian captive.—*Miss Wheeler.*

Guards, Lictors, People, &c.

Scene.—Near the Gates of Rome.

ACT I.

Scene—*A Hall in the Consul's Palace.*

Enter Licinius, Attilia, *Lictors, and People.*

Lic. Attilia waiting here? Is't possible?
Is this a place for Regulus's daughter?
Just gods! must that incomparable maid
Associate here with Lictors and Plebeians?

Att. Yes, on this threshold patiently I wait
The consul's coming; I would make him blush
To see me here his suiter. O, Licinius,
This is no time for form and cold decorum;
Five lagging years have crept their tedious round,
And Regulus, alas! is still a slave;
A wretched slave, unpitied, and forgotten;
No other tribute paid his memory,
Than the sad tears of his unhappy child;
If *she* be silent, who will speak for Regulus?

Lic. Let not her sorrows make my fair unjust.
Is there in Rome a heart so dead to virtue,
That does not beat in Regulus's cause?
That wearies not the gods for his return?
That does not think all subjugated Afric,
A slender, unimportant acquisition,
If, in return for this extended empire,
The freedom of thy father be the purchase?
These are the feelings of imperial Rome;
My own, it were superfluous to declare.
For if *Licinius* were to weigh his merit,
That he's *thy father* were sufficient glory.
He was my leader, train'd me up to arms;
And, if I boast a spark of Roman honour,
I owe it to *his* precepts and *his* virtues.

Att. And yet I have not seen Licinius stir.

Lic. Ah! spare me thy reproaches—what, when late
A private citizen, could I attempt?
'Twas not the lust of power, or pride of rank,
Which made me seek the dignity of tribune;
No, my Attilia, but I fondly hop'd
'Twould strengthen and enforce the just request,
Which, as a *private* man, I *vainly* urg'd;
But now, the people's representative,
I shall *demand*, Attilia, to be heard.

Att. Ah! let us not too hastily apply
This dangerous remedy; I would not rouse
Fresh tumults 'twixt the people and the senate:
Each views with jealousy the idol, power,
Which, each possessing, would alike abuse.
What one demands, the other still denies.
Might *I* advise you, try a *gentler* method;
I know that every moment Rome expects
Th' ambassador of Carthage, nay, 'tis said
The conscript fathers are already met
To give him audience in Bellona's temple.
There might the consul at my suit, Licinius,
Propose the ransom of my captive father.

Lic. Ah! think, Attilia, who that consul is,
Manlius, thy father's rival, and his foe:
His ancient rival, and his foe profess'd:
To hope in him, my fair, were fond delusion.

Att. Yet tho' his rival, Manlius, is a *Roman:*
Nor will he think of private enmities,
Weigh'd in the balance with the good of Rome,
Let me at least make trial of his honour.

Lic. Be it so, my fair! but elsewhere make thy suit;
Let not the consul meet Attilia *here*,

Confounded with the refuse of the people.
Att. Yes, I will see him *here*, e'en *here*, Licinius.
Let *Manlius* blush, not *me : here* will I speak,
Here shall he answer me.
Lic. Behold, he comes.
Att. Do thou retire.
Lic. O, bless me with a look,
One parting look, at least.
Att. Know, my Licinius,
That at this moment I am all the *daughter*,
The filial feelings now possess my soul,
And other passions find no entrance there.
Lic. O sweet, yet powerful influence of virtue,
That charms though cruel, though unkind subdues,
And what was love exalts to admiration ! [dues,
Yes, 'tis the privilege of souls like thine
To conquer most when least they aim at conquest.
Yet, ah ! vouchsafe to think upon Licinius,
Nor fear to rob thy father of his due ;
For surely virtue and the gods approve
Unwearied constancy and spotless love.
[*Exit* LICINIUS.

Enter MANLIUS.

Att. Ah ! Manlius, stay, a moment stay, and hear me.
Man. I did not think to meet thee here, Attilia ;
The place so little worthy of the guest.
Att. It would, indeed, have ill become Attilia,
While still her father was a Roman citizen ;
But for the daughter of a slave to Carthage,
It surely is most fitting.
Man. Say, Attilia,
What is the purpose of thy coming hither ?
Att. What is the purpose, patience, pitying Heaven !
Tell me, how long, to Rome's eternal shame,
To fill with horror all the wond'ring world,
My father still must groan in Punic chains,
And waste the tedious hours in cruel bondage ?
Days follow days, and years to years succeed,
And Rome forgets her hero, is content
That Regulus be a forgotten slave.
What is his crime ? is it that he preferr'd
His country's profit to his children's good ?
Is it th' unshaken firmness of his soul,
Just, uncorrupt, and, boasting, let me speak it,
Poor in the highest dignities of Rome ?
Illustrious crime ! O glorious poverty !
Man. But know, Attilia—
Att. O, have patience with me.
And can ungrateful *Rome* so soon forget ?
Can those who breathe the air *he* breath'd forget
The great, the godlike virtues of my father ?
There's not a part of Rome but speaks his praise.
The *streets*—thro' them the *hero* pass'd triumphant :
The *forum*—there the *legislator* plann'd :
The wisest, purest laws—the senate-house—
There spoke the *patriot Roman*—there his voice
Secur'd the public safety : Manlius, yes ;
The wisdom of his counsels match'd his valour.
Enter the *temples*—mount the *capitol*—
And tell me, Manlius, to what hand but *his*
They owe their trophies, and their ornaments,
Their foreign banners, and their boasted ensigns,
Tarentine, Punic, and Sicilian spoils ?
Nay, e'en those lictors who precede thy steps,
This consul's purple which invests thy limbs,
All, all were Regulus's, were my father's.
And yet this hero, this exalted patriot,
This man of virtue, this immortal Roman,
In base requital for his services,
Is left to linger out a life in chains,
No honours paid him but a daughter's tears.
O Rome ! O Regulus ! O thankless citizens !
Man. Just are thy tears :—thy father well deserves them ;
But know thy censure is unjust, Attilia.
The fate of Regulus is felt by all :
We know and mourn the cruel woes he suffers
From barbarous Carthage.
Att. Manlius, you mistake ;
Alas ! it is not Carthage which is barbarous ;
'Tis Rome, ungrateful Rome, is the barbarian ;
Carthage but punishes a foe profess'd,
But Rome betrays her hero and her father :
Carthage remembers how he slew her sons,
But Rome forgets the blood he shed for *her :*
Carthage revenges an acknowledged foe,
But Rome with basest perfidy rewards
The glorious hand that bound her brow with laurels.
Which now is the barbarian, Rome or Carthage ?
Man. What can be done ?
Att. A woman shall inform you.
Convene the senate ; let them straight propose
A ransom, or exchange for Regulus,
To Africa's ambassador. Do this,
And heav'n's best blessings crown your days with peace.
Man. Thou speakest like a *daughter*, I, Attilia,
Must as a *consul* act ; I must consult
The good of Rome, and with her good, her glory.
Would it not tarnish her unspotted fame,
To sue to Carthage on the terms thou wishest ?
Att. Ah ! rather own thou'rt still my father's foe.
Man. Ungen'rous maid ! no fault of mine concurr'd
To his destruction. 'Twas the chance of war.
Farewell ! ere this the senate is assembled—
My presence is requir'd.—Speak to the fathers,
And try to soften *their* austerity ;
My rigour they may render vain, for know,
I am Rome's *consul*, not her *king*, Attilia.
[*Exit* MANLIUS *with the lictors*, &c.
Att. (*alone.*) This flattering hope, alas ! has prov'd abortive.
One consul is our foe, the other absent.
What shall the sad Attilia next attempt ?
Suppose I crave assistance from the people !
Ah ! my unhappy father, on what hazards,
What strange vicissitudes, what various turns,
Thy life, thy liberty, thy all depends !

Enter BARCE (*in haste*).

Bar. Ah, my Attilia !
Att. Whence this eager haste ?
Bar. Th' ambassador of Carthage is arriv'd.
Att. And why does *that* excite such wondrous transport ?
Bar. I bring another cause of greater still.
Att. Name it, my Barce.
Bar. *Regulus* comes with him.
Att. My father ! can it be ?

Bar. Thy father—Regulus.
Att. Thou art deceiv'd, or thou deceiv'st thy friend.
Bar. Indeed I saw him not, but every tongue
Speaks the glad tidings.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Att. See where Publius comes.
Pub. My sister, I'm transported! Oh Attilia,
He's here, our father—Regulus is come!
Att. I thank you, gods: O my full heart! where is he?
Hasten, my brother, lead, O lead me to him.
Pub. It is too soon: restrain thy fond impatience.
With Africa's ambassador he waits,
Until th' assembled senate give him audience.
Att. Where was he, Publius, when thou saw'st him first?
Pub. You know, in quality of Roman questor,
My duty 'tis to find a fit abode
For all ambassadors of foreign states.
Hearing the Carthaginian was arriv'd,
I hasten'd to the port, when, O just gods!
No foreigner, no foe, no African
Salutes my eye, but Regulus—my father!
Att. Oh mighty joy! too exquisite delight!
What said the hero? tell me, tell me all,
And ease my anxious breast.
Pub. Ere I arriv'd,
My father stood already on the shore,
Fixing his eyes with anxious eagerness,
As straining to descry the capitol.
I saw, and flew with transport to embrace him,
Pronounced with wildest joy the name of father—
With reverence seiz'd his venerable hand,
And would have kiss'd it; when the awful hero,
With that stern grandeur which made Carthage tremble,
Drew back—stood all collected in himself,
And said austerely, Know, thou rash young man,
That *slaves* in *Rome* have not the rights of *fathers*.
Then asked, if yet the senate was assembled,
And where? which having heard, without indulging
The fond effusions of his soul, or mine,
He suddenly retired. I flew with speed
To find the consul, but as yet, success
Attends not my pursuit. Direct me to him.
Bar. Publius, you'll find him in Bellona's temple.
Att. Then Regulus returns to Rome a slave!
Pub. Yes, but be comforted; I know he brings
Proposals for a peace; his will's his fate.
Att. Rome may perhaps refuse to treat of peace.
Pub. Didst thou behold the universal joy
At his return, thou wouldst not doubt success.
There's not a tongue in Rome but, wild with transport,
Proclaims aloud that Regulus is come!
The streets are filled with thronging multitudes,
Pressing with eager gaze to catch a look.
The happy man who can descry him first,
Points him to his next neighbour, he to his;
Then what a thunder of applause goes round;
What music to the ear of filial love!
Attilia! not a Roman eye was seen,
But shed pure tears of exquisite delight.
Judge of my feelings by thy own, my sister.
By the large measure of thy fond affection,
Judge mine.
Att. Where is Licinius? find him out;
My joy is incomplete till he partakes it.
When doubts and fears have rent my anxious heart,
In all my woes he kindly bore a part:
Felt all my sorrows with a soul sincere,
Sigh'd as I sigh'd, and number'd tear for tear:
Now favouring heav'n my ardent vows has blest,
He shall divide the *transports* of my breast.
[*Exit* ATTILIA.
Pub. Barce, adieu!
Bar. Publius, a moment hear me.
Know'st thou the name of Africa's ambassador?
Pub. Hamilcar?
Bar. Son of Hanno?
Pub. Yes! the same.
Bar. Ah me! Hamilcar!—How shall I support it! (*aside.*)
Pub. Ah, charming maid! the blood forsakes thy cheek:
Is he the rival of thy Publius? speak,
And tell me all the rigour of my fate.
Bar. Hear me, my lord. Since I have been thy slave,
Thy goodness, and the friendship of Attilia,
Have soften'd all the horrors of my fate.
Till now I have not felt the weight of bondage.
Till now—ah, Publius!—think me not ungrateful,
I would not wrong thee—I will be sincere—
I will expose the weakness of my soul.
Know then, my lord—how shall I tell thee all?
Pub. Stop, cruel maid, nor wound thy Publius more;
I dread the fatal frankness of thy words:
Spare me the pain of knowing I am scorn'd;
And if thy heart's devoted to another,
Yet do not tell it me; in tender pity
Do not, my fair, dissolve the fond illusion,
The dear delightful visions I have form'd
Of future joy, and fond exhaustless love.
[*Exit* PUBLIUS.
Bar. (*alone.*) And shall I see him then, see my Hamilcar,
Pride of my soul, and lord of all my wishes?
The only man in all our burning Afric
Who ever taught my bosom how to love!
Down, foolish heart! be calm, my busy thoughts!
If at his name I feel these strange emotions,
How shall I see, how meet my conqueror?
O let not those presume to judge of joy [gives.
Who ne'er have felt the pangs which absence
Such tender transport those alone can prove,
Who long, like me, have known disastrous love;
The tears that fell, the sighs that once were paid,
Like grateful incense on his altar laid;
The lambent flame rekindle, not destroy,
And woes remember'd heighten present joy.
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE—*The inside of the Temple of Bellona—Seats for the Senators and Ambassadors—Lictors guarding the entrance.*

MANLIUS, PUBLIUS, *and Senators.*

Man. Let Regulus be sent for to our presence;
And with him the ambassador of Carthage.
Is it then true the foe would treat of peace?
Pub. They wish at least our captives were exchang'd,
And send my father to declare their wish:
If he obtain it, well: if not, then Regulus
Returns to meet the vengeance of the foe,
And pay for your refusal with his blood:
He ratified this treaty with his oath,
And, ere he quitted Carthage, heard, unmov'd,
The dreadful preparations for his death, [men!
Should he return. O Romans! O my country-
Can you resign your hero to your foe?
Say, can you give up Regulus to Carthage?
Man. Peace, Publius, peace, for see, thy father comes.

Enter HAMILCAR *and* REGULUS.

Ham. Why dost thou stop? dost thou forget this temple?
I thought these walls had been well known to Regulus?
Reg. Hamilcar! I was thinking what I was
When last I saw them, and what now I am.
Ham. (*to the consul.*) Carthage, by me, to Rome this greeting sends;
That, wearied out, at length, with bloody war,
If Rome inclines to peace, she offers it.
Man. We will at leisure answer thee. Be seated.
Come, Regulus, resume thine ancient place.
Reg. (*pointing to the senators.*) Who then are these?
Man. The senators of Rome.
Reg. And who art thou?
Man. What mean'st thou? I'm her consul;
Hast thou so soon forgotten Manlius? [Rome,
Reg. And shall a *slave* then have a place in
Among her consuls and her senators?
Man. Yes!—For her *heroes* Rome forgets
Softens their harsh austerity for thee, [her *laws;*
To whom she owes her conquest and her triumphs. [bers.
Reg. Rome may forget, but Regulus remem-
Man. Was ever man so obstinately good? (*Aside.*)
Pub. (*rising.*) Fathers, your pardon. I can sit no longer. (*To the senators.*)
Reg. Publius, what dost thou mean?
Pub. To do my duty;
Where Regulus must stand, shall Publius sit?
Reg. Alas! O Rome, how are thy manners chang'd!
When last I left thee, ere I sail'd for Afric,
It was a crime to think of private duties
When public cares requir'd attention.—Sit,
(*To Pub.*) And learn to occupy thy place with honour.
Pub. Forgive me, sir, if I refuse obedience;
My heart o'erflows with duty to my father.
Reg. Know, Publius, that thy duty's at an end;
Thy father died when he became a slave. [senger;
Man. Now urge thy suit, Hamilcar, we attend.
Ham. Afric hath chosen Regulus her mes-
In him, both Carthage and Hamilcar speak.
Man. (*to Reg.*) We are prepar'd to hear thee.
Ham. (*to Reg.*) Ere thou speak'st
Maturely weigh what thou hast sworn to do,
Should Rome refuse to treat with us of peace.
Reg. What I have sworn I will fulfil, Ham-
Be satisfied. [ilcar.
Pub. Ye guardian gods of Rome,
With your own eloquence inspire him now!
Reg. Carthage by me this embassy has sent;
If Rome will leave her undisturb'd possession
Of all she now enjoys, she offers *peace;*
But if you rather wish protracted war,
Her next proposal is, *exchange of captives;*—
If you demand advice of *Regulus,*
Reject them both.—
Ham. What dost thou mean?
Pub. My father!
Man. Exalted fortitude! I'm lost in wonder. (*Aside.*) [breath,
Reg. Romans! I will not idly spend my
To show the dire effects of such a peace;
The foes, who beg it, show their dread of war.
Man. But the exchange of prisoners thou proposest? [nic fraud.
Reg. That artful scheme conceals some Pu-
Ham. Roman, beware! hast thou so soon forgotten?
Reg. I will fulfil the treaty I have sworn to.
Pub. All will be ruined.
Reg. Conscript fathers! hear me.— [ills,
Though this exchange teems with a thousand
Yet 'tis th' example I would deprecate.
This treaty fix'd, Rome's honour is no more;
Should her degenerate sons be promis'd life,
Dishonest life, and worthless liberty,
Her glory, valour, military pride,
Her fame, her fortitude, her all were lost.
What honest captive of them all would wish
With shame to enter her imperial gates,
The flagrant scourge of slavery on his back?
None, none, my friends, would wish a fate so vile,
But those base cowards who resign'd their arms,
Unstain'd with hostile blood, and poorly sued,
Through ignominious fear of death, for bondage;
The scorn, the laughter, of th' insulting foe.
O shame! shame! shame! eternal infamy!
Man. However hurtful this exchange may be,
The liberty, the life of Regulus,
More than compensates for it.
Reg. Thou art mistaken.—
This Regulus is a mere mortal man,
Yielding apace to all th' infirmities
Of weak, decaying nature.—I am old,
Nor can my future, feeble services,
Assist my country much; but mark me well;
The young fierce heroes you'd restore to Carthage,
In lieu of this old man, are her chief bulwarks.
Fathers! in vig'rous youth this well-strung arm
Fought for my country, fought and conquer'd for her:

That was the time to prize its service high.
Now, weak and nerveless, let the foe possess it,
For it can harm them in the field no more.
Let Carthage have the poor, degrading triumph,
To close these failing eyes; but, O, my countrymen!
Check their vain hopes, and show aspiring Afric
That heroes are the common growth of Rome.
Man. Unequall'd fortitude.
Pub. O fatal virtue! [founds me.
Ham. What do I hear? this constancy con-
Man. (*to the senators.*) Let honour be the spring of all our actions,
Not interest, fathers. Let no selfish views
Preach safety at the price of truth and justice.
Reg. If Rome would thank me, I will teach her how.
—Know, fathers, that these savage Africans
Thought me so base, so very low of soul,
That the poor, wretched privilege, of breathing,
Would force me to betray my country to them.
Have these barbarians any tortures left,
To match the cruelty of such a thought?
Revenge me, fathers! and I'm still a Roman.
Arm, arm yourselves, prepare your citizens,
Snatch your imprison'd eagles from their fanes,
Fly to the shores of Carthage, force her gates,
Die every Roman sword in Punic blood—
And do such deeds—that when I shall return
(As I have *sworn*, and am resolved to do),
I may behold with joy, reflected back,
The terrors of your rage in the dire visages
Of my astonish'd executioners. [in wonder!
Ham. Surprise has chill'd my blood! I'm lost
Pub. Does no one answer? must my father perish! [question:
Man. Romans, we must defer th' important
Maturest counsels must determine on it.
Rest we awhile:—Nature requires some pause
From high-rais'd admiration. Thou, Hamilcar,
Shalt shortly know our final resolution.
Meantime, we go to supplicate the gods.
Reg. Have you a doubt remaining? Manlius, speak.
Man. Yes, Regulus, I think the danger less
To lose th' advantage thy advice suggests,
Than would accrue to Rome in losing thee,
Whose wisdom might direct, whose valour guard her.
Athirst for glory thou wouldst rush on death,
And for thy country's sake wouldst greatly perish.
Too vast a sacrifice thy zeal requires,
For Rome must bleed when Regulus expires.
Exeunt consul and senators.

Manent REGULUS, PUBLIUS, HAMILCAR; *to them enter* ATTILIA *and* LICINIUS.

Ham. Does Regulus fulfil his promise thus?
Reg. I've promis'd to return, and I will do it.
Att. My father! think a moment.
Lic. Ah! my friend!
Lic. and *Att.* O, by this hand, we beg—
Reg. Away! no more.
Thanks to Rome's guardian gods, I'm yet a slave,
And will be still a slave, to make Rome free!
Att. Was the exchange refused? Oh! ease my fears.
Reg. Publius! conduct Hamilcar and myself
To the abode thou hast for each provided.
Att. A foreign residence? a strange abode?
And will my father spurn his household gods?
Pub. My sire a stranger?—Will he taste no more
The smiling blessings of his cheerful home?
Reg. Dost thou not know the laws of Rome
A foe's ambassador within her gates? [forbid
Pub. This rigid law does not extend to thee.
Reg. Yes; did it not alike extend to all,
'Twere tyranny.—The law rights every man,
But favours none.
Att. Then, O my father,
Allow thy daughter to partake thy fate!
Reg. Attilia! no. The present exigence
Demands far other thoughts, than the soft cares,
The fond effusions, the delightful weakness,
The dear affections 'twixt the child and parent.
Att. How is my father chang'd from what I've known him! [Regulus,
Reg. The fate of Regulus is chang'd, not I am the same; in laurels or in chains.
'Tis the same principle; the same fix'd soul,
Unmov'd itself, though circumstances change.
The native vigour of the free-born mind
Still struggles with, still conquers, adverse fortune;
Soars above chains, invincible though vanquish'd.
[*Exeunt* REGULUS *and* PUBLIUS.

ATTILIA, HAMILCAR, *going*, *enter* BARCE.

Bar. Ah! my Hamilcar.
Ham. Ah! my long-lost BARCE.
Again I lose thee; Regulus rejects
Th' exchange of prisoners Africa proposes.
My heart's too full. Oh, I have much to say!
Bar. Yet you unkindly leave me, and say nothing. [loves,
Ham. Ah! didst thou love as thy Hamilcar
Words were superfluous; in my eyes, my Barce,
Thou'dst read the tender eloquence of love,
Th' uncounterfeited language of my heart.
A single look betrays the soul's soft feelings,
And shows imperfect speech of little worth.
[*Exit* HAMILCAR.
Att. My father then conspires his own de-
Is it not so? [struction.
Bar. Indeed, I fear it much;
But as the senate has not yet resolv'd, [ment;
There is some room for hope; lose not a mo-
And, ere the conscript fathers are assembled,
Try all the powers of winning eloquence,
Each gentle art of feminine persuasion,
The love of kindred, and the faith of friends,
To bend the rigid Romans to thy purpose.
Att. Yes, Barce, I will go; I will exert
My little pow'r, though hopeless of success.
Undone Attilia! fall'n from hope's gay heights
Down the dread precipice of deep despair.
So some tir'd mariner the coast espies,
And his lov'd home explores with straining eyes;
Prepares with joy to quit the treacherous deep,
Hush'd every wave, and every wind asleep;
But, ere he lands upon the well-known shore,
Wild storms arise, and furious billows roar,
Tear the fond wretch from all his hopes away,
And drive his shatter'd bark again to sea.

ACT III.

SCENE—*A Portico of a Palace without the gates of Rome.—The abode of the Carthaginian ambassador.*

Enter REGULUS *and* PUBLIUS *meeting.*

Reg. Ah! Publius here at such a time as this? [senate
Know'st thou the important question that the
This very hour debate?—Thy country's glory,
Thy father's honour, and the public good?
Dost thou know this, and fondly linger here?

Pub. They're not yet met, my father.

Reg. Haste—away—
Support my counsel in th' assembled senate,
Confirm their wav'ring virtue by thy courage,
And Regulus shall glory in his boy. [task.

Pub. Ah! spare thy son the most ungrateful
What!—supplicate the ruin of my father?

Reg. The good of Rome can never hurt her sons.

Pub. In pity to thy children, spare thyself.

Reg. Dost thou then think that mine's a frantic bravery?
That Regulus would rashly seek his fate?
Publius! how little dost thou know thy sire!
Misjudging youth! learn, that like *other* men,
I shun the *evil*, and I seek the *good;*
But *that* I find in *guilt*, and *this* in *virtue.*
Were it not guilt, guilt of the blackest die,
Even to *think* of freedom at th' expense
Of my dear bleeding country? to me, therefore,
Freedom and life would be the heaviest evils;
But to preserve that country, to restore her,
To heal her wounds, though at the price of *life*,
Or, what is dearer far, the price of liberty,
Is *virtue*—therefore, slavery and death
Are Regulus's good—his wish—his choice.

Pub. Yet sure our country——

Reg. Is a *whole*, my Publius,
Of which we all are *parts*, nor should a citizen
Regard *his* interests as distinct from *hers;*
No hopes or fears should touch his patriot soul,
But what affect *her* honour or *her* shame.
E'en when in hostile fields he *bleeds* to save her,
'Tis not *his* blood he loses, 'tis his *country's;*
He only pays her back a debt he owes.
To *her* he's bound for birth and education:
Her *laws* secure him from *domestic* feuds,
And from the *foreign* foe her *arms* protect him.
She lends him honours, dignity, and rank,
His wrongs revenges, and his merit pays;
And, like a tender and indulgent mother,
Loads him with comforts, and would make his state
As blest as nature and the gods design'd it.
Such gifts, my son, have their alloy of *pain*,
And let th' unworthy wretch, who will not bear
His portion of the *public burden*, lose
Th' *advantages* it yields;—let him retire
From the dear blessings of a social life,
And from the sacred laws which guard those blessings;
Renounce the civiliz'd abodes of man,
With kindred brutes one common shelter seek
In horrid wilds, and dens, and dreary caves,
And with their shaggy tenants share the spoil;
Or, if the savage hunters miss their prey,
From scatter'd acorns pick a scanty meal,—
Far from the sweet civilities of life; [dom:
There let him live, and vaunt his wretched free-
While we, obedient to the laws that guard us,
Guard *them*, and live or die as they decree.

Pub. With reverence and astonishment I hear thee!
Thy words, my father, have convinc'd my reason,
But cannot touch my heart;—nature denies
Obedience so repugnant. I'm a son.

Reg. A poor excuse, unworthy of a Roman.
Brutus, Virginius, Manlius—they were fathers.

Pub. 'Tis true, they were; but this heroic
This glorious elevation of the soul. [greatness,
Has been confin'd to fathers,—Rome, till now,
Boasts not a son of such unnatural virtue,
Who, spurning all the powerful ties of blood,
Has labour'd to procure his father's death.

Reg. Then be the first to give the great example—
Go, hasten, be thyself that son, my Publius.

Pub. My father, ah!

Reg. Publius, no more; begone—
Attend the senate—let me know my fate;
'Twill be more glorious if announc'd by thee.

Pub. Too much, too much, thy rigid virtue claims
From thy unhappy son. O nature, nature!

Reg. Publius! am I a stranger, or thy father?
In either case an obvious duty waits thee;
If thou regard'st me as an alien here,
Learn to prefer to mine the good of Rome;
If as a father—reverence my commands. [soul,

Pub. Ah! couldst thou look into my inmost
And see how warm it burns with love and duty,
Thou wouldst abate the rigour of thy words.

Reg. Could I explore the secrets of thy breast,
The virtue I would wish should flourish there
Were fortitude, not weak, complaining love.

Pub. If thou requir'st my *blood*, I'll shed it all;
But when thou dost enjoin the harsher task
That I should labour to procure thy death,
Forgive thy son—he has not so much virtue.
[*Exit* PUBLIUS.

Reg. Th' important hour draws on, and now my soul
Loses her wonted calmness, lest the senate
Should doubt what answer to return to Car-
O ye protecting deities of Rome! [thage.
Ye guardian gods! look down propitious on her,
Inspire her senate with your sacred wisdom,
And call up all that's Roman in their souls!

Enter MANLIUS (*speaking*).

See that the lictors wait, and guard the en-
Take care that none intrude. [trance—

Reg. Ah! Manlius here?
What can this mean?

Man. Where, where is Regulus?
The great, the godlike, the invincible?
Oh, let me strain the hero to my breast.—

Reg. (*avoiding him.*) Manlius, stand off, remember I'm a slave?
And thou Rome's consul.

Man. I am something more:
I am a man enamour'd of thy virtues;
Thy fortitude and courage have subdued **me.**
I *was* thy *rival*—I am *now* thy *friend;*

Allow me that distinction, dearer far
Than all the honours Rome can give without it.
Reg. This is the temper still of noble minds,
And these the blessings of an humble fortune.
Had I not been a *slave*, I ne'er had gain'd
The treasure of thy friendship.
Man. I confess,
Thy grandeur cast a veil before my eyes,
Which the reverse of fortune has remov'd.
Oft have I seen thee on the day of triumph,
A conqueror of nations, enter Rome;
Now, thou hast conquer'd *fortune* and *thyself.*
Thy laurels oft have mov'd my soul to envy,
Thy chains awaken my respect, my reverence;
Then Regulus appear'd a *hero* to me,
He rises now a god.
Reg. Manlius, enough.
Cease thy applause; 'tis dang'rous; praise like thine
Might tempt the most severe and cautious virtue.
Bless'd be the gods, who gild my latter days
With the bright glory of the consul's friendship!
Man. Forbid it, Jove! saidst thou thy *latter* days?
May gracious heav'n to a far distant hour
Protract thy valued life. Be it *my* care
To crown the hopes of thy admiring country,
By giving back her long-lost hero to her.
I will exert my power to bring about
Th' exchange of captives Africa proposes.
Reg. Manlius, and is it thus, is this the way
Thou dost begin to give me proofs of friendship?
Ah! if thy love be so destructive to me,
What would thy hatred be? Mistaken consul!
Shall I then lose the profit of my wrongs?
Be thus *defrauded* of the benefit
I vainly hoped from all my years of *bondage*?
I did not come to show my chains to Rome,
To move my country to a weak compassion;
I came to save her *honour*, to preserve her
From tarnishing her glory; came to snatch her
From offers so destructive to her fame.
O Manlius! either give me proofs more worthy
A Roman's friendship, or renew thy hate.
Man. Dost thou not know, that, this exchange
Inevitable death must be thy fate? [refus'd,
Reg. And has the name of *death* such terror in it,
To strike with dread the mighty soul of Manlius?
'Tis not *to-day* I learn that I am mortal.
The foe can only take from Regulus
What wearied nature would have shortly yield-
It will be now a voluntary gift, [ed;
'Twould then become a tribute seiz'd, not offer'd.
Yes, Manlius, tell the world that as I lived
For Rome alone, when I could live no longer,
'Twas my last care how, dying, to assist,
To save that country I had lived to serve.
Man. O unexampled worth! O godlike Regulus!
Thrice happy Rome! unparalleled in heroes!
Hast thou then sworn, thou awfully good man!
Never to bless the consul with thy friendship?
Reg. If thou wilt love me, love me like a *Roman.* [ship.
These are the terms on which I take thy friend-
We both must make a sacrifice to Rome,
I of my life, and thou of *Regulus:*
One must resign his being, one his friend.
It is but just, that what procures our country
Such real blessings, such substantial good,
Should cost thee something—I shall lose but little.
Go then, my friend! but promise, ere thou goest,
With all the consular authority,
Thou wilt support my counsel in the senate.
If thou art willing to accept these terms, [ship.
With transport I embrace thy proffer'd friend-
Man. (*after a pause.*) Yes, I do promise.
Reg. Bounteous gods, I thank you!
Ye never gave, in all your round of blessing,
A gift so greatly welcome to my soul,
As Manlius' friendship on the terms of honour!
Man. Immortal Powers! why am not I a slave?
By heav'n! I almost envy thee thy bonds.
Reg. My friend! there's not a moment to be lost;
Ere this, perhaps, the senate is assembled.
To thee, and to thy virtues, I commit
The dignity of Rome—my peace and honour.
Man. Illustrious man, farewell!
Reg. Farewell, my friend!
Man. The sacred flame thou hast kindled in my soul
Glows in each vein, trembles in every nerve,
And raises me to something more than man.
My blood is fired with virtue, and with Rome,
And every pulse beats an alarm to glory.
Who would not spurn a sceptre when compar'd
With chains like thine? Thou man of every virtue,
O farewell! may all the gods protect and bless thee. [*Exit* MANLIUS.

Enter LICINIUS.

Reg. Now I begin to live: propitious Heaven
Inclines to favour me.—Licinius here?
Lic. With joy, my honour'd friend, I seek thy presence.
Reg. And why with joy?
Lic. Because my heart once more
Beats high with flattering hope. In thy great cause
I have been labouring.
Reg. Say'st thou in *my* cause?
Lic. In thine and Rome's. Does it excite thy wonder?
Couldst thou then think so poorly of Licinius,
That base ingratitude could find a place
Within his bosom?—Can I then forget
Thy thousand acts of friendship to my youth?
Forget them too at that important moment
When most I might assist thee?—Regulus,
Thou wast my leader, general, father—all.
Didst thou not teach me early how to tread
The path of glory; point the way thyself,
And bid me follow thee?
Reg. But say, Licinius,
What hast thou done to serve me?
Lic. I have defended
Thy liberty and life!
Reg. Ah! speak—explain.—
Lic. Just as the fathers were about to meet,
I hasten'd to the temple—at the entrance
Their passage I retarded, by the force
Of strong entreaty; then address'd myself
So well to each, that I from each obtain'd

A declaration, that his utmost power
Should be exerted for thy life and freedom.
Reg. Great gods! what do I hear? Licinius too!
Lic. Not he alone; no, 'twere indeed unjust
To rob the fair Attilia of her claim
To filial merit.—What I could, I did. [earth,
But *she*—thy charming daughter—heav'n and
What did she not, to save her father?
Reg. Who?
Lic. Attilia, thy belov'd—thy age's darling!
Was ever father bless'd with such a child!
Gods! how her looks took captive all who saw
How did her soothing eloquence subdue [her!
The stoutest hearts of Rome! How did she rouse
Contending passions in the breasts of all!
How sweetly temper dignity with grief!
With what a soft, inimitable grace, [sooth'd.
She prais'd, reproach'd, entreated, flatter'd,
Reg. What said the senators?
Lic. What could they say?
Who could resist the lovely conqueror?
See where she comes—Hope dances in her eyes,
And lights up all her beauties into smiles.

Enter ATTILIA.

Att. Once more, my dearest father—
Reg. Ah, presume not
To call me by that name. For know, Attilia,
I number *thee* among the foes of Regulus.
Att. What do I hear? thy foe? my father's foe? [glory.
Reg. His worst of foes—the murd'rer of his
Att. Ah! is it then a proof of enmity
To wish thee all the good that gods can give thee,
To yield my life, if needful, for thy service?
Reg. Thou rash, imprudent girl! thou little know'st
The dignity and weight of public cares.
Who made a weak and inexperienc'd *woman*
The arbiter of Regulus's fate?
Lic. For pity's sake, my Lord!
Reg. Peace, peace, young man!
Her silence better than thy language pleads.
That bears at least the semblance of repentance.
Immortal powers!—A daughter and a Roman!
Att. Because I *am* a daughter, I presum'd—
Lic. Because I *am* a Roman, I aspired
T' oppose th' inhuman rigour of thy fate.
Reg. No more, Licinius. How can he be call'd
A Roman, who would live with infamy?
Or how can she be Regulus's daughter,
Whose coward mind wants fortitude and honour?
Unhappy children! now you make me *feel*
The burden of my chains: your feeble souls
Have made me know I am indeed a slave.
[*Exit* REGULUS.
Att. Tell me, Licinius, and oh! tell me truly,
If thou believ'st in all the round of time
There ever breath'd a maid so truly wretched?
To weep, to mourn, a father's cruel fate—
To love him with soul-rending tenderness—
To know no peace by day, or rest by night—
To bear a bleeding heart in this poor bosom,
Which aches and trembles but to think he suffers:
This is my crime—in any other child
'Twould be a merit.
Lic. Oh! my best Attilia!
Do not repent thee of the pious deed:
It was a virtuous error. *That* in *us*
Is a just duty, which the godlike soul
Of Regulus would think a shameful weakness.
If the contempt of life in him be virtue,
It were in us a crime to let him perish.
Perhaps at last he may consent to live;
He then will thank us for our cares to save him:
Let not his anger fright thee. Though our love
Offend him now, yet, when his mighty soul
Is reconcil'd to life, he will not chide us.
The sick man loathes, and with reluctance takes
The remedy by which his health's restor'd.
Att. Licinius! his reproaches wound my soul.
I cannot live, and bear his indignation.
Lic. Would my Attilia rather lose her father
Than, by offending him, preserve his life?
Att. Ah! no. If he but live, I am contented.
Lic. Yes, he shall live, and we again be bless'd:
Then dry thy tears, and let those lovely orbs
Beam with their wonted lustre on Licinius,
Who lives but in the sunshine of thy smiles.
[*Exit* LICINIUS.
Att. (*alone.*) Oh Fortune, Fortune, thou capricious goddess!
Thy frowns and favours have alike no bounds;
Unjust or prodigal, in each extreme.
When thou wouldst humble human vanity,
By singling out a wretch to bear thy wrath,
Thou crushest him with anguish to excess;
If thou wouldst *bless*, thou mak'st the happiness
Too poignant for his giddy sense to bear.—
Immortal gods, who rule the fates of men,
Preserve my father! bless him, bless him, heav'n!
If your avenging thunderbolts *must* fall,
Strike *here*—this bosom will invite the blow,
And *thank* you for it: but in mercy spare,
Oh! spare *his* sacred, venerable head;
Respect in *him* an image of yourselves;
And leave a world, who wants it, an example
Of courage, wisdom, constancy, and truth.
Yet if, Eternal Powers who rule this ball!
You have decreed that Regulus must fall;
Teach me to yield to your divine command,
And meekly bow to your correcting hand;
Contented to resign, or pleas'd receive,
What reason may withhold, or mercy give.
[*Exit* ATTILIA.

ACT IV.

SCENE—*Gallery in the Ambassador's Palace.*

Reg. (*alone.*) Be calm my soul! what strange emotions shake thee!
Emotions thou hast never felt till now.
Thou hast defied the dangers of the deep,
Th' impetuous hurricane, the thunder's roar,
And all the terrors of the various war;
Yet, now thou tremblest, fearful and dismay'd,
With anxious expectation of thy fate.—
Yes, thou hast amplest reason for thy fears;
For till this hour, so pregnant with events,
Thy fame and glory never were at stake.
Soft—let me think—what is this thing called *glory?*
'Tis the soul's tyrant, that should be dethron'd,
And learn subjection like her other passions

Ah no! 'tis false: this is the coward's plea;
The lazy language of refining vice.
That man was born in vain, whose wish to serve
Is circumscribed within the wretched bounds
Of *self*—a narrow, miserable sphere!
Glory exalts, enlarges, dignifies,
Absorbs the *selfish* in the *social* claims,
And renders man a blessing to mankind.—
It is this principle, this spark of deity,
Rescues debased humanity from guilt,
And elevates it by her strong excitements.—
It takes off sensibility from pain, [death;
From peril, fear; plucks out the sting from
Changes ferocious into gentle manners;
And teaches men to imitate the gods.
It shows,—but see, alas! where Publius comes.
Ah! he advances with a downcast eye,
And step irresolute.—

Enter PUBLIUS.

Reg. My Publius, welcome!
What tidings dost thou bring? What says the senate?
Is yet my fate determin'd? quickly tell me.—
Pub. I cannot speak, and yet, alas! I must.
Reg. Tell me the whole.—
Pub. Would I were rather dumb!
Reg. Publius, no more delay:—I charge thee speak. [part.
Pub. The senate has decreed you shall de-
Reg. Blest spirit of Rome! thou hast at last prevail'd—
I thank the gods, I have not lived in vain!
Where is Hamilcar?—find him—let us go,
For Regulus has naught to do in Rome;
I have accomplish'd her important work,
And must depart.
Pub. Ah, my unhappy father!
Reg. *Unhappy*, Publius! didst thou say *unhappy*?
Does he, does that blest man deserve this name,
Who to his latest breath can serve his country?
Pub. Like thee, my father, I adore my country,
Yet weep with anguish o'er thy cruel chains.
Reg. Dost thou not know that *life's* a slavery?
The body is the chain that binds the soul;
A yoke that every mortal must endure.
Wouldst thou lament—lament the general fate,
The chain that nature gives, entail'd on all,
Not these *I* wear.
Pub. Forgive, forgive my sorrows:
I know, alas! too well, those fell barbarians
Intend thee instant death.
Reg. So shall my life
And servitude together have an end.—
Publius, farewell! nay, do not follow me.
Pub. Alas! my father, if thou ever lov'dst
Refuse me not the mournful consolation [me,
To pay the last sad offices of duty
I e'er can show thee.—
Reg. No!—thou canst fulfil
Thy duty to thy father in a way
More grateful to him: I must straight embark.
Be it meanwhile thy pious care to keep
My lov'd Attilia from a sight, I fear,
Would rend her gentle heart. Her tears, my son,
Would dim the glories of thy father's triumph.
Her sinking spirits are subdued by grief,
And, should her sorrows pass the bounds of rea-
Publius, have pity on her tender age; [son,
Compassionate the weakness of her sex;
We must not hope to find in *her* soft soul
The strong exertion of a manly courage.—
Support her fainting spirit, and instruct her,
By thy example, how a Roman ought
To bear misfortune. O, indulge her weakness!
And be to her the father she will lose.
I leave my daughter to thee—I do more—
I leave to thee the conduct of—thyself.
—Ah, Publius! I perceive thy courage fails—
I see the quivering lip, the starting tear;—
That lip, that tear calls down my mounting soul.
Resume thyself—oh! do not blast my hope!
Yes—I'm composed—thou wilt not mock my age—
Thou *art*—thou art a *Roman*—and my *son*.
[*Exit.*
Pub. And is he gone?—now be thyself, my soul—
Hard is the conflict, but the triumph glorious.
Yes,—I must conquer these too tender feelings;
The blood that fills these veins demands it of me;
My father's great example, too, requires it.
Forgive me, *Rome*, and *glory*, if I yielded
To nature's strong attack:—I must subdue it.
Now, Regulus, I *feel* I am thy *son*.

Enter ATTILLA *and* BARCE.

Att. My brother, I'm distracted, wild with fear—
Tell me, O tell me, what I dread to know—
Is it, then, true?—I cannot speak—my father?
Bar. May we believe the fatal news?
Pub. Yes, Barce.
It is determin'd. Regulus must go.
Att. Immortal powers!—What say'st thou?
Bar. Can it be?
Thou canst not mean it.
Att. Then you've all betrayed me.
Pub. Thy grief avails not.

Enter HAMILCAR *and* LICINIUS.

Bar. Pity us, Hamilcar!
Att. Oh, help, Licinius, help the lost Attilia!
Ham. My Barce! there's no hope.
Lic. Ah! my fair mourner,
All's lost!
Att. What, all, Licinius? saidst thou all?
Not one poor glimpse of comfort left behind?
Tell me at least where Regulus is gone:
The daughter shall partake the father's chains,
And share the woes she knew not to prevent.
[*Going.*
Pub. What would thy wild despair? Attilia, stay,
Thou must not follow; this excess of grief
Would much offend him.
Att. Dost thou hope to *stop* me?
Pub. I hope thou wilt resume thy better self,
And recollect thy father will not bear—
Att. I only recollect I am a *daughter*,
A poor, defenceless, helpless, wretched daugh-
Away—and let me follow. [ter!
Pub. No, my sister.

Att. Detain me not—Ah! while thou hold'st me here,
He goes, and I shall never see him more.
Bar. My friend, be comforted, he cannot go
Whilst here Hamilcar stays.
Att. O, Barce, Barce!
Who will advise, who comfort, who assist me?
Hamilcar, pity me.—Thou wilt not answer?
Ham. Rage and astonishment divide my soul.
Att. Licinius, wilt thou not relieve my sorrows?
Lic. Yes, at my life's expense, my heart's
Wouldst thou instruct me how. [best treasure,
Att. My brother, too—
Ah! look with mercy on thy sister's woes!
Pub. I will at least instruct thee how to *bear* them.
My sister—yield thee to thy adverse fate;
Think of thy father, think of Regulus;
Has he not taught thee how to brave misfortune?
'Tis but by following his illustrious steps
Thou e'er canst merit to be call'd his daughter.
Att. And is it thus thou dost advise thy sister?
Are these, ye gods, the feelings of a son?
Indifference here becomes impiety—
Thy savage heart ne'er felt the dear delights
Of filial tenderness—the thousand joys
That flow from blessing and from being bless'd!
No—didst thou love thy father as *I* love him,
Our kindred souls would be in unison;
And all my sighs be echoed back by thine.
Thou wouldst—alas!—I know not what I say.—
Forgive me, Publius,—but, indeed, my brother,
I do not understand this cruel coldness.
Ham. Thou mayst not—but I understand it
His mighty soul, full as to thee it seems [well.
Of Rome and glory—is enamour'd—caught—
Enraptur'd with the beauties of fair Barce.—
She stays behind, if Regulus *departs*.
Behold the cause of all the well-feign'd virtue
Of this mock patriot—curst dissimulation!
Pub. And canst thou entertain such vile suspicions?
Gods! what an outrage to a son like me.
Ham. Yes, Roman: now I see thee as thou
Thy naked soul divested of its veil, [art,
Its specious colouring, its dissembled virtues:
Thou hast plotted with the senate to prevent
Th' exchange of captives. All thy subtle arts,
Thy smooth inventions, have been set to work—
The base refinements of your *polish'd* land.
Pub. In truth the doubt is worthy of an African. (*Contemptuously.*)
Ham. I know—
Pub. Peace, Carthaginian, peace, and hear
Didst thou not know, that on the very man [me,
Thou hast insulted, Barce's fate depends?
Ham. Too well I know, the cruel chance of war
Gave her, a blooming captive, to thy mother;
Who, dying, left the beauteous prize to thee.
Pub. Now, see the use a *Roman* makes of power.
Heav'n is my witness how I lov'd the maid!
O she was dearer to my soul than light!
Dear as the vital stream that feeds my heart!
But know, my *honour's* dearer than my love.
I do not even hope *thou* wilt believe me;
Thy brutal soul, as savage as thy clime,
Can never taste those elegant delights,
Those pure refinements, love and glory yield
'Tis not to thee I stoop for vindication,
Alike to me thy friendship or thy hate;
But to remove from others a pretence
For branding Publius with the name of villain;
That *they* may see no sentiment but honour
Informs this bosom.—Barce, thou art *free*.
Thou hast my leave with him to quit this shore.
Now learn, barbarian, how a *Roman* loves. [*Exit.*
Bar. He cannot mean it!
Ham. Oh, exalted virtue!
Which challenges esteem, though from a foe.
(*Looking after Publius.*)
Att. Ah! cruel Publius, wilt thou leave me
Thus leave thy sister? [thus?
Bar. Didst thou hear, Hamilcar?
Oh! didst thou hear the godlike youth resign me?
(*Hamilcar and Licinius seem lost in thought.*)
Ham. Farewell, I will return.
Lic. Farewell, my love! (*to Attilia.*)
Bar. Hamilcar, where—
Att. Alas! where art thou going?
(*to Licinius.*
Lic. If possible, to save the life of Regulus.
Att. But by what means?—Ah! how canst thou effect it?
Lic. Since the disease so desperate is become,
We must apply a desperate remedy.
Ham. (*after a long pause.*) Yes, I will mortify this generous foe;
I'll be reveng'd upon this stubborn Roman;
Not by defiance bold, or feats of arms,
But by a means more sure to work its end;
By emulating his exalted worth,
And showing him a virtue like his own;
Such a refin'd revenge as noble minds
Alone can practise, and alone can feel.
Att. If thou wilt go, Licinius, let Attilia
At least go with thee.
Lic. No, my gentle love,
Too much I prize thy safety and thy peace.
Let me entreat thee, stay with Barce here
Till our return.
Att. Then, ere ye go, in pity
Explain the latent purpose of your souls.
Lic. Soon shalt thou know it all—Farewell! farewell!
Let us keep Regulus in *Rome* or *die*.
(*to Hamilcar as he goes out.*)
Ham. Yes.—These smooth, polish'd Romans, shall confess
The soil of *Afric* too produces heroes. [theirs,
What, though our pride perhaps be less than
Our virtue may be equal: they shall own
The path of honour's not unknown to Carthage,
Nor, as they arrogantly think, confin'd
To their proud capitol:—Yes, they shall learn
The gods look down on other climes than theirs.
[*Exit.*
Att. What! gone, *both* gone? What can I think or do?
Licinius leaves me, led by love and virtue,
To rouse the citizens to war and tumult,
Which may be fatal to himself and Rome,
And yet, alas! not serve my dearest father.
Protecting deities! preserve them both!

Bar. Nor is thy Barce more at ease, my friend;
I dread the fierceness of Hamilcar's courage;
Rous'd by the grandeur of thy brother's deed,
And stung by his reproaches, his great soul
Will scorn to be outdone by him in glory.
Yet, let us rise to courage and to life,
Forget the weakness of our helpless sex,
And mount above these coward woman's fears.
Hope dawns upon my mind—my prospect clears,
And every cloud now brightens into day.

Att. How different are our souls! Thy sanguine temper,
Flush'd with the native vigour of thy soil,
Supports thy spirits; while the sad Attilia,
Sinking with more than all her sex's fears,
Sees not a beam of hope; or, if she sees it,
'Tis not the bright, warm splendour of the sun;
It is a sickly and uncertain glimmer
Of instantaneous lightning, passing by.
It shows, but not diminishes the danger,
And leaves my poor benighted soul as dark
As it had never shone.

Bar. Come, let us go.
Yes, joys unlook'd for now shall gild thy days,
And brighter suns reflect propitious rays.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE—*A Hall looking towards the Garden.*

Enter REGULUS, *speaking to one of* HAMILCAR'S *attendants.*

Where's your ambassador? where is Hamilcar?
Ere this he doubtless knows the senate's will.
Go seek him out—tell him we must depart—
Rome has no *hope* for *him*, or *wish* for *me*.
Longer delay were criminal in *both*.

Enter MANLIUS.

Reg. He comes. The consul comes! my noble friend!
O let me strain thee to this grateful heart,
And thank thee for the vast, vast debt, I owe thee!
But for *thy* friendship I had been a wretch—
Had been compell'd to shameful *liberty*.
To thee I owe the glory of these chains,
My faith inviolate, my fame preserv'd,
My honour, virtue, glory, bondage,—all!

Man. But we shall lose thee, so it is decreed—
Thou must depart!

Reg. Because I must depart
You will not lose me; I were lost indeed
Did I remain in Rome.

Man. Ah! Regulus,
Why, why so late do I begin to love thee?
Alas! why have the adverse fates decreed,
I ne'er must give thee other proofs of friendship,
Than those, so fatal, and so full of wo!

Reg. Thou hast perform'd the duties of a friend;
Of a just, faithful, true, and noble friend:
Yet, generous as thou art, if thou constrain me
To sink beneath a weight of obligation,
I could—yes, Manlius—I could ask still more.

Man. Explain thyself.

Reg. I think I have fulfill'd
The various duties of a citizen;
Nor have I aught beside to do for Rome.
Now, nothing for the public good remains.
Manlius, I recollect I am a father!
My Publius! my Attilia! ah! my friend,
They are—(forgive the weakness of a parent)
To my fond heart dear as the drops that warm it.
Next to my country, they're my all of life;
And, if a weak old man be not deceiv'd,
They will not shame that country. Yes, my friend,
The love of virtue blazes in their souls.
As yet these tender plants are immature,
And ask the fostering hand of cultivation:
Heav'n in its wisdom would not let their *father*
Accomplish this great work.—To thee, my friend,
The tender parent delegates the trust:
Do not refuse a poor man's legacy;
I do bequeath my orphans to thy love—
If thou wilt kindly take them to thy bosom,
Their loss will be repaid with usury.
O, let the father owe his glory to thee,
The children their protection!

Man. Regulus,
With grateful joy my heart accepts the trust;
Oh! I will shield with jealous tenderness,
The precious blossoms from a blasting world.
In me thy children shall possess a father,
Though not as worthy, yet as fond as thee.
The pride be mine to fill their youthful breasts
With every virtue—'twill not cost me much:
I shall have naught to teach, nor they to learn,
But the great history of their godlike sire.

Reg. I will not hurt the grandeur of thy virtue,
By paying thee so poor a thing as thanks.
Now all is over, and, I bless the gods,
I've nothing more to do.

Enter PUBLIUS *in haste.*

Pub. O Regulus!

Reg. Say what has happen'd?

Pub. Rome is in a tumult—
There's scarce a citizen but runs to arms—
They will not let thee go.

Reg. Is't possible?
Can Rome so far forget her dignity
As to desire this infamous exchange?
I blush to think it!

Pub. Ah! not so, my father.
Rome cares not for the peace, nor for th' exchange;
She only wills that Regulus shall stay.

Reg. How, stay? my oath—my faith—my honour! ah!
Do they forget?

Pub. No: Every man exclaims,
That neither faith nor honour should be kept
With Carthaginian perfidy and fraud.

Reg. Gods! gods! on what vile principles they reason!
Can guilt in Carthage palliate guilt in Rome,
Or vice in one absolve it in another?
Ah! who hereafter shall be criminal,
If precedents are used to justify
The blackest crimes?

Pub. Th' infatuated people
Have called the augurs to the sacred fane,
There to determine this momentous point.

Reg. I have no need of *oracles*, my son;
Honour's the oracle of honest men.
I gave my promise, which I will observe
With most religious strictness. Rome, 'tis true,
Had power to choose the peace, or change of slaves;
But whether Regulus return or not,

Is *his* concern, not the concern of *Rome*.
That was a public, *this* a private care.
Publius! thy father is not what he was;
I am the slave of *Carthage*, nor has Rome
Power to dispose of captives not her own.
Guards! let us to the port.—Farewell, my friend. [thou go

Man. Let me entreat thee stay; for shouldst
To stem this tumult of the populace,
They will by force detain thee: then, alas!
Both Regulus and Rome must break their faith.

Reg. What! must I then remain?

Man. No, Regulus,
I will not check thy great career of glory:
Thou shalt depart; meanwhile, I'll try to calm
This wild, tumultuous uproar of the people.
The consular authority shall still them.

Reg. Thy virtue is my safeguard—but—

Man. Enough.—
I know *thy* honour, and trust thou to *mine*.
I am a *Roman*, and I feel some sparks
Of Regulus's virtue in my breast.
Though fate denies me thy illustrious chains,
I will at least endeavour to *deserve* them.
[*Exit.*

Reg. How is my country alter'd! how, alas,
Is the great spirit of old Rome extinct!
Restraint and *force* must now be put to use,
To *make* her virtuous. She must be *compell'd*
To faith and honour.—Ah! what, Publius here?
And dost thou leave so tamely to my friend
The honour to assist me? Go, my boy,
'Twill make me *more* in love with chains and death,
To owe them to a *son*. [

Pub. I go, my father—
I will, I will obey thee.

Reg. Do not sigh—
One sigh will check the progress of thy glory.

Pub. Yes, I will own the pangs of death itself
Would be less cruel than these agonies:
Yet do not frown austerely on thy son:
His *anguish* is his *virtue:* if to conquer
The feelings of my soul were *easy* to me,
'Twould be no merit. Do not then defraud
The sacrifice I make thee of its worth.
[*Exeunt severally.*

MANLIUS, ATTILIA.

Att. (*speaking as she enters.*) Where is the consul?—where, oh! where is Manlius?
I come to breathe the voice of mourning to him;
I come to crave his mercy, to conjure him
To whisper peace to my afflicted bosom,
And heal the anguish of a wounded spirit.

Man. What would the daughter of my noble friend? [touch'd thee,—

Att. (*kneeling.*) If ever pity's sweet emotions
If ever gentle love assail'd thy breast—
If ever virtuous friendship fir'd thy soul—
By the dear names of husband and of parent—
By all the soft yet powerful ties of nature—
If e'er thy lisping infants charm'd thine ear,
And waken'd all the father in thy soul,—
If e'er thou hop'st to have thy latter days
Bless'd by their love, and sweeten'd by their duty— [ter,
Oh! hear a kneeling, weeping, wretched daugh-
Who begs a father's life—nor hers alone,
But Rome's—his country's father.

Man. Gentle maid!
Oh! spare this soft, subduing eloquence!—
Nay, rise. I shall forget I am a Roman—
Forget the mighty debt I owe my country—
Forget the fame and glory of thy father.
I must conceal this weakness. (*turns from her.*)

Att. (*rises eagerly.*) Ah! you weep!
Indulge, indulge, my lord, the virtuous softness:
Was ever sight so graceful, so becoming,
As pity's tear upon the hero's cheek? [*ing.*)

Man. No more—I must not hear thee. (*go-*

Att. How! not hear me! [lord—
You must—you shall—nay, nay, return, my
Oh! fly not from me—look upon my woes,
And imitate the mercy of the gods:
'Tis not their thunder that excites our reverence,
'Tis their mild mercy and forgiving love.
'Twill add a brighter lustre to thy laurels,
When men shall say, and proudly point thee out,
"Behold the consul!—he who sav'd his friend."
Oh! what a tide of joy will overwhelm thee!
Who will not envy thee thy glorious feelings?

Man. Thy father scorns his liberty and life,
Nor will accept of either, at th' expense
Of honour, virtue, glory, faith, and Rome.

Att. Think you behold the godlike Regulus;
The prey of unrelenting, savage foes,
Ingenious only in contriving ill:—
Eager to glut their hunger of revenge,
They'll plot such new, such dire, unheard-of tortures—
Such dreadful and such complicated vengeance,
As e'en the Punic annals have not known;
And, as they heap fresh torments on his head,
They'll glory in their genius for destruction.
Ah! Manlius—now methinks I see my father—
My faithful fancy, full of his idea, [torn—
Presents him to me—mangled, gash'd, and
Stretch'd on the rack in writhing agony—
The torturing pincers tear his quivering flesh,
While the dire murderers smile upon his wounds—
His groans their music, and his pangs their sport.
And if they lend some interval of ease,
Some dearbought intermission, meant to make
The following pang more exquisitely felt,
Th' insulting executioners exclaim, [scorn'd!"
"Now, Roman! feel the vengeance thou hast

Man. Repress thy sorrows—

Att. Can the friend of Regulus
Advise his daughter not to mourn his fate!
How cold, alas! is friendship, when compar'd
To ties of blood—to nature's powerful impulse!
Yes—she asserts her empire in my soul;
'Tis nature pleads—she will—she must be heard;
With warm, resistless eloquence, she pleads.
Ah, thou art soften'd!—see—the consul yields—
The feelings triumph—tenderness prevails—
The Roman is subdued—the daughter conquers! (*catching hold of his robe.*)

Man. Ah! hold me not—I must not, cannot
The softness of thy sorrow is contagious; [stay,
I too may feel, when I should only reason.
I dare not hear thee—Regulus and Rome,
The patriot and the friend—all, all forbid it.
(*breaks from her, and exit.*)

Att. Oh feeble grasp!—and is he gone, quite gone?
Hold, hold thy empire, reason, firmly hold it,
Or rather quit at once thy feeble throne,
Since thou but serv'st to show me what I've lost,
To heighten all the horrors that await me;
To summon up a wild, distracted crowd
Of fatal images, to shake my soul,
To scare sweet peace, and banish hope itself.
Farewell! delusive dreams of joy, farewell!
Come, fell despair! thou pale-eyed spectre, come,
For thou shalt be Attilia's inmate now,
And thou shalt grow, and twine about her heart,
And she shall be so much enamour'd of thee,
The pageant pleasure ne'er shall interpose
Her gaudy presence to divide you more.
(*stands in an attitude of silent grief.*)

Enter Licinius.

Lic. At length I've found thee—ah, my charming maid! [fondness!
How have I sought thee out with anxious
Alas! she hears me not. My best Attilia!
Ah! grief oppresses every gentle sense.
Still, still she hears not—'tis Licinius speaks,
He comes to sooth the anguish of thy spirit,
And hush thy tender sorrows into peace.

Att. Who's he that dares assume the voice of love,
And comes unbidden to these dreary haunts?
Steals on the sacred treasury of wo,
And breaks the league despair and I have made?

Lic. 'Tis one who comes the messenger of Heav'n,
To talk of peace, of comfort, and of joy.

Att. Didst thou not mock me with the sound of joy?
Thou little know'st the anguish of my soul,
If thou believ'st I ever can again,
So long the wretched sport of angry fortune,
Admit delusive hope to my sad bosom.
No—I abjure the flatterer and her train.
Let those who ne'er have been like me deceiv'd,
Embrace the fair, fantastic sycophant—
For I, alas! am wedded to despair,
And will not hear the sound of comfort more.

Lic. Cease, cease, my love, this tender voice of wo,
Though softer than the dying cygnet's plaint:
She ever chants her most melodious strain
When death and sorrow harmonize her note.

Att. Yes, I will listen now with fond delight;
For death and sorrow are my darling themes.
Well!—what hast thou to say of death and sorrow?
Believe me, thou wilt find me apt to listen,
And, if my tongue be slow to answer thee,
Instead of words I'll give thee sighs and tears.

Lic. I come to dry thy tears, not make them flow;
The gods, once more propitious, smile upon us,
Joy shall again await each happy morn,
And ever-new delight shall crown the day!
Yes, Regulus shall live.

Att. Ah, me! what say'st thou?
Alas! I'm but a poor, weak, trembling woman—
I cannot bear these wild extremes of fate—
Then mock me not. I think thou art Licinius,
The generous lover, and the faithful friend!
I think thou wouldst not sport with my afflictions.

Lic. Mock thy afflictions? May eternal Jove,
And every power at whose dread shrine we wor-
Blast all the hopes my fond ideas form, [ship,
If I deceive thee! Regulus shall live,
Shall live to give thee to Licinius' arms.
Oh! we will smooth his downward path of life,
And after a long length of virtuous years,
At the last verge of honourable age,
When nature's glimmering lamp goes gently out,
We'll close, together close, his eyes in peace,
Together drop the sweetly-painful tear,
Then copy out his virtues in our lives.

Att. And shall we be so blest? is't possible?
Forgive me, my Licinius, if I doubt thee.
Fate never gave such exquisite delight
As flattering hope hath imaged to thy soul.
But how? Explain this bounty of the gods.

Lic. Thou know'st what influence the name of tribune
Gives its possessor o'er the people's minds:
That power I have exerted, nor in vain;
All are prepar'd to second my designs:
The plot is ripe—there's not a man but swears
To keep thy godlike father here in Rome—
To save his life at hazard of his own.

Att. By what gradation does my joy ascend!
I thought that if my father had been sav'd
By any means, I had been rich in bliss:
But that he lives, and lives preserv'd by thee,
Is such a prodigality of fate,
I cannot bear my joy with moderation:
Heaven should have dealt it with a scantier hand, [on me;
And not have shower'd such plenteous blessings
They are too great, too flattering, to be real;
'Tis some delightful vision which enchants
And cheats my senses, weaken'd by misfortune.

Lic. We'll seek thy father, and, meanwhile, my fair, [him.
Compose thy sweet emotions ere thou see'st
Pleasure itself is painful in excess;
For joys, like sorrows, in extreme, oppress:
The gods themselves our pious cares approve,
And, to reward our virtue, crown our love

ACT V.

An Apartment in the Ambassador's palace—Guards and other attendants seen at a distance.

Ham. Where is this wondrous man, this matchless hero,
This arbiter of kingdoms and of kings,
This delegate of Heaven, this Roman god?
I long to show his soaring mind an equal,
And bring it to the standard of humanity.
What pride, what glory will it be, to fix
An obligation on his stubborn soul!
Oh! to constrain a foe to be obliged!
The very thought exalts me e'en to rapture.

Enter Regulus *and Guards.*

Ham. Well, Regulus! At last—
Reg. I know it all;
I know the motive of thy just complaint—
Be not alarm'd at this licentious uproar

Of the mad populace. I will depart—
Fear not; I will not stay in Rome alive.
Ham. What dost thou mean by uproar and alarms?
Hamilcar does not come to vent complaints;
He rather comes to prove, that Afric too
Produces heroes, and that Tiber's banks
May find a rival on the Punic coast. [bate:
Reg. Be it so.—'Tis not a time for vain de-
Collect thy people.—Let us straight depart.
Ham. Lend me thy hearing first.
Reg. O patience, patience!
Ham. It is esteem'd a glory to be grateful?
Reg. The time has been when 'twas a duty
But 'tis a duty now so little practis'd, [only,
That to perform it is become a glory.
Ham. If to fulfil it should expose to danger?—
Reg. It rises then to an illustrious virtue.
Ham. Then grant this merit to an African.
Give me a patient hearing.—Thy great son,
As delicate in honour as in love,
Hath nobly given my Barce to my arms;
And yet I know he dotes upon the maid.
I come to emulate the generous deed;
He gave me back my love, and in return
I will restore his father.
Reg. Ah! what say'st thou?
Wilt thou preserve me, then?
Ham. I will.
Reg. But how?
Ham. By leaving thee at liberty to *fly*.
Reg. Ah! [tence,
Ham. I will dismiss my guards on some pre-
Meanwhile do thou escape, and lie conceal'd:
I will affect a rage I shall not feel,
Unmoor my ships, and sail for Africa.
Reg. Abhorr'd barbarian!
Ham. Well, what dost thou say?
Art thou not much surpris'd?
Reg. I am indeed.
Ham. Thou couldst not then have hoped it?
Reg. No! I could not.
Ham. And yet I'm not a Roman.
Reg. (*smiling contemptuously.*) I perceive it.
Ham. You may retire. (*aloud to the guards.*)
Reg. No!—Stay, I charge you, stay.
Ham. And wherefore stay?
Reg. I thank thee for thy offer,
But I shall go with thee.
Ham. 'Tis well, proud man!
Thou dost despise me, then?
Reg. No, but I pity thee.
Ham. Why pity me?
Reg. Because thy poor, dark soul,
Hath never felt the piercing ray of virtue.
Know, African! the scheme thou dost propose
Would injure me, thy country, and thyself.
Ham. Thou dost mistake.
Reg. Who was it gave thee power
To rule the destiny of Regulus?
Am I a slave to Carthage, or to thee?
Ham. What does it signify from whom, proud
Thou dost receive this benefit? [Roman,
Reg. A benefit?
O, savage ignorance! is it a benefit
To lie, elope, deceive, and be a villain?
Ham. What! not when life itself, when all's at stake!
Know'st thou my countrymen prepare thee tor-
That shock imagination but to think of? [tures
Thou wilt be mangled, butcher'd, rack'd, im-
Goes not thy nature shrink? [paled.
Reg. (*smiling at his threats.*) Hamilcar! no.
Dost thou not know the Roman genius better?
We live on honour—'tis our food, our life,
The motive and the measure of our deeds!
We look on death as on a common object;
The tongue nor faulters, nor the cheek turns pale,
Nor the calm eye is moved at sight of him:
We court, and we embrace him, undismay'd;
We smile at tortures if they lead to glory,
And only cowardice and guilt appal us.
Ham. Fine sophistry! the valour of the tongue,
The heart disclaims it; leave this pomp of words,
And cease dissembling with a friend like me.
I know that life is dear to all who live,
That death is dreadful,—yes, and must be fear'd,
E'en by the frozen apathists of Rome.
Reg. Did I fear death, when, on Bagrada's banks,
I faced and slew the formidable serpent
That made your boldest Africans recoil,
And shrink with horror, though the monster liv'd
A native inmate of their own parch'd deserts?
Did I fear death before the gates of Adis?—
Ask Bostar, or let Asdrubal confess.
Ham. Or shall I rather of Xantippus ask,
Who dar'd to undeceive deluded Rome,
And prove this vaunter not invincible?
'Tis even said, in Africa I mean,
He made a prisoner of this demi-god.—
Did we not triumph then?
Reg. Vain boaster! no.
No Carthaginian conquer'd Regulus;
Xantippus was a Greek—a brave one, too:
Yet what distinction did your Afric make
Between the man who serv'd her and her foe?
I was the object of her open hate:
He, of her secret, dark malignity.
He durst not trust the nation he had sav'd;
He knew, and therefore fear'd you.—Yes, he knew
Where once you were obliged, you ne'er forgave.
Could you forgive at all, you'd rather pardon
The man who hated, than the man who serv'd you.
Xantippus found his ruin ere it reach'd him,
Lurking behind your honours and rewards,
Found it in your feign'd courtesies and fawnings.
When vice intends to strike a master stroke,
Its veil is smiles, its language protestations.
The Spartan's merit threaten'd, but his service
Compell'd his ruin.—Both you could not pardon.
Ham. Come, come, I know full well—
Reg. Barbarian! peace.
I've heard too much—Go, call thy followers;
Prepare thy ships, and learn to do thy duty.
Ham. Yes!—show thyself intrepid, and insult me;
Call mine the blindness of barbarian friendship.
On Tiber's banks I hear thee, and am calm:
But know, thou scornful Roman! that too soon
In Carthage thou mayst fear and feel my vengeance:
Thy cold, obdurate pride shall there confess,
Though Rome may talk—'tis Africa can punish.
[*Exit.*

Reg. Farewell! I've not a thought to waste on thee.
Where is the consul? why does Publius stay?
Alas! I fear—but see, Attilia comes.

Enter ATTILIA.

Reg. What brings thee here, my child? what eager joy
Transports thee thus?
Att. I cannot speak—my father!
Joy chokes my utterance—Rome, dear, grateful Rome
(Oh! may her cup with blessings overflow),
Gives up our common destiny to thee; [her,
Faithful and constant to th' advice thou gav'st
She will not hear of peace, or change of slaves,
But she insists—reward and bless her, gods!—
That thou shalt here remain.
Reg. What! with the shame—
Att. Oh! no—the sacred senate hath consider'd [faith,
That, when to Carthage thou didst pledge thy
Thou wast a captive, and that, being such,
Thou couldst not bind thyself in covenant.
Reg. He who can die is always free, my child!
Learn farther, he who owns another's strength
Confesses his own weakness. Let them know,
I swore I would return because I chose it,
And will return, because I swore to do it.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. Vain is that hope, my father.
Reg. Who shall stop me?
Pub. All Rome.—The citizens are up in arms:
In vain would reason stop the growing torrent;
In vain wouldst thou attempt to reach the port,
The way is barr'd by thronging multitudes:
The other streets of Rome are all deserted.
Reg. Where, where is Manlius?
Pub. He is still thy friend;
His single voice opposes a whole people;
He threats this moment, and the next entreats,
But all in vain; none hear him, none obey.
The general fury rises e'en to madness.
The axes tremble in the lictors' hands,
Who, pale and spiritless, want power to use them—
And one wild scene of anarchy prevails.
Reg. Farewell! my daughter. Publius, follow me. [*Exit* PUBLIUS.
Att. Ah! where? I tremble—
(*detaining* REGULUS.)
Reg. To assist my friend—
T' upbraid my hapless country with her crime—
To keep unstain'd the glory of these chains—
To go, or perish.
Att. Oh! have mercy!
Reg. Hold;
I have been patient with thee; have indulg'd
Too much the fond affections of thy soul;
It is enough; thy grief would now offend
Thy father's honour; do not let thy tears
Conspire with Rome to rob me of my triumph.
Att. Alas! it wounds my soul.
Reg. I know it does.
I know 'twill grieve thy gentle heart to lose me;
But think thou mak'st the sacrifice to Rome,
And all is well again.
Att. Alas! my father,
In aught beside—
Reg. What wouldst thou do, my child?
Canst thou direct the destiny of Rome,
And boldly plead amid th' assembled senate?
Canst thou, forgetting all thy sex's softness,
Fiercely engage in hardy deeds of arms?
Canst thou encounter labour, toil, and famine,
Fatigue and hardships, watchings, cold and heat?
Canst thou attempt to serve thy country thus?
Thou canst not:—but thou mayst sustain my loss
Without these agonizing pangs of grief,
And set a bright example of submission,
Worthy a Roman's daughter.
Att. Yet such fortitude—
Reg. Is a most painful virtue;—but Attilia
Is Regulus's daughter, and must have it.
Att. I will entreat the gods to give it me.
Ah! thou art offended! I have lost thy love.
Reg. Is this concern a mark that thou hast lost it?
I cannot, cannot spurn my weeping child.
Receive this proof of my paternal fondness,—
Thou lov'st Licinius—he too loves my daughter.
I give thee to his wishes; I do more—
I give thee to his virtues.—Yes, Attilia,
The noble youth deserves this dearest pledge
Thy father's friendship ever can bestow.
Att. My lord! my father! wilt thou, canst thou leave me?
The tender father will not quit his child!
Reg. I am, I am thy father! as a proof,
I leave thee my example how to suffer.
My child! I have a heart within this bosom;
That heart has passions—see in what we differ;
Passion—which is thy tyrant—is my slave.
Att. Ah! stay, my father. Ah!
Reg. Farewell! farewell! [*Exit.*
Att. Yes, Regulus! I feel thy spirit here,
Thy mighty spirit, struggling in this breast,
And it shall conquer all these coward feelings,
It shall subdue the woman in my soul;
A Roman virgin should be something more—
Should dare above her sex's narrow limits—
And I will dare—and mis'ry shall assist me—
My father! I will be indeed thy daughter!
The hero shall no more disdain his child;
Attilia shall not be the only branch
That yields dishonour to the parent tree.

Enter BARCE.

Bar. Attilia! is it true that Regulus,
In spite of senate, people, augurs, friends,
And children, will depart?
Att. Yes, it is true.
Bar. Oh! what romantic madness!
Att. You forget—
Barce! the deeds of heroes claim respect.
Bar. Dost thou approve a virtue which must lead
To chains, to tortures, and to certain death?
Att. Barce! those chains, those tortures, and that death,
Will be his triumph.
Bar. Thou art pleas'd, Attilia;
By heav'n, thou dost exult in his destruction!

Att. Ah! pitying powers. (*weeps.*)
Bar. I do not comprehend thee.
Att. No, Barce, I believe it.—Why, how shouldst thou?
If I mistake not, thou wast born in Carthage;
In a barbarian land, where never child
Was taught to triumph in a father's chains.
Bar. Yet thou dost weep—thy tears at least are honest,
For they refuse to share thy tongue's deceit;
They speak the genuine language of affliction,
And tell the sorrows that oppress thy soul.
Att. Grief, that dissolves in tears, relieves the heart.
When congregated vapours melt in rain,
The sky is calm'd, and all's serene again.
[*Exit.*
Bar. Why, what a strange, fantastic land is this!
This love of glory's the disease of Rome;
It makes her mad, it is a wild delirium,
A universal and contagious phrensy;
It preys on all, it spares nor sex nor age:
The consul envies Regulus his chains— [dom—
He, not less mad, contemns his life and free-
The daughter glories in the father's ruin—
And Publius, more distracted than the rest,
Resigns the object that his soul adores,
For this vain phantom, for this empty glory.
This may be virtue; but I thank the gods,
The soul of Barce's not a Roman soul. [*Exit.*

SCENE—*Within sight of the Tiber—ships ready for the embarcation of Regulus and the Ambassador—Tribune and People stopping up the passage—Consul and Lictors endeavouring to clear it.*

MANLIUS *and* LICINIUS *advance.*

Lic. Rome will not suffer Regulus to go.
Man. I thought the consul and the senators
Had been a part of Rome.
Lic. I grant they are—
But still the people are the greater part.
Man. The greater, not the wiser.
Lic. The less cruel.——
Full of esteem and gratitude to Regulus,
We would preserve his life.
Man. And we his honour.
Lic. His honour!——
Man. Yes. Time presses. Words are vain.
Make way there—clear the passage.
Lic. On your lives,
Stir not a man.
Man. I do command you, go.
Lic. And I forbid it.
Man. Clear the way, my friends.
How dares Licinius thus oppose the consul?
Lic. How dar'st thou, Manlius, thus oppose the tribune?
Man. I'll show thee what I dare, imprudent
Lictors, force through the passage. [boy!
Lic. Romans, guard it.
Man. Gods! is my power resisted then with
Thou dost affront the majesty of Rome. [arms!
Lic. The majesty of Rome is in the people;
Thou dost insult it by opposing them.
People. Let noble Regulus remain in Rome.
Man. My friends, let me explain this treacherous scheme.
People. We will not hear thee—Regulus shall
Man. What! none obey me? [stay.
People. Regulus shall stay.
Man. Romans, attend.——
People. Let Regulus remain.

Enter REGULUS, *followed by* PUBLIUS, ATTILIA, HAMILCAR, BARCE, &c.

Reg. Let Regulus remain! What do I hear?
Is't possible the wish should come from you?
Can Romans give, or Regulus accept,
A life of infamy? Is't possible?
Where is the ancient virtue of my country?
Rise, rise, ye mighty spirits of old Rome!
I do invoke you from your silent tombs;
Fabricius, Cocles, and Camillus, rise, [were.
And show your sons what their great fathers
My countrymen, what crime have I committed?
Alas! how has the wretched Regulus
Deserv'd your hatred!
Lic. Hatred? ah! my friend,
It is our love would break these cruel chains.
Reg. If you deprive me of my chains, I'm nothing;
They are my honours, riches, titles,—all! [try;
They'll shame my enemies, and grace my coun-
They'll waft her glory to remotest climes,
Beyond her provinces and conquer'd realms,
Where yet her conq'ring eagles never flew;
Nor shall she blush hereafter if she find
Recorded with her faithful citizens,
The name of Regulus, the captive Regulus.
My countrymen! what, think you, kept in awe
The Volsci, Sabines, Æqui, and Hernici?
The arms of Rome alone? no, 'twas her virtue,
That sole surviving good, which brave men keep,
Though fate and warring worlds combine against them:
This still is mine—and I'll preserve it, Romans!
The wealth of Plutus shall not bribe it from me!
If you, alas! require this sacrifice,
Carthage herself was less my foe than Rome;
She took my freedom—she could take no more·
But Rome, to crown her work, would take my honour.
My friends! if you deprive me of my chains,
I am no more than any other slave:
Yes, Regulus becomes a common captive,
A wretched, lying, perjur'd fugitive!
But if, to grace my bonds, you leave my honour,
I shall be still a Roman, though a slave. [ges?
Lic. What faith should be observ'd with sava-
What promise should be kept which bonds extort?
Reg. Unworthy subterfuge! ah! let us leave
To the wild Arab and the faithless Moor
These wretched maxims of deceit and fraud:
Examples ne'er can justify the coward.
The brave man never seeks a vindication,
Save from his own just bosom and the gods;
From principle, not precedent, he acts;
As that arraigns him, or as that acquits,
He stands or falls; condemn'd or justified.
Lic. Rome is no more, if Regulus departs.
Reg. Let Rome remember Regulus must die;
Nor would the moment of my death be distant,

If nature's work had been reserv'd for nature :
What Carthage means to do, she would have
As speedily, perhaps, at least as surely. [done,
My wearied life has almost reach'd its goal ;
The once warm current stagnates in these veins,
Or through its icy channels slowly creeps—
View the weak arm ; mark the pale, furrow'd
cheek,
The slacken'd sinew, and the dim sunk eye,
And tell me then I must not think of dying !
How can I serve you else ? My feeble limbs
Would totter now beneath the armour's weight,
The burden of that body it once shielded.
You see, my friends, you see, my countrymen,
I can no longer show myself a Roman,
Except by dying like one.—Gracious Heaven
Points out a way to crown my days with glory ;
O, do not frustrate then the will of Jove,
And close a life of virtue with disgrace.
Come, come, I know my noble Romans better ;
I see your souls, I read repentance in them ;
You all applaud me—nay, you wish my chains ;
'Twas nothing but excess of love misled you,
And, as you're Romans, you will conquer that.
Yes !—I perceive your weakness is subdued—
Seize, seize the moment of returning virtue ;
Throw to the ground, my sons, those hostile
Retard no longer Regulus's triumph ; [arms ;
I do request it of you as a friend,
I call you to your duty as a patriot,
And—were I still your gen'ral, I'd command
you.

Lic. Lay down your arms—let Regulus depart.
(*To the people, who clear the way, and quit their arms.*)

Reg. Gods ! gods ! I thank you—you indeed
are righteous. [oh, father !

Pub. See every man disarm'd. Oh, Rome !

Att. Hold, hold, my heart. Alas ! they all
obey. [thee.

Reg. The way is clear. Hamilcar, I attend

Ham. Why, I begin to envy this old man !
(*aside.*)

Man. Not the proud victor on the day of tri-
umph,
Warm from the slaughter of dispeopled realms,
Though conquer'd princes grace his chariot
wheels,
Though tributary monarchs wait his nod,
And vanquish'd nations bend the knee before him,
E'er shone with half the lustre that surrounds
This voluntary sacrifice for Rome !
Who loves his country will obey her laws ;
Who most obeys them is the truest patriot.

Reg. Be our last parting worthy of ourselves.
Farewell ! my friends. I bless the gods who
rule us,
Since I must leave you, that I leave you Romans.
Preserve the glorious name untainted still,
And you shall be the rulers of the globe,
The arbiters of earth. The farthest east,
Beyond where Ganges rolls his rapid flood,
Shall proudly emulate the Roman name.
(*Kneels.*) Ye gods, the guardians of this glori-
ous people,
Who watch with jealous eye Æneas' race,
This land of heroes I commit to you ! [care !
This ground, these walls, this people, be your
Oh ! bless them, bless them with a liberal hand !
Let fortitude and valour, truth and justice,
For ever flourish and increase among them !
And if some baneful planet threat the capitol
With its malignant influence, oh ! avert it.
Be Regulus the victim of your wrath.—
On this white head be all your vengeance pour'd,
But spare, oh ! spare, and bless immortal Rome !
Ah ! tears ! my Romans weep ! Farewell ! fare-
well !

Attilia *struggles to get to* Regulus—*is pre-
vented—she faints—he fixes his eye steadily
on her for some time, and then departs to the
ships.*

Manlius. (*looking after him.*) Farewell ! fare-
well ! thou glory of mankind !
Protector, father, saviour of thy country !
Through Regulus the Roman name shall live,
Shall triumph over time, and mock oblivion.
Farewell ! thou pride of this immortal coast !
'Tis Rome alone a Regulus can boast.

EPILOGUE.

BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

What son of physic, but his heart extends,
As well as hand, when call'd on by his friends ?
What landlord is so weak to make you fast,
When guests like you bespeak a good repast ?
But weaker still were he whom fate has plac'd
To sooth your cares, and gratify your taste,
Should he neglect to bring before your eyes,
Those dainty dramas which from genius rise ;
Whether your luxury be to smile or weep,
His and your profits just proportion keep.
To-night he brought, nor fears a due reward,
A Roman Patriot by a Female Bard.
Britons, who feel his flame, his worth will rate,
No common spirit his, no common fate.
Inflexible and Captive must be great.
"How !" cries a sucking fop, thus lounging,
straddling,
(Whose head shows want of ballast by its nod
dling),
"A woman write ? Learn, madam, of your
betters,
And read a noble lord's posthumous letters.
There you will learn the sex may merit praise,
By making puddings—not by making plays :
They can make tea and mischief, dance and sing ;
Their heads, though full of feathers, can't take
wing." [chance,
I thought they could, sir ; now and then, by
Maids fly to Scotland, and some w ves to France.
He still went nodding on—"Do all she can,
Woman's a trifle—plaything—like her fan."
Right, sir, and when a wife, the *rattle* of a man.
And shall such things as these become the *test*
Of female worth ? the fairest and the best

Of all heaven's creatures? for so Milton sung us,
And, with such champions, who shall dare to wrong us?
Come forth, proud man, in all your pow'rs array'd;
Shine out in all your splendour—who's afraid?
Who on French wit has made a glorious war,
Defended Shakspeare, and subdued Voltaire?—
Woman!*—Who, rich in knowledge, knows no pride,
Can boast ten tongues, and yet not satisfied?

* Mrs. Montague, author of an essay on the writings of Shakspeare.

Woman!* Who lately sung the sweetest lay?
A woman! woman! woman!† still I say.
Well then, who dares deny our power and might?
Will any married man dispute our right?
Speak boldly, sirs,—your wives are not in sight.
What! are you silent? then you are content;
Silence, the proverb tells us, gives consent.
Critics, will you allow our honest claim?
Are you dumb too? This night has fix'd our fame.

* Mrs. Carter, well known for her skill in ancient and modern languages.

† Miss Aikin, whose poems were just published.

PERCY:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

REMARKS.

The feuds of the rival houses of Percy and of Douglas have furnished materials for this melancholy tale, in which Mrs. More* has embodied many judicious sentiments and excellent passages, producing a forcible lesson to parental tyranny. The victim of her husband's unreasonable jealousy, *Elwina's* virtuous conflict is pathetic and interesting; while *Percy's* sufferings, and the vain regret of Earl *Raby*, excite and increase our sympathy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PERCY, Earl of Northumberland,.....*Mr. Lewis.*
EARL DOUGLAS,.....*Mr. Wroughton.*
EARL RABY, Elwina's Father,.....*Mr. Aickin.*
EDRIC, Friend to Douglas,.....*Mr. Whitefield.*
HARCOURT, Friend to Percy,.....*Mr. Robson.*
SIR HUBERT, a Knight,.....*Mr. Hull.*

ELWINA,.....*Mrs. Barry.*
BIRTHA,.....*Mrs. Jackson.*

Knights, Guards, Attendants, &c.

SCENE.—Raby Castle, in Durham.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Gothic Hall.

Enter EDRIC *and* BIRTHA.

Bir. What may this mean? Earl Douglas has enjoin'd thee
To meet him here in private?
Edr. Yes, my sister,
And this injunction I have oft receiv'd;
But when he comes, big with some painful secret,
He starts, looks wild, then drops ambiguous hints,
Frowns, hesitates, turns pale, and says 'twas nothing;
Then feigns to smile, and by his anxious care
To prove himself at ease, betrays his pain.
Bir. Since my short sojourn here, I've mark'd this earl,
And though the ties of blood unite us closely,
I shudder at his haughtiness of temper,
Which not his gentle wife, the bright Elwina,
Can charm to rest. Ill are their spirits pair'd;
His is the seat of frenzy, hers of softness,
His love is transport, hers is trembling duty;
Rage in his soul is as the whirlwind fierce,
While hers ne'er felt the power of that rude passion.
Edr. Perhaps the mighty soul of Douglas mourns,
Because inglorious love detains him here,
While our bold knights, beneath the Christian standard,
Press to the bulwarks of Jerusalem.
Bir. Though every various charm adorns Elwina,

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* Of this estimable lady, a cotemporary writer says, "This lady has for many years flourished in the literary world, which she has richly adorned by a variety of labours, all possessing strong marks of excellence. In the cause of religion and society, her labours are original and indefatigable; and the industrious poor have been once enlightened by her instructions, and supported by her bounty."

And though the noble Douglas dotes to madness,
Yet some dark mystery involves their fate:
The canker grief devours Elwina's bloom,
And on her brow meek resignation sits,
Hopeless, yet uncomplaining.
Edr. 'Tis most strange.
Bir. Once, not long since, she thought herself alone;
'Twas then the pent-up anguish burst its bounds;
With broken voice, clasp'd hands, and streaming eyes,
She call'd upon her father, call'd him cruel,
And said her duty claim'd far other recompense.
Edr. Perhaps the absence of the good Lord Raby,
Who, at her nuptials, quitted this fair castle,
Resigning it to her, may thus afflict her.
Hast thou e'er question'd her, good Birtha?
Bir. Often,
But hitherto in vain; and yet she shows me
The endearing kindness of a sister's love;
But if I speak to Douglas——
Edr. See! he comes.
It would offend him should he find you here.

Enter DOUGLAS.

Dou. How! Edric and his sister in close conference?
Do they not seem alarm'd at my approach?
And see, how suddenly they part! Now Edric,
[*Exit* BIRTHA.
Was this well done? or was it like a friend,
When I desir'd to meet thee here alone,
With all the warmth of trusting confidence,
To lay my bosom naked to thy view,
And show thee all its weakness, was it well
To call thy sister here, to let her witness
Thy friend's infirmity?—perhaps to tell her—
Edr. My lord, I nothing know; I came to learn.
Dou. Nay then thou dost suspect there 's something wrong?
Edr. If we were bred from infancy together,
If I partook in all thy youthful griefs,
And every joy thou knew'st was doubly mine,
Then tell me all the secret of thy soul:
Or have these few short months of separation,
The only absence we have ever known,
Have these so rent the bands of love asunder,
That Douglas should distrust his Edric's truth?
Dou. My friend, I know thee faithful as thou'rt brave,
And I will trust thee—but not now, good Edric.
'Tis past, 'tis gone, it is not worth the telling,
'Twas wrong to cherish what disturb'd my peace;
I'll think of it no more.
Edr. Transporting news!
I fear'd some hidden trouble vex'd your quiet.
In secret I have watch'd——
Dou. Ha! watch'd in secret?
A spy, employ'd, perhaps, to note my actions.
What have I said? Forgive me, thou art noble:
Yet do not press me to disclose my grief,
For when thou know'st it, I perhaps shall hate thee
As much, my Edric, as I hate myself
For my suspicions—I am ill at ease.
Edr. How will the fair Elwina grieve to hear it!
Dou. Hold, Edric, hold—thou hast touch'd the fatal string
That wakes me into madness. Hear me then,
But let the deadly secret be secured
With bars of adamant in thy close breast.
Think on the curse which waits on broken oaths;
A knight is bound by more than vulgar ties,
And perjury in thee were doubly damn'd.
Well then, the king of England—
Edr. Is expected
From distant Palestine.
Dou. Forbid it, Heaven!
For with him comes—
Edr. Ah! who?
Dou. Peace, peace,
For see Elwina 's here. Retire, my Edric;
When next we meet, thou shalt know all. Farewell. [*Exit* EDRIC.
Now to conceal with care my bosom's anguish,
And let her beauty chase away my sorrows!
Yes, I would meet her with a face of smiles—
But 'twill not be.

Enter ELWINA.

Elw. Alas, 'tis ever thus!
Thus ever clouded is his angry brow. [*Aside.*
Dou. I were too bless'd, Elwina, could I hope
You met me here by choice, or that your bosom
Shar'd the warm transports mine must ever feel
At your approach.
Elw. My lord, if I intrude, [giveness:
The cause which brings me claims at least for-
I fear you are not well, and come, unbidden,
Except by faithful duty, to inquire,
If haply in my power, my little power
I have the means to minister relief
To your affliction?
Dou. What unwonted goodness
O I were bless'd above the lot of man,
If tenderness, not duty, brought Elwina;
Cold, ceremonious, and unfeeling duty,
That wretched substitute for love: but know,
The heart demands a heart; nor will be paid
With less than what it gives. E'en now, Elwina,
The glistening tear stands trembling in your eyes,
Which cast their mournful sweetness on the ground,
As if they fear'd to raise their beams to mine,
And read the language of reproachful love.
Elw. My lord, I hop'd the thousand daily proofs
Of my obedience——
Dou. Death to all my hopes! [ence?
Heart-rending word!—obedience! what 's obedi-
'Tis fear, 'tis hate, 'tis terror, 'tis aversion,
'Tis the cold debt of ostentatious duty,
Paid with insulting caution, to remind me
How much you tremble to offend a tyrant
So terrible as Douglas.—O, Elwina——
While duty measures the regard it owes
With scrupulous precision and nice justice,
Love never reasons, but profusely gives,
Gives, like a thoughtless prodigal, its all,
And trembles then, lest it has done too little.
Elw. Indeed I'm most unhappy that my cares,
And my solicitude to please, offend.
Dou. True tenderness is less solicitous,
Less prudent and more fond; the enamour'd heart
Conscious it loves, and bless'd in being lov'd,
Reposes on the object it adores,
And trusts the passion it inspires and feels.
Thou hast not learn'd how terrible it is
To feed a hopeless flame.—But hear, Elwina,
Thou most obdurate, hear me.—
Elw. Say, my lord,
For your own lips shall vindicate my fame,
Since at the altar I became your wife,
Can malice charge me with an act, a word,
I ought to blush at? Have I not still liv'd

As open to the eye of observation,
As fearless innocence should ever live?
I call attesting angels to be witness,
If in my open deed, or secret thought,
My conduct, or my heart, they've aught discern'd
Which did not emulate their purity.
Dou. This vindication ere you were accus'd,
This warm defence, repelling all attacks
Ere they are made, and construing casual words
To formal accusations, trust me, Madam,
Shows rather an alarm'd and vigilant spirit,
For ever on the watch to guard its secret,
Than the sweet calm of fearless innocence.
Who talk'd of guilt? Who testified suspicion?
Elw. Learn, Sir, that virtue, while 'tis free from blame,
Is modest, lowly, meek, and unassuming;
Not apt, like fearful vice, to shield its weakness
Beneath the studied pomp of boastful phrase
Which swells to hide the poverty it shelters;
But, when this virtue feels itself suspected,
Insulted, set at nought, its whiteness stain'd,
It then grows proud, forgets its humble worth,
And rates itself above its real value,
Dou. I did not mean to chide! but think, O think,
What pangs must rend this fearful doting heart,
To see you sink impatient of the grave,
To feel, distracting thought! to feel you hate me!
Elw. What if the slende thread by which I hold
This poor precarious being soon must break,
Is it Elwina's crime, or Heaven's decree?
Yet I shall meet, I trust, the king of terrors,
Submissive and resign'd, without one pang,
One fond regret, at leaving this gay world.
Dou. Yes, Madam, there is one, one man ador'd,
For whom your sighs will heave, your tears will flow,
For whom this hated world will still be dear,
For whom you still would live——
Elw. Hold, hold my lord,
What may this mean?
Dou. Ah! I have gone too far.
What have I said?—Your father, sure, your father,
The good Lord Raby, may at least expect
One tender sigh.
Elw. Alas, my lord! I thought
The precious incense of a daughter's sighs
Might rise to heaven, and not offend its ruler.
Dou. 'Tis true; yet Raby is no more belov'd
Since he bestow'd his daughter's hand on Douglas:
That was a crime the dutiful Elwina
Can never pardon; and believe me, Madam,
My love's so nice, so delicate my honour,
I am asham'd to owe my happiness
To ties which make you wretched. [*Exit* Douglas.
Elw. Ah! how's this?
Though I have ever found him fierce and rash,
Full of obscure surmises and dark hints,
Till now he never ventur'd to accuse me.
"Yet there is one, one man belov'd, ador'd,
For whom your tears will flow"—these were his words—
And then the wretched subterfuge of Raby—
How poor th' evasion!—But my Birtha comes.

Enter Birtha.

Bir. Crossing the portico I met Lord Douglas,
Disorder'd were his looks, his eyes shot fire;
He call'd upon your name with such distraction
I fear'd some sudden evil had befallen you.
Elw. Not sudden: no; long has the storm been gathering,
Which threatens speedily to burst in ruin
On this devoted head.
Bir. I ne'er beheld
Your gentle soul so ruffled, yet I've marked you,
While others thought you happiest of the happy,
Bless'd with whate'er the world calls great, or good,
With all that nature, all that fortune gives,
I've mark'd you bending with a weight of sorrow.
Elw. O I will tell thee all! thou couldst not find
An hour, a moment in Elwina's life,
When her full heart so long'd to ease its burden,
And pour its sorrows in thy friendly bosom:
Hear then, with pity hear, my tale of wo,
And, O forgive, kind nature, filial piety,
If my presumptuous lips arraign a father!
Yes, Birtha, that belov'd, that cruel father,
Has doom'd me to a life of hopeless anguish,
To die of grief ere half my days are number'd;
Doom'd me to give my trembling hand to Douglas,
'Twas all I had to give—my heart was—Percy's.
Bir. What do I hear?
Elw. My misery, not my crime.
Long since the battle 'twixt the rival houses
Of Douglas and of Percy, for whose hate
This mighty globe 's too small a theatre,
One summer's morn, my father chas'd the deer
On Cheviot Hills, Northumbria's fair domain.
Bir. On that fam'd spot where first the feuds commenc'd
Between the earls?
Elw. The same. During the chace,
Some of my father's knights receiv'd an insult
From the Lord Percy's herdsmen, churlish foresters,
Unworthy of the gentle blood they serv'd.
My father, proud and jealous of his honour,
(Thou know'st the fiery temper of our barons,)
Swore that Northumberland had been concern'd
In this rude outrage, nor would hear of peace,
Or reconcilement, which the Percy offer'd;
But bade me hate, renounce, and banish him.
O! 'twas a task too hard for all my duty:
I strove, and wept; I strove—but still I lov'd.
Bir. Indeed 'twas most unjust; but say what follow'd? [tale?
Elw. Why should I dwell on the disastrous
Forbid to see me, Percy soon embark'd
With our great king against the Saracen.
Soon as the jarring kingdoms were at peace,
Earl Douglas, whom till then I ne'er had seen,
Came to this castle; 'twas my hapless fate
To please him.—Birtha! thou can'st tell what followed:
But who shall tell the agonies I felt?
My barbarous father forc'd me to dissolve
The tender vows himself had bid me form——
He dragg'd me trembling, dying, to the altar,
I sigh'd, I struggled, fainted, and complied.
Bir. Did Douglas know, a marriage had been
Propos'd 'twixt you and Percy? [once
Elw. If he did,
He thought, like you, it was a match of policy,
Nor knew our love surpass'd our fathers' prudence.
Bir. Should he now find he was the instrument
Of the Lord Raby's vengeance?
Elw. 'Twere most dreadful!
My father lock'd this motive in his breast,
And feign'd to have forgot the chace of Cheviot.

Some moons have now completed their slow course
Since my sad marriage.—Percy still is absent.
Bir. Nor will return before his sov'reign comes.
Elw. Talk not of his return! this coward heart
Can know no thought of peace but in his absence.
How, Douglas here again? some fresh alarm!
Enter DOUGLAS, *agitated, with letters in his hand.*
Dou. Madam, your pardon—
Elw. What disturbs my lord? [ease.
Dou. Nothing.—Disturb! I ne'er was more at
These letters from your father give us notice
He will be here to-night:—He farther adds,
The king 's each hour expected.
Elw. How? the king?
Said you, the king?
Dou. And 'tis Lord Raby's pleasure
That you among the foremost bid him welcome.
You must attend the court.
Elw. Must I, my lord?
Dou. Now to observe how she receives the news! [*Aside.*
Elw. I must not,—cannot.—By the tender love
You have so oft profess'd for poor Elwina,
Indulge this one request—O let me stay!
Dou. Enchanting sounds! she does not wish to go— [*Aside.*
Elw. The bustling world, the pomp which waits on greatness,
Ill suits my humble, unambitious soul;—
Then leave me here, to tread the safer path
Of private life; here, where my peaceful course
Shall be as silent as the shades around me;
Nor shall one vagrant wish be e'er allow'd
To stray beyond the bounds of Raby Castle.
Dou. O music to my ears! [*Aside.*] Can you resolve
To hide those wondrous beauties in the shade,
Which rival kings would cheaply buy with empire?
Can you renounce the pleasures of a court,
Whose roofs resound with minstrelsy and mirth?
Elw. My lord, retirement is a wife's best duty,
And virtue's safest station is retreat.
Dou. My soul 's in transports! [*Aside.*] But can you forego
What wins the soul of woman—admiration?
A world, where charms inferior far to yours
Only presume to shine when you are absent!
Will you not long to meet the public gaze?
Long to eclipse the fair, and charm the brave?
Elw. These are delights in which the mind partakes not.
Dou. I'll try her farther. [*Aside.*
[*Takes her hand, and looks steadfastly at her as he speaks.*
But reflect once more:
When you shall hear that England's gallant peers,
Fresh from the fields of war, and gay with glory,
All vain with conquest, and elate with fame,
When you shall hear these princely youths contend,
In many a tournament, for beauty's prize;
When you shall hear of revelry and masking,
Of mimic combats and of festive halls,
Of lances shiver'd in the cause of love,
Will you not then repent, then wish your fate,
Your happier fate, had till that hour reserv'd you
For some plumed conqueror?
Elw. My fate, my lord,
Is now bound up with yours.
Dou. Here let me kneel— [der;
Yes, I will kneel, and gaze, and weep, and wonThou paragon of goodness!—pardon, pardon.
[*Kisses her hand.*

I am convinc'd—I can no longer doubt,
Nor talk, nor hear, nor reason, nor reflect.
—I must retire, and give a loose to joy.
[*Exit* DOUGLAS.
Bir. The king returns.
Elw. And with him Percy comes!
Bir. You needs must go.
Elw. Shall I solicit ruin,
And pull destruction on me ere its time?
I, who have held it criminal to name him?
I will not go—I disobey thee, Douglas,
But disobey thee to preserve thy honour. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—The Hall.

Enter DOUGLAS, *speaking.*

See that the traitor instantly be seiz'd,
And strictly watch'd; let none have access to him.
—O jealousy, thou aggregate of woes!
Were there no hell, thy torments would create one.
But yet she may be guiltless—may? she must.
How beautiful she look'd! pernicious beauty!
Yet innocent as bright seem'd the sweet blush
That mantled on her cheek. But not for me,
But not for me, those breathing roses blow!
And then she wept—What! can I bear her tears?
Well- let her weep—her tears are for another;
O did they fall for me, to dry their streams
I'd drain the choicest blood that feeds this heart,
Nor think the drops I shed were half so precious.
[*He stands in a musing posture.*

Enter LORD RABY.

Raby. Sure I mistake—am I in Raby Castle?
Impossible; that was the seat of smiles;
And Cheerfulness and Joy were household gods.
I us'd to scatter pleasures when I came,
And every servant shar'd his lord's delight;
But now Suspicion and Distrust dwell here,
And Discontent maintains a sullen sway.
Where is the smile unfeign'd, the jovial welcome,
Which cheer'd the sad, beguil'd the pilgrim's pain,
And made Dependency forget its bonds?
Where is the ancient, hospitable hall,
Whose vaulted roof once rung with harmless mirth,
Where every passing stranger was a guest,
And every guest a friend? I fear me much,
If once our nobles scorn their rural seats,
Their rural greatness, and their vassals' love,
Freedom and English grandeur are no more.
Dou. [*Advancing.*] My lord, you are welcome.
Raby. Sir, I trust I am;
But yet methinks I shall not feel I'm welcome
Till my Elwina bless me with her smiles:
She was not wont with ling'ring step to meet me,
Or greet my coming with a cold embrace;
Now, I extend my longing arms in vain:
My child, my darling, does not come to fill them.
O they were happy days, when she would fly
To meet me from the camp, or from the chace,
And with her fondness overpay my toils!
How eager would her tender hands unbrace
The ponderous armour from my war-worn limbs,
And pluck the helmet which oppos'd her kiss!
Dou. O sweet delights, that never must be mine!
Raby. What do I hear?
Dou. Nothing: inquire no farther.
Raby. My lord, if you respect an old man's peace,
If e'er you doted on my much-lov'd child,
As 'tis most sure you made me think you did,

Then, by the pangs which you may one day feel,
When you, like me, shall be a fond, fond father,
And tremble for the treasure of your age,
Tell me what this alarming silence means?
You sigh, you do not speak, nay more, you hear not;
Your lab'ring soul turns inward on itself,
As there were nothing but your own sad thoughts
Deserv'd regard. Does my child live?

Dou. She does.

Raby. To bless her father!

Dou. And to curse her husband!

Raby. Ah! have a care, my lord, I'm not so old—

Dou. Nor I so base, that I should tamely bear it;
Nor am I so inur'd to infamy,
That I can say, without a burning blush,
She lives to be my curse!

Raby. How 's this?

Dou. I thought
The lily opening to the heaven's soft dews,
Was not so fragrant, and was not so chaste.

Raby. Has she prov'd otherwise? I'll not believe it.
Who has traduc'd my sweet, my innocent child?
Yet she 's too good to 'scape calumnious tongues.
I know that Slander loves a lofty mark:
It saw her soar a flight above her fellows,
And hurl'd its arrow to her glorious height,
To reach her heart, and bring her to the ground.

Dou. Had the rash tongue of Slander so presum'd,
My vengeance had not been of that slow sort
To need a prompter; nor should any arm,
No, not a father's, dare dispute with mine,
The privilege to die in her defence.
None dares accuse Elwina, but—

Raby. But who?

Dou. But Douglas.

Raby. [*Puts his hand to his sword.*] You?—
O spare my age's weakness!
You do not know what 'tis to be a father;
You do not know, or you would pity me,
The thousand tender throbs, the nameless feelings,
The dread to ask, and yet the wish to know,
When we adore and fear; but wherefore fear?
Does not the blood of Raby fill her veins?

Dou. Percy;—know'st thou that name?

Raby. How? What of Percy?

Dou. He loves Elwina, and, my curses on him!
He is belov'd again.

Raby. I'm on the rack!

Dou. Not the two Theban brothers bore each other
Such deep, such deadly hate as I and Percy.

Raby. But tell me of my child.

Dou. [*Not minding him.*] As I and Percy!
When at the marriage rites, O rites accurs'd!
I seiz'd her trembling hand, she started back,
Cold horror thrill'd her veins, her tears flow'd fast.
Fool that I was, I thought 'twas maiden fear;
Dull, doting ignorance: beneath those terrors,
Hatred for me and love for Percy lurk'd.

Raby. What proof of guilt is this?

Dou. E'er since our marriage,
Our days have still been cold and joyless all;
Painful restraint, and hatred ill disguis'd,
Her sole return for all my waste of fondness.
This very morn I told her 'twas your will
She should repair to court; with all those graces,
Which first subdued my soul, and still enslave it,
She begg'd to stay behind in Raby Castle,
For courts and cities had no charms for her.
Curse my blind love! I was again ensnar'd,
And doted on the sweetness which deceiv'd me.
Just at the hour she thought I should be absent,
(For chance could ne'er have tim'd their guilt so well,)
Arriv'd young Harcourt, one of Percy's knights,
Strictly enjoin'd to speak to none but her;
I seiz'd the miscreant: hitherto he 's silent,
But tortures soon shall force him to confess!

Raby. Percy is absent—They have never met.

Dou. At what a feeble hold you grasp for succour!
Will it content me that her person 's pure?
No, if her alien heart dotes on another,
She is unchaste, were not that other Percy.
Let vulgar spirits basely wait for proof,
She loves another—'tis enough for Douglas.

Raby. Be patient.

Dou. Be a tame convenient husband,
And meanly wait for circumstantial guilt?
No—I am nice as the first Cæsar was,
And start at bare suspicion. [*Going.*

Raby. [*Holding him.*] Douglas, hear me:
Thou hast nam'd a Roman husband; if she 's false,
I mean to prove myself a Roman father.
[*Exit* Douglas.
This marriage was my work, and thus I'm punish'd!

Enter Elwina.

Elw. Where is my father? let me fly to meet him,
O let me clasp his venerable knees,
And die of joy in his belov'd embrace!

Raby. [*Avoiding her embrace.*] Elwina!

Elw. And is that all? so cold?

Raby. [*Sternly.*] Elwina!

Elw. Then I'm undone indeed! How stern his looks!
I will not be repuls'd, I am your child,
The child of that dear mother you ador'd;
You shall not throw me off, I will grow here,
And, like the patriarch, wrestle for a blessing.

Raby. [*Holding her from him.*] Before I take thee in these aged arms,
Press thee with transport to this beating heart
And give a loose to all a parent's fondness,
Answer, and see thou answer me as truly
As if the dread inquiry came from Heaven,—
Does no interior sense of guilt confound thee?
Canst thou lay all thy naked soul before me?
Can thy unconscious eye encounter mine?
Canst thou endure the probe, and never shrink?
Can thy firm hand meet mine, and never tremble?
Art thou prepar'd to meet the rigid Judge?
Or to embrace the fond, the melting father?

Elw. Mysterious Heaven! to what am I reserv'd!

Raby. Should some rash man, regardless of thy fame,
And in defiance of thy marriage vows,
Presume to plead a guilty passion for thee
What wouldst thou do?

Elw. What honour bids me do.

Raby. Come to my arms! [*They embrace*

Elw. My father!

Raby. Yes, Elwina,
Thou art my child—thy mother's perfect image.

Elw. Forgive these tears of mingled joy and doubt;

For why that question? who should seek to please
The desolate Elwina?
Raby. But if any
Should so presume, canst thou resolve to hate him,
Whate'er his name, whate'er his pride of blood,
Whate'er his former arrogant pretensions?
Elw. Ha!
Raby. Dost thou falter? Have a care, Elwina.
Elw. Sir, do not fear me: am I not your daughter? [honour;
Raby. Thou hast a higher claim upon thy
Thou art Earl Douglas' wife.
Elw. [*Weeps.*] I am, indeed!
Raby. Unhappy Douglas!
Elw. Has he then complain'd
Has he presum'd to sully my white fame?
Raby. He knows that Percy——
Elw. Was my destin'd husband;
By your own promise, by a father's promise,
And by a tie more strong, more sacred still,
Mine, by the fast firm bond of mutual love.
Raby. Now, by my fears, thy husband told me truth.
Elw. If he has told thee, that thy only child
Was forc'd a helpless victim to the altar,
Torn from his arms who had her virgin heart,
And forc'd to make false vows to one she hated,
Then I confess that he has told the truth.
Raby. Her words are barbed arrows in my heart.
But 'tis too late. [*Aside.*] Thou hast appointed Harcourt
To see thee here by stealth in Douglas' absence?
Elw. No, by my life, nor knew I till this moment
That Harcourt was return'd. Was it for this
I taught my heart to struggle with its feelings?
Was it for this I bore my wrongs in silence?
When the fond ties of early love were broken,
Did my weak soul break out in fond complaints?
Did I reproach thee? Did I call thee cruel?
No—I endur'd it all; and wearied Heaven
To bless the father who destroy'd my peace.

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. My lord, a knight, Sir Hubert as I think,
But newly landed from the holy wars,
Entreats admittance.
Raby. Let the warrior enter.
[*Exit* MESSENGER.
All private interests sink at his approach;
All selfish cares be for a moment banish'd;
I've now no child, no kindred but my country.
Elw. Weak heart, be still, for what hast thou to fear?

Enter SIR HUBERT.

Raby. Welcome, thou gallant knight! Sir Hubert, welcome!
Welcome to Raby Castle!—In one word,
Is the king safe? Is Palestine subdu'd?
Sir H. The king is safe, and Palestine subdu'd.
Raby. Bless'd be the God of armies! Now, Sir Hubert,
By all the saints, thou'rt a right noble knight.
O why was I too old for this crusade!
I think it would have made me young again,
Could I, like thee, have seen the hated crescent
Yield to the Christian cross.—How now, Elwina!
What! cold at news which might awake the dead?
If there 's a drop in thy degenerate veins
That glows not now, thou art not Raby's daughter.
It is religion's cause, the cause of Heaven!
Elw. When policy assumes religion's name,
And wears the sanctimonious garb of faith
Only to colour fraud, and license murder,
War then is tenfold guilt.
Raby. Blaspheming girl!
Elw. 'Tis not the crosier, nor the pontiff's robe
The saintly look, nor elevated eye,
Nor Palestine destroy'd, nor Jordan's banks
Deluged with blood of slaughter'd infidels;
No, nor the extinction of the eastern world,
Nor all the mad, pernicious, bigot rage
Of your crusades, can bribe that Power that sees
The motive with the act. O blind, to think
That cruel war can please the Prince of Peace!
He, who erects his altar in the heart,
Abhors the sacrifice of human blood,
And all the false devotion of that zeal
Which massacres the world he died to save.
Raby. O impious rage! If thou wouldst shun my curse, [Hubert,
No more, I charge thee.—Tell me, good Sir
Say, have our arms achiev'd this glorious deed,
(I fear to ask,) without much Christian blood-shed?
Elw. Now, Heaven support me! [*Aside.*
Sir H. My good lord of Raby,
Imperfect is the sum of human glory!
Would I could tell thee that the field was won,
Without the death of such illustrious knights
As make the high-flush'd cheek of victory pale.
Elw. Why should I tremble thus? [*Aside.*
Raby. Who have we lost? [Grey,
Sir H. The noble Clifford, Walsingham, and
Sir Harry Hastings, and the valiant Pembroke,
All men of choicest note.
Raby. O that my name
Had been enroll'd in such a list of heroes!
If I was too infirm to serve my country,
I might have prov'd my love by dying for her.
Elw. Were there no more?
Sir H. But few of noble blood.
But the brave youth who gain'd the palm of glory,
The flower of knighthood, and the plume of war,
Who bore his banner foremost in the field,
Yet conquer'd more by mercy than the sword,
Was Percy.
Elw. Then he lives! [*Aside.*
Raby. Did he? Did Percy?
O gallant boy, then I'm thy foe no more;
Who conquers for my country is my friend!
His fame shall add new glories to a house,
Where never maid was false, nor knight disloyal. [tears:
Sir H. You do embalm him, lady, with your
They grace the grave of glory where he lies—
He died the death of honour.
Elw. Said'st thou—died?
Sir H. Beneath the towers of Solyma he fell.
Elw. Oh!
Sir H. Look to the lady.
[ELWINA *faints in her father's arms.*
Raby. Gentle knight, retire——
'Tis an infirmity of nature in her,
She ever mourns at any tale of blood;
She will be well anon—meantime, Sir Hubert,
You'll grace our castle with your friendly sojourn.
Sir H. I must return with speed—health to the lady. [*Exit*
Raby. Look up, Elwina. Should her husband
Yet she revives not. [come!

Enter DOUGLAS.

Dou. Ha——Elwina fainting!

My lord, I fear you have too harshly chid her.
Her gentle nature could not brook your sternness.
She wakes, she stirs, she feels returning life.
My love! [*He takes her hand.*
Elw. O Percy!
Dou. [*Starts.*] Do my senses fail me?
Elw. My Percy, 'tis Elwina calls.
Dou. Hell, hell!
Raby. Retire awhile, my daughter.
Elw. Douglas here,
My father and my husband?—O for pity
[*Exit, casting a look of anguish on both.*
Dou. Now, now confess she well deserves my vengeance!
Before my face to call upon my foe!
Raby. Upon a foe who has no power to hurt
Earl Percy 's slain. [thee—
Dou. I live again.—But hold—
Did she not weep? she did, and wept for Percy.
If she laments him, he 's my rival still,
And not the grave can bury my resentment.
Raby. The truly brave are still the truly gen'rous.
Now, Douglas, is the time to prove thee both.
If it be true that she did once love Percy,
Thou hast no more to fear, since he is dead.
Release young Harcourt, let him see Elwina,
'Twill serve a double purpose, 'twill at once
Prove Percy's death, and thy unchang'd affection.
Be gentle to my child, and win her heart
By confidence and unreproaching love.
Dou. By Heaven, thou counsel'st well! it shall be done.
Go set him free, and let him have admittance
To my Elwina's presence.
Raby. Farewell, Douglas.
Show thou believ'st her faithful, and she'll prove so. [*Exit.*
Dou. Northumberland is dead—that thought is peace!
Her heart may yet be mine, transporting hope!
Percy was gentle, even a foe avows it,
And I'll be milder than a summer's breeze.
Yes, thou most lovely, most ador'd of women,
I'll copy every virtue, every grace,
Of my bless'd rival, happier even in death
To be thus lov'd, than living to be scorn'd. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A Garden at Raby Castle, with a Bower.

Enter PERCY *and* SIR HUBERT.

Sir H. That Percy lives, and is return'd in safety,
More joys my soul than all the mighty conquests
That sun beheld, which rose on Syria's ruin.
Per. I've told thee, good Sir Hubert, by what wonder
I was preserv'd, though number'd with the slain.
Sir H. 'Twas strange, indeed!
Per. 'Twas Heaven's immediate work!
But let me now indulge a dearer joy,
Talk of a richer gift of Mercy's hand;
A gift so precious to my doting heart,
That life preserv'd is but a second blessing.
O Hubert, let my soul indulge its softness!
The hour, the spot, is sacred to Elwina.
This was her fav'rite walk; I well remember,
(For who forgets that loves as I have lov'd?)
'Twas in that very bower she gave this scarf,
Wrought by the hand of love! she bound it on,
And, smiling, cried, Whate'er befall us, Percy,
Be this the sacred pledge of faith between us.
I knelt, and swore, call'd every power to witness,
No time, nor circumstance, should force it from me,
But I would lose my life and that together
Here I repeat my vow.
Sir H. Is this the man
Beneath whose single arm a host was crush'd?
He, at whose name the Saracen turn'd pale?
And when he fell, victorious armies wept,
And mourn'd a conquest they had bought so dear?
How has he chang'd the trumpet's martial note,
And all the stirring clangour of the war,
For the soft melting of the lover's lute!
Why are thine eyes still bent upon the bower?
Per. O Hubert, Hubert, to a soul enamour'd,
There is a sort of local sympathy,
Which, when we view the scenes of early passion,
Paints the bright image of the object lov'd
In stronger colours than remoter scenes
Could ever paint it; realizes shade,
Dresses it up in all the charms it wore,
Talks to it nearer, frames its answers kinder,
Gives form to fancy, and embodies thought.
Sir H. I should not be believ'd in Percy's camp,
If I should tell them that their gallant leader,
The thunder of the war, the bold Northumberland,
Renouncing Mars, dissolv'd in amorous wishes,
Loiter'd in shades, and pined in rosy bowers,
To catch a transient gleam of two bright eyes.
Per. Enough of conquest, and enough of war!
Ambition 's cloy'd—the heart resumes its rights.
When England's king, and England's good requir'd,
This arm not idly the keen falchion brandish'd:
Enough—for vaunting misbecomes a soldier.
I live, I am return'd—am near Elwina! [her;
Seest thou those turrets? Yes, that castle holds
But wherefore tell thee this? for thou hast seen her.
How look'd, what said she? Did she hear the tale
Of my imagin'd death without emotion?
Sir H. Percy, thou hast seen the musk-rose, newly blown,
Disclose its bashful beauties to the sun,
Till an unfriendly, chilling storm descended,
Crush'd all its blushing glories in their prime,
Bow'd its fair head, and blasted all its sweetness;
So droop'd the maid beneath the cruel weight
Of my sad tale.
Per. So tender and so true!
Sir H. I left her fainting in her father's arms,
The dying flower yet hanging on the tree.
Even Raby melted at the news I brought,
And envy'd thee thy glory.
Per. Then I am bless'd!
His hate subdu'd, I've nothing more to fear.
Sir H. My embassy dispatch'd, I left the castle,
Nor spoke to any of Lord Raby's household,
For fear the king should chide the tardiness
Of my return. My joy to find you living
You have already heard.
Per. But where is Harcourt?
Ere this he should have seen her, told her all,
How I surviv'd, return'd—and how I love!
I tremble at the near approach of bliss,
And scarcely can sustain the joy which waits me
Sir H. Grant, Heaven, the fair one prove but half so true!
Per. O she is truth itself!
Sir H. She may be chang'd,
Spite of her tears, her fainting, and alarms.
I know the sex, know them as nature made 'em,
Not such as lovers wish, and poets feign.

Per. To doubt her virtue were suspecting Hea-
'Twere little less than infidelity! [ven,
And yet I tremble. Why does terror shake
These firm-strung nerves? But 'twill be ever thus,
When fate prepares us more than mortal bliss,
And gives us only human strength to bear it.
Sir H. What beam of brightness breaks through yonder gloom? [comes
Per. Hubert—she comes! by all my hopes, she
'Tis she—the blissful vision is Elwina! [me!
But ah! what mean those tears?—She weeps for
O transport!—go.—I'll listen unobserv'd,
And for a moment taste the precious joy,
The banquet of a tear which falls for love.

[*Exit* Sir Hubert, Percy *goes into the bower.*

Enter Elwina.

Shall I not weep? and have I then no cause?
If I could break the eternal bands of death,
And wrench the sceptre from his iron grasp;
If I could bid the yawning sepulchre
Restore to life its long committed dust;
If I could teach the slaughtering hand of war
To give me back my dear, my murder'd Percy,
Then I indeed might once more cease to weep.

[Percy *comes out of the bower.*

Per. Then cease, for Percy lives.
Elw. Protect me, Heaven!
Per. O joy unspeakable! My life, my love!
End of my toils, and crown of all my cares!
Kind as consenting peace, as conquest bright,
Dearer than arms, and lovelier than renown!
Elw. It is his voice—it is, it is my Percy!
And dost thou live?
Per. I never liv'd till now.
Elw. And did my sighs, and did my sorrows reach thee?
And art thou come at last to dry my tears?
How did'st thou 'scape the fury of the foe?
Per. Thy guardian genius hover'd o'er the field,
And turn'd the hostile spear from Percy's breast,
Lest thy fair image should be wounded there.
But Harcourt should have told thee all my fate,
How I surviv'd——
Elw. Alas! I have not seen him.
Oh! I have suffer'd much.
Per. Of that no more;
For every minute of our future lives
Shall be so bless'd, that we will learn to wonder
How we could ever think we were unhappy.
Elw. Percy—I cannot speak.
Per. Those tears how eloquent!
I would not change this motionless, mute joy,
For the sweet strains of angels: I look down
With pity on the rest of human kind,
However great may be their fame of happiness,
And think their niggard fate has given them nothing,
Not giving thee; or, granting some small blessing,
Denies them my capacity to feel it.
Elw. Alas! what mean you?
Per. Can I speak my meaning? [it;
'Tis of such magnitude that words would wrong
But surely my Elwina's faithful bosom
Should beat in kind responses of delight,
And feel, but never question, what I mean.
Elw. Hold, hold, my heart, thou hast much more to suffer!
Per. Let the slow form, and tedious ceremony,
Wait on the splendid victims of ambition.
Love stays for none of these. Thy father's soften'd,
He will forget the fatal Cheviot chace;
Raby is brave, and I have serv'd my country,
I would not boast, it was for thee I conquer'd;
Then come, my love.
Elw. O never, never, never!
Per. Am I awake? Is that Elwina's voice?
Elw. Percy, thou most ador'd, and most de-
If ever fortitude sustain'd thy soul, [ceiv'd!
When vulgar minds have sunk beneath the stroke,
Let thy imperial spirit now support thee.—
If thou canst be so wondrous merciful,
Do not, O do not curse me!—but thou wilt,
Thou must—for I have done a fearful deed,
A deed of wild despair, a deed of horror.
I am, I am—
Per. Speak, say, what art thou?
Elw. Married!
Per. Oh! [me;
Elw. Percy, I think I begg'd thee not to curse
But now I do revoke the fond petition.
Speak! ease thy bursting soul; reproach, upbraid,
O'erwhelm me with thy wrongs——I'll bear it all.
Per. Open, thou earth, and hide me from her sight!
Did'st thou not bid me curse thee?
Elw. Mercy! mercy!
Per. And have I 'scaped the Saracen's fell
Only to perish by Elwina's guilt? [sword
I would have bared my bosom to the foe,
I would have died, had I but known you wish'd it.
Elw. Percy, I lov'd thee most when most I wrong'd thee;
Yes, by these tears I did.
Per. Married! just Heaven!
Married! to whom? Yet wherefore should know?
It cannot add fresh horrors to thy crime,
Or my destruction.
Elw. Oh! 'twill add to both.
How shall I tell? Prepare for something dreadful.
Hast thou not heard of—Douglas?
Per. Why, 'tis well!
Thou awful Power, why waste thy wrath on me?
Why arm omnipotence to crush a worm?
I could have fallen without this waste of ruin.
Married to Douglas! By my wrongs, I like it;
'Tis perfidy complete, 'tis finish'd falsehood,
'Tis adding fresh perdition to the sin,
And filling up the measure of offence!
Elw. Oh! 'twas my father's deed! he made his child
An instrument of vengeance on thy head.
He wept and threaten'd, sooth'd me, and commanded.
Per. And you complied, most dutcously complied!
Elw. I could withstand his fury; but his tears,
Ah, they undid me! Percy dost thou know
The cruel tyranny of tenderness?
Hast thou e'er felt a father's warm embrace?
Hast thou e'er seen a father's flowing tears,
And known that thou could'st wipe those tears away?
If thou hast felt, and hast resisted these,
Then thou may'st curse my weakness; but if not,
Thou canst not pity, for thou canst not judge.
Per. Let me not hear the music of thy voice,
Or I shall love thee still; I shall forget
Thy fatal marriage and my savage wrongs.
Elw. Dost thou not hate me, Percy?
Per. Hate thee? Yes,
As dying martyrs hate the righteous cause

Of that bless'd power for whom they bleed—I hate thee.

[*They look at each other with silent agony.*

Enter HARCOURT.

Har. Forgive, my lord, your faithful knight—

Per. Come, Harcourt,

Come, and behold the wretch who once was Percy.

Har. With grief I've learn'd the whole unhappy tale.

Earl Douglas, whose suspicion never sleeps—

Per. What, is the tyrant jealous?

Elw. Hear him, Percy.

Per. I will command my rage—Go on.

Har. Earl Douglas

Knew, by my arms and my accoutrements,
That I belong'd to you; he questioned much,
And much he menac'd me, but both alike
In vain; he then arrested and confin'd me. [it.

Per. Arrest my knight! The Scot shall answer

Elw. How came you now releas'd?

Har. Your noble father

Obtain'd my freedom, having learn'd from Hubert
The news of Percy's death. The good old lord,
Hearing the king's return, has left the castle
To do him homage.
[*To* PERCY.] Sir, you had best retire;
Your safety is endanger'd by your stay.
I fear should Douglas know——

Per. Should Douglas know!
Why what new magic 's in the name of Douglas?
That it should strike Northumberland with fear?
Go, seek the haughty Scot, and tell him—no—
Conduct me to his presence.

Elw. Percy, hold;
Think not 'tis Douglas—'tis—

Per. I know it well——
Thou mean'st to tell me 'tis Elwina's husband;
But that inflames me to superior madness.
This happy husband, this triumphant Douglas,
Shall not insult my misery with his bliss.
I'll blast the golden promise of his joys.
Conduct me to him—nay, I will have way—
Come, let us seek this husband.

Elw. Percy, hear me.
When I was robb'd of all my peace of mind,
My cruel fortune left me still one blessing,
One solitary blessing, to console me;
It was my fame.—'Tis a rich jewel, Percy,
And I must keep it spotless, and unsoil'd:
But thou wouldst plunder what e'en Douglas spar'd,
And rob this single gem of all its brightness.

Per. Go—thou wast born to rule the fate of
Thou art my conqueror still. [Percy.

Elw. What noise is that?

[HARCOURT *goes to the side of the stage.*

Per. Why art thou thus alarm'd?

Elw. Alas! I feel
The cowardice and terrors of the wicked,
Without their sense of guilt.

Har. My lord, 'tis Douglas.

Elw. Fly, Percy, and for ever

Per. Fly from Douglas?

Elw. Then stay, barbarian, and at once destroy
My life and fame.

Per. That thought is death. I go:
My honour to thy dearer honour yields.

Elw. Yet, yet thou art not gone!

Per. Farewell, farewell! [*Exit* PERCY.

Elw. I dare not meet the searching eye of Douglas.
I must conceal my terrors.

DOUGLAS *at the side with his sword drawn,* EDRIC *holds him.*

Dou. Give me way.

Edr. Thou shalt not enter. [no hell,

Dou. [*Struggling with* EDRIC.] If there were
It would defraud my vengeance of its edge,
And she should live.

[*Breaks from* EDRIC *and comes forward.*
Cursed chance! he is not here.

Elw. [*Going.*] I dare not meet his fury.

Dou. See she flies
With every mark of guilt.—Go, search the bower,
[*Aside to* EDRIC.
He shall not thus escape. Madam, return. [*Aloud.*
Now, honest Douglas, learn of her to feign. [*Aside.*
Alone, Elwina? who had just parted hence?
[*With affected composure.*

Elw. My lord, 'twas Harcourt; sure you must have met him. [else!

Dou. O exquisite dissembler! [*Aside.*] No one

Elw. My lord!

Dou. How I enjoy her criminal confusion!
[*Aside.*
You tremble, Madam.

Elw. Wherefore should I tremble?
By your permission Harcourt was admitted;
'Twas no mysterious, secret introduction.

Dou. And yet you seem alarm'd.—If Harcourt's presence
Thus agitates each nerve, makes every pulse
Thus wildly throb, and the warm tides of blood
Mount in quick rushing tumults to your cheek,
If friendship can excite such strong emotions,
What tremors had a lover's presence caus'd?

Elw. Ungenerous man!

Dou. I feast upon her terrors. [*Aside.*
The story of his death was well contriv'd; [*To her.*
But it affects not me; I have a wife,
Compar'd with whom cold Dian was unchaste.
[*Takes her hand.*
But mark me well—though it concerns not you—
If there 's a sin more deeply black than others,
Distinguish'd from the list of common crimes,
A legion in itself, and doubly dear
To the dark prince of hell, it is—hypocrisy.
[*Throws her from him, and exit.*

Elw. Yes, I will bear this fearful indignation!
Thou melting heart, be firm as adamant;
Ye shatter'd nerves, be strung with manly force,
That I may conquer all my sex's weakness,
Nor let this bleeding bosom lodge one thought,
Cherish one wish, or harbour one desire,
That angels may not hear, and Douglas know.
[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—The Hall.

Enter DOUGLAS, *his sword drawn and bloody in one hand, in the other a letter.* HARCOURT, *wounded.*

Dou. Traitor, no more! this letter shows thy office.
Twice hast thou robb'd me of my dear revenge.
I took thee for thy leader.—Thy base blood
Would stain the noble temper of my sword;
But as the pander to thy master's lust,
Thou justly fall'st by a wrong'd husband's hand.

Har. Thy wife is innocent.

Dou. Take him away.

Har. Percy, revenge my fall!

[*Guards bear* HARCOURT *in*

Dou. Now for the letter!
He begs once more to see her.—So 'tis plain
They have already met!—but to the rest——
[*Reads.*] "In vain you wish me to restore the scarf;
Dear pledge of love, while I have life I'll wear it,
'Tis next my heart; no power shall force it thence;
Whene'er you see it in another's hand,
Conclude me dead."—My curses on them both!
How tamely I peruse my shame! but thus,
Thus let me tear the guilty characters
Which register my infamy; and thus,
Thus would I scatter to the winds of heaven
The vile complotters of my foul dishonour.
[*Tears the letter in the utmost agitation.*

Enter EDRIC.

Edr. My lord——
Dou. [*In the utmost fury, not seeing* EDRIC.] The scarf!
Edr. Lord Douglas.
Dou. [*Still not hearing him.*] Yes, the scarf!
Percy, I thank thee for the glorious thought!
I'll cherish it; 'twill sweeten all my pangs,
And add a higher relish to revenge!
Edr. My lord!
Dou. How! Edric here?
Edr. What new distress? [shame,
Dou. Dost thou expect I should recount my
Dwell on each circumstance of my disgrace,
And swell my infamy into a tale?
Rage will not let me—But—my wife is false.
Edr. Art though convinc'd?
Dou. The chronicles of hell
Cannot produce a falser.—But what news
Of her cursed paramour?
Edr. He has escap'd.
Dou. Hast thou examin'd every avenue?
Each spot? the grove? the bower, her favourite haunt?
Edr. I've search'd them all. [
Dou. He shall be yet pursued.
Set guards at every gate.—Let none depart
Or gain admittance here, without my knowledge.
Edr. What can their purpose be?
Dou. Is it not clear?
Harcourt has raised his arm against my life;
He fail'd; the blow is now reserv'd for Percy;
Then, with his sword fresh reeking from my heart,
He'll revel with that wanton o'er my tomb;
Nor will he bring her aught she'll hold so dear,
As the curs'd hand with which he slew her husband.
But he shall die! I'll drown my rage in blood,
Which I will offer as a rich libation
On thy infernal altar, black revenge! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—The Garden.

Enter ELWINA.

Elw. Each avenue is so beset with guards,
And lynx-ey'd Jealousy so broad awake,
He cannot pass unseen. Protect him, Heaven!

Enter BIRTHA.

My Birtha, is he safe? has he escap'd? [to him,
Bir. I know not. I despatch'd young Harcourt
To bid him quit the castle, as you order'd,
Restore the scarf, and never see you more.
But how the hard injunction was receiv'd,
Or what has happen'd since, I'm yet to learn.
Elw. O when shall I be eas'd of all my cares,
And in the quiet bosom of the grave
Lay down this weary head!—I'm sick at heart!
Should Douglas intercept his flight!
Bir. Be calm;
Douglas this very moment left the castle,
With seeming peace.
Elw. Ah, then, indeed there's danger!
Birtha, whene'er Suspicion feigns to sleep,
'Tis but to make its careless prey secure. [thee,
Bir. Should Percy once again entreat to see
'Twere best admit him; from thy lips alone
He will submit to hear his final doom
Of everlasting exile.
Elw. Birtha, no;
If honour would allow the wife of Douglas
To meet his rival, yet I durst not do it.
Percy! too much this rebel heart is thine:
Too deeply should I feel each pang I gave
I cannot hate—but I will banish—thee.
Inexorable duty, O forgive,
If I can do no more!
Bir. If he remains,
As I suspect, within the castle walls,
'Twere best I sought him out.
Elw. Then tell him, Birtha,
But, Oh! with gentleness, with mercy, tell him.
That we must never, never meet again.
The purport of my tale must be severe,
But let thy tenderness embalm the wound
My virtue gives. O soften his despair;
But say—we meet no more.

Enter PERCY.

Rash man, he's here!
[*She attempts to go, he seizes her hand.*
Per. I will be heard; nay, fly not; I will speak
Lost as I am, I will not be denied
The mournful consolation to complain.
Elw. Percy, I charge thee, leave me.
Per. Tyrant, no:
I blush at my obedience, blush to think
I left thee here alone, to brave the danger
I now return to share.
Elw. That danger's past:
Douglas was soon appeas'd; he nothing knows.
Then leave me, I conjure thee, nor again
Endanger my repose. Yet, ere thou goest,
Restore the scarf.
Per. Unkind Elwina, never!
'Tis all that's left me of my buried joys,
All which reminds me that I once was happy.
My letter told thee I would ne'er restore it.
Elw. Letter! what letter?
Per. That I sent by Harcourt.
Elw. Which I ne'er receiv'd. Douglas per-
Who knows? [haps.
Bir. Harcourt, t'elude his watchfulness,
Might prudently retire.
Elw. Grant Heaven it prove so!
[ELWINA *going*, PERCY *holds her*
Per. Hear me, Elwina; the most savage honour
Forbids not that poor grace.
Elw. It bids me fly thee. [part,
Per. Then, ere thou goest, if we indeed must
To sooth the horrors of eternal exile,
Say but—thou pity'st me!
Elw. [*Weeps.*] O Percy—pity thee!
Imperious honour;—Surely I may pity him.
Yet, wherefore pity? no, I envy thee:
For thou hast still the liberty to weep,
In thee 'twill be no crime; thy tears are guiltless,
For they infringe no duty, stain no honour,
And blot no vow; but mine are criminal,
Are drops of shame which wash the cheek of guilt,
And every tear I shed dishonours Douglas.

Per. I swear my jealous love e'en grudges thee
Thy sad pre-eminence in wretchedness.
Elw. Rouse, rouse, my slumb'ring virtue! Percy hear me. [thine,
Heaven, when it gives such high-wrought souls as
Still gives as great occasions to exert them.
If thou wast form'd so noble, great, and gen'rous,
'Twas to surmount the passions which enslave
The gross of human-kind.—Then think, O think,
She, whom thou once didst love, is now another's.
Per. Go on—and tell me that that other's Douglas. [me:
Elw. Whate'er his name, he claims respect from
His honour 's in my keeping, and I hold
The trust so pure, its sanctity is hurt
E'en by thy presence.
Per. Thou again hast conquer'd.
Celestial virtue, like the angel spirit,
Whose flaming sword defended Paradise,
Stands guard on every charm.—Elwina, yes,
To triumph over Douglas, we'll be virtuous.
Elw. 'Tis not enough to be,—we must appear so:
Great souls disdain the shadow of offence,
Nor must their whiteness wear the stain of guilt.
Per. I shall retract—I dare not gaze upon thee;
My feeble virtue staggers, and again
The fiends of jealousy torment and haunt me.
They tear my heart-strings.——Oh!
Elw. No more;
But spare my injur'd honour the affront
To vindicate itself.
Per. But, love!
Elw. But, glory!
Per. Enough! a ray of thy sublimer spirit
Has warm'd my dying honour to a flame!
One effort and 'tis done. The world shall say,
When they shall speak of my disastrous love,
Percy deserv'd Elwina though he lost her.
Fond tears, blind me not yet! a little longer,
Let my sad eyes a little longer gaze,
And leave their last beams here.
Elw. [*Turns from him.*] I do not weep.
Per. Not weep? then why those eyes avoiding mine? [cents?
And why that broken voice? those trembling ac-
That sigh which rends my soul?
Elw. No more, no more. [once;
Per. That pang decides it. Come—I'll die at
Thou Power supreme! take all the length of days,
And all the blessings kept in store for me,
And add to her account.—Yet turn once more,
One little look, one last, short glimpse of day,
And then a long dark night.—Hold, hold my heart,
O break not yet, while I behold her sweetness;
For after this dear, mournful, tender moment,
I shall have nothing more to do with life.
Elw. I do conjure thee, go.
Per. 'Tis terrible to nature!
With pangs like these the soul and body part!
And thus, but oh, with far less agony,
The poor departing wretch still grasps at being,
Thus clings to life, thus dreads the dark unknown,
Thus struggles to the last to keep his hold;
And when the dire convulsive groan of death
Dislodges the sad spirit—thus it stays,
And fondly hovers o'er the form it lov'd.
Once and no more—farewell, farewell!
Elw. For ever!
[*They look at each other for some time, then exit* Percy. *After a pause;*
'Tis past—the conflict 's past! retire, my Birtha,
I would address me to the throne of grace.

Bir. May Heaven restore that peace thy bosom wants! [*Exit* Birtha.
Elw. [*Kneels.*] Look down, thou awful, heart-inspecting Judge,
Look down with mercy on thy erring creature,
And teach my soul the lowliness it needs!
And if some sad remains of human weakness
Should sometimes mingle with my best resolves,
O breathe thy spirit on this wayward heart,
And teach me to repent th' intruding sin
In it's first birth of thought!
[*Noise within.*] What noise is that?
The clash of swords! should Douglas be return'd

Enter Douglas *and* Percy, *fighting.*

Dou. Yield, villain, yield.
Per. Not till this good right arm
Shall fail its master.
Dou. This to thy heart, then.
Per. Defend thy own.
[*They fight;* Percy *disarms* Douglas.
Dou. Confusion, death, and hell!
Edr. [*Without.*] This way I heard the noise.

Enter Edric, *and many Knights and Guards, from every part of the stage.*

Per. Cursed treachery!
But dearly will I sell my life.
Dou. Seize on him.
Per. I'm taken in the toils.
[Percy *is surrounded by Guards, who take his sword.*
Dou. In the cursed snare
Thou laidst for me, traitor, thyself art caught.
Elw. He never sought thy life.
Dou. Adulteress, peace!
The villain Harcourt too—but he 's at rest.
Per. Douglas, I'm in thy power; but do not triumph, [me.
Percy 's betray'd, not conquer'd. Come, despatch
Elw. [*To* Douglas.] O do not, do not kill him!
Per. Madam, forbear;
For by the glorious shades of my great fathers,
Their godlike spirit is not so extinct,
That I should owe my life to that vile Scot.
Though dangers close me round on every side,
And death besets me, I am Percy still.
Dou. Sorceress, I'll disappoint thee—he shall die,
Thy minion shall expire before thy face,
That I may feast my hatred with your pangs,
And make his dying groans, and thy fond tears,
A banquet for my vengeance.
Elw. Savage tyrant!
I would have fallen a silent sacrifice, [thee.
So thou had'st spar'd my fame—I never wrong'd
Per. She knew not of my coming;—I alone
Have been to blame—Spite of her interdiction,
I hither came. She 's pure as spotless saints.
Elw. I will not be excus'd by Percy's crime;
So white my innocence, it does not ask
The shade of others' faults to set it off;
Nor shall he need to sully his fair fame
To throw a brighter lustre round my virtue.
Dou. Yet he can only die—but death for honour!
Ye powers of hell, who take malignant joy
In human bloodshed, give me some dire means,
Wild as my hate, and desperate as my wrongs!
Per. Enough of words. Thou know'st I hate thee, Douglas;
'Tis steadfast, fix'd, hereditary hate,
As thine for me; our fathers did bequeath it
As part of our unalienable birthright,

Which nought but death can end.—Come, end it here.
Elw. [*Kneels.*] Hold, Douglas, hold!—not for myself I kneel,
I do not plead for Percy, but for thee:
Arm not thy hand against thy future peace,
Spare thy brave breast the tortures of remorse,—
Stain not a life of unpolluted honour,
For, oh! as surely as thou strik'st at Percy,
Thou wilt for ever stab the fame of Douglas.
Per. Finish the bloody work.
Dou. Then take thy wish.
Per. Why dost thou start?
[Percy *bares his bosom.* Douglas *advances to stab him, and discovers the scarf.*
Dou. Her scarf upon his breast!
The blasting sight converts me into stone;
Withers my powers like cowardice or age,
Curdles the blood within my shiv'ring veins
And palsies my bold arm.
Per. [*Ironically to the Knights.*] Hear you, his friends!
Bear witness to the glorious, great exploit,
Record it in the annals of his race,
That Douglas, the renown'd—the valiant Douglas,
Fenc'd round with guards, and safe in his own castle,
Surpris'd a knight unarm'd, and bravely slew him.
Dou. [*Throwing away his dagger.*] 'Tis true—I am the very stain of knighthood.
How is my glory dimm'd!
Elw. It blazes brighter!
Douglas was only brave—he now is generous!
Per. This action has restor'd thee to thy rank,
And makes thee worthy to contend with Percy.
Dou. Thy joy will be as short as 'tis insulting.
[*To* Elwina.
And thou, imperious boy, restrain thy boasting.
Thou hast sav'd my honour, not remov'd my hate,
For my soul loathes thee for the obligation.
Give him his sword.
Per. Now thou'rt a noble foe,
And in the field of honour I will meet thee,
As knight encount'ring knight.
Elw. Stay, Percy, stay,
Strike at the wretched cause of all, strike here,
Here sheathe thy thirsty sword, but spare my husband. [me,
Dou. Turn, Madam, and address those vows to
To spare the precious life of him you love.
Even now you triumph in the death of Douglas;
Now your loose fancy kindles at the thought,
And, wildly rioting in lawless hope,
Indulges the adultery of the mind.
But I'll defeat that wish.—Guards, bear her in.
Nay, do not struggle. [*She is borne in.*
Per. Let our deaths suffice,
And reverence virtue in that form inshrin'd.
Dou. Provoke my rage no farther.—I have kindled
The burning torch of never-dying vengeance
At love's expiring lamp.—But mark me, friends,
If Percy's happier genius should prevail,
And I should fall, give him safe conduct hence,
Be all observance paid him.—Go, I follow thee.
[*Aside to* Edric.
Within I've something for thy private ear.
Per. Now shall this mutual fury be appeas'd!
These eager hands shall soon be drench'd in slaughter!
Yes—like two famish'd vultures snuffing blood,
And panting to destroy, we'll rush to combat;
Yet I've the deepest, deadliest cause of hate,
I am but Percy, thou'rt—Elwina's husband.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Elwina's *Apartment*

Elw. Thou who in judgment still remember'st mercy,
Look down upon my woes, preserve my husband!
Preserve my husband! Ah, I dare not ask it;
My very prayers may pull down ruin on me!
If Douglas should survive, what then becomes
Of—him—I dare not name? And if he conquers,
I've slain my husband. Agonizing state!
When I can neither hope, nor think, nor pray,
But guilt involves me. Sure to know the worst
Cannot exceed the torture of suspense,
When each event is big with equal horror.
[*Looks out.*
What, no one yet? This solitude is dreadful!
My horrors multiply!

Enter Birtha.

Thou messenger of wo!
Bir. Of wo, indeed!
Elw. How, is my husband dead?
Oh, speak!
Bir. Your husband lives.
Elw. Then farewell, Percy
He was the tenderest, truest!—Bless him, Heaven,
With crowns of glory and immortal joys!
Bir. Still are you wrong; the combat is not over.
Stay, flowing tears, and give me leave to speak.
Elw. Thou sayest that Percy and my husband
Then why this sorrow? [live;
Bir. What a task is mine!
Elw. Thou talk'st as if I were a child in grief,
And scarce acquainted with calamity.
Speak out, unfold thy tale, whate'er it be,
For I am so familiar with affliction,
It cannot come in any shape will shock me.
Bir. How shall I speak? Thy husband——
Elw. What of Douglas?
Bir. When all was ready for the fatal combat,
He call'd his chosen knights, then drew his sword,
And on it made them swear a solemn oath,
Confirm'd by every rite religion bids,
That they would see perform'd his last request,
Be it whate'er it would. Alas! they swore.
Elw. What did the dreadful preparation mean?
Bir. Then to their hands he gave a poison'd cup,
Compounded of the deadliest herbs and drugs;
Take this, said he, it is a husband's legacy;
Percy may conquer—and—I have a wife!
If Douglas falls, Elwina must not live.
Elw. Spirit of Herod! Why, 'twas greatly thought!
'Twas worthy of the bosom which conceiv'd it!
Yet 'twas too merciful to be his own.
Yes, Douglas, yes, my husband, I'll obey thee,
And bless thy genius which has found the means
To reconcile thy vengeance with my peace,
The deadly means to make obedience pleasant.
Bir. O spare, for pity spare, my bleeding heart:
Inhuman to the last! Unnatural poison!
Elw. My gentle friend, what is there in a name?
The means are little where the end is kind.
If it disturb thee, do not call it poison;
Call it the sweet oblivion of my cares,
My balm of wo, my cordial of affliction,
The drop of mercy to my fainting soul,
My kind dismission from a world of sorrow,

My cup of bliss, my passport to the skies.
Bir. Hark! what alarm is that?
Elw. The combat 's over! [BIRTHA *goes out.*
[ELWINA *stands in a fixed attitude, her hands clasped.*
Now, gracious Heaven, sustain me in the trial,
And bow my spirit to thy great decrees!

Re-enter BIRTHA.

[ELWINA *looks steadfastly at her without speaking.*
Bir. Douglas is fallen.
Elw. Bring me the poison.
Bir. Never. [approach!
Elw. Where are the knights? I summon you—
Draw near, ye awful ministers of fate,
Dire instruments of posthumous revenge!
Come—I am ready; but your tardy justice
Defrauds the injur'd dead.—Go, haste, my friend,
See that the castle be securely guarded,
Let every gate be barr'd—prevent his entrance.
Bir. Whose entrance?
Elw. His—the murderer of my husband.
Bir. He 's single, we have hosts of friends.
Elw. No matter;
Who knows what love and madness may attempt?
But here I swear by all that binds the good,
Never to see him more.—Unhappy Douglas.
O if thy troubled spirit still is conscious
Of our past woes, look down, and hear me swear,
That when the legacy thy rage bequeath'd me
Works at my heart, and conquers struggling
Ev'n in that agony I'll still be faithful. [nature,
She who could never love, shall yet obey thee,
Weep thy hard fate, and die to prove her truth.
Bir. O unexampled virtue! [*A noise without.*
Elw. Heard you nothing?
By all my fears the insulting conqueror comes.
O save me, shield me!

Enter DOUGLAS.

Heaven and earth, my husband!
Dou. Yes——
To blast thee with the sight of him thou hat'st,
Of him thou hast wrong'd, adultress, 'tis thy husband. [mercy,
Elw. [*Kneels,*] Bless'd be the fountain of eternal
This load of guilt is spar'd me! Douglas lives!
Perhaps both live! [*To* BIRTHA.] Could I be sure of that,
The poison were superfluous, joy would kill me.
Dou. Be honest now, for once, and curse thy stars;
Curse thy detested fate which brings thee back
A hated husband, when thy guilty soul
Revell'd in fond, imaginary joys
With my too happy rival: when thou flew'st,
To gratify impatient, boundless passion,
And join adulterous lust to bloody murder;
Then to reverse the scene! polluted woman!
Mine is the transport now, and thine the pang.
Elw. Whence sprung the false report that thou had'st fall'n?
Dou. To give thy guilty breast a deeper wound,
To add a deadlier sting to disappointment,
I rais'd it—I contriv'd—I sent it thee. [virtue.
Elw. Thou seest me bold, but bold in conscious
—That my sad soul may not be stain'd with blood,
That I may spend my few short hours in peace,
And die in holy hope of Heaven's forgiveness,
Relieve the terrors of my lab'ring breast,
Say I am clear of murder—say he lives,
Say but that little word, that Percy lives,
And Alps and oceans shall divide us ever,
As far as universal space can part us.
Dou. Canst thou renounce him?
Elw. Tell me that he lives,
And thou shalt be the ruler of my fate,
For ever hide me in a convent's gloom,
From cheerful day-light, and the haunts of men,
Where sad austerity, and ceaseless prayer
Shall share my uncomplaining day between them.
Dou. O, hypocrite! now, Vengeance, to thy office.
I had forgot—Percy commends him to thee,
And by my hand—
Elw. How—by thy hand?
Dou. Has sent thee
This precious pledge of love.
[*He gives her* PERCY'S *scarf.*
Elw. Then Percy 's dead! [mine!
Dou. He is.—O great revenge, thou now art
See how convulsive sorrow rends her frame!
This, this is transport!—injur'd honour now
Receives its vast, its ample retribution.
She sheds no tears, her grief s too highly wrought;
'Tis speechless agony.—She must not faint—
She shall not 'scape her portion of the pain.
No! she shall feel the fulness of distress,
And wake to keen perception of her loss.
Bir. Monster! Barbarian! leave her to her sorrows.
Elw. [*In a low broken voice.*] Douglas—think not I faint, because thou seest
The pale and bloodless cheek of wan despair.
Fail me not yet, my spirits; thou cold heart,
Cherish thy freezing current one short moment,
And bear thy mighty load a little longer.
Dou. Percy, I must avow it, bravely fought,—
Died as a hero should;—but, as he fell,
(Hear it, fond wanton!) call'd upon thy name,
And his last guilty breath sigh'd out—Elwina!
Come—give a loose to rage, and feed thy soul
With wild complaints, and womanish upbraidings.
Elw. [*In a low solemn voice.*] No.
The sorrow 's weak that wastes itself in words,
Mine is substantial anguish—deep, not loud;
I do not rave—Resentment 's the return
Of common souls for common injuries. [sion;
Light grief is proud of state, and courts compas-
But there 's a dignity in cureless sorrow,
A sullen grandeur which disdains complaint;
Rage is for little wrongs—Despair is dumb.
[*Exeunt* ELWINA *and* BIRTHA.
Dou. Why, this is well! her sense of wo is strong! [her,
The sharp, keen tooth of gnawing grief devours
Feeds on her heart, and pays me back my pangs.
Since I must perish, 'twill be glorious ruin:
I fall not singly, but, like some proud tower,
I'll crush surrounding objects in the wreck,
And make the devastation wide and dreadful.

Enter RABY.

Raby. O whither shall a wretched father turn,
Where fly for comfort? Douglas, art thou here?
I do not ask for comfort at thy hands.
I'd but one little casket, where I lodged
My precious hoard of wealth, and, like an idiot,
I gave my treasure to another's keeping,
Who threw away the gem, nor knew its value,
But left the plunder'd owner quite a beggar.
Dou. What art thou come to see thy race dishonour'd?

And thy bright sun of glory set in blood?
I would have spar'd thy virtues, and thy age,
The knowledge of her infamy.
Raby. 'Tis false. [blood.
Had she been base, this sword had drank her
Dou. Ha! dost thou vindicate the wanton?
Raby. Wanton?
Thou hast defam'd a noble lady's honour—
My spotless child—in me behold her champion:
The strength of Hercules will nerve this arm,
When lifted in defence of innocence.
The daughter's virtue for the father's shield,
Will make old Raby still invincible.
[*Offers to draw.*
Dou. Forbear.
Raby. Thou dost disdain my feeble arm,
And scorn my age.
Dou. There will be blood enough;
Nor need thy wither'd veins, old lord, be drain'd,
To swell the copious stream.
Raby. Thou wilt not kill her?
Dou. Oh, 'tis a day of horror!

Enter EDRIC *and* BIRTHA.

Edr. Where is Douglas?
I come to save him from the deadliest crime
Revenge did ever meditate.
Dou. What meanest thou? [wife.
Edr. This instant fly, and save thy guiltless
Dou. Save that perfidious—
Edr. That much-injur'd woman.
Bir. Unfortunate indeed, but O most innocent!
Edr. In the last solemn article of death,
That truth-compelling state, when even bad men
Fear to speak falsely, Percy clear'd her fame.
Dou. I heard him.—'Twas the guilty fraud of love.
The scarf, the scarf! that proof of mutual passion,
Given but this day to ratify their crimes!
Bir. What means my lord? This day? That fatal scarf
Was given long since, a toy of childish friendship;
Long ere your marriage, ere you knew Elwina.
Raby. 'Tis I am guilty.
Dou. Ha!
Raby. I,—I alone.
Confusion, honour, pride, parental fondness,
Distract my soul,—Percy was not to blame,
He was—the destin'd husband of Elwina!
He lov'd her—was belov'd—and I approv'd.
The tale is long.—I chang'd my purpose since,
Forbade their marriage—
Dou. And confirm'd my mis'ry!
Twice did they meet to-day—my wife and Percy.
Raby. I know it.
Dou. Ha! thou knew'st of my dishonour?
Thou wast a witness, an approving witness,
At least a tame one!
Raby. Percy came, 'tis true,
A constant, tender, but a guiltless lover!
Dou. I shall grow mad indeed; a guiltless lover!
Percy, the guiltless lover of my wife?
Raby. He knew not she was married.
Dou. How? is't possible? [cent;
Raby. Douglas, 'tis true; both, both were inno-
He of her marriage, she of his return. [vow'd
Bir. But now, when we believ'd thee dead, she
Never to see thy rival. Instantly,
Not in a state of momentary passion,
But with a martyr's dignity and calmness,
She bade me bring the poison.
Dou. Had'st thou done it,
Despair had been my portion! Fly, good Birtha,
Find out the suffering saint—describe my penitence,
And paint my vast extravagance of fondness,
Tell her I love as never mortal lov'd—
Tell her I know her virtues, and adore them—
Tell her I come, but dare not seek her presence,
Till she pronounce my pardon.
Bir. I obey. [*Exit* BIRTHA.
Raby. My child is innocent! ye choirs of saints
Catch the bless'd sounds—my child is innocent!
Dou. O I will kneel, and sue for her forgiveness,
And thou shalt help me plead the cause of love,
And thou shalt weep—she cannot sure refuse
A kneeling husband and a weeping father.
Thy venerable cheek is wet already.
Raby. Douglas! it is the dew of grateful joy
My child is innocent! I now would die,
Lest fortune should grow weary of her kindness,
And grudge me this short transport.
Dou. Where, where is she?
My fond impatience brooks not her delay;
Quick, let me find her, hush her anxious soul,
And sooth her troubled spirit into peace.

Enter BIRTHA.

Bir. O horror, horror, horror!
Dou. Ah! what mean'st thou?
Bir. Elwina—
Dou. Speak—
Bir. Her grief wrought up to frenzy,
She has, in her delirium, swallow'd poison!
Raby. Frenzy and poison!
Dou. Both a husband's gift;
But thus I do her justice.
As DOUGLAS *goes to stab himself, enter* ELWINA *distracted, her hair dishevelled,* PERCY'S *scarf in her hand.*
Elw. [*Goes up to* DOUGLAS.] What, blood again? We cannot kill him twice!
Soft, soft—no violence—he 's dead already;—
I did it—Yes—I drown'd him with my tears;—
But hide the cruel deed! I'll scratch him out
A shallow grave, and lay the green sod on it;
Ay—and I'll bind the wild briar o'er the turf,
And plant a willow there, a weeping willow—
[*She sits on the ground.*
But look you tell not Douglas, he'll disturb him;
He'll pluck the willow up—and plant a thorn.
He will not let me sit upon his grave,
And sing all day, and weep and pray all night.
Raby. Dost thou not know me?
Elw. Yes—I do remember
You had a harmless lamb.
Raby. I had indeed! [mate,
Elw. From all the flock you chose her out a
In sooth a fair one—you did bid her love it—
But while the shepherd slept the wolf devour'd it.
Raby. My heart will break. This is too much, too much!
Elw. [*Smiling.*] O 'twas a cordial draught—I drank it all.
Raby. What means my child?
Dou. The poison! Oh the poison!
Thou dear wrong'd innocence—
Elw. Off—murderer, off!
Do not defile me with those crimson hands.
[*Shows the scarf.*
This is his winding sheet—I'll wrap him in it—
I wrought it for my love—there—now I've dress'd him.
How brave he looks! my father will forgive him,

He dearly lov'd him once--but that is over.
See where he comes—beware, my gallant Percy,
Ah! come not here, this is the cave of death,
And there 's the dark, dark palace of Revenge!
See the pale king sits on his blood-stain'd throne!
He points to me—I come, I come, I come.
[*She faints, they run to her,* DOUGLAS *takes up his sword and stabs himself.*
Dou. Thus, thus I follow thee.
Edr. Hold thy rash hand!
Dou. It is too late. No remedy but this
Could medicine a disease so desperate.
Raby. Ah, she revives!
Dou. [*Raising himself.*] She lives! bear, bear me to her!
We shall be happy yet.
[*He struggles to get to her, but sinks down.*
It will not be—
O for a last embrace—Alas! I faint—
She lives--Now death is terrible indeed—
Fair spirit, I lov'd thee—O—Elwina! [*Dies.*
Elw. Where have I been? The damps of death are on me. [thus!
Raby. Look up, my child! O do not leave me
Pity the anguish of thy aged father.
Hast thou forgot me?
Elw. No—you are my father;
O you are kindly come to close my eyes,
And take the kiss of death from my cold lips!
Raby. Do we meet thus?
Elw. We soon shall meet in peace.
I've but a faint remembrance of the past—
But something tells me—O those painful struggles
Raise me a little—there—
[*She sees the body of* DOUGLAS.
What sight is that? [der'd!
A sword, and bloody? Ah! and Douglas mur-
Edr. Convinc'd too late of your unequall'd virtues, [wrongs,
And wrung with deep compunction for your
By his own hand the wretched Douglas fell.
Elw. This adds another, sharper pang to death.
O thou Eternal! take him to thy mercy,
Nor let this sin be on his head, or mine!
Raby. I have undone you all—the crime is mine!
O thou poor injur'd saint, forgive thy father,
He kneels to his wrong'd child.
Elw. Now you are cruel,
Come near, my father, nearer—I would see you,
But mists and darkness cloud my failing sight.
O death! suspend thy rights for one short moment,
Till I have ta'en a father's last embrace—
A father's blessing.—Once—and now 'tis over.
Receive me to thy mercy, gracious Heaven!
[*She dies.*
Raby. She's gone! for ever gone! cold, dead and cold.
Am I a father? Fathers love their children——
I murder mine! With impious pride I snatch'd
The bolt of vengeance from the hand of Heaven
My punishment is great—but oh! 'tis just.
My soul submissive bows. A righteous God
Has made my crime become my chastisement.
[*Exeunt*

THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

AS IT WAS ACTED IN 1779, AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

TO

THE COUNTESS BATHURST,

THIS TRAGEDY IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED, AS A
SMALL TRIBUTE TO HER MANY VIRTUES,
AND AS A
GRATEFUL TESTIMONY OF THE FRIENDSHIP WITH WHICH SHE HONOURS
HER MOST OBEDIENT AND MOST
OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF THE TRAGEDY.—SPOKEN BY MR. HULL.

Our modern poets now can scarcely choose
A subject worthy of the Tragic Muse;
For bards so well have glean'd th' historic field,
That scarce one sheaf th' exhausted ancients yield;
Or if, perchance, they from the golden crop
Some grains, with hand penurious, rarely drop;
Our author these consigns to manly toil,
For classic themes demand a classic soil.
A vagrant she, the desert waste who chose,
Where truth and history no restraints impose.
To her the wilds of fiction open lie,
A flow'ry prospect, and a boundless sky;
Yet hard the task to keep the onward way,
Where the wide scenery lures the foot to stray;
Where no severer limits check the Muse
Than lawless fancy is dispos'd to choose.
Nor does she emulate the loftier strains
Which high *heroic* Tragedy maintains:
Nor conquest she, nor wars, nor triumphs sings,
Nor with rash hand o'erturns the thrones of kings.
No ruin'd empires greet to-night your eyes,
No nations at our bidding fall or rise;
To statesmen deep, to politicians grave,
These themes, congenial to their tastes, we leave,
Of crowns and camps, a kingdom's weal or wo,
How few can judge, because how few can know!
But here you all may boast the censor's art,
Here all are critics who possess a heart.
And of the passions we display to-night,
Each hearer judges like the Stagyrite.
The scenes of private life our author shows
A simple story of domestic woes;
Nor unimportant is the glass we hold,
To show the effect of passions uncontroll'd;
For if to govern *realms* belong to few,
Yet all who live have *passions* to subdue.
Self-conquest is the lesson books should preach,
Self-conquest is the theme the stage should teach.
Vouchsafe to learn this obvious duty here,
The verse though feeble, yet the moral's clear.
O mark to-night the unexampled woes
Which from unbounded self-indulgence flows.
Your candour once endur'd our author's lays;
Endure them now—it will be ample praise

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

Earl Guildford.	Bertrand.
Rivers, his son.	Emmelina.
Orlando, a young Italian Count.	Julia.

Scene.—Earl Guildford's *Castle.*

ACT I.

Scene—*An Apartment in Guildford Castle.*

Enter Bertrand.

Ber. What fools are seriously melancholy villains!
I play a surer game, and screen my heart
With easy looks and undesigning smiles;
And while my plots still spring from sober thought,
My deeds appear the effect of wild caprice,
And I the thoughtless slave of giddy chance.

What but this frankness could have won the promise
Of young Orlando, to confide to me
That secret grief which preys upon his heart?
'Tis shallow, indiscreet hypocrisy,
To seem too good: I am the *careless* Bertrand,
The honest, undesigning, plain, blunt man.
The follies I avow cloak those I hide,
For who will search where nothing seems conceal'd!
'Tis rogues of solid, prudent, grave demeanour,
Excite suspicion; men on whose dark brow
Discretion, with his iron hand, has grav'd
The deep-mark'd characters of thoughtfulness.
Here comes my uncle, venerable Guildford,
Whom I could honour, were he not the sire
Of that aspiring boy, who fills the gap [thee!
'Twixt me and fortune;—Rivers, how I hate

Enter GUILDFORD.

How fares my noble uncle?
Guild. Honest Bertrand!
I must complain we have so seldom met:
Where do you keep? believe me, we have miss'd you. [me, sir,
Ber. O, my good lord! your pardon—spare
For there are follies in a young man's life,
And idle thoughtless hours, which I should blush
To lay before your wise and temperate age.
Guild. Well, be it so—youth has a privilege,
And I should be asham'd could I forget
I have myself been young, and harshly chide
This not ungraceful gayety. Yes, Bertrand,
Prudence becomes moroseness, when it makes
A rigid inquisition of the fault,
Not of the man, perhaps, but of his youth.
Foibles that shame the head on which old Time
Has shower'd his snow, are then more pardon-
And age has many a weakness of its own. [able.
Ber. Your gentleness, my lord, and mild reproof,
Correct the wanderings of misguided youth,
More than rebuke can shame me into virtue.
Guild. Saw you my beauteous ward, the lady Julia?
Ber. She pass'd this way, and with her your
Your Emmelina. [fair daughter,
Guild. Call them both my daughters;
For scarce is Emmelina more belov'd
Than Julia, the dear child of my adoption.
The hour approaches too, (and, bless it heaven,
With thy benignest, kindliest influence!)
When Julia shall indeed become my daughter,
Shall, in obedience to her father's will,
Crown the impatient vows of my brave son,
And richly pay him for his dangers past.
Ber. Oft have I wondered how the gallant
Youthful and ardent, doting to excess, [Rivers,
Could dare the dangers of uncertain war,
Ere marriage had confirmed his claim to Julia.
Guild. 'Twas the condition of her father's will,
My brave old fellow-soldier, and my friend!
He wished to see our ancient houses joined
By this, our children's union; but the veteran
So highly valued military prowess,
That he bequeath'd his fortunes and his daughter
To my young Rivers, on these terms alone,
That he should early gain renown in arms;
And if he from the field returned a conqueror,
That sun which saw him come victorious home
Should witness their espousals. Yet he comes not!
The event of war is to the brave uncertain,
Nor can desert in arms ensure success.
Ber. Yet fame speaks loudly of his early valour. [Orlando,
Guild. E'er since the Italian count, the young
My Rivers' bosom friend, has been my guest,
The glory of my son is all his theme:
Oh! he recounts his virtues with such joy,
Dwells on his merit with a zeal so warm,
As to his generous heart pays back again
The praises he bestows.
Ber. Orlando's noble.
He's of a tender, brave, and gallant nature,
Of honour most romantic, with such graces
As charm all womankind.
Guild. And here comes one,
To whom the story of Orlando's praise
Sounds like sweet music.
Ber. What, your charming daughter!
Yes, I suspect she loves the Italian count:
(*Aside.*)
That must not be. Now to observe her closely.

Enter EMMELINA.

Guild. Come hither, Emmelina: we were speaking
Of the young Count Orlando. What think you
Of this accomplished stranger?
Em. (*confused.*) Of Orlando!
Sir, as my father's guest, my brother's friend,
I do esteem the count.
Guild. Nay, he has merit
Might justify thy friendship, if he wanted
The claims thou mention'st; yet I mean to blame him. [my father?
Em. What has he done? How has he wrong'd
For you are just, and are not angry lightly;
And he is mild, unapt to give offence,
As you to be offended.
Guild. Nay, 'tis not much:
But why does young Orlando shun my presence?
Why lose that cheerful and becoming spirit
Which lately charmed us all? Rivers will chide us,
Should he return and find his friend unhappy.
He is not what he was. What says my child?
Em. My lord, when first my brother's friend arrived—
Be still, my heart— (*Aside.*)
Ber. She dares not use his name.
Her brother's friend! (*Aside.*)
Em. When first your noble guest
Came from that voyage he kindly undertook
To ease our terrors for my Rivers' safety,
When we believed him dead, he seem'd most happy,
And shar'd the gen'ral joy his presence gave.
Of late he is less gay; my brother's absence,
(Or I mistake) disturbs his friend's repose:
Nor is it strange; one mind informs them both:
Each is the very soul that warms the other,
And both are wretched or are bless'd together
Ber. Why trembles my fair cousin?
Em. Can I think

That my lov'd brother's life has been in danger,
Nor feel a strong emotion?
Ber. (*ironically.*) Generous pity!
But when that danger has so long been past,
You should forget your terrors.
Em. I shall never;
For when I think that danger sprung from friend-
That Rivers, to preserve another's life, [ship;
Incurr'd this peril, still my wonder rises.
Ber. And why another's life? Why not Orlando's?
Such caution more betrays than honest freedom.
Guild. He's still the same, the gibing, thoughtless Bertrand,
Severe of speech, but innocent of malice.
[*Exit* GUILDFORD: EMMELINA *going.*
Ber. Stay, my fair cousin! still with adverse
Am I beheld? Had I Orlando's form, [eyes
I mean, were I like him *your brother's friend*,
Then would your looks be turned thus coldly on me? [nothing,
Em. But that I know your levity means
And that your heart accords not with your
This would offend me. [tongue,
Ber. Come, confess the truth,
That this gay Florentine, this Tuscan rover,
Has won your easy heart, and given you his:
I know the whole; I'm of his secret council;
He has confess'd—
Em. Ha! what has he confess'd?
Ber. That you are wondrous fair: nay, nothing farther:
How disappointment fires her angry cheek!
(*Aside.*)
Yourself have told the rest, your looks avow it,
Your eyes are honest, nor conceal the secret.
Em. Know, sir, that virtue no concealment needs:
So far from dreading, she solicits notice,
And wishes every secret thought she harbours,
Bare to the eye of men, as 'tis to heaven.
Ber. Yet mark me well: trust not Orlando's truth;
The citron groves have heard his amorous vows
Breath'd out to many a beauteous maid of Florence;
Bred in those softer climes, his roving heart
Ne'er learn'd to think fidelity a virtue;
He laughs at tales of British constancy.
But see, Orlando comes—he seeks you here.
With eyes bent downwards, folded arms, pale
Disorder'd looks, and negligent attire, [cheeks,
And all the careless equipage of love, [blood
He bends this way. Why does the mounting
Thus crimson your fair cheek? He does not see us;
I'll venture to disturb his meditations,
And instantly return. [*Exit* BERTRAND.
Em. No more; but leave me.
He's talkative, but harmless; rude, but honest;
Fuller of mirth than mischief. See, they meet—
This way they come; why am I thus alarm'd?
What is't to me that here Orlando comes?
Oh, for a little portion of that art
Ungenerous men ascribe to our whole sex!
A little artifice were prudence now:
But I have none; my poor unpractis'd heart
Is so unknowing of dissimulation,
So little skill'd to seem the thing it is not,
That if my lips are mute, my looks betray me.

Re-enter BERTRAND *with* ORLANDO.

Ber. Now to alarm her heart, and search out his. (*Aside.*)
Or. We crave your pardon, beauteous Emmelina,
If rudely we intrude upon your thoughts;
Thoughts pure as infants' dreams or angels' wishes,
And gentle as the breast from which they spring.
Em. Be still, my heart, nor let him see thy weakness. (*Aside.*)
We are much bound to thank you, cousin Bertrand,
That since your late return, the Count Orlando
Appears once more among us. Say, my lord,
Why have you shunn'd your friends' society?
Was it well done? My father bade me chide you;
I am not made for chiding, but he bade me;
He says, no more you rise at early dawn
With him to chase the boar: I pleaded for you;
Told him 'twas savage sport.
Or. What was his answer?
Em. He said 'twas sport for heroes, and made heroes;
That hunting was the very school of war,
Taught our brave youth to shine in nobler fields,
Preserv'd them from the rust of dull inaction,
Train'd them for arms, and fitted them for conquest.
Or. O, my fair advocate! scarce can I grieve
To have done wrong, since my offence has
So sweet a pleader. [gain'd
Ber. (*aside.*) So, I like this well;
Full of respect, but cold.
Em. My lord, your pardon,
My father waits my coming; I attend him.
[*Exit.*
Ber. In truth, my lord, you're a right happy man;
Her parting look proclaims that you are blest;
The crimson blushes on her cheek display'd
A gentle strife 'twixt modesty and love:
Discretion strove to dash the rising joy,
But conquering love prevail'd and told the tale.
My lord, you answer not.
Or. What shall I say?
Oh, couldst thou read my heart!
Ber. The hour is come
When my impatient friendship claims that trust
Which I so oft have press'd, and you have promis'd.
Or. I cannot tell thee: 'tis a tale of guilt;
How shall I speak? my resolution sickens;
All virtuous men will shun me, thou wilt scorn
And fly the foul contagion of my crime. [me,
Ber. My bosom is not steel'd with that harsh prudence
Which would reproach thy failings: tell me all;
The proudest heart loves to repose its faults
Upon a breast that has itself a tincture
Of human weakness: I have frailties too,
Frailties that teach me how to pity thine.
What! silent still? Thou lov'st my beauteous cousin!
Have I not guess'd?

Or. I own that she has charms
Might warm a frozen stoic into love,
Tempt hermits back again to that bad world
They had renounc'd, and make religious men
Forgetful of their holy vows to heav'n:
Yes, Bertrand—come, I'll tell thee all my weak-
Thou hast a tender, sympathizing heart— [ness;
Thou art not rigid to a friend's defects.
That heavenly form I view with eyes as cold
As marble images of lifeless saints;
I see and know the workmanship divine;
My judgment owns her exquisite perfections,
But my rebellious heart denies her claim.
Ber. What do I hear! you love her not!
Or. Oh! Bertrand!
For pity do not hate me; but thou must,
For am I not at variance with myself?
Yet shall I wrong her gentle, trusting nature,
And spurn the heart I labour'd to obtain?
She loves me, Bertrand: oh! too sure she
loves me: [sion;
Loves me with tenderest, truest, chastest pas-
Loves me, oh, barb'rous fate! as I love—Julia.
Ber. Heard I aright? Did you not speak of
Julia?
Julia! the lovely ward of my good uncle?
Julia! the mistress of your friend, of Rivers?
Or. Go on, go on, and urge me with my guilt;
Display my crime in all its native blackness;
Tell me some legend of infernal falsehood,
Tell me some dreadful tale of perjur'd friends,
Of trust betray'd, of innocence deceiv'd:
Place the dire chronicle before my eyes;
Inflame the horror, aggravate the guilt:
That I may see the evils which await me,
Nor pull such fatal mischiefs on my head,
As with my ruin must involve the fate
Of all I love on earth.
Ber. Just as I wish. (*Aside.*)
Or. Thou know'st I left my native Italy,
Directed hither by the noble Rivers,
To ease his father's fears, who thought he fell
In that engagement where we both were
wounded.
His was a glorious wound, gain'd in the cause
Of gen'rous friendship: for a hostile spear,
Aim'd at my breast, Rivers in his receiv'd,
Sav'd my devoted life, and won my soul.
Ber. So far I knew; but what of Emmelina?
Or. Whether her gentle beauties first allur'd
me,
Or whether peaceful scenes and rural shades,
Or leisure, or the want of other objects,
Or solitude, apt to engender love,
Engag'd my soul, I know not; but I lov'd her.
We were together always, till the habit
Grew into something like necessity.
When Emmelina left me I was sad,
Nor knew a joy till Emmelina came;
Her soft society amus'd my mind,
Fill'd up my vacant heart, and touch'd my soul:
'Twas gratitude, 'twas friendship, 'twas esteem,
'Twas reason, 'twas persuasion,—nay, 'twas
Ber. But where was Julia? [love.
Or. Oh! too soon she came;
For when I saw that wondrous form of beauty,
I stood entranced, like some astronomer,
Who, as he views the bright expanse of heaven,
Finds a new star. I gaz'd, and was undone;
Gaz'd, and forgot the tender Emmelina,
Gaz'd, and forgot the gen'rous, trusting Rivers,
Forgot my faith, my friendship, and my honour.
Ber. Does Julia know your love?
Or. Forbid it, heaven!
What! think'st thou I am so far gone in guilt
As boldly to avow it? Bertrand, no;
For all the kingdoms of the spacious earth,
I would not wrong my friend, or damn my hon-
our. [self.
Ber. Trust me, you think too hardly of your-
Or. Think I have lodg'd a secret in thy breast
On which my peace, my fame, my all depends;
Long have I struggled with the fatal truth,
And scarce have dar'd to breathe it to myself:
For, oh! too surely the first downward step,
The treacherous path that leads to guilty deeds,
Is to make sin familiar to the thoughts. [*Exit.*
Ber. Am I awake? No: 'tis delusion all!
My wildest wishes never soar'd to this;
Fortune anticipates my plot: he loves her.
Loves just whom I would have him love—loves
Julia!
Orlando, yes, I'll play thee at my will;
Poor puppet! thou hast trusted to my hand
The strings by which I'll move thee to thy ruin,
And make thee too the instrument of vengeance,
Of glorious vengeance on the man I hate. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

Enter JULIA *and* EMMELINA.

Julia. How many cares perplex the maid who
loves!
Cares which the vacant heart can never know.
You fondly tremble for a brother's life;
Orlando mourns the absence of a friend;
Guildford is anxious for a son's renown;
In my poor heart your various terrors meet,
With added fears and fonder apprehensions:
They all unite in me, I feel for all,
His life, his fame, his absence, and his love;
For he may live to see his native home,
And he may live to bless a sister's hopes,
May live to gratify impatient friendship,
May live to crown a father's house with honour,
May live to glory, yet be dead to love.
Em. Forbear these fears; they wound my
brother's honour:
Julia! a brave man must be ever faithful;
Cowards alone dare venture to be false;
Cowards alone dare injure trusting virtue,
And with bold perjuries affront high heaven.
Julia. I know his faith, and venerate his vir-
I know his heart is tender as 'tis brave; [tues;
That all his father's worth, his sister's softness,
Meet in his generous breast—and yet I fear—
Whoever lov'd like me, and did not fear?

Enter GUILDFORD.

Guild. Where are my friends, my daughter?
where is Julia?
How shall I speak the fulness of my heart?
My son, my Rivers, will this day return.
Em. My dearest brother!
Julia. Ha! my Rivers comes!
Propitious heaven!

Em. And yet my Julia trembles.
Julia. Have I not cause? my Rivers comes!
I dread to ask, and yet I die to hear. [but how?
My lord—you know the terms—
Guild. He comes a conqueror!
He comes as Guildford's son should ever come!
The battle's o'er, the English arms successful,
And Rivers, like an English warrior, hastes
To lay his laurels at the feet of beauty. [*Exit.*
Julia. My joy oppresses me!
Em. And see, Orlando!
How will the welcome news transport his soul,
And raise his drooping heart! with caution tell him,
Lest the o'erwhelming rapture be too much
For his dejected mind.

Enter ORLANDO *and* BERTRAND.

Julia. My lord Orlando,
Wherefore that troubled air? no more you dwell
On your once darling theme; you speak no more
The praises of your Rivers; is he chang'd?
Is he not still the gallant friend you lov'd,
As virtuous and as valiant?
Or. Still the same;
He must be ever virtuous, ever valiant.
Em. If Rivers is the same, then must I think
Orlando greatly chang'd; you speak not of him,
Nor long for his return, as you were wont.
How did you use to spend the livelong day,
In telling some new wonders of your friend,
Till night broke in upon th' unfinish'd tale;
And when 'twas o'er, you would begin again,
And we again would listen with delight,
With fresh delight, as if we had not heard it!
Does Rivers less deserve, or you less love?
Or. Have I not lov'd him? was my friendship
When any praised his glories in the field? [cold
My raptur'd heart has bounded at the tale!
Methought I grew illustrious from his glory,
And rich from his renown; to hear him prais'd,
More proud than if I had achiev'd his deeds,
And reap'd myself the harvest of his fame.
How have I trembled for a life so dear,
When his too ardent soul, despising caution,
Has plung'd him in the foremost ranks of war,
As if in love with danger.
Julia. Valiant Rivers!
How does thy greatness justify my love!
Ber. He's distant far, so I may safely praise him. (*Aside.*)
I claim some merit in my love of Rivers,
Since I admire the virtues that eclipse me;
With pleasure I survey those dazzling heights
My gay, inactive temper cannot reach.
Em. Spoke like my honest cousin. Then, Orlando,
Since such the love you bear your noble friend,
How will your heart sustain the mighty joy
The news I tell will give you? Yes, Orlando,
Restrain the transports of your grateful friendship,
And hear with moderation, hear me tell you
That Rivers will return—
Or. How? when?
Em. This day.
Or. Impossible!
Ber. Then all my schemes are air. (*Aside.*)
Em. To-day I shall embrace my valiant brother! [her right?
Julia. You droop, my lord: did you not hear
She told you that your Rivers would return,
Would come to crown your friendship and our hopes. [friend?
Or. He is most welcome! Is he not my
You say my Rivers comes. Thy arm, good Bertrand.
Ber. Joy to us all; joy to the Count Orlando!
Weak man, take care. (*Aside to* ORLANDO.)
Em. My lord! you are not well.
Ber. Surprise and joy oppress him; I myself
Partake his transports. Rouse, my lord, for
Em. How is it with you now? [shame.
Or. Quite well—'tis past.
Ber. The wonder's past, and naught but joy remains.

Enter GUILDFORD *and* RIVERS.

Guild. He's come! he's here! I have embrac'd my warrior;
Now take me, heav'n, I have liv'd long enough.
Julia. My lord, my Rivers!
Riv. 'Tis my Julia's self!
My life!
Julia. My hero! Do I then behold thee?
Riv. Oh, my full heart! expect not words,
Em. Rivers! [my Julia!
Riv. My sister! what an hour is this!
My own Orlando, too!
Or. My noble friend!
Riv. This is such prodigality of bliss,
I scarce can think it real. Honest Bertrand,
Your hand; yours, my Orlando, yours, my
And as a hand, I have a heart for all; [father;
Love has enlarg'd it; from excess of love
I am become more capable of friendship.
My dearest Julia!
Guild. She is thine, my son, [her,
Thou hast deserv'd her nobly; thou hast won
Fulfill'd the terms—
Riv. Therefore I dare not ask her;
I would not claim my Julia as a debt,
But take her as a gift; and, oh! I swear
It is the dearest, richest, choicest gift,
The bounty of indulgent heaven could grant.
(GUILDFORD *joins their hands.*)
Julia. Spare me, my lord.—As yet I scarce have seen you.
Confusion stops my tongue—yet I will own,
If there be truth or faith in woman's vows,
Then you have still been present to this heart,
And not a thought has wander'd from its duty.
[*Exeunt* JULIA *and* EMMELINA.
Riv. (*looking after Julia.*) Oh, generous Julia!
Or. (*aside to Ber.*) Mark how much she loves him! [fond sex have always ready.
Ber. (*aside to Or.*) Mere words, which the
Riv. Forgive me, good Orlando, best of friends!
How my soul joys to meet thee on this shore!
Thus to embrace thee in my much-lov'd England! [of heroes,
Guild. England! the land of worth, the soil
Where great Elizabeth the sceptre sways,
O'er a free, glorious, rich, and happy people!
Philosophy, not cloister'd up in schools,
The speculative dream of idle monks,

Attir'd in attic robe, here roams at large;
Wisdom is wealth, and science is renown
Here sacred laws protect the meanest subject,
The bread that toil procures fair freedom sweet-
And every peasant eats his homely meal [ens,
Content and free, lord of his small domain.

Riv. Past are those Gothic days, and, thanks to heav'n,
They are for ever past, when English subjects
Were born the vassals of some tyrant lord!
When free-soul'd men were basely handed down
To the next heir, transmitted with their lands,
The shameful legacy, from sire to son! [boy,

Guild. But while thy generous soul, my noble
Justly abhors oppression, yet revere
The plain stern virtues of our rough forefathers:
O, never may the gallant sons of England
Lose their plain, manly, native character,
Forego the glorious charter nature gave them,
Beyond what kings can give, or laws bestow;
Their candour, courage, constancy, and truth!

[*Exeunt* GUILDFORD *and* RIVERS.

Or. Stay, Bertrand, stay—Oh, pity my distraction!
This heart was never made to hide its feelings;
I had near betray'd myself.

Ber. I trembled for you;
Remember that the eye of love is piercing,
And Emmelina mark'd you.

Or. 'Tis too much:
My artless nature cannot bear disguise.
Think what I felt when unsuspecting Rivers
Press'd me with gen'rous rapture to his bosom,
Profess'd an honest joy, and call'd me friend!
I felt myself a traitor: yet I swear,
Yes, by that Power who sees the thoughts of men,
I swear, I love the gallant Rivers more [Than light or life! I love, but yet I fear him:
I shrunk before the lustre of his virtue—
I felt as I had wrong'd him—felt abash'd.
I cannot bear this conflict in my soul,
And therefore have resolv'd—

Ber. On what?

Or. To fly.

Ber. To fly from Julia?

Or. Yes, to fly from all,
From every thing I love; to fly from Rivers,
From Emmelina, from myself, from thee:
From Julia? no—that were impossible,
For I shall bear her image in my soul;
It is a part of me, the dearest part;
So closely interwoven with my being,
That I can never lose the dear remembrance,
Till I am robb'd of life and her together.

Ber. 'Tis cowardice to fly.

Or. 'Tis death to stay.

Ber. Where would you go? How lost in thought he stands! (*Aside.*)
A vulgar villain now would use persuasion,
And by his very earnestness betray
The thing he meant to hide; I'll coolly wait,
Till the occasion shows me how to act,
Then turn it to my purpose. Ho! Orlando!
Where would you go?

Or. To solitude, to hopeless banishment!
Yes, I will shroud my youth in those dark cells
Where disappointment steals devotion's name,
To cheat the wretched votary into ruin;
There will I live in love with misery;
Ne'er shall the sight of mirth profane my grief,
The sound of joy shall never charm my ear,
Nor music reach it, save when the slow bell
Wakes the dull brotherhood to lifeless prayer
Then, when the slow-retreating world recedes,
When warm desires are cold, and passion dead,
And all things but my Julia are forgotten,
One thought of her shall fire my languid soul,
Chase the faint orison, and feed despair.

Ber. What! with monastic, lazy drones retire,
And chant cold hymns with holy hypocrites?
First perish all the sex! forbid it, manhood!
Where is your nobler self? for shame, Orlando,
Renounce this superstitious, whining weakness,
Or I shall blush to think I call'd you friend.

Or. What can I do? [riage

Ber. (*after a pause.*) Beg she'll defer the mar
But for one single day; do this, and leave
The rest to me: she shall be thine.

Or. How sayst thou?
What, wrong her virtue?

Ber. Still this cant of virtue!
This pomp of words, this phrase without a meaning!
I grant that honour's something, manly honour;
I'd fight, I'd burn, I'd bleed, I'd die for honour;
But what's this virtue?

Or. Ask you what it is?
Why, 'tis what libertines themselves adore;
'Tis that which wakens love and kindles rapture,
Beyond the rosy lip or starry eye.
Virtue! 'tis that which gives a secret force
To common charms; but to true loveliness
Lends colouring celestial. Such its power,
That she who ministers to guilty pleasures,
Assumes its semblance when she most would please,
Virtue! 'tis that ethereal energy [Which gives to body spirit, soul to beauty. [*Exit.*

Ber. Curse on his principles! Yet I shall shake them;
Yes, I will bend his spirit to my will,
Now, while 'tis warm with passion, and will take
Whatever mould my forming hand will give it.
'Tis worthy of my genius! Then I love
This Emmelina: true, she loves not me,
But, should young Rivers die, his father's lands
Would then be mine—is Rivers, then, immortal!
Come—Guildford's lands, and his proud daughter's hand, [genius!
Are worth some thought. Aid me, ye spurs to
Love, mischief, poverty, revenge, and envy!

[*Exit* BERTRAND.

Enter EMMELINA *and* RIVERS, *talking.*

Em. Yet do not blame Orlando, good my brother; [lov'd;
He's still the same, that brave frank heart you
Only his temper's chang'd, he is grown sad;
But that's no fault, I only am to blame;
Fond, foolish heart, to give itself away
To one who gave me nothing in return!

Riv. How's this? my father said Orlando lov'd thee.

Em. Indeed I thought so; he was kinder once;
Nay, still he loves, or my poor heart deceives me.

Riv. If he has wrong'd thee! yet I know he could not;

His gallant soul is all made up of virtues,
And I would rather doubt myself than him.
Yet tell me all the story of your loves,
And let a brother's fondness sooth thy cares.

Em. When to this castle first Orlando came,
A welcome guest to all, to me most welcome;
Yes, spite of maiden shame and burning blushes,
Let me confess he was most welcome to me!
At first my foolish heart so much deceiv'd me,
I thought I lov'd him for my brother's sake;
But when I closely search'd this bosom traitor,
I found, alas! I lov'd him for his own.

Riv. Blush not to own it; 'twas a well-plac'd flame!
I glory in the merit of my friend,
And love my sister more for loving him.

Em. He talk'd of you; I listen'd with delight,
And fancied 'twas the subject only charm'd me;
But when Orlando chose another theme,
Forgive me, Rivers, but I listen'd still
With undiminish'd joy—he talk'd of love,
Nor was that theme less grateful than the former.
I seem'd the very idol of his soul;
Rivers, he said, would thank me for the friend-
ship
I bore to his Orlando; I believ'd him.
Julia was absent then—but what of Julia?

Riv. Ay, what of her indeed? why nam'd you Julia?
You could not surely think? no, that were wild.
Why did you mention Julia?

Em. (*confusedly.*) Nay, 'twas nothing,
'Twas accident, nor had my words a meaning;
If I did name her—'twas to note the time—
To mark the period of Orlando's coldness.
The circumstance was casual, and but meant
To date the change; it aim'd at nothing farther.

Riv. (*agitated.*) 'Tis very like—no more—
I'm satisfied—
You talk as I had doubts: what doubts have I?
Why do you labour to destroy suspicions
Which never had a birth? Is she not mine?
Mine by the fondest ties of dear affection?—
But *did* Orlando change at her return?
Did he grow cold? It could not be for that;
You may mistake. And yet you said 'twas *then*:
Was it *precisely* then? I only ask
For the fond love I bear my dearest sister.

Em. 'Twas as I said.

Riv. (*recovering himself.*) He loves thee, Emmelina:
These starts of passion, this unquiet temper,
Betray how much he loves thee: yes, my sister,
He fears to lose thee, fears his father's will
May dash his rising hopes, nor give thee to him.

Em. Oh, flatterer! thus to sooth my easy nature
With tales of possible, unlikely bliss!
Because it *may* be true, my credulous heart
Whispers it is, and fondly loves to cherish
The feeble glimmering of a sickly hope.

Riv. This precious moment, worth a tedious age
Of vulgar time, I've stol'n from love and Julia;
She waits my coming, and a longer stay
Were treason to her beauty and my love.
Doubts vanish, fears recede, and fondness triumphs.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE—*A Garden.*

Em. Why do my feet unbidden seek this grove?
Why do I trace his steps? I thought him here
This is his hour of walking, and these shades
His daily haunt: oft have they heard his vows:
Ah! fatal vows, which stole my peace away!
But now he shuns my presence: yet who knows,
He may not be ungrateful, but unhappy!
Yes, he will come to clear his past offences,
With such prevailing eloquence will plead,
So mourn his former faults, so blame his coldness,
And by ten thousand graceful ways repair them,
That I shall think I never was offended.
He comes, and every doubt's at once dispell'd:
'Twas fancy all; he never meant to wrong me.

Enter ORLANDO.

Or. Why at this hour of universal joy, [ture,
When every heart beats high with grateful rap-
And pleasure dances her enchanting round;
O, tell me why, at this auspicious hour,
You quit the joyful circle of your friends:
Rob social pleasure of its sweetest charm,
And leave a void e'en in the happiest hearts,
An aching void which only you can fill?
Why do you seek these unfrequented shades?
Why court these gloomy haunts, unfit for beauty,
But made for meditation and misfortune?

Em. I might retort the charge, my lord Orlando!
I *might* inquire how the lov'd friend of Rivers,
Whom he has held deep-rooted in his heart
Beyond a brother's dearness, sav'd his life,
And cherish'd it when sav'd beyond his own;—
I *might* inquire, why, when this Rivers comes,
After long tedious months of expectation,
Alive, victorious, and as firm in friendship
As fondness could have wish'd, or fancy feign'd
I *might* inquire why thus Orlando shuns him—
Why thus he courts this melancholy gloom,
As if he were at variance with delight,
And scorn'd to mingle in the general joy?

Or. Oh, my fair monitress! I have deserv'd
Your gentle censure. Henceforth I'll be gay.

Em. Julia complains too of you.

Or. Ah! does Julia?
If Julia chides me, I have err'd indeed:
For harshness is a stranger to her nature. [fore?
But why does she complain? O, tell me where-
That I may soon repair the unwilling crime,
And prove my heart at least ne'er meant to wrong her.

Em. Why so alarm'd? [her.

Or. Alarm'd!

Em. Indeed, you seem'd so.

Or. Sure you mistake. Alarm'd! oh no, I was not;
There was no cause—I could not be alarm'd
Upon so slight a ground. Something you said,
But what, I know not, of your friend.

Em. Of Julia?

Or. That Julia was displeas'd—was it not so?
'Twas that, or something like it.

Em. She complains
That you avoid her.

Or. How! that I avoid her?
Did Julia say so? ah! you had forgot—
It could not be.

Em. Why are you terrified?

Or. No,

Not terrified—I am not—but were those [ing;
Her very words? you might mistake her mean-
Did Julia say Orlando shunn'd her presence?
Oh! did she, could she say so?
Em. If she did,
Why this disorder? there's no cause.
Or. No cause?
Oh! there's a cause of dearer worth than empire!
Quick let me fly, and find the fair upbraider;
Tell her she wrongs me, tell her I would die
Rather than meet her anger. (EMMELINA *faints.*)
Ah, she faints!
What have I said? curse my imprudent tongue!
Look up, sweet innocence! my Emmelina—
My gentle friend, awake! look up, fair creature!
'Tis your Orlando calls.
Em. Orlando's voice!
Methought he talked of love—nay, do not mock
My heart is but a weak, a very weak one! [me;
I am not well—perhaps I've been to blame.
Spare my distress; the error has been mine.
[*Exit* EMMELINA.
Or. So then, all's over; I've betrayed my secret,
And stuck a poison'd dagger to her heart,
Her innocent heart. Why, what a wretch am I!
Ruin approaches—shall I tamely meet it,
And dally with destruction till it blast me?
No, I will fly thee, Julia, fly for ever.
Ah, fly! what then becomes of Emmelina?
Shall I abandon *her*? it must be so;
Better escape with this poor wreck of honour
Than hazard all by staying. Rivers here?

Enter RIVERS.

Riv. The same. My other self! my own Orlando!
I came to seek thee; 'twas in thy kind bosom,
My suffering soul reposed its secret cares,
When doubts and difficulties stood before me:
And now, now when my prosperous fortune shines,
And gilds the smiling hour with her bright beams,
Shall I become a niggard of my bliss,
Defraud thee of thy portion of my joys, [them?
And rob thee of thy well-earn'd claim to share
Or. That I have ever lov'd thee, witness Heaven! [sing
That I have thought thy friendship the best bles-
That mark'd the fortune of my happier days,
I here attest the sovereign Judge of hearts!
Then think, O think what anguish I endure,
When I declare, in bitterness of spirit,
That we must part——
Riv. What does Orlando mean?
Or. That I must leave thee, Rivers; must
Thy lov'd society. [renounce
Riv. Thou hast been injur'd;
Thy merit has been slighted: sure, my father,
Who knew how dear I held thee, would not wrong thee.
Or. He is all goodness; no—there is a cause—
Seek not to know it.
Riv. Now, by holy friendship!
I swear thou shalt not leave me; what, just now,
When I have safely pass'd so many perils,
Escap'd so many deaths, return'd once more
To the kind arms of long desiring friendship,
Just now, when I expected such a welcome,
As happy souls in paradise bestow
Upon a new inhabitant, who comes
To taste their blessedness, you coldly tell me
You will depart: it must not be, Orlando.
Or. It must, it must.
Riv. Ah, must! then tell me wherefore?
Or. I would not dim thy dawn of happiness,
Nor shade the brighter beams of thy good fortune
With the dark sullen cloud that hangs o'er mine.
Riv. Is this the heart of him I call'd my friend,
Full of the graceful weakness of affection?
How have I known it bend at my request!
How lose the power of obstinate resistance,
Because his friend entreated! This Orlando!
How is he chang'd!
Or. Alas, how chang'd, indeed!
How dead to every relish of delight!
How chang'd in all but in his love for thee!
Yet think not that my nature is grown harder,
That I have lost that ductile, yielding heart;
Rivers, I have not—oh! 'tis still too soft;
E'en now it melts, it bleeds in tenderness—
Farewell! I dare not trust myself—farewell!
Riv Then thou resolv'st to go?
Or. This very day!
Riv. What do I hear? To-day! It must not
This is the day that makes my Julia mine. [be.
Or. Wed her to-day?
Riv This day unites me to her;
Then stay at least till thou behold'st her mine.
Or. Impossible! another day were ruin.
Riv. Then let me fly to Julia, and conjure her
To bless me with her hand this hour—this
Or. Oh! no, no, no! [moment,
Riv. I will: in such a cause
Surely she will forego the rigid forms
Of cold decorum; then, my best Orlando!
I shall receive my Julia from thy hand;
The blessing will be doubled! I shall owe
The precious gift of love to sacred friendship!
Or. Canst thou bear this, my heart?
Riv. Then, my Orlando,
Since thy unkind reserve denies my heart
Its partnership in this thy hoard of sorrows,
I will not press to know it; thou shalt go
Soon as the holy priest has made us one:
For, oh! 'twill sooth thee in the hour of parting,
To know I'm in possession of my love,
To think I'm blest with Julia, to reflect
Thou gav'st her to my arms, my bride! my wife!
Or. Ah! my brain turns!
Riv. 'Tis as I thought; I'll try him.
(*Aside.*)
Now answer me, Orlando, and with truth;
Hide nothing from thy friend—dost thou not love? [heart.
Or. Ha! how! I am betray'd! he reads my
Riv. Hast thou, with all that tenderness of soul,
From love's infection kept thy yielding heart?
Say, couldst thou bask in all the blaze of beauty,
And never feel its warmth?—Impossible!
Oh! I shall probe thy soul, till thou confess
The conqu'ring fair one's name—but why con-
Come. come, I know full well— [fess?

Or. Ha! dost thou know?
And knowing, dost thou suffer me to live?
And dost thou know my guilt, and call me friend?
He mocks but to destroy me!
Riv. Come, no more:
Love is a proud, an arbitrary god,
And will not choose as rigid fathers bid;
I know that thine has destin'd for thy bride
A Tuscan maid; but hearts disdain all force.
Or. How's this? what, dost thou justify my passion?
Riv. Applaud it—glory in it—will assist it.
She is so fair, so worthy to be lov'd,
That I should be thy rival, were not she
My sister.
Or. How!
Riv. She is another Julia.
Or. I stood upon a fearful precipice—
I'm giddy still—oh, yes! I understand thee—
Thy beauteous sister! what a wretch I've been!
Oh, Rivers! too much softness has undone me.
Yet I will never wrong the maid I love,
Nor injure thee; first let Orlando perish!
Riv. Be more explicit.
Or. For the present spare me.
Think not too hardly of me, noble Rivers!
I am a man, and full of human frailties;
But hate like hell the crime which tempts me on.
When I am ready to depart I'll see thee,
Clear all my long accounts of love and honour,
Remove thy doubts, embrace thee, and expire.
[*Exit* Orlando.

Manet Rivers.

Riv. It must be so—to what excess he loves her!
Yet wherefore not demand her? for his birth
May claim alliance with the proudest fortune.
Sure there's some hidden cause—perhaps—ah, no! [suspicion;
Turn from that thought, my soul! 'twas vile
And I could hate the heart which but conceiv'd it.
'Tis true their faiths are different—then his father,
Austere and rigid, dooms him to another.
That must not be—these bars shall be remov'd;
I'll serve him with my life, nor taste of bliss
Till I have sought to bless the friend I love.
[*Exit.*

Re-enter Orlando.

Or. Wed her to-day? wed her perhaps this hour?
Hasten the rites for *me*? *I* give her to him?
I stand a tame spectator of their bliss?
I live a patient witness of their joy? [blood.
First let this dagger drink my heart's warm
(*Takes a dagger from his bosom, then sees* Julia.)
The sorceress comes! oh, there's a charm about her [live.
Which holds my hand, and makes me wish to
I shudder at her sight! open, thou earth,
And save me from the peril of her charms!
(*Puts up the dagger.*)

Enter Julia.

Julia. Methought I heard the cry of one in pain;
From hence it came; ah, me! my lord Orlando!
What means that sigh? that agonizing voice?
Those groans which rend your heart? those frantic looks?
Indeed I'm terrified. What would you do?
Or. (*furiously.*) Die!
Julia. Talk you of death? renounce the fatal
Live for my sake, Orlando. [thought;
Or. For thy sake?
That were indeed a cause to live for ages,
Would nature but extend the narrow limits
Of human life so far.
Julia. And for the sake
Of Rivers; live for both; he sends me here
To beg you would delay your purpos'd parting;
His happiness, he swears, if you are absent,
Will be but half complete.
Or. Is it to-night?
This marriage, Julia, did you say to-night?
Julia. It is, and yet you leave us.
Or. No.—I'll stay.
Since you command, stay and expire before you.
Julia. What mean you?
Or. That I'll perish at the feet
Of—Rivers.
Julia. Tell your sorrows to my lord;
Upon his faithful breast repose the weight
That presses you to earth,
Or. Tell *him?* Tell Rivers?
Is he not yours? Does not the priest now wait
To make you one? Then do not mock me thus:
What leisure can a happy bridegroom find
To think upon so lost a wretch as I am?
You hate me, Julia.
Julia. Hate you! how you wrong me!
Live to partake our joy.
Or. Hope you for joy?
Julia. Have I not cause? Am I not lov'd by Rivers?
Rivers, the best, the bravest of his sex!
Whose valour fabled heroes ne'er surpass'd,
Whose virtues teach the young and charm the
Whose graces are the wonder of our sex, [old;
And envy of his own.
Or. Enough! enough!
O spare this prodigality of praise.
But, Julia, if you would not here behold me
Stretch'd at your feet a lifeless bloody corpse,
Promise what I shall now request.
Julia. What is it?
Or. That till to-morrow's sun, I ask no longer,
You will defer this marriage.
Julia. Ah! defer it!
Impossible; what would my Rivers think?
Or. No matter what; 'tis for his sake I ask it:
His peace, his happiness, perhaps his life
Depends on what I ask.
Julia. His life! the life of Rivers!
Some dreadful thought seems lab'ring in your breast;
Explain this horrid mystery. [Or.
I dare not.
If you comply, before to-morrow's dawn,
All will be well, the danger past: then finish
These—happy nuptials: but if you refuse,
Tremble for him you love; the altar's self
Will be no safeguard from a madman's rage.
Julia. What rage? what madman? what remorseless villain?

Orlando—will not you protect your friend?
Think how he loves you—he would die for you—
Then save him, on my knees I beg you save
him— (*Kneels.*)
Oh! guard my Rivers from this bloody foe.
Or. Dearer than life I love him—ask no more,
But promise in the awful face of heaven,
To do what I request—and promise further,
Not to disclose the cause.
Julia. Oh, save him! save him!
Or. 'Tis to preserve him that I ask it: promise,
Or see me fall before you.
(*He draws the dagger, she still kneeling.*)
Julia. I do promise.
Hide, hide that deadly weapon—I do promise.
(*Rises.*)
How wild you look! you tremble more than I.
I'll call my Rivers hither.
Or. Not for worlds.
If you have mercy in your nature, Julia,
Retire. Oh, leave me quickly to myself;
Do not expose me to the strong temptation
Which now assaults me.—Yet you are not gone.
Julia. Be more composed; I leave you with
regret. [its seat!
(*As she goes out.*) His noble mind is shaken from
What may these transports mean? heav'n guard
my Rivers!

As Julia *goes out, enter* Bertrand; *he speaks behind.*

Ber. Why, this is well; this has a face; she
weeps,
He seems disorder'd.—Now, to learn the cause,
And then make use of what I hear by chance,
As of a thing I knew. (*He listens.*)
Or. (*after a pause.*) And is she gone?
Her parting words shot fire into my soul;
Did she not say she left me with regret?
Her look was tender, and the starting tear
Fill'd her bright eye; she left me with regret—
She own'd it too.
Ber. 'Twill do.
(*Comes forward.*) What have you done?
The charming Julia is dissolv'd in wo;
Her radiant eyes are quench'd in floods of tears;
For you they fall; her blushes have confess'd it.
Or. For me? what sayst thou? Julia weep
for me!
Yet she is gentle, and she would have wept
For thee; for any who but seem'd unhappy.
Ber. Ungrateful!
Or. How?
Ber. Not by her tears, I judge,
But by her words, not meant for me to hear.
Or. What did she say? What didst thou
hear, good Bertrand?
Speak—I'm on fire.
Ber. It is not safe to tell you.
Farewell! I would not injure Rivers.
Or. Stay,
Or tell me all, or I renounce thy friendship.
Ber. That threat unlocks my tongue; I must
not lose thee.
Sweet Julia wept, clasp'd her fair hands, and
Why was I left a legacy to Rivers, [cried,
Robb'd of the power of choice? Seeing me
she started,
Would have recall'd her words, blush'd, and
retir'd. [my ruin.
Or. No more; thou shalt not tempt me to
Deny what thou hast said, deny it quickly,
Ere I am quite undone; for, oh! I feel
Retreating virtue touches its last post,
And my lost soul now verges on destruction.
Bertrand! she promis'd to defer the marriage.
Ber. Then my point's gain'd; that will make
Rivers jealous. (*Aside*)
She loves you.
Or. No; and even if she did
I have no hope.
Ber. You are too scrupulous.
Be bold, and be successful; sure of this,
There is no crime a woman sooner pardons
Than that of which her beauty is the cause.
Or. Shall I defraud my friend? he bled to
gain her!
What! rob the dear preserver of my life
Of all that makes the happiness of his?
And yet her beauty might excuse a falsehood,
Nay, almost sanctify a perjury.
Perdition's in that thought—'twas born in hell.
My soul is up in arms, my reason's lost,
And love, and rage, and jealousy, and honour,
Pull my divided heart, and tear my soul. [*Exit.*

Manet Bertrand.

Ber. Rave on, and beat thy wings; poor
bird! thou'rt lim'd,
And vain will be thy struggles to get loose.
How much your very honest men lack *prudence!*
Though all the nobler virtues fill one scale,
Yet place but indiscretion in the other,
In worldly business, and the ways of men,
That single folly weighs the balance down,
While all the ascending virtues kick the beam.
Here's this Orlando now, of rarest parts,
Honest, heroic, generous, frank, and kind,
As inexperience of the world can make him;
Yet shall this single weakness, this *imprudence*,
Pull down unheard-of plagues upon his head,
And snare his heedless soul beyond redemption;
While dull, unfeeling hearts, and frozen spirits,
Sordidly safe, secure because untempted,
Look up, and wonder at the generous crime
They wanted wit to frame, and souls to dare.

ACT IV.

Scene—*An Apartment.*

Em. How many ways there are of being
wretched!
The avenues to happiness how few!
When will this busy, fluttering heart be still?
When will it cease to feel and beat no more?
E'en now it shudders with a dire presage
Of something terrible it fears to know.
Ent'ring, I saw my venerable father
In earnest conference with the Count Orlando;
Shame and confusion fill'd Orlando's eye,
While stern resentment fir'd my father's cheek.
And look, he comes, with terror on his brow!
But, O! he sees me, sees his child; and now
The terror of his look is lost in love,
In fond, paternal love.

Enter GUILDFORD.

Guild. Come to my arms,
And there conceal that penetrating eye,
Lest it should read what I would hide for ever,
Would hide from all, but most would hide from thee—
Thy father's grief, his shame, his rage, his tears.
Em. Tears! heaven and earth! see if he does not weep! [my eyes
Guild. He who has drawn this sorrow from
Shall pay me back again in tears of blood.
'Tis for thy sake I weep.
Em. Ah, weep for me!
Hear, heaven, and judge; hear, heaven, and
If any crime of mine— [punish me!
Guild. Thou art all innocence;
Just what a parent's fondest wish would frame;
No fault of thine e'er stain'd thy father's cheek;
For if I blush'd, it was to hear thy virtues,
And think that thou wast mine: and if I wept,
It was from joy and gratitude to heaven,
That made me father of a child like thee.
Orlando—
Em. What of him?
Guild. I cannot tell thee;
An honest shame, a virtuous pride forbids.
Em. Oh, speak! [father?
Guild. Canst thou not guess, and spare thy
Em. 'Tis possible I can—and yet I will not:
Tell me the worst while I have sense to hear.
Thou wilt not speak—nay, never turn away;
Dost thou not know that fear is worse than grief?
There may be bounds to grief, fear knows no bounds;
In grief we know the worst of what we feel,
But who can tell the end of what we fear?
Grief mourns some sorrow palpable and known,
But fear runs wild with horrible conjecture.
Guild. Then hear the worst, and arm thy soul to bear it.
My child!—he has—Orlando has refus'd thee.
Em. (*after a long pause.*) 'Tis well—'tis very well—'tis as it should be. [wo,
Guild. Oh, there's an eloquence in that mute
Which mocks all language. Speak, relieve thy heart,
Thy bursting heart; thy father cannot bear it.
Am I a man? no more of this, fond eyes!
I am grown weaker than a chidden infant,
While not a sigh escapes to tell thy pain.
Em. See, I am calm; I do not shed a tear;
The warrior weeps, the woman is a hero!
Guild. (*embraces her.*) My glorious child! now thou art mine indeed!
Forgive me if I thought thee fond and weak.
I have a Roman matron for my daughter,
And not a feeble girl. And yet I fear,
For, oh! I know thy tenderness of soul,
I fear this silent anguish but portends
Some dread convulsion soon to burst in horrors.
Em. I will not shame thy blood; and yet, my father,
Methinks thy daughter should not be refus'd!
Refused! It is a harsh, ungrateful sound;
Thou shouldst have found a softer term of scorn.
And have I then been held so cheap? Refus'd?
Been treated like the light ones of my sex,
Held up to sale? been offer'd, and refused?
Guild. Long have I known thy love. I thought it mutual;
I met him—talk'd of marriage—
Em. Ah! no more:
I am rejected;—does not that suffice?
Excuse my pride the mortifying tale;
Spare me particulars of how and when,
And do not parcel out thy daughter's shame.
No flowers of rhetoric can change the fact,
No arts of speech can varnish o'er my shame;
Orlando has refus'd me.
Guild. Villain! villain!
He shall repent this outrage.
Em. Think no more on't:
I'll teach thee how to bear it; I'll grow proud,
As gentle spirits still are apt to do
When cruel slight or killing scorn assails them.
Come, virgin dignity, come, female pride,
Come, wounded modesty, come, slighted love,
Come, conscious worth, come too, O black despair!
Support me, arm me, fill me with my wrongs!
Sustain this feeble spirit! Yes, my father,
But for thy share in this sad tale of shame,
I think I could have borne it.
Guild. Thou hast a brother;
He shall assert thy cause.
Em. First strike me dead—
No, in the wild distraction of my spirit,
In this dread conflict of my breaking heart,
Hear my fond pleading—save me from that curse;
Thus I adjure thee by the dearest ties (*kneels*)
Which link society; by the sweet names
Of parent and of child; by all the joys
These tender chains have yielded, I adjure thee
Breathe not this fatal secret to my brother;
Let him not know his sister was refused!
O, spare me that consummate, perfect ruin!
Conceive the mighty wo—I cannot speak:
And tremble to become a childless father.
[*Exit* EMMELINA.
Guild. What art thou, life? thou lying vanity!
Thou promiser, who never mean'st to pay!
This beating storm will crush my feeble age!
Yet let me not complain; I have a son,
Just such a son as heaven in mercy gives,
When it would bless supremely; he is happy;
His ardent wishes will this day be crown'd;
He weds the maid he loves; in him, at least,
My soul will yet taste comfort.—See, he's here;
He seems disorder'd.

Enter RIVERS (*not seeing* GUILDFORD.)

Riv. Yes, I fondly thought
Not all the tales which malice might devise,
Not all the leagues combined hell might form,
Could shake her steady soul.
Guild. What means my son?
Where is thy bride?
Riv. O, name her not!
Guild. Not name her?
Riv. No, if possible, not think of her;
Would I could help it!—Julia! oh, my Julia!
Curse my fond tongue! I said I would not name her;
I did not think to do it, but my heart
Is full of her idea; her lov'd image
So fills my soul, it shuts out other thoughts;

My lips resolving not to frame the sound,
Dwell on her name, and all my talk is Julia!
Guild. 'Tis as it should be; ere the midnight bell
Sound in thy raptured ear, this charming Julia
Will be thy wife.
Riv. No.
Guild. How?
Riv. She has refused.
Guild. Sayst thou?
Riv. She has.
Guild. Why, who would be a father!
Who that could guess the wretchedness it brings,
But would entreat of heaven to write him childless!
Riv. 'Twas but a little hour ago we parted,
As happy lovers should; but when again
I sought her presence, with impatient haste,
Told her the priest, the altar, all was ready;
She blushed, she wept, and vowed it could not be;
That reasons of importance to our peace
Forbade the nuptial rites to be performed
Before to-morrow.
Guild. She consents to-morrow!
She but defers the marriage, not declines it.
Riv. Mere subterfuge! mere female artifice!
What reason should forbid our instant union?
Wherefore to-morrow? wherefore not to-night?
What difference could a few short hours have made?
Or if they could, why not avow the cause?
Guild. I have grown old in camps, have lived in courts;
The toils of bright ambition have I known,
Woo'd greatness and enjoy'd it, till disgust
Follow'd possession; still I fondly look'd
Through the false perspective for distant joy,
Hop'd for the hour of honourable ease,
When, safe from all the storms and wrecks of fate,
My shatter'd bark at rest, I might enjoy
An old man's blessings, liberty and leisure,
Domestic happiness and smiling peace.
The hour of age indeed is come! I feel it;
Feel it in all its sorrows, pains, and cares;
But where, oh where's th' untasted peace it promis'd? [*Exit* GUILDFORD.
Riv. I would not deeper wound my father's peace;
But hide the secret cause of my resentment,
Till all be known; and yet I know too much.
It must be so—his grief, his sudden parting:
Fool that I was, not to perceive at once—
But friendship blinded me, and love betray'd.
Bertrand was right, he told me she was changed,
And would, on some pretence, delay the marriage;
I hop'd 'twas malice all.—Yonder she comes,
Dissolved in tears; I cannot see them fall,
And be a man; I will not, dare not meet her;
Her blandishments would sooth me to false peace,
And if she asked it, I should pardon all. [*Exit.*

Enter JULIA.

Julia. Stay, Rivers! stay, barbarian! hear me speak!
Return, inhuman!—best belov'd! return:
Oh. I will tell thee all, restore thy peace,
Kneel at thy feet, and sue for thy forgiveness.
He hears me not—alas! he will not hear.
Break, thou poor heart, since Rivers is unkind.

Enter ORLANDO.

Or. Julia in tears!
Julia. Alas! you have undone me!
Behold the wretched victim of her promise!
I urged, at your request, the fatal suit
Which has destroy'd my peace; Rivers suspects me,
And I am wretched!
Or. Better 'tis to weep
A temporary ill, than weep for ever;
That anguish must be mine.
Julia. Ha! weep for ever!
Can they know wretchedness, who know not love? [honour!
Or. Not love! oh cruel friendship! tyrant
Julia. Friendship! alas, how cold art thou to love!
Or. Too well I know it; both alike destroy me,
I am the slave of both, and, more than either,
The slave of honour.
Julia. If you then have felt
The bitter agonies—
Or. Talk you of agonies?
You who are lov'd again! No! they are mine,
Mine are the agonies of hopeless passion;
Yes, I do love—I dote, I die for love!
(*falls at her feet.*) Julia!
Julia. How?
Or. Nay, never start—I know I am a villain!
I know thy hand is destin'd to another,
That other too my friend, that friend the man
To whom I owe my life! Yes, I adore thee;
Spite of the black ingratitude, adore thee;
I dote upon my friend, and yet betray him;
I'm bound to Emmelina, yet forsake her;
I honour virtue, while I follow guilt;
I love the noble Rivers more than life,
But Julia more than honour.
Julia. Hold! astonishment
Has seal'd my lips; whence sprung this monstrous daring?
Or. (*rises.*) From despair.
Julia. What can you hope from me?
Or. Hope! nothing.
I would not aught receive, aught hope but death.
Think'st thou I need reproach? think'st thou I
To be reminded that my love's a crime? [need
That every moral tie forbids my passion?
But though I know that heaven has plagues in store,
Yet mark—I do not, will not, can't repent;
I do not even wish to love thee less;
I glory in my crime: pernicious beauty!
Come, triumph in thy power, complete my woes;
Insult me with the praises of my rival,
The man on earth—whom most I ought to love!
Julia. I leave thee to remorse, and to that
Thy crime demands. (*going.*) [penitence
Or. A moment stay.
Julia. I dare not.
Or. Hear all my rival's worth, and all my
The unsuspecting Rivers sent me to thee, [guilt.
To plead his cause; I basely broke my trust,
And, like a villain, pleaded for myself.
Julia. Did he? Did Rivers? Then he loves me still—
Quick let me seek him out.

Or. (*takes out the dagger.*) First take this dagger;
Had you not forced it from my hand to-day,
I had not liv'd to know this guilty moment;
Take it, present it to the happy Rivers;
Tell him to plunge it in a traitor's heart;
Tell him his friend, Orlando, is that traitor;
Tell him Orlando forg'd the guilty tale;
Tell him Orlando was the only foe
Who at the altar would have murder'd Rivers,
And then have died himself.
Julia. Farewell—repent—think better.
[*Exit* JULIA.
(*As she goes out, he still looks after her.*)

Enter RIVERS.

Riv. Turn, villain, turn!
Or. Ha! Rivers here?
Riv. Yes, Rivers.
Or. Gape wide, thou friendly earth, for ever hide me!
Rise Alps, ye crushing mountains, bury me!
Riv. Nay, turn, look on me.
Or. Rivers! oh, I cannot,
I dare not, I have wrong'd thee.
Riv. Doubly wrong'd me;
Thy complicated crimes cry out for vengeance.
Or. Take it.
Riv. But I would take it as a man.
Draw. (RIVERS *draws.*)
Or. Not for a thousand worlds.
Riv. Not fight?
Why, thou'rt a coward too as well as villain:
I shall despise as well as hate thee.
Or. Do;
Yet wrong me not, for if I am a coward
'Tis but to thee: there does not breathe the
Thyself excepted, who durst call me so, [man,
And live; but, oh! 'tis sure to heaven and thee,
I am the veriest coward guilt e'er made.
Now, as thou art a man, revenge thyself;
Strike!
Riv. No, not stab thee like a base assassin,
But meet thee as a foe.
Or. Think of my wrongs.
Riv. I feel them here.
Or. Think of my treachery.
Riv. Oh, wherefore wast thou false? how have I lov'd thee!
Or. Of that no more: think of thy father's
Of Emmelina's wrongs— [grief,
Riv. Provoke me not.
Or. Of Julia—
Riv. Ha! I shall forget my honour,
And do a brutal violence upon thee,
Would tarnish my fair fame. Villain and cow-
Traitor! will nothing rouse thee? [ard!
Or. (*drawing.*) Swelling heart!
Yet this I have deserv'd, all this, and more.

As they prepare to fight, enter EMMELINA *hastily.*

Em. Lend me your swiftness, lightnings—'tis too late.
See, they're engaged—oh no—they live, both
Hold, cruel men! [live!
Riv. Unlucky! 'tis my sister.
Em. Ye men of blood! if yet you have not
All sense of human kindness, love, or pity: [lost
If ever you were dear to one another;
If ever you desire or look for mercy,
When, in the wild extremity of anguish,
You supplicate that Judge who has declared
That vengeance is his own—oh, hear me now;
Hear a fond wretch, whom misery has made
bold; [souls.
Spare, spare each other's life—spare your own
Or. (*to* RIVERS.) Thou shouldst have struck at once! O, tardy hand! [curtail'd?
Em. Does death want engines? is his power
Has fell disease forgotten to destroy?
Are there not pestilence and spotted plagues,
Devouring deluges, consuming fires,
Earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, and famine,
That man must perish by the hand of man?
Nay, to complete the horror, friend by friend?
Riv. What! shall I then endure this outrage tamely? [*love*
Em. No.—If you *covet* death; if you're in
With slaughter and destruction—does not war
Invite you to her banner? Far and wide
Her dire dominion reaches.—There seek death.
There fall without a crime. There, where no
No individual rage, no private wrong, [hate,
Arms man against his brother.—Not as here,
Where *both* are often *murderers* in the *act;*
In the *foul purpose—always.*
Riv. Is honour nothing?
Em. Honour! O, yes, I know him. 'Tis a phantom;
A shadowy figure wanting bulk and life,
Who, having nothing solid in himself,
Wraps his thin form in Virtue's plunder'd robe,
And steals her title. Honour! 'tis the fiend
Who feeds on orphans' tears and widows' groans,
And slakes his impious thirst in brothers' blood.
Honour! why, 'tis the primal law of hell!
The grand device to people the dark realms
With noble spirits, who, but for this curst honour,
Had been at peace on earth, or bless'd in heaven.
With this *false* honour, Christians have no com-
Religion disavows, and truth disowns it. [merce.
Or. (*throws away his sword.*) An angel speaks, and angels claim obedience.
Riv. (*to* ORLANDO.) This is the heart thou hast wrong'd.
Em. (*comes up to* ORLANDO.) I pity thee;
Calamity has taught me how to pity:
Before I knew distress, my heart was hard;
But now it melts at every touch of wo;
And wholesome sufferings bring it back to virtue.
Rivers, he once was good and just like thee:
Who shall be proud, and think he stands secure,
If thy Orlando's false?
Riv. Think of his crime.
Em. Oh, think of his temptation! think 'twas Julia;
Thy heart could not resist her; how should *his?*
It is the very error of his friendship.
Your souls were fram'd so very much alike,
He could not choose but to love whom Rivers lov'd. [like this?
Or. Think'st thou there is in death a pang
Strike, my brave friend! be sudden and be
Death, which is terrible to happy men, [silent.
To me will be a blessing: I have lost [friend;
All that could make life dear; I've lost my

I've stabb'd the peace of mind of that fair crea-
I have surviv'd my honour : this is dying ! [ture,
The mournful fondness of officious love
Will plant no thorns upon my dying pillow;
No precious tears embalm my memory,
But curses follow it.

Em. See, Rivers melts ;
He pities thee.

Or. I'll spare thy noble heart
The pain of punishing ; Orlando's self
Revenges both.

(*Goes to stab himself with the dagger.*)

Em. Barbarian ! kill me first.

Riv. (*snatching the dagger.*) Thou shalt not die ! I swear I love thee still :
That secret sympathy which long has bound us,
Pleads for thy life with sweet but strong entreaty.
Thou shalt repair the wrongs of that dear saint,
And be again my friend.

Or. Oh, hear me,

Em. No.
I cannot stoop to live on charity,
And what but charity is love compell'd ?
I've been a weak, a fond, believing woman,
And credulous beyond my sex's softness :
But with the weakness, I've the pride of woman.
I loved with virtue, but I fondly loved ;
That passion fixed my fate, determined all,
And marked at once the colour of my life.
Hearts that love well, love long ; they love but once. [mine ;
My peace thou hast destroyed, my honour's
She who aspired to gain Orlando's heart,
Shall never owe Orlando's hand to pity.

[*Exit* Emmelina.

Or. (*after a pause.*) And I still live !

Riv. Farewell ! should I stay longer
I might forget my vow.

Or. Yet hear me, Rivers.

[*Exit* Rivers, Orlando *following.*

Enter Bertrand *on the other side.*

Ber. How's this ? my fortune fails me, both alive !
I thought by stirring Rivers to this quarrel,
There was at least an equal chance against him.
I work invisibly, and, like the tempter,
My agency is seen in its effects.
Well, *honest* Bertrand ! now for Julia's letter.
(*Takes out a letter.*) This fond epistle of a love-sick maid,
I've sworn to give, but did not swear to whom.
"Give it my love," said she, "my dearest lord!"
Rivers, she meant ; there's no address—that's lucky.
Then where's the harm ? Orlando is a lord
As well as Rivers, loves her too as well.
(*Breaks open the letter.*) I must admire your style—your pardon, fair one.
(*Runs over it.*) I tread in air—methinks I brush the stars, [me.—
And spurn the subject world which rolls beneath
There's not a word but fits Orlando's case
As well as Rivers';—tender to excess— [less ;
No name—'twill do ; his faith in me is bound-
Then, as the brave are still, he's unsuspecting,
And credulous beyond a woman's weakness.
(*Going out he spies the dagger.*) Orlando's dagger ! ha ! 'tis greatly thought.
This may do noble service ; such a scheme !
My genius catches fire ! the bright idea
Is formed at once, and fit for instant action.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

Scene—*The Garden.*

Ber. 'Twas here we were to meet ; where does he stay ?
This compound of strange contradicting parts,
Too flexible for virtue, yet too virtuous
To make a flourishing, successful villain !
Conscience ! be still, preach not remorse to me ;
Remorse is for the luckless, failing villain.
He who succeeds repents not ; penitence
Is but another name for ill success.
Was Nero penitent when Rome was burnt ?
No ; but had Nero been a petty villain,
Subject to laws and liable to fear,
Nero perchance had been a penitent.
He comes.—This paper makes him all my own.

Enter Orlando.

Or. At length this wretched, tempest-beaten bark
Seems to have found its haven : I'm resolved ;
My wavering principles are fixed to honour ;
My virtue gathers force, my mind grows strong,
I feel an honest confidence within,
A precious earnest of returning peace.

Ber. Who feels secure, stands on the verge of ruin. (*Aside.*)
Trust me, it joys my heart to see you thus :
What have I not attempted for your sake !
My love for you has warped my honest nature,
And friendship has infringed on higher duties.

Or. It was a generous fault.

Ber. Yet 'twas a fault.
Oh for a flinty heart that knows no weakness,
But moves right onward, unseduc'd by friend-
And all the weak affections ! [ship,

Or. Hear me, Bertrand !
This is my last farewell ; absence alone
Can prop my stagg'ring virtue.

Ber. You're resolv'd :
Then Julia's favours come too late :

Or. What favours ?

Ber. Nay, nothing : I renounce these weak affections ;
They have misled us both. I too repent,
And will return the letter back to Julia.

Or. Letter ! what letter ? Julia write to me
I will not see it. What would Rivers say ?
Bertrand ! he sav'd my life ;—I will not see it

Ber. I do not mean you should : nay, I refus'd
To bring it you.

Or. Refus'd to bring the letter ?

Ber. Yes, I refus'd at first.

Or. Then thou *hast* brought it ?
My faithful Bertrand !—come.

Ber. 'Twere best not see it.

Or. Not see it ! how ! not read my Julia's letter !
An empire should not bribe me to forbear.
Come, come.

Ber. Alas, how frail is human virtue!
My resolution melts, and though I mean not
To trust you with the letter, I must tell you
With what a thousand, thousand charms she gave it. [it,
"Take this," said she, "and, as Orlando reads
Attend to every accent of his voice;
Watch every little motion of his eye;
Mark if it sparkles when he talks of Julia;
If when he speaks, poor Julia be the theme;
If when he sighs, his bosom heave for Julia:
Note every trifling act, each little look,
For, oh! of what importance is the least
To those who love like me!"

Or. Delicious poison!
O how it taints my soul! give me the letter.
(BERTRAND *offers it,* ORLANDO *refuses.*)
Ha! where's the virtue which but now I boasted?
'Tis lost, 'tis gone—conflicting passions tear me.
I am again a villain. Give it—no:
A spark of honour strikes upon my soul.
Take back the letter; take it back, good Ber- [trand!
Spite of myself compel me to be just:
I will not read it.

Ber. How your friend will thank you!
Another day makes Julia his for ever.
Even now the great pavilion is prepar'd;
There will the nuptial rites be solemnized.
Julia already dress'd in bridal robes,
Like some fair victim—

Or. O, no more, no more.
What can she write to me?

Ber. Some prudent counsel.

Or. Then wherefore fear to read it? come, I'll venture;
What wondrous harm can one poor letter do?
The letter—quick—the letter.

Ber. Since you force me. (*Gives it.*)

Or. Be firm, ye shivering nerves! It is her hand. [you this.
(*Reads.*) "To spare my blushes, Bertrand brings
How have you wrong'd me! you believ'd me false; [you.
'Twas my compassion for your friend deceiv'd
Meet me at midnight in the great pavilion;
But shun till then my presence; from that hour
My future life is yours; your once-lov'd friend
I pity and esteem; but you alone
Possess the heart of Julia."
This to me!
I dream, I rave, 'tis all Elysium round me,
And thou, my better angel! this to me!

Ber. I'm dumb; oh, Julia! what a fall is thine!

Or. What, is it such a crime to love? away—
Thy moral comes too late; thou shouldst have
Thy scruple sooner, or not urg'd at all: [urg'd
Thou shouldst—alas! I know not what I say—
But this I know, the charming Julia loves me,
Appoints a meeting at the dead of night!
She loves! the rest is all beneath my care.

Ber. Be circumspect; the hour is just at hand;
Since all is ready for your purpos'd parting,
See your attendants be dispos'd aright,
Near the pavilion gate.

Or. Why so?

Ber. 'Tis plain,
Julia must be the partner of your flight:
'Tis what she means, you must not mind her
A little gentle violence perhaps, [struggles;
To make her yield to what she had resolv'd,
And save her pride; she'll thank you for it after.

Or. Take her by force? I like not that, O Bertrand,
There is a mutinous spirit in my blood,
That wars against my conscience. Tell my Julia
I will not fail to meet her.

Ber. I obey.
Be near the garden; I shall soon return.
[*Exit* BERTRAND.

Or. This giant sin, whose bulk so lately scared
Shrinks to a common size; I now embrace [me,
What I but lately fear'd to look upon.
Why, what a progress have I made in guilt!
Where is the hideous form it lately wore?
It grows familiar to me; I can think,
Contrive, and calmly meditate on mischief,
Talk temp'rately of sin, and cherish crimes
I lately so abhorr'd, that had they once
But glanced upon the surface of my fancy
I had been terrified. Oh, wayward conscience!
Too tender for repose, too sear'd for penitence!
[*Exit* ORLANDO.

Scene changes to another part of the Garden—A grand Pavilion—The Moon shining.

Enter RIVERS, *in a melancholy attitude.*

Riv. Ye lovely scenes of long-remember'd bliss!
Scenes which I hop'd were fated to bestow
Still dearer blessings in a beauteous bride!
Thou gay pavilion, which art dress'd so fair
To witness my espousals, why, ah, why
Art thou adorn'd in vain? Yet still I court thee,
For Julia lov'd thee once:—dear, faithless Julia!
Yet is she false? Orlando swore she was not:
It may be so, yet she avoids my presence,
Keeps close from every eye, but most from mine.

Enter ORLANDO.

Or. Ah! Rivers here? would I had shunn'd his walks!
How shall I meet the man I mean to wrong?

Riv. Why does Orlando thus expose his health
To this cold air? [health

Or. I ask the same of Rivers?

Riv. Because this solitude, this silent hour,
Feeds melancholy thoughts, and soothes my soul.
My Julia will not see me. [soul.

Or. How?

Riv. She denies me
Admittance to her presence.

Or. (*aside.*) Then I'm lost,
Confirm'd a villain, now 'tis plain she loves me.

Riv. She will not pardon me one single fault
Of jealous love, though thou hadst clear'd up all. [known.

Or. Wait till to-morrow, all will then be

Riv. Wait till to-morrow! Look at that pavilion;
All was prepar'd; yes, I dare tell thee all,
For thou art honest now.

Or. (*aside.*) That wounds too deeply.

Riv. Soon as the midnight bell gave the glad summons,

This dear pavilion had beheld her mine.
Or. All will be well to-morrow. (*aside.*) If I stay [Rivers.
I shall betray the whole.—Good night, my
Riv. Good night; go you to rest; I still shall walk. [*Exit* Orlando.
Yes, I will trace her haunts; my too fond heart,
Like a poor bird that's hunted from its nest,
Dares not return, and knows not where to fix;
Still it delights to hover round the spot
Which lately held its treasure; eyes it still,
And with heart-breaking tenderness surveys
The scene of joys which never may return. [*Exit.*

Scene changes to another part of the garden.

Re-enter Orlando.

Or. Did he say rest? talk'd he of rest to me?
Can rest and guilt associate? but no matter,
I cannot now go back; then such a prize,
Such voluntary love, so fair, so yielding,
Would make archangels forfeit their allegiance!
I dare not think; reflection leads to madness.

Enter Bertrand.

Bertrand! I was not made for this dark work:
My heart recoils—poor Rivers!
Ber. What of Rivers?
Or. I've seen him.
Ber. Where?
Or. Before the great pavilion.
Ber. (*aside.*) That's lucky, saves me trouble; were he absent,
Half of my scheme had failed.
Or. He's most unhappy;
He wish'd me rest, spoke kindly to me, Bertrand;
How, how can I betray him?
Ber. He deceives you;
He's on the watch, else wherefore now abroad
At this late hour? beware of treachery.
Or. I am myself the traitor.
Ber. Come, no more!
The time draws near, you know the cypress
'Tis dark. [walk,
Or. The fitter for dark deeds like mine.
Ber. I have prepar'd your men; when the bell
Go into the pavilion; there you'll find [strikes
The blushing maid, who with faint screams perhaps
Will feign resentment. But you want a sword.
Or. A sword!—I'll murder no one—why a sword? [take mine;
Ber. 'Tis prudent to be arm'd; no words,
There may be danger, Julia may be lost,
This night secures or loses her for ever.
The cypress walk—spare none who look like spies.
Or. (*looking at the sword.*) How deeply is that soul involv'd in guilt,
Who dares not hold communion with its
Nor ask itself what it designs to do! [thoughts,
But dallies blindly with the gen'ral sin,
Of unexamin'd, undefin'd perdition!
[*Exit* Orlando.
Ber. Thus far propitious fortune fills my sails,
Yet still I doubt his milkiness of soul;
My next exploit must be to find out Rivers,
And, as from Julia, give him a feign'd message,
To join .er here at the pavilion gate;
There shall Orlando's well-arm'd servants meet him,
And take his righteous soul from this bad world.
If they should fail, his honest cousin Bertrand
Will help him onward in his way to heav'n.
Then this good dagger, which I'll leave beside him,
Will, while it proves the deed, conceal the doer;
'Tis not an English instrument of mischief,
And who'll suspect *good Bertrand* wore a dagger?
To clear me further, I've no sword—unarm'd—
Poor helpless Bertrand! Then no longer poor,
But Guildford's heir, and lord of these fair lands.
[*Exit* Bertrand.

Enter Orlando *on the other side.*

Or. Draw thy dun curtain round, oh, night! black night!
Inspirer and concealer of foul crimes!
Thou wizard night! who conjur'st up dark thoughts, [guilt!
And mak'st him bold, who else would start at
Beneath thy veil the villain dares to act,
What in broad day he would not dare to think.
Oh, night! thou hid'st the dagger's point from men,
But canst thou screen the assassin from himself?
Shut out the eye of heav'n? extinguish conscience?
Or heal the wounds of honour? Oh, no, no, no!
Yonder she goes—the guilty, charming Julia!
My genius drives me on—Julia, I come.
(*Runs off.*)

Scene—*The Pavilion.*

An arched door, through which Julia *and her maid come forward on the stage.*

Julia. Not here? not come? look out, my faithful Anna.
'There was a time—oh, time for ever dear!
When Rivers would not make his Julia wait.
Perhaps he blames me, thinks the appointment
Too daring, too unlike his bashful Julia; [bold,
But 'twas the only means my faithful love
Devis'd, to save him from Orlando's rashness.
I have kept close, refus'd to see my Rivers;
Now all is still, and I have ventured forth,
With this kind maid, and virtue for my guard.
Come, we'll go in, he cannot sure be long.
(*They go into the pavilion.*)

Enter Orlando, *his sword drawn and bloody, his hair dishevelled.*

Or. What have I done? a deed that earns damnation!
Where shall I fly? ah! the pavilion door!
'Tis open—it invites me to fresh guilt;
I'll not go in—let that fallen angel wait,
And curse her stars as I do.
(*The midnight bell strikes.*) Hark! the bell!
Demons of darkness, what a peal is that!
Again! 'twill wake the dead—I cannot bear it!
'Tis terrible as the last trumpet's sound!
That was the marriage signal! Powers of hell,
What blessings have I blasted! Rivers! Julia!
(Julia *comes out.*)

Julia. My Rivers calls; I come, I come.—
Orlando!
Or. Yes,
Thou beautiful deceiver! 'tis that wretch.
Julia. That perjur'd friend.
Or. That devil!
Julia. I'm betrayed.
Why art thou here?
Or. Thou canst make ruin lovely,
Or I would ask, why didst thou bring me here?
Julia. I bring thee here?
Or. Yes, thou, bright falsehood! thou.
Julia. No, by my hopes of heaven! where is
Some crime is meant. [my Rivers?
Or. (*catches her hand.*) Julia! the crime is
done.
Dost thou not shudder? art thou not amaz'd?
Art thou not cold and blasted with my touch?
Is not thy blood congeal'd? does no black horror
Fill thy presaging soul? look at these hands;
Julia! they're stain'd with blood; blood, Julia,
Nay, look upon them. [blood!
Julia. Ah! I dare not. Blood!
Or. Yes, thou dear false one, with the noblest
That ever stain'd a dark assassin's hand. [blood
Had not thy letter with the guilty message
To meet thee here this hour, blinded my honour,
And wrought my passion into burning phrensy,
Whole worlds should not have bribed me.
Julia. Letter and message?
I sent thee none.
Or. Then Bertrand has betrayed me!
And I have done a deed beyond all reach,
All hope of mercy—I have murder'd Rivers.
Julia. Oh! (*She falls into her maid's arms.*)
Or. O rich reward which love prepares for
Thus hell repays its instruments! [murder!

Enter GUILDFORD *with servants.*

Guild. Where is he?
Where is this midnight murderer? this assassin?
This is the place Orlando's servant nam'd.
Or. The storm comes on. 'Tis Guildford,
good old man!
Behold the wretch accurst of heaven and thee.
Guild. Accurst of both indeed. How, Julia
fainting!
Or. She's pure as holy truth; she was de-
And so was I. [ceiv'd,
Guild. Who tempted thee to this?
Or. Love, hell, and Bertrand.
Julia. (*recovering.*) Give me back my Rivers;
I will not live without him. Oh, my father!
Guild. Father! I'm none; I am no more a
father;
I have no child; my son is basely murder'd,
And my sweet daughter, at the fatal news,
Is quite bereft of reason.
Or. Seize me, bind me:
If death's too great a mercy, let me live:
Drag me to some damp dungeon's horrid gloom,
Deep as the centre, dark as my offences;
Come, do your office, take my sword; oh, Ber-
trand,
Yet, ere I perish, could it reach thy heart!
(*They seize* ORLANDO.)
Julia. I will not long survive thee, oh, my
Rivers!

Enter RIVERS *with the dagger.*

Riv. Who calls on Rivers with a voice so sad,
So full of sweetness?
Guild. Ah, my son!
Julia. 'Tis he, 'tis he!

JULIA *and* RIVERS *run into each other's arms.*
ORLANDO *breaks from the guards, and falls on his knees.*

Or. He lives, he lives! the godlike Rivers
lives!
Hear it, ye host of heaven! witness, ye saints!
Recording angels, tell it in your songs;
Breathe it, celestial spirits, to your lutes,
That Rivers lives!
Julia. Explain this wondrous happiness?
Riv. 'Twas Bertrand whom Orlando killed;
the traitor
Has with his dying breath confess'd the whole.
Or. Good sword, I thank thee!
Riv. In the tangled maze
Orlando miss'd the path he was to take, [ceal'd
And pass'd through that where Bertrand lay con-
To watch th' event: Orlando thought 'twas me,
And that I play'd him false: the walk was dark.
In Bertrand's bloody hand I found this dagger,
With which he meant to take my life; but how
Were you alarm'd?
Guild. One of Orlando's men,
Whom wealth could never bribe to join in mur-
Or. Murder! I bribe to murder? [der—
Riv. No; 'twas Bertrand
Brib'd them to that curst deed; he lov'd my
Or. Exquisite villain! [sister.
Guild. Fly to Emmelina,
If any spark of reason yet remain,
Tell her the joyful news. Alas, she's here!
Wildly she flies! Ah, my distracted child!

Enter EMMELINA *distracted.*

Em. Off, off! I will have way! ye shall not
hold me:
I come to seek my lord; is he not here?
Tell me, ye virgins, have ye seen my love,
Or know you where his flocks repose at noon?
My love is comely—sure you must have seen
him;
'Tis the great promiser! who vows and swears;
The perjur'd youth! who deals in oaths and
breaks them.
In truth he might deceive a wiser maid.
I lov'd him once; he then was innocent;
He was no murderer then, indeed he was not;
He had not kill'd my brother.
Riv. Nor has now;
Thy brother lives.
Em. I know it—yes, he lives
Among the cherubim. Murd'rers too will live;
But where? I'll tell you where—down, down,
down, down.
How deep it is! 'tis fathomless—'tis dark!
No—there's a pale blue flame—ah, poor Or-
Guild. My heart will burst. [lando!
Or. Pierce mine, and that will ease it.
Em. (*comes up to her father.*) I knew a maid
who lov'd—but she was mad—
Fond, foolish girl! Thank heav'n, I am not mad;

Yet the afflicting angel has been with me;
But do not tell my father, he would grieve;
Sweet, good old man—perhaps he'd weep to hear it:
I never saw my father weep but once;
I'll tell you when it was. I did not weep;
'Twas when—but soft, my brother must not know it.
'Twas when his poor fond daughter was refus'd.
Guild. Who can bear this?
Or. I will not live to bear it.
Em. (*comes up to* ORLANDO.) Take comfort, thou poor wretch! I'll not appear
Against thee, nor shall Rivers; but blood must,
Blood will appear; there's no concealing blood.
What's that? my brother's ghost—it vanishes;
(*Catches hold of* RIVERS.)
Stay, take me with thee, take me to the skies;
I have thee fast; thou shalt not go without me.
But hold—may we not take the murd'rer with us?
That look says—No. Why then I'll not go with thee.
Yet hold me fast—'tis dark—I'm lost—I'm gone. (*Dies.*)
Or. One crime makes many needful; this day's sin
Blots out a life of virtue. Good old man!
My bosom bleeds for thee; thy child is dead,
And I the cause. 'Tis but a poor atonement;
But I can make no other. (*Stabs himself.*)
Riv. What hast thou done?
Or. Fill'd up the measure of my sins. Oh, mercy!
Eternal goodness, pardon this last guilt!
Rivers, thy hand!—farewell! forgive me, heaven!
Yet is it not an act which bars forgiveness,
And shuts the door of grace for ever?—Oh! (*Dies.*)

(*The curtain falls to soft music.*)

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ.—SPOKEN BY MR. LEE LEWES.

UNHAND me, gentlemen, by heaven, I say,
I'll make a ghost of him who bars my way.
[*Behind the scenes.*
Forth let me come—A poetaster true,
As lean as envy, and as baneful too;
On the dull audience let me vent my rage,
Or drive these female scribblers from the stage.
For scene or history, we've none but these,
The law of liberty and wit they seize;
In tragic—comic—pastoral—they dare to please.
Each puny bard must surely burst with spite,
To find that women with such fame can write;
But, oh, your partial favour is the cause,
Which feeds their follies with such full applause.
Yet still our tribe shall seek to blast their fame,
And ridicule each fair pretender's aim;
Where the dull duties of domestic life
Wage with the muse's toils eternal strife.
What motley cares Corilla's mind perplex,
While maids and metaphors conspire to vex!
In studious dishabille behold her sit,
A letter'd gossip, and a housewife wit;
At once invoking, though for different views,
Her gods, her cook, her milliner, and muse.
Round her strew'd room a frippery chaos lies,
A checker'd wreck of notable and wise;
Bills, books, caps, couplets, combs, a varied mass,
Oppress the toilet, and obscure the glass;
Unfinish'd here an epigram is laid,
And there a mantuamaker's bill unpaid:
Here newborn plays foretaste the town's applause,
There, dormant patterns pine for future gauze;
A moral essay now is all her care,
A satire next, and then a bill of fare:
A scene she now projects, and now a dish,
Here's act the first—and here—remove with fish.
Now while this eye in a fine phrensy rolls,
That, soberly casts up a bill for coals;
Black pins and daggers in one leaf she sticks,
And tears, and thread, and balls, and thimbles mix.
Sappho, 'tis true, long vers'd in epic song,
For years esteem'd all household studies wrong;
When dire mishap, though neither shame nor sin,
Sappho herself, and not her muse, lies in.
The virgin Nine in terror fly the bower,
And matron Juno claims despotic power;
Soon Gothic hags the classic pile o'erturn,
A caudle-cup supplants the sacred urn;
Nor books nor implements escape their rage,
They spike the inkstand, and they rend the page;
Poems and plays one barbarous fate partake,
Ovid and Plautus suffer at the stake,
And Aristotle's only sav'd—to wrap plumcake.
Yet, shall a woman tempt the tragic scene?
And dare—but hold—I must repress my spleen;
I see your hearts are pledg'd to her applause,
While Shakspeare's spirit seems to aid her cause;
Well pleas'd to aid—since o'er his sacred bier
A female hand did ample trophies rear,
And gave the greenest laurel that is worshipp'd there.

POEMS.

MORNING SOLILOQUY.

The following lines were written by Hannah More for her own use, in early life; but a copy having been given to a friend, the author was importuned to print it. She complied, and prefixed to the piece the following—

"As early rising is very conducive to health, and to the improvement of the mind in knowledge and piety, this soliloquy is designed to promote so important an end; and is recommended more particularly to young persons, as, by contracting a habit of rising early in the days of their youth, they would be less liable to depart from such a custom as they advance in life. The last stanza is expressive of the action of rising, in order that those who repeat it may have no excuse for not quitting their beds immediately."

Soft slumbers now mine eyes forsake,
My powers are all renew'd;
May my freed spirit too awake,
With heavenly strength endued!

Thou silent murderer Sloth, no more
My mind imprison'd keep;
Nor let me waste another hour
With thee, thou felon Sleep.

Hark, O my soul, could dying men
One lavish'd hour retrieve,
Though spent in tears, and pass'd in pain,
What treasures would they give!

But seas of pearl, and mines of gold,
Were offer'd them in vain;
Their pearl of countless price is lost,*
And where's the promis'd gain?

Lord, when thy day of dread account
For squander'd hours shall come,
Oh, let them not increase th' amount,
And swell the former sum!

Teach me in health each good to prize,
I, dying, shall esteem;
And every pleasure to despise
I then shall worthless deem.

For all thy wondrous mercies past
My grateful voice I raise,
While thus I quit the bed of rest
Creation's Lord to praise.

* See Matthew xiii. 46.

ON MR. SHAPLAND,

An eminent Apothecary in Bristol.

Wouldst thou inquire of him who sleeps beneath,
This tomb shall tell thee, 'tis no common dust,
That, crush'd at length by oft defeated death,
Fills the cold urn committed to its trust.

Stranger! this building fallen to decay,
Was once the dwelling of an honest mind—
A spirit cheerful as the light of day—
The soul of friendship—milk of human kind.

His art forbade th' expiring wretch to die,
Empower'd the nerveless tongue once more to speak,
Restor'd its lustre to the sunken eye,
And spread fresh roses on the livid cheek

Each various duty bound on social man,
'Twas his with glowing duty to perform,
As crystal pure, his stream of conduct ran,
Unstain'd by folly, undisturb'd by storm.

With me, then, stranger! mourn departed worth;
Steel'd is the heart that can forbear to sigh;
Let deep regret call all thy sorrows forth—
Live as he liv'd—and fear not then to die.*

* Dr. Stonhouse had the highest esteem for Mr. Shapland, who attended his family, as well as that of Mrs. More, even after he had left off general practice. Dr. Stonhouse, in 1789, presented to Mr. Shapland a piece of plate "as a testimony of his gratitude for the restoration of health, through the blessing of God."

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HINTS

TOWARDS FORMING THE CHARACTER OF A YOUNG PRINCESS.

I call that a complete and generous education, which fits a person to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously, all the offices both of public and private life, of peace, and of war.—*Milton.*

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF EXETER.

My Lord.—Could it have been foreseen by the author of the following pages, that in the case of the illustrious person who is the subject of them, the standard of education would have been set so high; and especially, that this education would be committed to such able and distinguished hands, the work might surely have been spared. But as the work was gone to the press before that appointment was announced, which must give general satisfaction, it becomes important to request, that if the advice suggested in any part of the work should appear presumptuous, your lordship, and still more the public, who might be more forward than your lordship in charging the author with presumption, will have the candour to recollect, that it was offered not to the learned bishop of Exeter, but to an unknown, and even to an imaginary preceptor.

Under these circumstances, your lordship will perhaps have the goodness to accept the dedication of the following pages; not as arrogantly pointing out duties to the discharge of which you are so competent, but as a mark of the respect and esteem with which I have the honour to be,

My lord, your lordship's most obedient and most faithful servant,

April 2, 1805. THE AUTHOR

PREFACE.

If any book, written with an upright and disinterested intention, may be thought to require an apology, it is surely the slight work which is now, with the most respectful deference, submitted, not to the public only, but especially to those who may be more immediately interested in the important object which it has in view.

If we were to inquire what is, even at the present critical period, one of the most momentous concerns which can engage the attention of an Englishman, who feels for his country like a patriot, and for his posterity like a father; what is that object of which the importance is not bounded by the shores of the British islands, nor limited by our colonial possessions;—with which, in its consequences, the interests, not only of all Europe, but of the whole civilized world, may hereafter be in some measure implicated; what Briton would hesitate to reply, the education of the Princess Charlotte of Wales?

After this frank confession of the unspeakable importance of the subject in view, it is no wonder if the extreme difficulty, as well as delicacy of the present undertaking, is acknowledged to be sensibly felt by the author.

It will too probably be thought to imply not only officiousness, but presumption, that a private individual should thus hazard the obtrusion of unsolicited observations on the proper mode of forming the character of an English princess.—It may seem to involve an appearance of unwarrantable distrust, by implying an apprehension of some deficiency in the plan about to be adopted by those, whoever they may be, on whom this great trust may be devolved: and to indicate self-conceit, by conveying an intimation, after so strong an avowal of the delicacy and difficulty of the task, that such a deficiency is within the powers of the author to supply.

The author, however, earnestly desires, as far as it may be possible to obviate these anticipated charges, by alleging that under this free constitution, in which every topic of national policy is openly canvassed, and in which the prerogative of the crown form no mean part of the liberty of the subject, the principles which it is proper to instil into a royal personage, become a topic, which if discussed respectfully, may without offence, exercise, the liberty of the British press.

The writer is very far, indeed, from pretending to offer any thing approaching to a sytem of instruction for the royal pupil, much less from presuming to dictate a plan of conduct to the preceptor. What is here presented, is a mere outline, which may be filled up by far more able hands: a sketch which contains no consecutive details, which neither aspires to regularity of design, nor exactness of execution.

To awaken a lively attention to a subject of such moment, to point out some circumstances connected with the early season of improvement, but still more with the subsequent stages of life; to offer, not a treatise on education, but a desultory suggestion of sentiments and principles; to convey instruction, not so much by precept or by argument, as to exemplify it by illustrations and examples; and, above all, to stimulate the wise and the good to exertions far more effectual: these are the real motives which have given birth to this slender performance.

Had the royal pupil been a prince, these hints would never have been obtruded on the world, as it would then have been naturally assumed, that the established plan usually adopted in such cases would have been pursued. Nor does the author presume in the present instance, to insinuate a suspicion, that there will be any want of a large and liberal scope in the projected system, or to intimate an apprehension that the course of study will be adapted to the sex, rather than to the circumstances of the princess.

If, however, it should be asked, why a stranger presumes to interfere in a matter of such high concern? It may be answered in the words of an elegant critic, that in classic story, when a superb and lasting monument was about to be consecrated to beauty, every lover was permitted to carry a tribute.

The appearance of a valuable elementary work on the principles of Christianity, which has been recently published in our language, translated from the German under the immediate patronage of an august personage, for the avowed purpose of benefit to her illustrious daughters, as it is an event highly auspicious to the general interests of religion, so is it a circumstance very encouraging to the present undertaking.

It is impossible to write on such points as are discussed in this little work without being led to draw a comparison between the lot of a British subject, and that of one who treats on similar topics under a despotic government.—The excellent archbishop of Cambray, with every advantage which genius, learning, and profession, and situation could confer; the admired preceptor of the duke of Burgundy, appointed to the office by the king himself, was yet in the beautiful work which he composed for the use of his royal pupil, driven to the necessity of couching his instructions under a fictitious narrative, and of sheltering behind the veil of fable, the duties of a just sovereign, and the blessings of a good government: he was aware, that even under this disguise, his delineation of both would too probably be construed into a satire on the personal errors of his own king, and the vices of the French government, and in spite of his ingenious discretion, the event justified his apprehensions.

Fortunate are the subjects of that free and happy country who are not driven to have recourse to any such expedients; who may, without danger, dare to express temperately what they think lawfully; who, in describing the most perfect form of government, instead of recurring to poetic invention, need only delineate that under which they themselves live; who, in sketching the character, and shadowing out the duties of a patriot king, have no occasion to turn their eyes from their own country to the throne of Ithaca or Salentum.

HINTS

TOWARDS FORMING THE CHARACTER OF A YOUNG PRINCESS.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

We are told that when a sovereign of ancient times, who wished to be a mathematician, but was deterred by the difficulty of attainment, asked, whether he could not be instructed in some easier method, the answer which he received was, that there was no royal road to geometry. The lesson contained in this reply ought never to be lost sight of, in that most important and delicate of all undertakings, the education of a prince!

It is a truth which might appear too obvious to require enforcing, and yet of all others it is a truth most liable to be practically forgotten, that the same subjugation of desire and will, of inclinations and tastes, to the laws of reason and conscience, which every one wishes to see promoted in the lowest ranks of society, is still more necessary in the very highest, in order to the attainment either of individual happiness, or of general virtue, to public usefulness, or to private self-enjoyment.

Where a prince, therefore, is to be educated, his own welfare no less than that of his people, humanity no less than policy, prescribe, that the claims and privileges of the rational being should not be suffered to merge in the peculiar rights or exemptions of the expectant sovereign. If, in such cases, the wants and weaknesses of human nature could indeed be wholly effaced, as easily as they are kept out of sight, there would at least be some resonable plea against the charge of cruelty. But when, on the contrary, the most elevated monarch must still retain every natural hope and fear, every affection and passion of the heart, every frailty of the mind, and every weakness of the body, to which the meanest subject is liable; how exquisitely inhuman must it be to provide so sedulously for the extrinsic accident of transient greatness, as to blight the growth of substantial virtue, to dry up the fountains of mental and moral comfort, and in short to commit the ill-fated victim of such mismanagement to more, almost, than human dangers and difficulties, without even the common resources of the least favoured of mankind.

Yet, must not this be the unaggravated consequence of not accustoming the royal child to that salutary control which the corruption of our nature requires, as its indispensable and earliest corrective? If those foolish desires, which in the great mass of mankind are providentially repressed by the want of means to gratify them, should, in the case of royalty, be thought warrantable, because every possible gratification is within reach, what would be the result, but the full blown luxuriance of folly, vice, and misery? The laws of human nature

will not bend to human greatness; and by these immutable laws it is determined, that happiness and virtue, virtue and self-command, self-command and early habitual self-denial, should be joined together in an indissoluble bond of connexion.

The first habit, therefore, to be formed in every human being, and still more in the offspring and heir of royalty, is that of patience, and even cheerfulness, under postponed and restricted gratification. And the first lesson to be taught is, that since self-command is so essential to all genuine virtue and real happiness, where others cannot restrain us, there, especially, we should restrain ourselves. That illustrious monarch, Gustavus Adolphus, was so deeply sensible of this truth, that when he was surprised by one of his officers in secret prayer in his tent, he said, 'Persons of my rank are answerable to God alone for their actions; this gives the enemy of mankind a peculiar advantage over us; an advantage which can only be resisted by prayer, and reading the Scriptures.'

As the mind opens, the universal truth of this principle may be exemplified in innumerable instances, by which it may be demonstrated, that man is a rational being only so far as he can thus command himself. That such a superiority to the passions is essential to all regular and steady performance of duty; and that true gratification is thus, and thus only insured, because, by him who thus habitually restrains himself, not only every lawful pleasure is most perfectly njoyed; but every common blessing, for which the sated voluptuary has lost all relish, becomes a source of the most genuine pleasure, a source of pleasure which is never exhausted, because such common blessings are never wholly withheld.

The mind should be formed early, no less than the person: and for the same reason. Providence has plainly indicated childhood to be the season of instruction, by communicating at that period, such flexibility to the organs, such retention to the memory, such quickness to the apprehension, such inquisitiveness to the temper, such alacrity to the animal spirits, and such impressibility to the affections, as are not possessed at any subsequent period. We are therefore bound by every tie of duty to follow these obvious designations of Providence, by moulding that flexibility to the most durable ends; by storing that memory with the richest knowledge; by pointing that apprehension to the highest objects; by giving to that alacrity its best direction; by turning that inquisitiveness to the noblest intellectual purposes; and, above all, by converting that impressibility of heart to the most exalted moral use.

If this be true in general, much more forcibly does it apply to the education of princes! Nothing short of the soundest, most rational, and, let me add, most religious education, can counteract the dangers to which they are exposed. If the highest of our nobility, in default of some better way of guarding against the mischiefs of flatterers and dependents, deem it expedient to commit their sons to the wholesome equality of a public school, in order to repress their aspiring notions, and check the tendencies of their birth; —If they find it necessary to counteract the pernicious influence of domestic luxury, and the corrupting softness of domestic indulgence, by severity of study and closeness of application; how much more indispensable is the spirit of this principle in the instance before us? The highest nobility have their equals, their competitors, and even their superiors. Those who are born within the sphere of royalty are destitute of all such extrinsic means of correction, and must be wholly indebted for their safety to the soundness of their principles, and the rectitude of their habits. Unless, therefore, the brightest light of reason be, from the very first, thrown upon their path, and the divine energies of our holy religion, both restraining and attractive, be brought as early as possible to act upon their feelings, the children of royalty, by the very fate of their birth, would be 'of all men most miserable.'

Let it not, however, be supposed, that any impracticable rigour is here recommended; or that it is conceived to be necessary that the gay period of childhood should be rendered gloomy or painful, whether in the cottage or the palace. The virtue which is aimed at, is not that of the stoic philosophy; nor do the habits which are deemed valuable, require the harshness of a Spartan education. Let nature, truth, and reason, be consulted; and, let the child, and especially the royal child, be as much as possible, trained according to their simple and consistent indications. The attention, in such instances as the present, should be the more watchful and unremitting, as counteracting influences are, in so exalted a station, necessarily multiplied; and every difficulty is at its greatest possible height. In a word, let not common sense, which is universal and eternal, be sacrificed to the capricious tastes of the child, or to the pliant principles of any who may approach her. But let the virtue and the happiness of the royal pupil be as simply, as feelingly, and as uniformly consulted, as if she were the daughter of a private gentleman. May this attention to her moral and mental cultivation be the supreme concern, from honest reverence to the offspring of such a race, from a dutiful regard to her own future happiness, and from reasonable attention to the well-being of those millions, whose earthly fate may be at this moment suspended on lessons, and habits, received by one providentially distinguished female!

CHAP. II.

On the Acquisition of Knowledge.

The course of instruction for the princess will, doubtless, be wisely adapted, not only to the duties, but to the dangers of her rank. The probability of her having one day functions to discharge, which, in such exempt cases only, fall to the lot of females, obviously suggests the expediency of an education not only superior to, but in certain respects, distinct from, that of other women. What was formerly deemed necessary in an instance of this nature, may be inferred from the well-known attainments of the

unfortunate lady Jane Grey ; and still more from the no less splendid acquirements of queen Elizabeth. Of the erudition of the latter, we have particular account from one, who was the fittest in that age to appreciate it, the celebrated Roger Aschasm. He tells us, that when he read over with her the orations of Eschines and Demosthenes in Greek, she not only understood, at first sight, the full force and propriety of the language, and the meaning of the orators, but that she comprehended the whole scheme of the laws, customs, and manners of the Athenians. She possessed an exact and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, and had committed to memory most of the striking passages in them. She had also learned by heart many of the finest parts of Thucydides and Xenophon, especially those which relate to life and manners. Thus were her early years sedulously employed in laying in a large stock of materials for governing well. To what purpose she improved them, let her illustrious reign of forty-five years declare!

If the influence of her erudition on her subsequent prosperity should be questioned ; let it be considered, that her intellectual attainments supported the dignity of her character, under foibles and feminine weaknesses, which would otherwise have sunk her credit: she had even address enough to contrive to give to those weaknesses a certain classic grace. Let it be considered also, that whatever tended to raise her mind to a level with those whose services she was to use, and of whose counsels she was to avail herself, proportionably contributed to that mutual respect and confidence between the queen and her ministers, without which, the results of her government could not have been equally successful. Almost every man of rank was then a man of letters, and literature was valued accordingly. Had, therefore, deficiency of learning been added to inferiority of sex, we might not at this day have the reign of Elizabeth on which to look back, as the period in which administrative energy seemed to attain the greatest possible perfection.

Yet, though an extended acquaintance with ancient authors will be necessary now, as it was then, in the education of a princess, a general knowledge of ancient languages, it is presumed, may be dispensed with. The Greek authors, at least, may doubtless be read with sufficient advantage through the medium of a translation ; the spirit of the original being, perhaps, more transfusible into the English, than into any other modern tongue. But are there not many forcible reasons why the Latin language should not be equally omitted ?* Besides the advantage of reading, in their original dress, the historians of that empire, the literature of Rome is peculiarly interesting, as being the most satisfactory medium through which the moderns can obtain an intimate knowledge of the ancient world. As the Latin itself is a modification of one of the Greek dialects, so the Roman philosophers and poets, having formed themselves, as much as possible, on Grecian models, present to us the nearest possible transcripts of those masters whom they copy. Thus, by an acquaintance with the Latin language, we are brought into a kind of actual contact not only with the ancient world, but with that portion of it which, having the most direct and the fullest intercourse with the other parts, introduces us, in a manner the most informing and satisfactory to classical and philosophical antiquity in general. But what is still more, the Latin tongue enables us for ourselves, without the intermediation of any interpreter, to examine all the particular circumstances in manners, intercourse, modes of thinking and speaking, of that period which Eternal Wisdom chose (probably because it was ever after to appear the most luminous in the whole retrospect of history) as fittest for the advent of the Messiah, and the bringing life and immortality to light by the gospel.

If to this may be added lesser yet not unimportant considerations, we would say, that by the acquaintance which the Latin language would give her with the etymology of words she will learn to be more accurate in her definitions, as well as more critically exact and elegant in the use of her own language ; and her ability to manage it with gracefulness and vigour will be considerably increased.*

Of the modern languages, if the author dares hazard an opinion, the French and German seem the most necessary. The Italian appears less important, as those authors which seem more peculiarly to belong to her education, such as Davilla, Guicciardin, and Beccaria, may be read either in French or English translations.

It is not to be supposed that a personage, under her peculiar circumstances, should have much time to spare for the acquisition of what are called the fine arts ; nor, perhaps, is it to be desired. To acquire them in perfection, would steal away too large a portion of those precious hours which will barely suffice to lay in the various rudiments of indispensable knowledge ; and, in this fastidious age, whatever falls far short of perfection, is deemed of little worth. A moderate skill in music, for instance, would probably have little other effect, than to make the listeners feel, as Farinelli is said to have done, who used to complain heavily that the pension of 2000*l.* a year, which he had from the king of Spain, was compensation little enough for his being sometimes obliged to hear his majesty play. Yet this would be a far less evil than that to which *excellence* might lead. We can think of few things more to be deprecated, than that those who have the greatest concerns to pursue, should have their tastes engaged, perhaps monopolized, by trifles. A listener to the royal music, if possessed of either wisdom or virtue, could not but feel his pleasure at the most exquisite performance abated, by the apprehension that this perfection implied the neglect of matters far more essential.

* The royal father of the illustrious pupil is said to possess the princely accomplishment of a pure classical taste. Of his love for polite learning, the attention which he is paying to the recovery of certain of the lost works of some of the Roman authors is an evidence.

* Who does not consider as one of the most interesting passages of modern history, that which relates the effect produced by an eloquent Latin oration pronounced in a full assembly, by the late empress Maria Theresa, in the bloom of her youth and beauty, so late as the year 1740? Antiquity produces nothing more touching of the kind.

Besides, to excel in those arts, which, though merely ornamental, are yet well enough adapted to ladies who have only a subordinate part to fill in life, would rather lessen than augment the dignity of a sovereign. It was a truly royal reply of Themistocles, when he was asked if he could play on the lute—'No, but if you will give me a paltry village I may perhaps know how to improve it into a great city.'

These are imperial arts, and worthy kings.

As to these inferior accomplishments, it is not desirable, and is it not sufficient that a sovereign should possess that general knowledge and taste which give the power of discriminating excellence, so as judiciously to cherish, and liberally to reward it?

But, not only in works of mere taste; even in natural history, botany, experimental philosophy, and other generally valuable sciences, a correct but unlaboured outline of knowledge, it is presumed, will, in the present instance, be thought sufficient. Profitable and delightful as these pursuits are to others (and no one more admires them than the writer of this essay) yet the royal personage must not be examining plants, when she should be studying laws; nor investigating the instincts of animals, when she should be analyzing the characters of men. The time so properly devoted to these studies in other educations, will be little enough in this, to attain that knowledge of general history, and especially that accurate acquaintance with the events of our own country, which, in her situation, are absolutely indispensable.

Geography and chronology have not unfitly been termed the two eyes of history. With chronology she should be completely acquainted. It is little to know events, if we do not know in what order and succession they are disposed. It is necessary also to learn how the periods of computation are determined. Method does not merely aid the memory, it also assists the judgment, by settling the dependence of one event upon another. Chronology is the grand art of historical arrangement. To know that a man of distinguished eminence has lived, is to know little, unless we know when he lived, and who were his contemporaries. Indistinctness and confusion must always perplex that understanding, in which the annals of past ages are not thus consecutively linked together.

Would it not be proper always to read history with a map, in order to keep up in the mind the indissoluble connexion between history and geography; and that a glance of the country may recall the exploits of the hero, or the virtues of the patriot who has immortalized it?

Respecting the study of geography, I would observe that many particulars, which do not seem to have been considered by the generality of writers, ought to be brought before the view of a royal pupil. The effects of local situation, and geographical boundary, on the formation and progress of nations and empires.—The consequences, for example, which have resulted as well in the political, as in the civil and religious circumstances of mankind, from the Mediterranean being so aptly interposed, not so much as it should seem to be a common barrier, as to form a most convenient and important medium of intercourse between Europe, Asia, and Africa.—The effect of this great *Naumachia* of the ancient world, in transferring empire from east to west;—the want of tides in the Mediterranean, so as to adapt this scene of early maritime adventure to the rudeness of those who were first to navigate it, and whose success might have been fatally impeded, by that diversity of currents, which in other seas the ebb and flow of the tides is perpetually creating.

In connection with this, though somewhat locally remote from it, is to be remarked the regularity of the monsoons in the Erythræan* sea, by means of which, the earlier traders between Africa and India were carried across the Persian gulf, without the exercise of that skill, which as yet did not exist. And, as if to facilitate the conveyance of those most interesting commodities to the Mediterranean, in order that the commerce of that inland ocean might never want an adequate stimulus, the Red Sea is carried onward, till it is separated from the Mediteranean by a comparatively narrow isthmus: an isthmus that seems providentially to have been retained, that while the maratime activity and general convenience of the ancient world was provided for, there might still be sufficient difficulty in the way, to excite to a more extended circumnavigation, when the invention of the compass, the improvement of maritime skill, and the general progress of human society, should concur in bringing on the proper season.

And, in this geographic sketch, let not the remarkable position of Judea be forgotten:† placed in the very middle parts of the old world (whose extent may be reckoned from the pillars of Hercules to 'the utmost Indian isle Tabrobane,') as the sun in the centre of the solar system, and at the top of the Mediterranean, both that it might be within the vortex of great events, and also that when the fulness of time should come, it might be most conveniently situated for pouring forth that light of truth, of which it was destined to be the local origin, upon all the nations of the earth, and especially on the Roman empire. Such are the less common particulars to which attention may advantageously be drawn. With geography in general should of course be

* A name given formerly to all that portion of the sea which lies between Arabia and India, though latterly confined to the Arabian gulf.

† It is worthy of notice, that in all probability Judea was the country by means of which a trade was first opened between the Mediterranean and India. David had taken from the Edomites two cities at the Red Sea, Ezion Geber and Elath; these, we are told, Solomon made sea-ports, and colonized them with navigators, furnished by the king of Tyre, of whom it is said, 2 Chron. viii. 18, that he sent unto Solomon ships and servants, who had knowledge of the sea, and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir; and, 1 Kings, x. 22, we are told that Solomon had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram, which came once in three years, bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. Thus, Tyre, the great emporium of the Mediterranean was evidently indebted to David and Solomon, for access to that commerce of the east, which was carried on by means of the Red Sea, and brought from the above-mentioned ports, across the isthmus of Suez, probably to the same place where the Tyrians in later times unshipped their Asiatic commodities, the port of Rhinocorura.

connected some knowledge of the natural and civil history of each country; its chief political revolutions, its alliances, and dependencies; together with the state of its arts, commerce, natural productions, government, and religion.

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CHAP. III

On the importance of forming the mind.

It is of the highest importance that the royal pupil should acquire an early habit of method and regularity in her studies. She should, therefore, be particularly guarded against that desultory manner of reading, too common at this day, and particularly with women. She should be trained always to study some valuable purpose, and carefully to attend to the several waymarks, by means of which that end may most effectually be attained. She should be accustomed to call forth the forces of her mind, and to keep them alert, well disciplined, and ready for service. She should so cultivate settled principles of action, as to acquire the habit of applying them, on demand, to the actual occasions of life; and should possess a promptitude, as well as soundness, in deducing consequences, and drawing conclusions. Her mind should be exercised with as much industry in the pursuit of moral truth and useful knowledge, as that of a young academic in the studies of his profession. The art of reigning is the profession of a prince. And, doubtless, it is a science which requires at least as much preparatory study as any other. Besides, one part of knowledge is often so necessary for reflecting light on another part, that perhaps no one who does not understand many things, can understand any thing well.

But, whatever may be the necessary degree of knowledge, it is most certain that it cannot be attained amidst the petty avocations which occupy a modern lady's time.—Knowledge will not come by nature or by chance. Precepts do not always convey it. Talents do not always insure it. It is the fruit of pains. It is the reward of application.

Dii *laboribus* omnia vendunt.

Let her ever bear in mind, she *is not to study that she may become learned, but that she may become wise.* It is by such an acquisition of knowledge as is here recommended, that her mind must be so enlarged and invigorated as to prepare her for following wise counsels, without blindly yielding to fortuitous suggestions; as to enable her to trace actions into their multifarious consequences, and to discover real analogies without being deceived by superficial appearances of resemblance. It is thus that she must be secured from the dominion of the less enlightened. This will preserve her from credulity; prevent her from overrating inferior talents, and help her to attain that *nil admirari*, which is so necessary for distinguishing arrogant pretension from substantial merit. It will aid her to appreciate the value of those around her; will assist her penetration in what regards her friends; preserve her from a blind prejudice in choosing them, from retaining them through fear or fondness, and from changing them through weakness or caprice. 'When we are abused through specious appearances,' says the judicious Hooker, 'it is because reason is negligent to search out the fallacy.' But he might have added, if reason be not cultivated early, if it be not exercised constantly, it will have no eye for discernment, no heart for vigorous exertion. Specious appearances will perpetually deceive that mind which has been accustomed to acquiesce in them through ignorance, blindness, and inaction.

A prince should be ignorant of nothing which it is honourable to know; but he should look on mere acquisition of knowledge not as the end to be rested in, but only as the means of arriving at some higher end. He may have been well instructed in history, belles lettres, philosophy, and languages, and yet have received a defective education, if the formation of his judgment has been neglected. For, it is not so important to know every thing, as to know the exact value of every thing, to appreciate what we learn, and to arrange what we know.

Books alone will never form the character. Mere reading would rather tend to make a pedantic, than an accomplished prince. It is *conversation* which must unfold, enlarge, and apply the use of books. Without that familiar comment on what is read, which will make a most important part of the intercourse between a royal pupil and the society around him, mere reading might only fill the mind with fallacious models of character, and false maxims of life. It is *conversation* which must develope what is obscure, raise what is low, correct what is defective, qualify what is exaggerated, and gently and almost insensibly raise the understanding, form the heart, and fix the taste; and by giving just proportions to the mind, teach it the power of fair appreciation, draw it to adopt what is reasonable, to love what is good, to taste what is pure, and to imitate what is elegant.

But this is not to be effected by cold rules, and formal reflections; by insipid dogmas, and tedious sermonizing. It should be done so indirectly, so discreetly, and so pleasantly, that the pupil shall not be led to dread a lecture at every turn, nor a dissertation on every occurrence. While yet such an ingenious and cheerful turn may be given to subjects apparently unpromising, old truths may be conveyed by such new images, that the pupil will wonder to find herself improved when she thought she was only diverted. Folly may be made contemptible, affectation ridiculous, vice hateful, and virtue beautiful, by such seemingly unpremeditated means, as shall have the effect, without having the effort, of a lesson. Topics must not be so much proposed as insinuated.

But above all, there should be a constant, but imperceptible habit of turning the mind to a love of TRUTH in all its forms and aspects; not only in matters of grave morality, but in matters of business, of common intercourse, and even of taste; for there is a truth both in moral and mental taste, little short of the exactness of mathematical truth; and the mind should acquire

an habit of seeking perfection in every thing. This habit should be so early and insensibly formed, that when the pupil comes afterwards to meet with maxims, and instances of truth and virtue, in historical and moral writings, she may bring to the perusal tastes, tempers, and dispositions so laid in, as to have prepared the mind for their reception. As this mode of preparatory and incidental instruction will be gradual and inwoven, so it will be deep and durable; but as it will be little obvious to ordinary judges, it will excite less wonder and admiration than the usual display and exhibition so prevalent in modern education. Its effects will be less ostensible, but they will be more certain.

When it is considered how short is that period of life in which plain unvarnished truth will be likely to appear in all its naked simplicity before princes, is there a moment of that happy, that auspicious season to be lost, for presenting it to them in all its lovely and engaging forms? It is not enough that they should possess truth as a principle; they should cherish it as an object of affection, delight in it as a matter of taste, and dread nothing so much as false colouring and artifice.

He who possesses a sound principle, and strong relish of truth in his own mind, will possess a touchstone by which to try this quality in others, and which will enable him to detect false notions, to see through false manners, and to despise false attractions. This discerning faculty is the more important, as the high breeding of every polished society presents so plausible an imitation of goodness, as to impose on the superficial observer, who, satisfied with the image and superscription, never inquires whether the coin be counterfeit or sterling.

The early habit of sifting questions, turning about a truth, and examining an argument on all sides, will strengthen the intellectual powers of the royal pupil; prevent her thoughts from wandering; accustom her to weigh fairly and resolve soundly; will conquer irresolution in her mind; preserve her from being easily deceived by false reasoning, startled by doubts, and confounded by objections. She will learn to digest her thoughts in an exact method, to acquire a logical order in the arrangement of them, to possess precision in her ideas, and its natural concomitant, perspicuity in her expression; all which will be of the highest importance to one who may hereafter have so much to do and to say in public.

With the *shades* of expressions she should also be well acquainted, and be habituated to use the most apposite and the most correct; such are neither too high nor too low, too strong nor too weak, for the occasion, such as are obvious, but not vulgar, accurate but not pedantic, elegant but not artificial.

The memory should be stored with none but the best things, that when, hereafter, the judgment is brought into exercise, it may find none but the best materials to act upon. Instead, therefore, of loading the memory, might it not be useful to establish it into a rule to read to her every day, as an amusement, and distinctly from all regular instruction, a passage from the history of England, a story out of Plutarch, or any similar author; and require of her to repeat it afterwards, in her own words? This would not only add, daily, one important fact to her stock of knowledge, but would tend to form a perspicuous and elegant style.—Occasion would also be furnished for observing whether she exhibited that best proof of good sense, the seizing on the prominent features of the story, laying less stress on what was less important.

But while accuracy is thus sought the still more important habit of comprehensiveness must not be overlooked. Her mind should be trained to embrace a wide compass; it should be taught to take in a large whole, and then subdivide it into parts; each of which should be considered distinctly, yet connectedly, with strict attention to its due proportions, relative situations, its bearings with respect to the others, and the dependence of each part on the whole. Where, however, so many things are to be known, and so many to be done, it is impossible to attend equally to all. It is therefore important, that, in any case of competition, the less material be left unlearned and undone; and that petty details never fill the time and mind, at the expense of neglecting great objects.

For those, therefore, who have much business and little time, it is a great and necessary art to learn to extract the essential spirit of an author from the body of his work, to know how to seize on the vital parts; to discern where his strength lies; and to separate it from those portions of the work which are superfluous, collateral, or merely ornamental.

On the subject of economizing time, the writer would have been fearful of incurring the charge of needless strictness, by suggesting the utility of accustoming princes to be read to while they are dressing, could not the actual practice of our admirable queen Mary be adduced to sanction the advice.—That excellent princess, from a conscientious regard to the value of time, was either read to by others, or condescended, herself, to read aloud, that those who were employed about her person might share the benefit, which she enhanced by such pleasant and judicious remarks as the subject suggested. But there is an additional reason why the *children* of the great would be benefited by this habit; for it would not only turn idle moments to some account, but would be of use in another way, by cutting off the fairest occasions which their inferior attendants can have for engaging them, by frivolous or flattering discourse.

It would be well to watch attentively the bent of the mind in the hours of relaxation and amusement, when caution is dismissed by the pupil, and control by the preceptor; when no studies are imposed, and no specific employment suggested. In fact when vigilance appears to sleep, it should be particularly on the alert, in order to discern those tendencies and dispositions which will then most naturally unfold themselves; and because that the heart, being at those seasons less under discipline, will be more likely to betray its native character. And as the regulation of the temper is

that part of education on which the whole happiness of life most materially depends, no occasion should be neglected, no indication slighted, no connteraction omitted, which may contribute to accomplish so important an end.

The peculiar defects, not merely such faults as are incident to childhood, but the predominating faults of the individual, should be carefully watched, lest they acquire strength through neglect, when they might have been diminished by a counteracting force. If the temper be restless, ardent, and impetuous, weariness and discontent will, hereafter, fill up the dreary intervals between one animating scene and another, unless the temper be subdued and tranquillized by a constant habit of quiet, though varied, and interesting occupation. Few things are more fatal to the mind, than to depend for happiness on the contingent recurrence of events, business, and diversions, which inflame and agitate it; for as they do not often occur, the intervals which are long are also languid; the enjoyment is factitious happiness; the privation is actual misery.

Reading, therefore, has, especially to a prince, its moral uses, independently of the nature of the study itself. It brings no small gain, if it secure him from the dominion of turbulent pursuits and agitating pleasures. If it snatch him on the one hand, from public schemes of ambition and false glory; and if it rescue him on the other, from the habit of forming petty projects of incessant diversion, the rudiments of a trifling and useless life.

Knowledge, therefore, is often the preservative of virtue, and, next to right habits of sentiment and conduct, the best human source of happiness. Could Louis the fourteenth have *read*, probably the edict of Nantz had not been revoked. But a restless temper, and a vacant mind, unhappily lighting on absolute power, present, in this monarch, a striking instance of the fatal effects of ignorance and the calamity of a neglected education. He had a good natural understanding, loved business, and seemed to have a mind capable of comprehending it. Many of his recorded expressions are neat and elegant. But he was uninstructed upon system; cardinal Mazarine, with a view to secure his own dominion, having withheld from him all the necessary means of education. Thus, he had received no ideas from books; he even hated in others the learning which he did not himself possess: the terms *wit* and *scholar*, were in his mind, terms of reproach; the one as implying satire, the other pedantry. He wanted not application to public affairs; and habit had given him some experience in them. But the apathy which marked his latter years strongly illustrated the infelicity of an unfurnished mind. This, in the tumult of his brighter days, amidst the succession of intrigues, the splendour of festivity, and the bustle of arms, was scarcely felt. But ambition and voluptuousness cannot always be gratified. Those ardent passions, which in youth were devoted to licentiousness, in the meridian of life to war, in a more advanced age to bigotry and intolerance, not only had never been directed by religion, but had never been softened by letters.—After he had renounced his mistresses at home, and his unjust wars abroad, even though his mind seems to have acquired some pious tendencies, his life became a scene of such inanity and restlessness, that he was impatient at being, for a moment, left alone. He had no intellectual resources. The agitation of great events had subsided. From never having learned either to employ himself in reading or thinking, his life became a blank, from which he could not be relieved by the sight of his palaces, his gardens, and his aqueducts, the purchase of depopulated villages and plundered cities.

Indigent amid all his possessions, he exhibited a striking confirmation of the declaration of Solomon, concerning the unsatisfying nature of all earthly pleasures; and showed, that it is in vain even for kings to hope to obtain from others those comforts, and that contentment, which man can derive only from with in himself.

CHAP. IV.

The Education of a Sovereign a specific Education.

The formation of the character is the grand object to be accomplished. This should be considered to be not so much a separate business, as a sort of centre to which all the rays of instruction should be directed. All the studies it is presumed, of the royal pupil should have some reference to her probable future situation. Is it not, therefore, obviously requisite that her understanding be exercised in a wider range than that of others of her sex; and that her principles be so established, on the best and surest foundation, as to fit her at once for fulfilling the peculiar demands, and for resisting the peculiar temptations of her station? Princes have been too often inclined to fancy, that they have few interests in common with the rest of mankind, feeling themselves placed by Providence on an eminence so much above them. But the great aim should be, to correct the haughtiness which may attend this superiority, without relinquishing the truth of the fact. Is it not, therefore, the business of those who have the care of a royal education, not so much to deny the reality of this distance, or to diminish its amount, as to account for its existence, and point out the uses to which it is subservient?

A prince is an individual being, whom the hand of Providence has placed on a pedestal of peculiar elevation: but he should learn, that he is placed there as the minister of good to others; that the dignity being hereditary, he is the more manifestly raised to that elevation, not by his own merit, but by providential destination; by those laws, which he is himself bound to observe with the same religious fidelity as the meanest of his subjects. It ought early to be impressed that those appendages of royalty, with which human weakness may too probably be fascinated, are intended not to gratify the feelings, but to distinguish the person of the monarch; that, in themselves, they are of little value; that they

are beneath the attachment of a rational, and of no substantial use to a moral being; in short, that they are not a subject of a triumph, but are to be acquiesced in for the public benefit, and from regard to that weakness of our nature, which subjects so large a portion of every community to the influence of their imagination, and their senses.

While, therefore, a prince is taught the use of those exterior embellishments, which, as was before observed, designate, rather than dignify his station; while he is led to place the just value on every appendage which may contribute to give him importance in the eyes of the multitude; who not being just judges of what constitutes true dignity, are consequently apt to reverence the royal person exactly so far as they see outward splendour connected with it; should not a royal pupil himself be taught, instead of overvaluing that splendour, to think it a humbling, rather than an elevating consideration, that so large a part of the respect paid to him, should be owing to such extrinsic causes, to causes which make no part of himself? Let him then be taught to gratify the public with all the pomp and circumstance suitable to royalty; but let him never forget, that though his station ought always to procure for him respect, he must ever look to his own personal conduct, for inspiring veneration, attachment, and affection; and ever let it be remembered that this affection is the strongest tie of obedience; that subjects like to see their prince great, when that greatness is not produced by rendering them less; and as the profound Selden observes, 'the people will always be liberal to a prince who spares them, and a good prince will always spare a liberal people.'

This is not a period when any wise man would wish to diminish either the authority, or the splendour of kings. So far from it, he will support with his whole weight, an institution which the licentious fury of a revolutionary spirit has rendered more dear to every Englishman. On no consideration, therefore would he pluck even a feather from those decorations of royalty, which, by a long association, have become intimately connected with its substance. In short, every wise inhabitant of the British isles must feel, that he who would despoil the crown of its jewels, would not be far from spoiling the wearer of his crown. And as nothing but domestic folly or frenzy would degrade the monarch from his due elevation, so democratic envy alone would wish to strip him, not only of a single constituent of real greatness, but even of a single ornamental appendage on which the people have been accustomed to gaze with honest joy.

Nevertheless, those outrages which have lately been committed against the sanctity of the throne, furnish new and most powerful reasons for assiduously guarding princes by every respectful admonition, against any tendency to exceed their just prerogatives, and for checking every rising propensity to overstep, in the slightest degree, their well-defined rights.

At the same time it should be remembered, that there may be no less dangerous faults on the other side, and that want of firmness in maintaining just rights, or of spirit in the prompt and vigorous exercise of necessary authority may prove as injurious to the interests of a community as the most lawless stretch of power. Defects of this very kind were evidently among the causes, of bringing down, on the gentlest of the kings of France, more calamities than had ever resulted from the most arbitrary exertion of power in any of his predecessors. Feebleness and irresolution, which seems to be little more than pardonable weaknesses in private persons, may, by their consequences, prove in princes fatal errors; and even produce the effect of great crimes. Vigour to secure, and opportunity to exert their constitutional power, is as essential as moderation not to exceed it.*

It serves to show the inestimable value of well-defined laws, and the importance of making the prince acquainted with them, that Louis the thirteenth conceived a jealousy respecting his own power, because he did not understand the nature of it; and his favourites were unable or unwilling to instruct him. But his usurpation of extraordinary power tended to exalt his minister still more than himself; and in setting the king above the laws, he still set the cardinal above the king.

The power of the monarchs of France had never been defined by any written law. Charles V. Louis IX. and perhaps a very few other wise and temperate princes, did not conceive their power to be above the laws, but approved of those moderating maxims which had become, by degrees, the received usages of the state, and which, while they seemed, in some measure, a constitutional check upon the absolute power of the crown, formed also a guard against that popular licentiousness, which, in a pure despotism, appears to be the only resource left to the people. But France has had few monarchs like Charles V. and still fewer like Louis IX. Henry IV. seems to have found and observed the happy medium. He was at once resolute and mild; determined and affectionate; politic and humane. The firmness of his mind, and the active vigour of his conduct, always kept pace with the gentleness of his language. He fought for his prerogatives bravely, and defended them vigorously; yet, it is said, he ever carefully avoided the use of the term. He also loved and sought popularity, but he never sacrificed to it any just claim, nor ever made a concession which did not also tend to guard the real prerogatives of the crown.† And it seems to be the true wisdom of a prince, that, as he cannot be too deliberate in his councils, nor too cautious in his plans, so when those counsels are well matured, and those plans well

* May it not be observed, without risking the imputation of flattery, that perhaps never, in the history of the world, has any country been so uninterruptedly blessed with that very temperament of government, which is here implied, as this empire has been under the dominion of the house of Hanover? There has, on no occasion been a want of firmness; but with that firmness, there has been a conscientious regard to the principles of the constitution. Who can at this moment pretend to pronounce how much we owe to the steady integrity which is so obviously possessed by our present sovereign? And who does not remember with what good effect his resolute composure and dignified firmness were exerted during a scene of the greatest alarm which has occurred in his reign—the riots of the year 1780.

† Il ne se defioit pas des loix, parcequ'il se fioit en lui meme.—*De Retz.*

digested he cannot be too decisive in their execution.

It was not, indeed, under the actual rule of monarchs, however arbitrary, that royal authority was raised to its highest pitch in France. It was Richelieu, who, under a regency, rapidly established such a system of tyranny, as the boldest sovereign had seldom dared to attempt. He improved on all the anterior corruptions; and, as a lively French author says, tried to conceal their being corruptions, by erecting them into political maxims. Mazarin, with inferior ability, which would not have enabled him to *give* the impulse, attempted still more to accelerate the movement of that machine which his predecessor had set a going with such velocity; and a civil war was the consequence.

Happily, the examples of neither the kings, the laws, nor the constitution of France, can be strictly applicable to us. Happily also, we live at a time, when genuine freedom is so completely established among us: when the constitution, powers, and privileges of parliament are so firmly settled; the limits of the royal prerogative so exactly defined, and so fully understood; and the mild, moderate, and equitable spirit of the illustrious family in which it is invested, is withall so conspicuous, that as Blackstone observes, 'topics of government, which, like the mysteries of the Bona Dea, were formerly thought too sacred to be divulged to any but the initiated, may now, without the smallest offence, be fully and temperately discussed.'

At this tumultuous period, when we have seen almost all the thrones of Christendom trembling to their foundation; we have witnessed the British constitution, like the British oak, confirmed and rooted by the shaking of that tremendous blast, which has stripped kingdoms of their crowns, levelled the fences and inclosures of law, laid waste the best earthly blessings of mankind, and involved in desolation a large part of the civilized world. When we have beheld absolute monarchies, and republican states, alike ravaged by the tempest, shall we not learn still more highly to prize our own unparalleled political edifice, built with such fair proportions, on principles so harmonious and so just, that one part affords to another that support which, in its turn, it receives; while each lends strength, as well as stability to all?

How slender is the security of unlimited power, let the ephemeral reigns of eastern despots declare! A prince who governs a free people, enjoys a safety which no despotic sovereign ever possessed. The latter rules singly; and where a revolution is meditated, the change of a single person is soon effected. But where a sovereign's power is incorporated with the powers of parliament, and the will of the people who elect parliaments, the kingly state is fenced in with, and intrenched by the other states. He relies not solely upon an army. He relies on his parliament, and on his people,—a sure resource, while he involves his interests with theirs! This is the happiness, the beauty, and the strength of that three-fold bond which ties our constitution together. Counsellors may mislead, favourites may betray, even armies may desert, and navies may mutiny, but LAWS, as they are the surest guides of action, so are they the surest guards from danger.

Well might the view of this well-founded power produce the remark which it drew forth from a sagacious Frenchman,* who was comparing the solid constitutional authority of the British monarch, with the more specious, but less secure fabric of the despotism of the kings of France—'That a king of England, who acted according to the laws, was the greatest of all monarchs!'

But while the convulsions of other governments, built on less permanent principles, have riveted our affection to our own; and while an experimental acquaintance with the miseries of anarchy most naturally lead us, as subjects, to a strong sense of the duty of obedience:—with equal zeal would we wish it to be inculcated on princes, that they should be cautious never to multiply occasions for exacting that obedience; that they should use no unnecessary compulsion by seizing as a debt what good subjects are always willing to pay as a duty: and what is then only to be relied upon, when it is spontaneous and cordial.

It is observable, that those monarchs who have most sedulously contended for prerogative, have been among the feeblest and the least capable of exercising it; and that those who have struggled most earnestly for unjust power, have seldom enjoyed it themselves, but have made it over to mistresses and favourites. This is particularly exemplified in two of our weakest and most unhappy princes, Edward II. and Richard II.—Whether it was that this very imbecility made them more contentious about their prerogative, and more obstinate in resisting the demands of parliament; or that their favourites stimulated them to exactions, the benefit of which was to be transferred to themselves. The character of Edward III. (notwithstanding his faults) was consistently magnanimous. He was not more brave than just. He was attentive to the dignity of his crown in proportion to that magnanimity, and to the creation and execution of laws in proportion to that justice; and he took no important steps without the advice of parliament. The wretched reign and miserable catastrophe of each of the two first-named princes, furnish a striking contrast to the energy and popularity of the last; of whom Hume observes, 'that his domestic government was even more admirable than his foreign conquests;' and of whom Selden says, 'that one would think by his actions that he never was at home, and by his laws that he never was abroad.'

A wise and virtuous prince will ever bear in mind the grand distinction between his own situation and that of his minister. The latter is but the precarious possessor of a transient authority; a mere tenant at will, or, at most, for life. He himself is the hereditary and permanent possessor of the property. The former may be more tempted to adopt measures which, though gainful or gratifying at the present, will be probably productive of future mischief to the estate But surely the latter may be justly expected to take a longer and wider view; and considering

* Gourville.

the interests of his posterity no less than his own, to reject all measures which are likely to disparage their inheritance, or injure their tenure. He will trace the misfortunes of our first Charles to the usurpation of the Tudors; and mark but too natural a connexion between the unprincipled domination and profuse magnificence of Louis XIV., and the melancholy fate of his far better and more amiable successor. He will remember the solid answer of the Spartan king, who being reproached by a superficial observer with having left the regal power impaired to his posterity, replied, 'No; for he had left it more *secure*, therefore more *permanent*.' A large and just conception of interest, therefore, no less than of duty, will prompt a wise prince to reject all measures which, while they appear to flatter the love of dominion, naturally inherent in the mind of man, by holding forth the present extension of his power, yet tend obstinately to weaken its essential strength, to make his authority the object of his people's jealousy, rather than of their affection; to cause it to rest on the uncertain basis of military power, rather than on the deep and durable foundations of the constitution.

In order to enable him the better, therefore, to know the true nature and limits of his authority, he will endeavour to develope the constitutional foundations on which it rests. Sovereigns, even female sovereigns, though they cannot have leisure to become fully acquainted with the vast mass of our laws, ought at least to imbibe the spirit of them. If they be not early taught the general principles of our laws and constitution, they may be liable, from the flatterers to whom they may be exposed, to hear of nothing but the power which they may exert, or the influence which they may exercise, without having their attention directed to those counteracting principles, which, in a limited monarchy like ours, serve, in numberless ways, to balance and restrain that power.

It should be worked into a principle in the mind, that it is in consideration of the duties which the laws impose on a prince, that those laws have secured to him either dignity or prerogative; it being a maxim of the law, that protection and allegiance are reciprocal. With the impression of the power, the splendour, and the dignity of royalty, the ideas of trust, duty, and responsibility, should be inseparably interwoven. It should be assiduously inculcated, that the LAWS form the very basis of the throne; the root and ground-work of the monarch's political existence. One peculiar reason why a prince ought to know so much of the laws and constitution, as to be able to determine what is, and what is not, an infringement of them, is, that he may be quick sighted to the slightest approximation of ministers towards any such encroachments. A farther reason is, that by studying the laws and constitution of the country, he may become more firmly attached to them, not merely by national instinct, and fond prejudice, because they are his *own*, but from judgment, reason, knowledge, discrimination, preference, habit, obligation,—in a word, because they are the *best*.

But as this superficial sketch proposes not to be an essay on political, but moral instruction, these remarks are only hazarded, in order to intimate the peculiar turn which the royal education ought to take. If a sovereign of England be, in such a variety of respects, supreme, it follows, not only that his education should be liberal, large, and general, but that it should, moreover, be directed to a knowledge of those departments in which he will be called to preside.

As supreme magistrate and the source of all judicial power, he should be adequately acquainted, not only with the law of nature and of nations, but particularly with the law of England. As possessing the power of declaring war, and contracting alliances, he should be thoroughly conversant with those authors who, with the soundest judgment, the deepest moral views, and the most correct precision, treat of the great principles of political justice; who best unfold the rights of human nature, and the mischiefs of unjust ambition. He should be competently acquainted with the present state of the different governments of Europe, with which that of Great Britain may have any political relation and he should be led to exercise that intuitive discernment of character and talents, which will enable him to decide on the choice of ambassadors, and other foreign ministers, whom it is his prerogative to appoint.

As he is the fountain of honour, from which proceed titles, distinctions, and offices, he should be early accustomed to combine a due attention to character, with the examination of claims, and the appreciation of services; in order that the honours of the subject may reflect no dishonour on the prince. Those whose distinguished lot it is to bestow subordinate offices and inferior dignities, should evince, by the judgment with which they confer them, how fit they themselves are to discharge the highest.

Is he supreme head of the church? Hence arises a strong obligation to be acquainted with ecclesiastical history in general, as well as with the history of the church of England in particular. He should learn, not merely from habit and prescription, but from an attentive comparison of our national church with other ecclesiastical institutions, to discern both the distinguishing characters and appropriate advantages of our church establishment. He ought to inquire in what manner its interests are interwoven with those of the state, so far as to be inseparable from them. He should learn, that from the supreme power, with which the laws invest him over the church, arises a most awful responsibility, especially in the grand prerogative of bestowing the higher ecclesiastical appointments; a trust which involves consequences far too extensive for human minds to calculate; and which a sovereign, even amid all the dazzling splendour of royalty, while he preserves tenderness of conscience, and quickness of sensibility, will not reflect on without trepidation. While history offers numberless instances of the abuse of this power, it records numberless striking examples of its proper application. It even presents some, in which good sense has operated usefully in the absence of all principle.—When a profligate ecclesiastic applied for preferment to the profligate duke of Orleans, while regen

of France, urging as a motive, that he should be dishonoured if the duke did not make him a bishop—'And I,' replied the regent, 'shall be dishonoured if I do.'

CHAP. V

On the importance of studying Ancient History.

Those pious persons do not seem to understand the true interests of Christianity, who forbid the study of pagan literature. That it is of little value, comparatively with Christian learning, does not prove it to be altogether without its usefulness. In the present period of critical investigation, heathen learning seems to be justly appreciated, in the scale of letters; the wisdom and piety of some of our most eminent contemporaries having successfully applied it to its noblest office, by rendering it subservient to the purposes of Revelation, in multiplying the evidences, and illustrating the proofs. Thus the Christian emperor, when he destroyed the heathen temples, consecrated the golden vessels, to adorn the Christian churches.

In this enlightened period, Religion, our religion at least, does not, as in her days of darkness, feel it necessary to degrade human learning, in order to withdraw herself from scrutiny. The time is past, when it was produced as a serious charge against saint Jerome, that he had read Homer; when a doctor of the Sorbonne penitently confessed, among his other sins, that the exquisite muse of Virgil had made him weep for the woes of Dido; and when the works of Tacitus were condemned to the flames, from the papal chair, because the author was not a Roman Catholic. It is also curious to observe a papist persecuting the memory of a pagan on the ground of his *superstition!* Pope Gregory the great, expelled Livy from every Christian library on this account!

The most acute enemy of Christianity, the emperor Julian, who had himself been bred a Christian and a scholar, well understood what was most likely to hurt its cause. He knew the use which the Christians were making of ancient authors, and of rhetoric, in order to refute error, and establish truth.—'They fight us,' said he, 'by the knowledge of our own authors; shall we suffer ourselves to be stabbed with our own swords?' He actually made a law to interdict their reading Homer and Demosthenes; prohibited to their schools the study of antiquity, and ordered that they should confine themselves, to the explanation of Matthew and Luke, in the churches of the Galileans.

It can never be too soon, for the royal pupil, to begin to collect materials for reflection, and for action. Her future character will much depend on the course of reading, the turn of temper, the habit of thought now acquired, and the standard of morals now fixed. The acquisition of present taste will form the elements of her subsequent character. Her present acquirements, it is true, will need to be matured by her after experience; but experience will operate to comparatively little purpose, where only a slender stock has been laid in for it to work upon; and where these materials for forming the character have not been previously prepared. Things must be known before they are done. The part should be studied before it is acted, if we expect to have it acted well.

Where much is to be learned, time must be economised; and in the judicious selection of pagan literature, the discernment of the preceptor will be particularly exercised. All those writers, however justly celebrated, who have employed much learning, in elaborating points which add little to the practical wisdom or virtue of mankind; all such as are rather curious than useful, or ingenious than instructive, should be passed over; nor need she bestow much attention on points, which, though they may have been accurately discussed, are not seriously important. Dry critical knowledge, though it may be correctly just; and mere chronicles of events, though they may be strictly true, teach not the things she wants. Such authors as Sallust, who, in speaking of turbulent innovators, remarks, *that they thought the very disturbance of things established a sufficient bribe to set them at work:* those who, like this exquisite historian, unfold the internal principles of action, and dissect the hearts and minds of their personages, who develope complicated circumstances, furnish a clue to trace the labyrinth of causes and effects, and assign to every incident its proper motive, will be eminently useful. But, if she be taught to discern the merits of writers, it is that she may become not a critic in books, but in human nature.

History is the glass by which the royal mind should be dressed. If it be delightful for a private individual to enter with the historian into every scene which he describes, and into every event which he relates; to be introduced into the interior of the Roman senate, or the Athenian areopagus; to follow Pompey to Pharsalia, Miltiades to Marathon, or Marlborough to Blenheim; how much more interesting will this be to a sovereign? To him for whom senates debate, for whom armies engage, and who is himself to be a prime actor in the drama! Of how much more importance is it to *him*, to possess an accurate knowledge of all the successive governments of that world, in a principal government of which he is one day to take the lead. To possess himself of the experience of ancient states, of the wisdom of every antecedent age! To learn moderation from the ambition of one, caution from the rashness of another, and prudence perhaps from the indiscretion of both! To apply foregone examples to his own use; adopting what is excellent, shunning what is erroneous, and omitting what is irrelevant!

Reading and observation are the two grand sources of improvement; but they lie not equally open to all. From the latter, the sex and habits of a royal female, in a good measure, exclude her. She must then, in a greater degree, depend on the formation which books afford, opened and illustrated by her preceptor. Though her personal observation must be limited, her advantages from historical sources may be large and various.

If history for a time, especially during the

reign of the prince whose actions are recorded, sometimes misrepresent characters, the dead, even the royal dead, are seldom flattered; unless, which indeed too frequently happens, the writer is deficient in that just conception of moral excellence, which teaches to distinguish what is splendid from what is solid. But, sooner or later, history does justice. She snatches from oblivion, or reproach, the fame of those virtuous men, whom corrupt princes, not contented with having sacrificed them to their unjust jealousy, would rob also of their fair renown. When Arulenus Rusticus was condemned by Domitian, for having written with its deserved eulogium, the life of that excellent citizen, Thrasea Pœtus; when Senecio was put to death by the same emperor, for having rendered the like noble justice to Helvidius Priscus—when the historians themselves, like the patriots whom they celebrated were sentenced to death, their books also being condemned to the flames; when Fannia, the incomparable wife of Helvidius, was banished, having the courage to carry into exile that book which had been the cause of it; a book of which her conjugal piety had furnished the materials,—'In the fire which consumed these books,' says the author of the life of Agricola, the tyrants imagined that they had stifled the very utterance of the Roman people, abolished the lawful power of the senate, and forced mankind to doubt of the very evidence of their senses. Having expelled philosophy, and exiled science, they flattered themselves that nothing, which bore the stamp of virtue, would exist.* —But history has vindicated the noble sufferers. Pœtus and Helvidius will ever be ranked among the most honourable patriots; while the emperor, who, in destroying their lives could not injure their reputation, is consigned to eternal infamy.

The examples which history records, furnish faithful admonitions to succeeding princes, respecting the means by which empires are erected and overturned. They show by what arts of wisdom, or by neglect of those arts, little states become great, or great states fall into ruin; with what equity or injustice wars have been undertaken; with what ability or incapacity they have been conducted; with what sagacity or short-sightedness treaties have been formed. How national faith hath been maintained, or forfeited. How confederacies have been made, or violated. History, which is the amusement of other men, is the school of princes. They are not to read it merely as the rational occupation of a vacant hour, but to consult it, as a storehouse of materials for the art of government.

There is a splendour in heroic actions, which fires the imagination, and forcibly lays hold on the passions. Hence, the poets were the first, and, in the rude ages of antiquity, the only historians. They seized on whatever was dazzling, in character, or shining in action; exaggerated heroic qualities, immortalized patriotism, and deified courage. But instead of making their heroes patterns to men, they lessened the utility of their example by elevating them into gods.

Hence however arose the first idea of history; of snatching the deeds of illustrious men from the delusions of fable; of bringing down extravagant powers, and preter-natural faculties within the limits of human nature and possibility; and reducing overcharged characters to the size and shape of real life; giving proportion, order and arrangement to the widest scheme of action, and to the most extended duration of time.

CHAP. VI.

Laws—Egypt—Persia.

But however the fictions of poetry might have given being to history, it was sage political institutions, good governments, and wise laws which formed both its solid basis, and its valuable superstructure. And it is from the labours of ancient legislators, the establishment of states, the foundation of government, and the progress of civil society, that we are to look for more real greatness, and more useful instruction, than from all the extravagant exploits recorded in fabulous ages of antiquity.

So deep is the reverential awe which mankind have uniformly blended with the idea of laws, that almost all civilized nations have affected to wrap up the origin of them in the obscurity of a devout mystery, and to intimate that they sprang from a divine source. This has arisen partly from a love to the marvellous, inherent in the human mind; partly from the vanity of a national fondness in each country for losing their original in the trackless paths of impenetrable antiquity. Of the former of those tastes, a legislator, like Numa, who had deep views and who knew how much the people reverence whatever is mysterious, would naturally avail himself. And his supposed divine communication was founded in his consummate knowledge of the human mind; a knowledge which a wise prince will always turn to good account.

But, however the mysteriousness of the origin of laws may excite the reverence of the vulgar, it is the wise only who will duly venerate their sanctity, as they alone can appreciate their value. Laws are providentially designed, not only to be the best subsidiary aid of Religion, where she is operative, but to be in some sort her substitute, in those instances where her own direct operations might be ineffectual. For, even where the immediate law of God is little regarded, the civil code may be externally efficient, from its sanctions being more visible, palpable, tangible. And human laws are directly fitted to restrain the outward acts of those, whose hearts are not influenced by the divine injunctions. Laws, therefore, are the surest fences of the best blessings of civilized life. They bind society together, while they strengthen the separate interests of those whom they reciprocally unite. They tie the hands of depredation in the poor, and of oppression in the rich: protect the weak against the encroachments of the powerful, and draw their sacred

* Beginning of Tacitus's life of Agricola.

shelter round all that is dear in domestic, or valuable in social life. They are the truest guardians of the dignity of the throne, and the only rampart of the liberty of the people.

On the law of nature, and the law of revelation (where revelation is known) all human laws ought to depend. That a rule of civil conduct should be prescribed to man, by the state in which he lives, is made necessary by nature, as well as sanctioned by revelation. Were man an insulated being, the law of nature, and of revelation, would suffice for him; but, for aggregate man, something more than even municipal laws becomes requisite. Divided as human beings are, into separate states, and societies, connected among themselves, but disconnected with other states, each requires with relation to the other, certain general rules, called the law of nations, as much as each state needs respecting itself, those distinct codes, which are suited to their own particular exigencies. On the whole, then, as the natural sense of weakness and fear impels man to seek the protection, and the blessing of laws, so from the experience of that protection, and the sense of that blessing, his reason derives the most powerful argument to desire their perpetuation; and his providential destiny becomes his choice.

If, therefore, we would truly estimate the value of laws, let us figure to ourselves the misery of that state of nature in which there should be no law, but that of the strongest; no judge to determine right, or to punish wrong; to redress suffering, or to repel injury; to protect the weak, or to control the powerful.

If, under the prevalence of a false, and even absurd religion, several ancient states, that of Egypt in particular subsisted in so much splendour* for so long a period, and afterwards sunk into such abject depression, the causes of both are obvious. The LAWS of ancient Egypt were proverbial for their wisdom. It has not escaped several christian historians that it was the human praise of him who was ordained to be the legislator of God's own people, that *he was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians.* And it was meant to confer an high eulogium on the wisest of the kings of Israel, that his wisdom eclipsed that of Egypt.

The laws of this state so strongly enforced mercy, that they punished with death those who refused to save the life of a fellow-creature if attacked, when it was in their power. The justice of the Egyptian laws was so inflexible, that the kings obliged the judges to swear that they would never depart from the principles of rectitude, though even in obedience to the royal command. Their respect for individual virtue, and for that reputation which follows it, was so high, that a kind of moral inquisition was appointed, on the death of every citizen, to inquire what sort of life he had lived, that his memory might be accordingly held in honour or detestation. From the verdict of this solemn tribunal, even their kings themselves were not exempted.

The whole aim and end of education among them was to inspire a veneration for GOVERNMENT and RELIGION. They had a law which assigned some employment to every individual of the state. And though the genius of our free constitution would justly reprobate what indeed its temperate and judicious restraints render unnecessary among us, that clause which directed that the employment should be perpetuated in the same family, yet, perhaps, the severe moralist, with the example of the well-ordered government of Egypt before his eyes, might reasonably doubt whether a law, the effect of which was to keep men in their places, though it might now and then check the career of a lofty genius, was not a much less injury to society than the free scope which was afforded to the turbulent ambition of every aspiring spirit in the Greek democracies. Bossuet, who has, perhaps, penetrated more deeply into these subjects than almost any modern, has pronounced Egypt to be the fountain of all political wisdom.

What afterwards plunged the Egyptians into calamity, and brought final dissolution on their government? It was a departure from its constitutional principles; it was the neglect and contempt of those venerable laws which for *sixteen centuries* had constituted their glory and their happiness. They exchanged the love of their wise domestic institutions for the ambition of subduing distant countries. One of their most heroic sovereigns (as is not unusual) was the instrument of their misfortunes. Sesostris was permitted by Divine Providence to diminish the true glory of Egypt, by a restless ambition to extend her territory. This splendid prince abandoned the real grandeur of governing wisely at home for the false glory of foreign conquests, which detained him nine years in distant climates. At a remote period, the people, weary of the blessings they had so long enjoyed under a single monarch, weakened the royal power, by dividing it among multiplied sovereigns.

What exalted the ancient Persians to such lasting fame? The equity and strict execution of their LAWS. It was their sovereign disdain of falsehood in their public transactions. Their considering fraud as the most degrading of vices, and thus transfusing the spirit of their laws into their conduct. It was that love of justice (modern statesmen would do well to imitate the example) which made them oblige themselves to commend the virtues of their enemies. It was such an extraordinary respect for education, that no sorrow was ever expressed for young persons who died uninstructed. It was by paying such an attention to the children of the sovereign, that, at the age of fourteen, they were placed under the care of four statesmen who excelled in different talents. By one they were instructed in the principles of justice; by an

* It is to be observed that this splendour alludes to the prosperity arising from wise political institutions merely; for the private morals of Egypt must have borne some proportion to her corrupt idolatry, which afterwards became of the most degrading and preposterous kind. Her wisdom, we must therefore infer, was chiefly *political* wisdom. Her morality seems to have been, in a good measure, cultivated with a view to aggrandize the state, and in violation of many natural feelings, as was the case in Sparta. Egypt was a well compacted political society, and her virtue appears to have been the effect of political discipline. In enumerating her merits, *our* object is to prove the great importance of laws.

other they were taught to subdue sensuality; by a third they were initiated in the art of government; and by a fourth in the duties of religion. Plato has given a beautiful sketch of this accomplished and sublime education.

It will be found that nearly the same causes which forwarded the ruin of Egypt, contributed to destroy Persia; a dereliction of those fundamental principles of legislation and morals to which it had been indebted for its long prosperity and grandeur.

But be it remembered, that the best human laws will not be exempt from the imperfection inseparably bound up with all human things. Let us beware, however, of those innovators who, instead of carefully improving and vigourously executing those laws which are already established, adopt no remedies short of destruction; tolerate no improvement short of creation; who are carried away by a wild scheme of visionary perfection, which, if it could any where be found to exist, would not be likely to be found in the projects of men who disdain to avail themselves of ancient experience and progressive wisdom. Thucydides was a politician of another cast; for he declared, that even indifferent laws, vigilantly executed, were superior to the best that were not properly obeyed. Those modern reformists, who affect to be in raptures with the Greek republics, would do well to imitate the deliberation, the slowness, the doubt with which the founder of the Athenian legislation introduced his laws. Instead of those sudden and instantaneous constitutions we have witnessed, which, disdaining the slow growth of moral births, have started at once, full grown, from the brain of the projector, and were as suddenly superseded as rapidly produced; Solon would not suffer a single law to be determined on and accepted till the first charm of novelty was past, and the first heat of enthusiasm had cooled. What would the same capricious theorists say to that reverence with which the Egyptians, above cited, regarded antiquity, example, custom, law, prescription? This sage people considered every political novelty with a jealousy equal to the admiration with which it is regarded by the new school. Trial, proof, experience, was the slow criterion by which they ventured to decide on the excellence of any institution. While, to the licentious innovator, antiquity is ignorance, custom is tyranny, order is intolerance, laws are chains. But the end has corresponded with the beginning. Their 'baseless fabrics' have fallen to pieces before they were well reared; and have exposed their superficial, but self-sufficient builders, to the just derision of mankind.

CHAP. VII.

Greece.

When we contemplate Greece, and especially when we fix our eyes on Athens, our admiration is strongly, I had almost said, is irresistibly excited, in reflecting, that such a diminutive spot concentrated within itself whatever is great and eminent in almost every point of view; whatever confers distinction on the human intellect; whatever is calculated to inspire wonder, or communicate delight. Athens was the pure well-head of poetry:

> Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
> Repairing, in their golden urns draw light.

It was the theatre of arms, the cradle of the arts, the school of philosophy, and the parent of eloquence.

To be regarded as the masters in learning, the oracle of taste, and the standard of politeness, to the whole civilized world, is a splendid distinction. But it is a pestilent mischief, when the very renown attending such brilliant advantages becomes the vehicle for carrying into other countries the depraved manners by which these pre-eminent advantages are accompanied. This was confessedly the case of Greece with respect to Rome. Rome had conquered Greece by her arms; but whenever a subjugated country contributes, by her vices, to enslave the state which conquered her, she amply revenges herself.

But the perils of this contamination do not terminate with their immediate consequences. The ill effects of Grecian manners did not cease with the corruptions which they engendered at Rome. There is still serious danger, lest, while the ardent and high spirited young reader contemplates Greece only through the splendid medium of her heroes and her artists, her poets and her orators; while his imagination is fired with the glories of conquest, and captivated with the charms of literature, that he may lose sight of the disorders, the corruptions, and the crimes, by which Athens, the famous seat of arts and of letters, was dishonoured. May he not be tinctured (allowing for change of circumstances) with something of that spirit which inflamed Alexander, when, as he was passing the Hydaspes, he enthusiastically exclaimed, 'O Athenians! could you believe to what dangers I expose myself, for the sake of being celebrated by you!'

Many of the Athenian vices originated in the very nature of their constitution; in the very spirit of that turbulent democracy which Solon could not restrain, nor the ablest of his successors control. The great founder of their legislation felt the dangers inseparable from the democratic form of government, when he declared, 'that he had not given them the best laws, but the best which they were able to bear.' In the very establishment of his institutions, he betrayed his distrust of this species of government, by those guards and ramparts which he was so assiduous in providing and multiplying. Knowing himself to be incapable of setting aside the popular power, his attention was directed to divest it, as much as possible, of its mischiefs, by the entrenchments that he strove to cast about it. His sagacious mind anticipated the ill effects of that republican restlessness, that at length completely overturned the state which it had so often menaced, and so constantly distracted.

This unsettled government, which left the country perpetually exposed to the tyranny of the few, and the turbulence of the many, was never bound together by any principle of union,

by any bond of interest, common to the whole community, except when the general danger, for a time, annihilated the distinction of separate interests. The restraint of laws was feeble; the laws themselves were often contradictory; often ill administered; popular intrigues, and tumultuous assemblies, frequently obstructing their operation. The noblest services were not seldom rewarded with imprisonment, exile, or assassination. Under every change, confiscation and proscription were never at a stand; and the only way of effacing the impression of any revolution which had produced these outrages, was to promote a new one, which engendered in its turn, fresh outrages, and improved upon the antecedent disorders.

By this light and capricious people, acute in their feelings, carried away by every sudden gust of passion, as mutable in their opinions as unjust in their decisions, the most illustrious patriots were first sacrificed, and then honoured with statues; their heroes were murdered as traitors, and then reverenced as gods. This wanton abuse of authority, this rash injustice, and fruitless repentance, would be the inevitable consequence of lodging supreme power in the hands of a vain and variable populace, inconstant in their very vices, perpetually vibrating between irretrievable crimes and ineffectual regrets.

That powerful oratory, which is to us so just a subject of admiration, was, doubtless, no inconsiderable cause of the public disorders. And to that exquisite talent, which constitutes one of the chief boasts of Athens, we may look for one principal source of her disorders:

> Those ancients, whose resistless eloquence
> Wielded at will the fierce Democracy,
> Shook th' arsenal and fulmined over Greece
> To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.

When we consider what mighty influence this talent gave to the popular leaders, and what a powerful engine their demagogues possessed, to work upon the passions of the multitude, who composed their popular assemblies; when we reflect on the character of those crowds, on whom this stirring eloquence was exercised, and remember that their opinion decided on the fate of the country: all this will contribute to account for the frequency and violence of the public commotions, and naturally explains why that rhetorical genius, which shed so bright a lustre on the country, was, from the nature of the constitution, frequently the instrument of convulsing it.

While the higher class, in many of the Greek republics, seemed without scruple to oppress their inferiors, the populace of Athens commonly exerted the same hostile spirit of resentment against their leaders.—Competition, circumvention, litigation, every artifice of private fraud, every stratagem of personal injustice, filled up the short intervals of foreign wars and public contests. How strikingly is St. Paul's definition of that light and frivolous propensity of the Athenians which led them to pass the day only 'to hear or tell some new thing,' illustrated by Plutarch's relation of the illiterate citizen, who voted Aristides to the punishment of the Ostracism! When this great man questioned his accuser, whether Aristides had ever injured him? He replied, so far from it, that he did not even know him, only he was quite *wearied out* with hearing him every where called *the just*. Besides that spirit of envy which is peculiarly alive in democracies, to have heard this excellent person calumniated would have been a refreshing novelty, and have enabled him, to 'tell a new thing.'

That passionate fondness for scenic diversions which led the Athenians not only to apply part of the public money to the support of the theatres, and to pay for the admission of the populace, but also made it a capital crime to divert this fund to any other service, even to the service of the state, so sacred was this application of it deemed was another concurrent cause of the profligacy of public manners.* The abuses to which this universal invitation to luxury and idleness led; the licentiousness of that purely democratic spirit, which made the lowest classes claim as a right to partake in the diversions of the highest; the pernicious productions of some of the comic poets; the unbounded license introduced by the mask; the voluptuousness of their music, whose extraordinary effects it would be impossible to believe, were they not confirmed by the general voice of antiquity: all these concurring circumstances induced a depravation of morals of which less enlightened countries do not often present an example. The profane and impure Aristophanes was almost adored, while the virtue of Socrates not only procured him a violent death, but the poet, by making the philosopher contemptible to the populace, paved the way to his unjust sentence by the judges. Nay, perhaps the delight which the Athenians took in the impious and offensively loose wit of this dramatic poet rendered them more deaf to the voice of that virtue which was taught by Plato and of that liberty in which they had once gloried, and which Demosthenes continued to thunder in their ears. Their rage for sensual pleasure rendered them a fit object for the projects of Philip, and a ready prey to the attacks of Alexander.

In lamenting, however, the corruptions of the theatre in Athens, justice compels us to acknowledge, that her immortal tragic poets, by their chaste and manly compositions, furnish a noble exception. In no country has decency and purity, and, to the disgrace of Christian countries, let it be added, have morality, and even piety, been so generally prevalent in any theatrical compositions as in what.

* Pericles, not being rich enough to supplant his competitor by acts of liberality, procured this law with a view to make his court to the people. He scrupled not, in order to secure their attachment to his person and government, by thus 'buying them with their own money,' effectually to promote their natural levity and idleness, and to corrupt their morals.—The rulers of a neighbouring nation have been too skilful adepts in the art of corruption, not to admire and eagerly adopt an example so suited to their political circumstances, and so congenial to their national frivolity. Accordingly, an unexampled multitude of theatres have been opened; and in order to allay the discontents of the lower class at the expense of their time and morals, the price of these diversions has been reduced so low as almost to emulate the gratuitous admission of the Athenian populace.

——her lofty grave tragedians taught
In chorus, or iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence.

Yet, in paying a just and warm tribute to the moral excellencies of these sublime dramatists, is not an answer provided to that long agitated question, Whether the stage can be indeed made a school of morals? No question had ever a fairer chance for decision than was here afforded. If it be allowed that there never was a more profligate city than Athens; if it be equally indisputable that never country possessed more unexceptionable dramatic poets than Eschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; if the same city thus at once produced the best physicians and the worst patients, what is the result? Do the Athenian annals record that any class or condition of citizens were actually reformed by constantly frequenting, we had almost said, by constantly living in the theatre?

Plutarch, who severely condemns the Athenians, had too just a judgment to censure either the excellence of the poets, or the good taste of the people who admired them. But he blames them for that excessive passion for diversions, 'which,' says he, 'by setting up a new object of attachment, had nearly extinguished public virtue, and made them more anxious about the fate of a play than about the fate of their country.'*

Such were the manners which historians, orators, and poets have consigned to immortal fame! Such were the people for whom our highly educated youth are taught to feel an enthusiastic admiration! Such are the forms of government which have excited the envy, and partly furnished the model to the bloody innovators and frantic politicians of our age! Madly to glory in the dream of liberty, and to be in fact the victim of changing tyrants, but unchanging tyranny. This was the coveted lot of ancient Athens.—This is the object of reverence, eulogy, and imitation to a large portion of modern Europe!

In reflecting on the splendid works of genius and of art in Athens, as opposed to the vices of her government, and the licentiousness of her morals,—will it be thought an adequate compensation for the corruptions of both, if we grant, as we are disposed to do, in its fullest extent, that unparalleled combination of talents, which delighted and informed the rest of the world? If we allow that this elegance of taste spread so wide, and descended so low, that every individual of an Athenian mob might, as has been triumphantly asserted,† be a just critic of dramatic composition? That the ear of the populace was so nicely tuned and so refined a judge of the delicacies of pronunciation, than an Attic herb-woman could detect the provincial accent of a learned philosopher? Is it even a sufficient compensation, exquisite as we allow the gratification to have been, that the spectator might range among the statues of Lysippus, or the pictures of Apelles, or the critic enjoy the still more intellectual luxury of listening to an oration of Demosthenes, of a scene of Euripides,—while the rulers of so accomplished a people were in general dissolute, tyrannical, oppressive and unjust; and the people themselves universally sunk into the most degraded state of manners; immersed in the last excess of effeminacy; debased by the most excessive sensuality, fraud, idleness, avarice, gaming, and debauchery?

If here and there the eye is relieved, and the feelings are refreshed, with the casual appearance of a Miltiades, a Cimon, an Aristides, a Socrates, a Phocion, or a Xenophon; yet these thinly scattered stars serve less to retrieve the Athenian character, by their solitary lustre, or even by their confluent radiance, than to overwhelm it with disgrace, by the atrocious injustice with which these bright luminaries were treated by their country. The eulogium of the citizen is the satire of the state.

While we observe that Greece first became powerful, rich, and great, through the energy of her people, and the vigour of her character, and that this very greatness, power, and riches, have a natural bias towards corruption; that while they happily tend to produce and nourish those arts, which in their just measure are the best embellishments of a nation; yet carried to excess, and misapplied to vicious purposes, tend to weaken and corrupt it; that Athens, by her public and private vices, and by her very refinement in politeness, and her devotedness to the arts, not only precipitated her own ruin,—but by the transplantation of those arts, encumbered with those vices, ultimately contributed to ruin Rome also. While we take this retrospect, we, of this highly favoured land, may receive an awful admonition; we may make a most instructive comparison of our own situation with respect to a neighbouring nation,—a nation which, under the rapidly-shifting form of every mode of government, from the despotism of absolute monarchy to a republican anarchy, to which the royal tyranny was comparative freedom;—and now again, in the closing scene of this changeful drama, to the heavy subjugation of military despotism, has never ceased to be the object of childish admiration, of passionate fondness, and servile imitation, to too many in our own country; to persons, too, whose rank giving them the greatest stake in it, have most to risk by the assimilation with her manners, and most to lose by the adoption of her principles. And though, through the special Providence and undeserved mercies of God, we have withstood the flood of revolutionary doctrines, let us, taking warning from the resemblance above pointed out, no longer persist, as in the halcyon days of peace, servilely to adopt her language, habits, manners, and corruptions. For now to fill up the measure of our danger, her pictures, and her statues, not the fruits of her own genius—for here the comparison with Athens fails—but the plunder of her usurpation, and the spoils of her injustice, by holding out new baits to our curiosity, and new attractions to our admiration, are in danger of fatally and finally accomplishing the resemblance. May the omen be averted!

Among the numberless lessons which *we* may derive from the study of Grecian history, there is one which cannot be too often inculcated, more especially as it is a fact little relished by

* See Wortley Montague, on the Rise and Fall of Ancient Republics.

† See an elegant paper in the Adventurer, in which some of these triumphs of Athens are asserted.

many of our more refined wits and politicians,—we mean the error of ascribing to arts, to literature, and to politeness, that power of softening and correcting the human heart, which is, in truth, the exclusive prerogative of *religion*. Really to mend the heart, and purify the principle, is a deeper work than the most finished cultivation of the *taste* has ever been able to effect. The polished Athenians were among the most unjust of mankind in their national acts, and the most cruel towards their allies. They remarkably exemplify the tendency of *acting in a body*, to lesson each man's individual consciousness of guilt or cruelty. This polite people, in their political capacity, committed, without scruple, actions of almost unparalleled barbarity.

Every reflecting class of British and especially of Christian readers will not fail to peruse the annals of this admired republic with sentiments of deep gratitude to heaven for the vast superiority of our own national, civil, social, moral, and religious blessings. And they may enrich the catalogue with that one additional advantage, which Xenophon thought was all that Athens wanted, and which we possess—*We are an Island.** The sound and sober politician will see most strongly illustrated, in the evils of the Athenian state (though dissimilar in some respects from modern democracy) the blessings of our representative government, and of our deliverance from any approximation towards that mob government, to which universal suffrage would be the natural and necessary introduction.

The delicate and refined female of our favoured country will feel peculiar sensations of thankfulness, in comparing her happy lot with the degraded state of women in the politest ages of Greece. Condemned to ignorance, labour, and obscurity; excluded from rational intercourse; debarred from every species of intellectual improvement or innocent enjoyment; they never seem to have been the objects of respect or esteem; in the conjugal relation, the servile agent, not the endeared companion. Their depressed state was, in some measure, confirmed by illiberal legal institutions; and their native genius was systematically restrained from rising above one degraded level. Such was the lot of the *virtuous* part of the sex. We forbear to oppose to this gloomy picture the profligate renown to which the bold pretensions of daring vice elevated mercenary beauty; nor would we glance at the impure topic, but to remind our amiable countrywomen, that immodesty in dress, contempt of the sober duties of domestic life, a boundless appetite for pleasure, and a misapplied devotion to the arts, were among the steps which led to this systematic profession of shameless profligacy, and to the establishment of those countenanced corruptions which raised the more celebrated, but infamous, Athenian women

To that bad eminence.

Every description of men, who know how to estimate public good or private happiness will joyfully acknowledge the visible effect which Christianity has had independently of its influence over its real votaries) in improving and elevating the general standard of morals, so as considerably to rectify and raise the conduct of those who are not directly actuated by its principles. And, lastly, to say nothing of a pure church establishment, so diametrically the reverse of the deplorably blind and ignorant rites of Athenian worship,*—who can contemplate, without thankful heart, that large infusion of Christianity into our national laws, which has set them so infinitely above all comparison with the admired codes of Lycurgus and of Solon?

* See Montesquieu Esprit des Loix, vol. ii. p. 3.

CHAP. VIII.

Rome.

If the Romans from being a handful of banditti, rendered themselves in a short period lords of the universe;—if Rome, from being an ordinary town in Italy, became foremost in genius and in arms, and at length unrivalled in imperial magnificence; let it be remembered that the foundations of this greatness were laid in some of the extraordinary virtues of that republic. The personal frugality of her citizens; the remarkable simplicity of their manners; the habit of transferring from themselves to the state all pretensions to external consequence and splendour; the strictness of her laws, and the striking impartiality of their execution; that inflexible regard to justice, which led them, in the early ages of the republic—so little was the doctrine of *expediency* in repute among *them*—to inflict penalties on those citizens who even conquered by deceit, and not by valour; that vigilant attention to private morals which the establishment of a censorship secured, and that zeal for liberty, which was at the same time supported by her political constitution.—These causes were the true origin of the Roman greatness. This was the pedestal on which her colossal power was erected; and though she remained mistress of the world, even at a time when these virtues had begun to decline, the first impulse not having ceased to operate, yet a discerning eye might even then perceive her growing internal weakness, and might anticipate her final dissolution.

Republican Rome, however, has been much too highly panegyrised. The Romans, had, indeed, a public feeling, to which every kind of private affection gave way; and it is chiefly on the credit of their sacrificing their individual interests to the national cause, that they acquired so high a renown.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that the grand fundamental principle of the ancient republics (and though it was still more strikingly manifest in the Grecian, it was in no small degree the case with republican Rome) was different from that which constitutes the essential principle of the British constitution, and even opposite to it. In the former the *public* was every thing; the rights, the comforts, the very

* Acts of the Apostles, ch. xvii.

existence of *individuals*, were as nothing. With *us*, happily the case is very different, nay even exactly the reverse. The well-being of the whole community is provided for, by effectually securing the rights, the safety, the comforts of every individual. Among the ancients, the grossest acts of injustice against private persons were continually perpetrated and were regarded as beneath account, when they stood in the way of the will, the interests, the aggrandizement, the glory of the state. In *our* happier country, not the meanest subject can be injured in his person or his possessions. The little stock of the artisan, the peaceful cottage of the peasant, is secured to him by the universal superintendance, and the strong protection of the public force. The state is justly considered as made up of an aggregate of particular families; and it is by securing the well being of each, that all are preserved in prosperity. We could delight to descant largely on this topic; and surely the contemplation could not but warm the hearts of Britons with lively gratitude to the author of all their blessings, and with zealous attachment to that constitution, which conveys and secures to them the enjoyment of such unequalled happiness! But we dare not expatiate in so wide a field. Let us, however, remark the degree in which the benevolent spirit of Christianity is transfused into our political system. As it was the glory of our religion to take the poor under her instruction, and to administer her consolations to the wretched, so it is the beauty of our constitution that she considers not as below her care, the seats of humble but honest industry; the peaceful dwellings, and quiet employments of the lover of domestic comfort.

Again—This vital spirit of our constitution is favourable to virtue, as well as congenial with religion, and conducive to happiness. It checks that spirit of injustice and oppression which is so manifest in the conduct of the ancient republics towards all other nations. It tends to diffuse a general sense of moral obligation, a continual reference to the claims of others, and our own consequent obligations; in short, a continual reference to the *real* rights of man; a term which, though so shamefully abused, and converted into a watch-word of riot and rebellion, yet, truly and properly understood, is of sound meaning and constant application. By princes especially, these rights should ever be kept in remembrance. They were, indeed, never so well secured, as by that excellent injunction of our blessed Saviour, *to do to others as we would have them to do to us.* And to which the apostle's brief, but comprehensive directions, form an admirable commentary; *Honour all men—Love your brethren—Fear God—Honour the king.*

But to return to the Romans; their very patriotism, by leading them to thirst for universal empire, finally destroyed them, being no less fatal to the morals, than to the greatness of the state. Even their vaunted public spirit partly originated in the necessities of their situation. They were a little state, surrounded by a multitude of other little states, and they had no safety but in union. 'Necessity first roused the genius of war, and the habits of experienced and successful valour kept him awake The love of wealth and power, in latter ages, carried on what original bravery had begun; till, in the unavoidable vicissitude of human affairs, Rome perished beneath the weight of that pile of glory which she had been so long rearing.'*

Their laws and constitution were naturally calculated to promote their public spirit, and to produce their union. Having succeeded in repelling the attacks of the small rival powers, and, by their peculiar fortune, or rather by the designation of Providence, having become the predominating power in Italy, they proceeded to add conquest to conquest, making in the pride of conscious superiority, wars evidently the most unjust. Yet it must not be denied, that the occupation which progressive conquests found for the citizens, communicated a peculiar hardiness to the Roman character, and served to retard the growth both of luxury and faction. That public spirit which might be justified when it applied itself to wars of self-defence, became by degrees little better than the principle of a band of robbers on a great scale; at the best, of honourable robbers, who for the sake of the spoil, agree fairly to co-operate in order to obtain it, and divide it equally when it is obtained.

This public spirit seems to have existed so long as there were any objects of foreign ambition remaining, and so long as any sense was left to foreign danger. Even in the midst of unlawful and unrelenting war, it is important to bear in mind, that many of the ancient virtues were still assiduously cultivated; the laws were still had in reverence, and, in spite of a corrupt polytheism, and of many and great defects in the morality and the constitution of Rome, this was the salt which, for a time, preserved her. The firmness of character, and deep political sagacity of the Romans, seem to have borne an exact proportion to each other. That foreseeing wisdom, that penetrating policy, which led Montesquieu to observe, that they conquered the world by *maxims* and *principles*, seem in reality, to have insured the success of their conquests, almost more than their high national valour, and their bold spirit of enterprize.

What was it which afterwards plunged Rome into the lowest depths of degradation, and finally blotted her out from among the nations? It was her renouncing those *maxims* and *principles*. It was her departure from every virtuous and self-denying habit. It was the gradual relaxation of private morals. It was the substitution of luxury for temperance, and of a mean and narrow selfishness for public spirit. It was a contempt for the sober manners of the ancient republic, and a dereliction of the old principles of government, even while the forms of that government were retained. It was the introduction of a new philosophy more favourable to sensuality, it was the importation, by her Asiatic proconsuls, of every luxury which could pamper that sensuality. It was, in short, the evils, resulting from those two passions which monopolized their souls, the lust of power, and the lust of gold.—These passions operated on each other, as

* Carlo Denina on the ancient Republics of Italy

cause and effect, action and reaction; and produced that rapid corruption which Sallust describes with so much spirit—*Mores majorum non paulatim ut antea, sed torrentis modo precipitati.* Profligacy, venality, peculation, oppression, succeed to that simplicity, patriotism, and high-minded disinterestedness, on which this nation had once so much valued itself, and which had attracted the admiration of the world. So that Rome, in the days of her pristine severity of manners, and Rome in the last period of her freedom, exhibits a stronger contrast than will be found between almost any two countries.

This depravation does not refer to solitary instances, to the shamelessness of a Verres, or the profligacy of a Piso, but to the general practice of avowed corruption and systematic venality. By the just judgment of Providence, the enjoyment of the spoils brought home from the conquered nations corrupted the conquerors; and at length compelled Rome, in her turn, both to fly before her enemies, and to bow down her head under the most intolerable domestic yoke. Rome had no more the spirit to make any faint struggle for liberty after the death of Cæsar, than Greece after that of Alexander, though to each the occasion seemed to present itself. Neither state had virtue enough left to deserve, or even to desire to be free. The wisdom of Cato should, in the case of Rome, have discovered this: and it should have spared him the fruitless attempt to restore liberty to a country which its vices had enslaved, and have preserved him, even on his own principles, from self-destruction.

Among the causes of the political servitude of Rome may be reckoned, in a considerable degree, the institution of the Pretorian bands, who, in a great measure, governed both the Romans and the emperors. These Pretorian bands presented the chief difficulty in the way of good emperors, some of whom they destroyed for attempting to reform them; and of the bad emperors they were the electors.

In perusing the Roman history, these, and other causes of the decline and fall of the empire, should be carefully shown; the tendency of private vices to produce factions, and the tendency of factions to overthrow liberty; a spirit of dissension, and a rapid deterioration of morals, being in all states, the most deadly, and, indeed, the inseparable symptoms of expiring freedom. The no less baneful influence of arbitrary power, in the case of the many profligate and cruel emperors who succeeded, should be clearly pointed out.

It is also a salutary lesson on the hunger of conquest, and the vanity of ambition, to trace the Roman power, by its vast accession of territory, losing in solidity what it gained in expansion; furnishing a lasting example to future empires, who trust too much for the stability of their greatness to the deceitful splendour of remote acquisition, and the precarious support of distant colonial attachment.

Above all, the fall of Rome may be attributed, in no small degree, to the progress, and, gradually to the prevalence of the epicurean philosophy, and to its effect in taking away that reverence for the gods, which alone could preserve that deep sense of the sanctity of oaths for which Rome, in her better days, had been so distinguished. She had originally established her political system on this fear of the gods; and the people continued, as appears from Livy, to practise the duties of their religion* (such as it was) more scrupulously than any other ancient nation. The most amiable of the Roman patriots attributes the antecedent success and grandeur of his country to their conviction, 'that all events are directed by a Divine Power;† and Polybius, speaking merely as a politician, accuses some, in his age, of rashness and absurdity, for endeavouring to extirpate the fear of the gods; declaring, that what others held to be an object of disgrace, he believed to be the very thing by which the republic was sustained. He illustrates his position by adducing the conduct of the two great states, one of which, from its adoption of the doctrines of Epicurus had no sense of religion left, and consequently no reverence for the solemnities of an oath, which the other retained in its full force. 'If among the Greeks,' says he, 'a single talent only be intrusted to those who have the management of any of the public money, though they give ten written suretics, with as many seals, and twice as many witnesses, they are *unable* to discharge the trust reposed in them with integrity, —while the Romans, who, in their magistracies and embassies, disburse the greatest sums, are prevailed on by *the single obligation of an oath*, to perform their duty with inviolable honesty.'‡

In her subsequent total dereliction of this integrity, what a lesson does Rome hold out to *us*, to be careful not to lose the influences of a purer religion! To guard, especially, against the fatal effects of a needless multiplication of oaths, and the light mode in which they are too frequently administered! The citizens of Rome, in the days of the younger Cato, had no resource left against this pressing evil, because it was in vain to inculcate a reverence for *their* gods, and to revive the influence of *their* religion. But, if even the belief of false gods had the power of conveying political and moral benefits, which the dark system of atheism annihilated, how earnestly should WE endeavour to remove and diffuse the ancient deference for the true religion, by teaching systematically and seriously, to our youth, the divine principles of that Christianity which, in better times, was the honourable practice of our forefathers, and which can alone restore a due veneration for the solemnity of oaths.§

* Nulla unquam respublica sanctior, nec bonis exemplis ditior fuit.

† See Montague on the Rise and Fall of ancient Republics.

‡ Hampton's Polybius, vol. ii. book 6. on the excellencies of the Roman government.

§ The admirable Hooker observes, that even the falsest religions were mixed with some truths, which had 'very notable effects.' Speaking of the dread of perjury in the ancient Romans, he adds, 'It was their hurt untruly to attribute so great power to false gods, as that they were able to prosecute, with fearful tokens of divine revenge, the wilful violation of oaths and execrable blasphemies, offered by deriders of religion even unto those false gods. Yet the right belief which they had, that to perjury vengeance is due, was not without good effect, as touching the course of their lives who feared the wilful violation of oaths.' Ecclesiastical Polity,

CHAP. IX

Characters of historians, who were concerned in the transactions which they record.

Of the modern writers of ancient history, the young reader will find that Rollin† has, in one respect, the decided superiority; we mean in his practice of intermixing useful reflections on events and characters. But, we should strongly recommend the perusal of such portions of the original ancient historians, as a judicious preceptor would select. And, in reading historians, or politicians, ancient or modern, the most likely way to escape theories and fables, is to study those writers who were themselves actors in the scenes which they record.

Among the principal of these is—Thucydides, whose opportunities of obtaining information, whose diligence in collecting it, and whose judgment and fidelity in recording it, have obtained for him the general suffrage of the best judges; who had a considerable share in many of the events which he records, having been an unfortunate, though meritorious commander in the Peloponnesian war, of which he is the incomparable historian;—whose chronological accuracy is derived from his early custom of preparing materials as the events arose; and whose genius confers as much honour, as his unmerited exile reflects disgrace, on his native Athens. In popular governments, and in none perhaps so much as in those of Greece, the ill effects or mismanagement at home have been too frequently charged on those who have had the conduct of armies abroad; and where a sacrifice must be made, that of the absent is always the most easy. The integrity and patriotism of Thucydides, however, were proof against the ingratitude of the republic. His work was as impartial as if Athens had been just; like Clarendon, he devoted the period of his banishment to the composition of a history, which was the glory of the country that banished him.—A model of candour, he wrote not for a party or a people, but for the world; not for the applause of his age, but the instruction of posterity. And though his energy, spirit, and variety must interest all readers of taste, statesmen will best know his value, and politicians will look up to him as a master.—Xenophon, the Attic bee, equally admirable in whatever point of view he is considered; a consummate general, historian, and philosopher; who carried on the historic series of the Greek revolutions from the period at which Thucydides discontinued it; like him was driven into banishment from that country, of which he was so bright an ornament,—

> And with his exil'd hours enrich'd the world!

The conductor and narrator of a retreat more honourable and more celebrated than the victories of other leaders; a writer, who is considered by the first Roman critic, as the most exquisite model of simplicity and elegance; and who in almost all the transactions which he relates, *magna pars fuit*.—Polybius, trained to be a statesman in the Achæan league, and a warrior at the conquest of Carthage; the friend of Scipio, and the follower of Fabius; and who is said to be more experimentally acquainted with the wars and politics of which he treats, than any other Greek. He is however, more authentic than entertaining; and the votaries of certain modern historians, who are satisfied with an epigram instead of a fact, who like turns of wit better than sound political reflections, and prefer an antithesis to truth, will not justly appreciate the merit of Polybius, whose love of authenticity induced him to make several voyages to the places of which his subjects led him to speak. Cæsar, of whom it would be difficult to say, whether he planned his battles with more skill, fought them with more valour, or described them with more ability; or whether his sword or pen executed his purposes with more celerity and effect; but, who will be less interesting to the general reader, than to the statesman and soldier. His commentaries, indeed, will be perused with less advantage by the hereditary successor of the sovereign of a settled constitution, than by those who are struggling with the evils of civil commotion. Joinville, whose life of his great master, saint Louis, is written with the spirit of the ancient nobles, and the vivid earnestness of one, who saw with interest what he describes with fidelity; having been companion to the king in the expeditions which he records. Philippe de Comines, who possessed, by his personal concern in public affairs, all the avenues to the political and historical knowledge of his time, and whose memoirs will be admired while acute penetration, sound sense, and solid judgment survive. Davila, who learned the art of war under that great master, Henry the fourth of France, and whose history of the civil wars of that country furnishes a variety of valuable matter; who possesses the happy talent of giving interest to details, which would be dry in other hands; who brings before the eyes of the reader, every place which he describes, and every scene in which he was engaged; while his intimate knowledge of business, and of human nature, enables him to unveil with address, the mysteries of negotiation, and the subtleties of statesmen. This excellent work is disgraced by the most disgusting panegyrics on the execrable Catharine di Medici, an offence against truth and virtue, too glaring to be atoned for by any sense of personal obligation. In consequence of this partiality, he speaks of the massacre of saint Bartholomew, as slightly as if it had been a merely common act of necessary rigour on a few criminals; an *execution* being the cool term by which he describes that tremendous deed.* Guicciardin, a diplomatic historian, a lawyer, and a patriot; whose tedious orations and florid style cannot destroy the merit of his great work; the value of which is enhanced by the piety and probity of his own mind. Sully, the intrepid warrior, the able financier, the uncorrupt minister, who generally regulated the deep designs of the consummate statesman, by the inflexible

* The writer forbears to name living authors.

* Who can help regretting that the lustre of one of the most elegant works of antiquity, Quintilian's Institution of an Orator, should be in a similar manner tarnished by the most preposterous panegyrics on the emperor Domitian!

rules of religion and justice; whose memoirs should be read by ministers, to instruct them how to serve kings; and by kings, to teach them how to choose ministers. Cardinal de Retz, who delineates with accuracy and spirit the principal actors in the wars of the Fronde, in which he himself had been a chief agent; who developes the dissimulation of courts, with the skilfulness of an adept in the arts which he unfolds, yet affecting, while he portrays the artifices of others, a simplicity, the very reverse of his real character; while his levity in writing retains so much of the licentiousness, and want of moral and religious principle of his former life, that he cannot be safely recommended to those whose principles of judgment and conduct are not fixed. Yet, his characters of the two famous cardinal prime ministers may be read with advantage by those, whose business leads them to such studies. The reader of de Retz will find frequent occasion to recognise the homage which even impiety and vice pay to religion and virtue, while the abundant corruptions of popery will call forth from every considerate protestant, devout sensations of gratitude to Heaven, for having delivered us from the tyranny of a system, so favourable to the production of the rankest abuses in the church, and the grossest superstition in the people. Temple, the zealous negotiator of the triple alliance, and worthy, by his spirit and candour, to be the associate of De Wit in that great business which was transacted between them, with the liberal spirit, and honourable confidence of private friendship. His writings give the clearest insight into the period and events of which he treats; and his easy, though careless style, and well-bred manner, would come, almost more than any other, under the description of what may be called the *genteel*, did not his vanity a little break the charm. None, however, except his political writings, are meant to be recommended; his religious opinions being highly exceptionable and absurd. Yet it is but justice to add, that his unambitious temper, his fondness for private life, his enjoyment of its peace, and his taste for its pleasures, render his character interesting and amiable. The manners painting Clarendon, the able chancellor, the exemplary minister, the inflexible patriot, who stemmed, almost singly, the torrent of vice, corruption, and venality; and who was not ashamed of being religious in a court which was ashamed of nothing else; whom the cabal hated for his integrity, and the court for his purity; a statesman who might have had statues erected to him in any other period but in that in which he lived; would have reformed most other governments but that to which he belonged, and been supported by almost any king but him whom he had the misfortune to serve. Clarendon, the faithful biographer of his own life; the majestic and dignified historian of the grand rebellion; whose periods sometimes want beauty, but never sense, though that sense is often wrapped up in an involution and perplexity which a little obscure it; whose style is weighty and significant, though somewhat retarded by the stateliness of its march, and encumbered with a redundancy of words. Torcy, whose memoirs, though they may be thought to bear rather hard on the famous plenipotentiaries with whom he negotiated, and on the haughtiness of the allies who employed them, are written with much good sense, modesty, and temper. They present a striking reverse in the fortune of the imperious disturber of Europe, 'fallen from his high estate.' He who had been used to give his orders from the banks of the Po, the Danube, and the Tagus, is seen reduced to supplicate for peace, and to exchange the insolence of triumph for the hope of existence. Two Dutch burgomasters, haughtily imposing their own terms on a monarch who had before filled France with admiration, and Europe with alarm. This reverse must impress the mind of the reader, as it does that of the writer, with an affecting sense of that controlling Providence, which thus derides the madness of ambition, and the folly of worldly wisdom; that Providence which, in maintaining its character of being the abaser of the proud, produces, by means at first sight the most opposite, the accomplishment of its own purposes; and renders the unprincipled lust of dominion the instrument of its own humiliation. The difficulties of a negociator, who has to conclude an inglorious though indispensable treaty, are feelingly described, as well as the too natural, though hard fate of a minister, who is driven to such an unfortunate measure as that of being considered as the instrument of dishonour to his country. His pious recognition of God, as the supreme disposer of events, is worthy of great praise. The copious and fluent Burnet, whose diffuse, but interesting *history of his own times*, informs and pleases; though the loose texture of his slovenly narration would not now be tolerated in a newspaper; who saw a great deal, and wishes to have it thought that he saw every thing; whose egotism we forgive for the sake of his frankness, and whose minuteness, for the sake of his accuracy; who, if ever he exceeds, it is always on the side of liberty and toleration; an excess safe enough when the writer is soundly loyal, and unquestionably pious; and more especially safe when the reader is a prince. Lady Russel, worthy of being the daughter of the virtuous Southampton; too fatally connected with the unhappy politics of the times; whose life was a practical illustration of her faith in the divine support, and of submission to the divine will; and whose letters, by their sound and sober piety, strong sense, and useful information, eclipse all those of her learned and distinguished correspondents.

CHAP. X.

Reflections on History—Ancient Historians.

If, however, the historian be a compatriot, and especially if he be a contemporary, even though he was no actor in the drama, it is difficult for him not to range himself too uniformly on one side or the other. The human mind has a strong natural bias to adopt exclusive attachment. Perhaps man may be defined to be *an animal that delights in party*. Yet we are in-

clined to believe that an historian, though he may be partial and interested, yet if he be keen sighted and intelligent as to the facts of which he speaks, is, on the whole, a better witness than a more fair and candid, but worse informed man; because we may more easily calculate the degree of allowance to be made for partiality and prejudice, than we can estimate that which is to be made for defect of information. Of two evils, therefore, we should prefer a prejudiced, but well informed, to a more impartial, but less enlightened narrator.

When materials are fresh, they are more likely to be authentic; but, unfortunately, when it is more easy to obtain, it is often less safe to employ them. When the events are more remote, their authenticity is more difficult to ascertain; and, when they are near, the passions which they excite are more apt to warp the truth. Thus, what might be gained in accuracy by nearness of position, is liable to be lost in the partiality which that very position induces. The true point of vision is attained, when the eye and the object are placed at their due distance. The reader who comes to the perusal of the work, in a more unimpassioned frame than perhaps, the author wrote, will best collect the characters from the narrative, if fairly given.

Care should be taken not to extol shining characters in the gross, but to point out their weaknesses and errors; nor should the brilliant qualities of illustrious men be suffered to cast a veil over their vices, or so to fascinate the young reader, as to excite admiration of their very faults. Even in perusing *sacred history*, we should never extenuate, much less justify, the errors of great characters, but make them, at once, a ground for establishing the doctrine of general corruption, and for quickening our own vigilance. The weaknesses of the wisest, and the errors of the best, while they should be regarded with candour, must not be held up to imitation. It has been reasonably conjectured, that many acts of cruelty in Alexander, whose disposition was naturally merciful, were not a little owing to one of his preceptors having been early accustomed to call himself Phœnix, and his pupil Achilles; and thus to have habitually trained him to an imitation even of the vices of this ferocious hero.

A prince must not study history merely to store his memory with amusing narratives or insulated events, but with a view to trace the dependence of one event upon another. A common reader will be satisfied with knowing the exploits of Scipio or Hannibal, and will be sufficiently entertained with the description of the riches or beauty of such renowned cities as Carthage or Rome; but a prince (who is also a politician) studies history, in order to observe how ambition, operating on the breasts of two rival states, led to one war after another between these two states. By what steps the ruin of the one, and the triumph of the other, were hastened or delayed; by what indications the final catastrophe might have been antecedently known, or by what measures it might have been averted. He is interested not merely when a single event arises, but by the whole skill of the game; and he is on this account anxious to possess many inferior circumstances, serving to unite one event with another, which, to the ordinary reader, appear insignificant and dull. Again in the case of Pompey and Cæsar, the reflecting politician connects the triumphs of the latter with the political moral state of Rome. He bears in mind the luxurious habits of the patricians, who became the officers in Pompey's army; the gradual decay of public spirit, the licentiousness and venality of the capital, and the arts by which Cæsar had prepared his troops, while they were in Gaul, for the contention which he already meditated for the empire of the world. He will, in idea, see that world already vanquished, when he considers the profound policy of this conqueror, who on being appointed to the government of Gaul on both sides the Alps, by exciting the Gauls to solicit the same privileges with the Italians, opened to himself this double advantage:—the disturbance which this would occasion in Rome, would lift him into absolute power; while by his kindness and protection to these people, he gained an accession of strength to overthrow his competitor. The ordinary reader is satisfied with the battle of Pharsalia for the entertainment it affords, and admires the splendour of the triumphs, without considering these things as links that connect the events which are past with those which are to come.

The preceptor of the royal pupil will, probably, think it advisable to select for her perusal some of the lives of Plutarch. This author teaches two things excellently, antiquity and human nature. He would deserve admiration, were it only for that magazine of wisdom, condensed in the excellent sayings of so many great men, which he has recorded. Perhaps, all the historians together have not transmitted to us so many of the sage axioms and *bon mots* of ancient Greece and Rome. Yet, in his parallels—if that can be called a parallel which brings together two men who have commonly little or no resemblance, even the upright Plutarch exhibits something too much of the partiality lately noticed; the scale, whenever he weighs one of his own countrymen against a Roman, almost invariably in clining to the Greek side.

It may also be deemed useful to read to her a few select portions of Suetonius. Though he is an author utterly unfit to be put into youthful, and especially, into female hands, yet a judicious instructor may select passages particularly appropriated to a royal pupil. In truth, the writings of the ancient authors of all classes, historians, satirists, poets, and even moralists, are liable to the same objection, whether it be Suetonius, or Plutarch, or Juvenal, or even the comparatively decorous Virgil, that we take in hand; the perusal cannot fail to suggest to every considerate, and especially to every female reader, the obligations which we owe to Christianity, independently of its higher ends, for having so raised the standard of morals and of manners, as to have rendered almost too monstrous for belief, and too shocking for relation, in our days, the familiar and uncensured incidents of ancient time. Suetonius paints with uncommon force, though too often with offensive grossness, the crimes of the emperors, with their subsequent miseries and punishments. Tyrants will always

detest history, and, of all historians, they will detest Suetonius.

An authentic historian of a deceased tyrant must not, however, be confounded with the malevolent declaimer against royalty. But though the most arbitrary prince cannot prevent his own posthumous disgrace, yet an honest and conscientious historian will remember, that, while he is detailing the *vices* of a king, which it is his duty to enumerate, it is his duty also carefully to avoid bringing the *office* of the king into contempt. And, while he is exposing the individual *crime*, he should never lose sight of his respect for the *authority* and *station* of him whose actions truth compels him to record in their real characters. The contrary insidious practice has of late so much prevailed, that the young reader should be put on his guard not to suffer his principles to be undermined by the affectation of indignant virtue, mock patriotism, zeal for spurious liberty, and factitious morality. It is but justice to Mr. Hume, against whose principles we have thought it a duty to bear our most decided testimony,* to allow that. in the earlier periods of English history, he carefully abstains from the vulgar error of always ascribing the public calamity, which he is relating, to the ambition or injustice of kings; but often attributes it, where it is often more justly due, to the insolence and oppression of the barons, or the turbulence and insubordination of the people. If he errs, it is on the contrary side.

But let those licentious anarchists, who delight to retail insipid jests, or to publish unqualified libels on kings *as* kings, cast their eyes on an uninterrupted succession of five illustrious Roman emperors, who, though not exempt from faults, some of them from vices, chiefly attributable to paganism, yet exhibit such an unbroken continuity of great talents and great qualities, as it would, perhaps, be difficult to find in any private family for five successive generations.

The candour of our excellent queen Mary,† towards the biographers of princes, was exemplary. When with an intention probably to sooth the royal ear, some persons in her presence, severely condemned certain historians who had made reflections dishonourable to the memory of princes, she observed that if the princes had given just ground for censure, the authors had done well to represent them fairly; and that other sovereigns must expect to be dealt with in the same manner, if they gave the same cause. She had even the magnanimity to wish, that all such princes would read Procopius, (an author too much addicted to blacken the memory of kings,) 'because,' she observed, 'however he might have exaggerated the vices he described, it would be a salutary lesson to future princes, that they themselves must expect the same treatment, when all restraint was taken off, and the dread of their power terminated with their lives.'

The late king of Prussia, who united the character of an author to that of a warrior, was of another way of thinking. He was of opinion, that the names of *good* princes alone should be recorded in history; and that those of the wicked should be suffered to perish with their crimes.* Were this practice to be universally adopted, might we not presume to question whether even the illustrious name of *Frederick the great* would be as certain, as it is at present, of being carried down to posterity?

Tacitus is the historian of philosophers, and the oracle of politicians. Highly valuable for his deep and acute reflections, in which neither the governors nor governed are spared; he is an original and profound thinker, and is admirable for the plenitude of his images, and the paucity of his words. His style is ardent, and his figures are bold. Vigour, brevity, and point, are its characteristics. He throws out a stronger likeness of a flagitious Roman in three words, than a diffuse writer would give in as many pages. In his annals he is a faithful, occasionally, indeed, a too faithful narrator; but he is also, at the same time, an honest and indignant reprover of the atrocious deeds which he records. In a man passionately loving liberty, virtue, and his country, we pardon, while painting the ruin of each, those dark and sullen shades with which he sometimes overcharges the picture. Had he delineated happier times, his tints would probably have been of a lighter cast. If he ever deceives, he does not, at least, ever appear to intend it; for he gives rumours as rumours, and his facts he generally grounds on the concurrent testimony of the times of which he writes. If, however Tacitus fulfils one of the two duties which he himself prescribes to historians, that of writing without *fear*, he does not uniformly accomplish the other, that of writing without *hatred*; at least neither his veracity nor his candour extended to his remarks on the Jews or Christians.

But, with all his diffuseness Livy is the writer who assists in forming the taste.—With all his warmth, there is a beautiful sobriety in his narrations; he does not magnify the action, he relates it, and pours forth, from a full urn, a copious and continued stream of varied elegance. He directs the judgment, by passing over slight things in a slight manner, and dwelling only on the prominent parts of his subject, though he has been accused of some important omissions. He keeps the attention always alive, by exhibiting passions as well as actions; and what best indicates the hand of a master, we hang suspended on the event of his narrative, as if it were a fiction, of which the catastrophe is in the power of the writer, rather than a real history, with whose termination we are already acquainted. He is admirable no less for his humanity than his patriotism; and he is one of the few historians, who have marked the broad line of discrimination between true and false glory, not erecting pomps, triumphs, and victories, into essentials of real greatness. He teaches patience under censure, inculcates a contempt

* In chap. xi † In chap. viii.

* *Examen du Prince de Machiavel by the king of Prussia.* It is curious to compare this composition of the king with his own conduct. To contrast his strong reprobation of the baneful glory of heroes, his horror of conquest, and of the cruel passions which oppress mankind; his professed admiration of clemency, meekness, justice, and compassion, with which this work abounds,—with the actual exploits of the ravager of the fertile plains of Saxony, &c. &c.!!

of vulgar acclamation, and of all praise which is not fairly earned. One valuable superiority, which Livy possesses over his competitors, is, that in describing vice, and vicious characters, he scrupulously contrives to excite an abhorrence of both; and his relations never leave on the mind of the reader, a propensity to the crime, or a partiality for the criminal whom he has been describing. A defect, in this acuteness of moral feeling, has been highly pernicious to the youthful reader; and this too common admixture of impure description, even when the honest design has been to expose vice, has sensibly tainted the wholesomeness of historic composition.

Independently of those beautiful, though sometimes redundant speeches, which Livy puts into the mouths of his heroes, his eloquent and finished answers to ambassadors, furnish a species of rhetoric peculiarly applicable to a royal education.

It has been regretted by some of the critics, that Livy, after enriching his own work by the most copious plagiarisms from his great precursor, Polybius, commends him in a way so frigid as almost to amount to censure. He does not, it is true, go the length of Voltaire in his treatment of Shakspeare, who first pillages and then abuses him. The Frenchman, indeed, who spoils what he steals, acts upon the old known principle of his country highwaymen, who always murder where they rob.

If it be thought that we have too warmly recommended heathen authors, let it be remembered, that in the hands of every enlightened preceptor, as was eminently the case with Fenelon, pagans almost become Christian teachers by the manner in which they will be explained, elucidated, purified; and not only will the corruptions of paganism be converted into instruction, by being contrasted with the opposite Christian graces, but the Christian system will be advantageously shown to be almost equally at variance, with many pagan virtues, as with all its vices.

If there were no other evidence of the value of pagan historians, the profound attention which they prove the ancients to have paid to the education of youth, would alone suffice to give them considerable weight in the eyes of every judge of sound instruction. Their regard to youthful modesty; the inculcation of obedience and reserve, the exercises of self-denial, exacted from children of the highest rank, put to shame,—I will not say Christians, but many of the nominal professors of Christianity.—Levity, idleness, disregard of the laws, contempt of established systems and national institutions, met with a severer reprobation in the pagan youth, than is always found among those, in our day, who yet do not openly renounce the character of Christians.

Far be it from us, however, to take our morals from so miserably defective a standard as pagan history affords. For though philosophy had given some admirable rules for maintaining the out-works of virtue, Christianity is the only religion which ever pretended to expel vice from the heart.—The best qualities of paganism want the best motives. Some of the overgrown Roman virtues, also, though they would have been valuable in their just measure and degree, and in a due symmetry and proportion with other virtues, yet, by their excess, helped to produce those evils which afterwards ruined Rome; while a perfect system of morals, like the Christian, would have prevented those evils. Their patriotism was oppression to the rest of the world. Their virtue was not so much sullied by pride, as founded in it; and their justice was tinctured with a savageness which bears little resemblance to the justice which is taught by Christianity.

These two simple precepts of our religion, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself*;—these two principles, kept in due exercise, would, like the two powers which govern the natural world, keep the intellectual and spiritual world in order; would restrain, impel, unite and govern it.

In considering the ancient philosophy, *how does the fine gold become dim*, before the sober lustre of that divine legislator, whose kingdom, indeed, was not of this world, but who has taught 'kings of the earth, princes, and all people,' those maxims and principles which cast into shade all the false splendours 'of the antique world!' Christianity has furnished the only true practical comment on that grand position of the admirable author of the sublime, that *nothing is great the contempt of which is great.* For how can triumphs, honours, riches, power, conquest, fame, be considered as of intrinsic value by a Christian, the very *essence* of whose religion consists in being crucified to the world; the very *aim and end* of whose religion lies in a superiority to all greatness which is to have an end with this life; the very *nature* and *genius* of whose religion tends to prove, that eternal life is the only adequate measure of the happiness, and immortal glory the only adequate object of the ambition of a Christian.

CHAP. XI.

English History.—Mr. Hume.

But the royal pupil is not to wander always in the wide field of universal history. The extent is so vast, and the time for travelling over it so short, that after being sufficiently possessed of that general view of mankind which the history of the world exhibits, it seems reasonable to concentrate her studies, and to direct her attention to certain great leading points, and especially to those objects with which she has a natural and more immediate connexion. The history of modern Europe abounds with such objects. In Robertson's luminous view of the state of Europe, the progress of society is traced with just arrangement and philosophical precision. His admirable histories of Charles V. and Mary Queen of Scots, separate from their great independent merit, will be read with singular advantage in connection with the contemporary reigns of English history. In the writings of Sully and Clarendon, may be seen how, for a long time, the passions of kings were contra-

dicted, and often controlled by the wisdom of their ministers; sovereigns who were not insensible to praise, nor averse from flattery, yet submitting, though sometimes with a very ill grace, to receive services rather than adulation. Ministers who consulted the good rather than the humour of their princes; who promoted their interests, instead of gratifying their vices, and who preferred their fame to their favour.

Mr. Hume.

Hume is incomparably the most informing, as well as the most elegant, of all the writers of English history. His narrative is full, well arranged, and beautifully perspicuous. Yet, he is an author who must be read with extreme caution on a political, but especially on a religious account. Though, on occasions where he may be trusted, because his peculiar principles do not interfere, his political reflections are usually just, sometimes profound. His account of the origin of the Gothic government is full of interest and information. He marks, with exact precision, the progress and decay of the feudal manners, when law and order began to prevail, and our constitution assumed something like a shape. His finely painted characters of Alfred and Elizabeth should be engraved on the heart of every sovereign. His political prejudices do not strikingly appear, till the establishment of the house of Stewart, nor his religious antipathies till about the distant dawn of the reformation under Henry V. From that period to its full establishment, he is perhaps more dangerous, because less ostensibly daring than some other infidel historians. It is a serpent under a bed of roses. He does not (in his *history* at least) so much ridicule religion himself, as invite others to ridicule it. There is in his manner, a sedateness which imposes; in his scepticism, a sly gravity which puts the reader more off his guard than the vehemence of censure, or the levity of wit; for we are always less disposed to suspect a man who is too wise to appear angry. That same wisdom makes him too correct to *invent* calumnies, but it does not preserve him from doing what is scarcely less disingenuous. He implicitly adopts the injurious relations of those annalists who were most hostile to the reformed faith; though he must have known their accounts to be aggravated and discoloured, if not absolutely invented. He thus makes others responsible for the worst things he asserts, and spreads the mischief, without avowing the malignity. When he speaks from himself, the sneer is so cool, the irony so sober, the contempt so discreet, the moderation so insidious, the difference between popish bigotry, and protestant firmness, between the fury of the persecutor and the resolution of the martyr, so little marked; the distinctions between intolerant frenzy and heroic zeal so melted into each other, and though he contrives to make the reader feel some indignation at the tyrant, he never leads him to feel any reverence for the sufferer; he ascribes such a slender superiority to one religious system above another, that the young reader who does not come to the perusal with his principles formed, will be in danger of thinking that the reformation was really not worth contending for.

But, in nothing is the skill of this accomplished sophist more apparent than in the artful way in which he piques his readers into a conformity with his own views concerning religion. Human pride, he knew, naturally likes to range itself on the side of ability. He therefore, skilfully works on this passion, by treating with a sort of contemptuous superiority, as weak and credulous men, all whom he represents as being under the religious delusion, and by uniformly insinuating that talents and piety belong to opposite parties.

To the shameful practice of confounding fanaticism with real religion, he adds the disingenuous habit of accounting for the best actions of the best men, by referring them to some low motive; and affects to confound the designs of the religious and the corrupt, so artfully, that no radical difference appears to subsist between them.

It is injurious to a young mind to read the history of the reformation by any author, how accurate soever he may be in his facts, who does not see a divine power accompanying this great work; by any author who ascribes to the power, or rather to the perverseness of nature, and the obstinacy of innovation, what was in reality an effect of providential direction; by any who discerns nothing but human resources, or stubborn perseverance, where a Christian distinguishes, though with a considerable alloy of human imperfection, the operation of the Spirit of God.

Hume has a fascinating manner at the close of the life of a hero, a prince, or a statesman, of drawing up his character so elaborately as to attract and fix the whole attention of the reader; and he does it in such a way, that while he engages the mind he unsuspectedly misleads it. He makes a general statement of the vices and virtues, the good and bad actions of the person whom he paints, leaving the reader to form his own conclusions, by casting up the balance of the vices and virtues, of the good and bad actions thus enumerated: while he never once leads the reader to determine on the character by the only sure criterion, the *ruling principle*, which seemed to govern it. This is the too prevailing method of historians; they make morals completely independent of religion, by thus weighing qualities, and letting the preponderance of the scale decide on virtue, as it were by grains and scruples: thus furnishing a standard of virtue subversive of that which Christianity establishes. This method instead of marking the moral distinctions, blends and confounds them, by establishing character on an accidental difference, often depending on circumstance and occasion, instead of applying to it one eternal rule and motive of action.*

But, there is another evil into which writers far more unexceptionable than Mr. Hume often

* If these remarks may be thought too severe by some readers for that degree of scepticism which appears in Mr. Hume's *history* may I not be allowed to observe that he has shown his principles so fully, in some of his other works, that we are entitled, on the ground of these works, to read with suspicion every thing he says which borders on religion?—A circumstance apt to be forgotten by many who read *only* his history.

fall, that of rarely leading the mind to look beyond second causes and human agents. It is mortifying to refer them to the example of a pagan. Livy thought it no disgrace to proclaim, repeatedly, the insufficiency of man to accomplish great objects without divine assistance. *He* was not ashamed to refer events to the direction and control of providence; and when he speaks of notorious criminals, he is not contented with describing them as transgressing against the state, but represents them as also offending against the gods.

Yet, it is proper again to notice the defects of ancient authors in their views of providential interference; a defect arising from their never clearly including a future state in their account. They seem to have conceived themselves as fairly *entitled* by their good conduct to the divine favour, which favour they usually limited to present prosperity. Whereas all notions of divine justice must of necessity be widely erroneous, in which a future retribution is not unambiguously and constantly included.

CHAP. XII.

Important æras of English History.

As the annals of our own country furnish an object on which a royal student should be led to dwell with particular interest, it may be necessary to call the attention to certain important periods of our history and constitution, from each of which we begin to reckon a new æra; because from that epoch, some new system of causes and effects begins to take place!

It will be proper, however, to trace the shades of alteration which intervene between these æras; for though the national changes appear to be brought about by some one great event, yet, the event itself will be found to have been slowly working its way by causes trivial in their appearance, and gradual in their progress. For the minds of the people must be previously ripened for a change, before any material alteration is produced—It was not the injury that Lucretia sustained, which kindled the resentment of the Romans; the previous misconduct of the Tarquins had excited in the people the spirit of that revolution. A momentary indignation brought a series of discontents to a crisis, and one public crime was seized on as the pretence for revenging a long course of oppression. The arrival, however, of these slowly produced æras makes a sudden and striking change in the circumstances of a country, and forms a kind of distinct line of separation between the manners which precede and those which follow it.

A prince (whose chief study must be politics) ought in general to prefer contemporary historians, and even ordinary annalists, to the compilers of history who come after them. He should have recourse to the documents from which authors derive their history, rather than sit down satisfied with the history so derived. Life, however, is too short to allow, in all cases, of this laborious process. Attention, therefore, to the minuter details of contemporary annalists, and to the original records consisting of letters and state papers, must be limited to periods of more than ordinary importance. Into these the attentive politician will dive for himself, and he will often be abundantly repaid. The periods, for example, of the unhappy contests in the reign of the first Charles, of the restoration, and more especially of the revolution, are the turning points of our political constitution. A prince, by examining these original documents, and by making himself master of the points then at issue, would be sure to understand what are his own rights as a sovereign.

It is not by single, but by concurrent testimony, that the truth of history is established. And it is by a careful perusal of different authors who treat of the same period, that a series of historic truth will be extracted. Where they agree, we may trust that they are right; where they differ we must elicit truth from the collision. Thus the royal pupil, when engaged in the perusal of Clarendon, should also study some of the best writers, who are favourable to the parliamentary cause. A careful perusal of Ludlow and Whitlock; a general survey of Rushworth, or occasional reference to that author and to Thurloe; and as a cursory review of their own *lives* and *times* by Laud and Baxter, will throw great light on many of the transactions of the eventful period of the first Charles. They will show how different the same actions appear to different men, equal in understanding and integrity. They will inforce mutual candour and mutual forbearance, repressing the wholesale conclusions of party violence, and teaching a prince to be on his guard against the intemperate counsels of his interested or heated advisers. They will instruct a monarch in the important lesson of endeavouring to ascertain and keep in view the light in which his actions and motives will appear to his people. They will teach him to attend carefully to the opinions and feelings, and even to the prejudices of the times; and in obedience to a precept enjoined by divine authority for private life, and still more important to be observed in public,—'to provide things honest in the sight of all men.'

Again, while the narratives of the contemporary historians furnish facts, they who live in a succeeding age have the additional advantages first, of a chance of greater impartiality; secondly, of a comparison with corresponding events, and, thirdly, of having the tendencies of the events related, appreciated by the evidence of their actual effects. How imperfect, for example, would be the philosophical and political remarks, and how false the whole colour belonging to any history of the French revolution which might have immediately appeared.* Much lapse of time is necessary in order to reflect back light on the original tendency of events. The fermentation of political passions requires a long time to subside. The agitation continues till the events have nearly lost their

* The French revolution, with its consequences, seem intended practically to contradict what Thucydides declared to be his design in writing history; namely, by a faithful account of past things to assist mankind in conjecturing the future!

interest, by the occurrence of a fresh class of events; which, in their turn, raise a new party, and excite a new interest; so that an impartial distribution of praise and censure is seldom made till those who are concerned in it have been long out of hearing. And it is an inconvenience inseparable from human things that when writers are least able to come at the truth, they are most disposed to tell it.

It will be necessary to understand the political system of Europe, since that period particularly, when the two powers of France and Austria having arisen to a greatness, which made them mutually, as well as generally formidable, other countries, seeing the necessity for their own safety, of opposing the stronger, and supporting the weaker, conceived the idea of that balance of power, that just equiponderance, which might preserve the security of all.

But there is a far earlier epoch to which attention ought perhaps, in the very first instance, to be directed, I mean the reign of Alfred. This is eminently a study for kings.—In Alfred, the most vigorous exertion of public justice was united with attachment to public liberty. He eagerly seized every interval of tranquillity, from the convulsions with which the state was torn, to collect materials for the most salutary institutions, which he afterwards established; he employed every moment he could snatch from the wars in which he was inevitably engaged, in introducing the arts of peace, and in turning the minds of his harassed and disorderly subjects to virtuous and industrious pursuits; in repairing the mischievous consequences of past insurrections, and wisely guarding against their return. He had to correct the habits of a people who had lived without laws, and without morals; and to reduce to civilization, men who had been driven to subsist by chance or rapine. By a system of jurisprudence, which united moral discipline with the execution of penal laws, he undertook to give a new direction to habits inveterately depraved.

The royal pupil will be taught to ascribe the origin of some of our best usages to these sagacious regulations; above all, the conception of that unparalleled idea which so beautifully reconciles the exact administration of justice with individual liberty; the origin of our juries evidently appearing to have first entered the mind of Alfred. The effects on the people seem to have been proportioned to the exertions of the prince. Crimes were repressed. The most unexampled change took place in the national manners. Encouragement was held out to the reformed, while punishment kept in order the more irreclaimable. Yet with all these strong measures, never was a prince more tenderly alive to the liberty of the subject. And while commerce, navigation, ingenious inventions, and all the peaceful arts were promoted by him, his skill in the military tactics of that day was superior, perhaps, to that of any of his contemporaries.

To form such vast projects, not for disturbing the world, but for blessing it,—to reduce those projects, in many instances, to the most minute detail of actual execution;—to have surmounted the misfortune of a neglected education so as to make himself a scholar, a philosopher, and the moral as well as civil instructor of his people;—all this implies such a grandeur of capacity, such an exact conception of the true character of a sovereign, such sublimity of principle, and such corresponding rectitude of practice, as fill up all our ideas of consummate greatness. In a word, Alfred seems to have been sent into the world to realize the beautiful fiction, which poets, philosophers, and patriots, have formed of a perfect king. It is also worth observing, that all those various plans were both projected and executed by a monarch who, as all historians agree, had suffered more hardships than any ordinary adventurer, had fought more battles than most generals, and was the most voluminous author of his day.* And, if it should be asked by what means a single individual could accomplish such a variety of projects, the answer is simply this: It was in a good measure by an art of which little account is made, but which is perhaps of more importance in a sovereign than almost any other, at least it is one without which the brightest genius is of little value, *a strict œconomy of time.*

Between the earlier life of Alfred and that of Charles II. there was, as must be observed, a striking similarity. The paths of both to the throne were equally marked by such imminent dangers and 'hair breadth's 'scapes' as more resemble romance than authentic history. What a lesson had Alfred prepared for Charles! But their characters as kings, exhibited an opposition which is as strong as the resemblance in their previous fortunes. With an understanding naturally good, with that education which Alfred wanted,—with every advantage which an improved state of society could give over a barbarous one; such, notwithstanding, was the uniform tenor of the Stuart's subsequent life, as almost to present the idea of an intended contrast to the virtues of the illustrious Saxon.

Another epoch to which the pupil's attention should be pointed, is the turbulent and iniquitous reign of king John; whose oppression and injustice were, by the excess to which they were carried, the providential means of rousing the English spirit, and of obtaining the establishment of the great charter. This famous transaction, so deservedly interesting to Englishmen, bestowed or secured the most valuable civil privileges; chiefly indeed to the barons and clergy, but also to the people at large. The privileges of the latter had antecedently, been scarcely taken into the account, and their liberties, always imperfect, had suffered much infringement by the introduction of the feudal law into England under the Norman William. For, whether they were vassals under the barons, or vassals under the king it made little difference in their condition; which was, in fact, to the greater part, little better than a state of absolute slavery. The barons, liberal, perhaps, through policy rather than humanity, in struggling for their own liberty were compelled to involve in one common interest the liberty of the people; and the same laws which they

* See the character of Alfred in Hume, from which the preceding part of this account, in substance, is chiefly taken.

demanded to secure their own protection, in some measure necessarily extended their benign influence to the inferior classes of society —Those immunities, which are essential to the well-being of civil and social life, gradually became better secured. Injustice was restrained, tyrannical exactions were guarded against, and oppression was no longer sanctioned. This famous deed, without any violent innovation, became the mound of property, the pledge of liberty, and the guarantee of independence. As it guarded the rights of all orders of men, from the lowest to the highest, it was vigorously contended for by all; for, if it limited the power of the king, it also confirmed it, by securing the allegiance and fidelity of the subject. It was of inestimable use by giving a determinate form and shape, 'such a local habitation and a name,' to the spirit of liberty; so that the English, when, as it often happened, they claimed the recognition of their legal rights, were not left to wander in a wide field, without having any specific object, without limitation, and without direction. *They knew what to ask for*, and, obtaining that, they were satisfied. *We* surely cannot but be sensible of the advantages which they derived from this circumstance, who have seen the effects of an opposite situation, in this very particular, illustrated so strikingly in the earlier period of the French revolution.

But, rapidity of progress seems, by the very laws of nature, to be precluded, where the benefit is to be radical and permanent.—It was not, therefore, until our passion for making war within the territory of France was cured, nor until we left off tearing the bowels of our own country, in the dissensions of the Yorkists and Lancastrians, after having for near four hundred years, torn those of our neighbours; in a word, it was not until both foreign and civil fury began to cool, that in the reign of Henry VII. the people began to enjoy more real freedom, as the king enjoyed a more settled dominion, and the interests of peace and commerce substantially prevailed. Without ascribing to this king virtues which he did not possess, the view of his reign, with all its faults, affords a kind of breathing time, and sense of repose. It is from this reign that the history of the laws, and civil constitution of England become interesting; as that of our ecclesiastical constitution does from the subsequent reign. A general acquaintance with the antecedent part of our history may suffice for the royal pupil, but from these periods she cannot possess too detailed a knowledge of it.

CHAP. XII.

Queen Elizabeth.

It is remarkable that in France, a nation in which women have always been held in the highest consideration, their genius has never been called to its loftiest exercise.—France is perhaps the only country which has never been governed by a woman.—The mothers, however, of some of her sovereigns, when minors, have, during their regencies, Blanche of Castile,* especially, discovered talents for government not inferior to those of most of her kings.

Anne of Austria has had her eulogists; but in her character there seems to have been more of intrigue than of genius, or at least, than of sound sense; and her virtues were problematical. If her talents had some splendour, they had no solidity. They produced a kind of stage effect, which was imposing, but not efficient, and she was rather an actress of royalty than a great queen. She was not happy in the choice of a friend. The source of all Mazarin's greatness, she supported him with inflexible attachment, and established him in more than regal power. In return, he treated her with respect as long as he stood in need of her protection, and set her aside when her support was become no longer necessary to his confirmed power.

The best queens have been most remarkable for employing great men. Among these, Zenobia, Elizabeth, and Anne stood foremost. Those who wish to derogate from the glories of a female reign, have never failed to urge, that they were owing to the wisdom of the ministers, and not to that of the queen; a censure which involves an eulogium. For, is not the choice of sagacious ministers the characteristic mark of a sagacious sovereign? Would, for instance, Mary di Medici have chosen a Walsingham; she who made it one of the first acts of her regency to banish Sully, and to employ Concini? Or, did it ever enter into the mind of the first Mary of England to take into her councils that Cecil, who so much distinguished himself in the cabinet of her sister?

Elizabeth's great natural capacity was, as has been before observed, improved by an excellent education. Her native vigour of mind had been early called forth by a series of uncommon trials. The circumspection she had been, from childhood, obliged to exercise, taught her prudence. The difficulties which beset her, accustomed her to self-control. Can we, therefore, doubt that the steadiness of purpose, and undaunted resolution which she manifested on almost every occasion during her long reign, were greatly to be attributed to that youthful discipline? She would probably never have acquired such an ascendency over the mind of others, had she not early learned so absolute a command over her own.

On coming to the crown, she found herself surrounded with those obstacles which display great characters, but overset ordinary minds. The vast work of the reformation, which had been undertaken by her brother Edward, but crushed in the very birth, as far as was within human power, by the bigot Mary, was resumed and accomplished by Elizabeth: and that, not in the calm of security, not in the fulness of undisputed power, but even while that power was far from being confirmed, and that security was liable, every mement, to be shaken by the most alarming commotions. She had prejudices, apparently insurmountable, to overcome; she had heavy debts to discharge; she had an almost ruined navy to repair; she had a debased coin

* Mother of Louis IX.

to restore; she had empty magazines to fill; she had a decaying commerce to invigorate; she had an exhausted exchequer to replenish.—All these, by the blessing of God on the strength of her mind, and the wisdom of her councils, she accomplished. She not only paid her own debts; but, without any great additional burdens on her subjects, she discharged those also which were due to the people from her two immediate predecessors. At the same time, she fostered genius, she encouraged literature, she attracted all the great talents of the age within the sphere of her own activity. And, though she constantly availed herself of all the judgment and talents of her ministers, her acquiescence in their measures was that of conviction, never of implicit confidence.

Her exact frugality may not, by superficial judges, be reckoned among the shining parts of her character. Yet, those who see more deeply, must allow, that it was a quality from which the most important benefits were derived to her people; and without which all her great abilities would have been comparatively inefficient. The parsimony of her grandfather was the rapine and exaction of an extortioner; hers, the wise economy of a provident parent. If we are to judge of the value of actions by their consequences, let us compare the effects upon the country, of the prodigality, both of her father, and of her successor, with her own frugality. As it has been asserted by Plutarch,* that the money idly thrown away by the Athenians on the representations of two dramatic poets only, amounted to a larger sum than had been expended on all their wars against the Persians, in defence of their liberty; so it has been affirmed, that the first James spent more treasure on his favourites, than it had cost Elizabeth to maintain all her wars. Yet, there have not been wanting historians, who have given the praise of liberality to James, and especially to Henry, while Elizabeth has suffered the imputation of avarice. But we ought to judge of good and evil, by their own weight and measure, and not by the specious names which the latter can assume, nor by the injurious terms which may be bestowed on the former.

It is not from the splenetic critic in retired life, from the declaimer, ignorant of the duties and the requisitions of princes, that we should take our sentiments on the point of royal economy; but from men, who, however possessing different characters and views, yet agree in this one respect, that their exalted public situations, and great personal experience enable them to give a fair and sound opinion. The judgment even of the emperor Tiberius was not so impaired by his vices, but that he could insist, that an exchequer, exhausted by prodigality, must be replenished with oppression. Cicero, versed in public business, no less than in the knowledge of mankind, affirms, that 'a liberal prince loses more hearts than he gains, and that the resentment of those from whom he takes the money, is much stronger than the gratitude of those to whom he gives it.' And, on another occasion he says, that 'men are not aware what a rich treasury frugality is.' The same sentiments seem to have been adopted by another Roman statesman, a royal favourite too. Pliny affirms, that 'a prince will be pardoned, who gives nothing to his subjects, provided he takes nothing away from them.'

Those princes, who despising frugality, have been prodigal for the sake of a little temporary applause, have seldom achieved lasting good. And, allowing that this lavish generosity may be for the moment a popular quality, yet, there is scarcely any thing which has contributed to bring more calamities on a state, than the means used for enabling the prince to indulge it. It was not in Rome alone, as recent instances testify, that when the government has wanted money, the rich have been always found to be the guilty. A prodigal generosity, as we have seen in the case of Cæsar, and in our own time, may be a useful instrument for paving the way to a throne; but an established sovereign will find economy a more certain means of keeping him in it. The emperor Nero was extolled for the felicity which he was diffusing by his bounty, while Rome was groaning under the burthen of his exactions. That liberality which would make a prince necessitous, and a people poor, would, by hurting his fame, weaken his influence; for reputation is power. After all, such a care and improvement of the revenue, as will enable him to spare his subjects, is the truest liberality in a prince.

But, to return—The distinguishing qualities of Elizabeth appear to have been economy, prudence, and moderation. Yet in some instances the former was rigid, not to say unjust.* Nor had her frugality always the purest motives. She was, it is true, very unwilling to trouble parliament for money, for which, indeed, they were extremely unwilling to be troubled; but her desire to keep herself independent of them seems to have been her motive for this forbearance. What she might have gained in supplies she must have lost in power.

To her moderation and that middle line of conduct which she observed, much of her success may be ascribed. To her moderation in the contests between papists and puritans, it is chiefly to be attributed, that the reformation issued in a happier medium in England, than in any other country.—To her moderation, in respect to foreign war, from which she was singularly averse, may be ascribed at that rapid improvement at home, which took place under her reign.—If we were to estimate Elizabeth as a private female, she would doubtless appear entitled to but little veneration. If as an instrument raised up by Divine Providence to carry through the most arduous enterprises in the most difficult emergencies, we can hardly rate her too highly. We owe her much as Englishmen. As protestants, what do we not owe her? If we look at the woman, wo shall see much to blame; if at the sovereign, we shall see almost every thing to admire.—Her great, faults though they derogated from her personal character, seldom deeply affected her administration. In one instance only, her favouritism was prejudicial

* In his inquiry whether the Athenians were more eminent in the arts of war or peace.

* Particularly her keeping the see of Ely vacant nineteen years, in order to retain the revenue.

to the state; her appointment of Leicester to the naval command, for which he was utterly unfit. On many occasions, as we have elsewhere observed, her very passions supplied what was wanting in principle. Thus, her violent attachments might have made her indiscriminately lavish, if they had not been counteracted by that parsimoniousness which never forsook her. Accordingly, in the midst of her lamentations for the death of Leicester, we see her grief did not make her forget to seize his goods, and to repay herself for what she had lent him.

Our censures, therefore, must not be lost in our admiration, nor must our gratitude warp our judgment. And it may be useful to inquire how it came to pass that Elizabeth, with so much power, so much prudence, and so much popularity, should at length become completely miserable, and die, neglected and forsaken, her sun setting ingloriously after so bright a day of prosperity and honour.

May we not venture to attribute it to the defectiveness, not to say unsoundness, of her moral principles? Though corrupt principles for a certain period may conceal themselves, and even dazzle, by the success of the projects to which, in the view of superficial reasoners, they may have appeared conducive; they will, in a long course of action, betray their intrinsic weakness. —They may not entirely have prevented the public good effects of other useful qualities with which they were associated; but they do most fatally operate against the personal honour of the individual; and against her reaping that harvest of gratitude and respect, to which she might otherwise have been so justly entitled.

Vanity was, too probably, the spring of some of Elizabeth's most admired actions; but the same vanity also produced that jealousy, which terminated in the death of Mary. It was the same vanity which led her first to court the admiration of Essex, and then to suffer him to fall a victim to her wounded pride. Her temper was uncontrolled.—While we pardon her ignorance of the principles of liberty, we should not forget how little she respected the privileges of parliament, claiming a right of imprisoning its very members, without deigning to give any account of her proceedings.

Policy was her favourite science, but in that day a liberal policy was not understood; and Elizabeth was too apt to substitute both simulation and dissimulation for an open and generous conduct. This dissimulation at length lost her the confidence of her subjects, and while it inspired her with a distrust, it also forfeited the attachment of her friends. Her insincerity, as was natural, infected those around her. The young Cecil himself was so far alienated from his royal mistress, and tainted with the prevailing spirit of intrigue, as to be secretly corresponding with her rival James.

That such mortifying occurrences were too likely to arise, from the very nature of existing circumstances, where the dying prince was the last of her race, and the nearly vacant throne about to be possessed by a stranger, must assuredly be allowed. But it may still be asserted, that nothing but deficiency of moral character could have so desolated the closing scene of an illustrious princess. Real virtue will, in every rank, draw upon it disinterested regard; and a truly virtuous sovereign will not be shut out from a more than ordinary share in this general blessing. It is honourable to human nature to see the dying William pressing to his bosom the hand of Bentick; but it will be still more consolatory as well as instructive to compare, with the forsaken death-bed of Elizabeth, the exemplary closing scence of the second Mary as described by Burnet, an eye-witness of the affecting event which he relates.

CHAP. XIV.

Moral advantages to be derived from the study of history, independent of the examples it exhibits.—History proves the corruption of human nature.—It demonstrates the superintending power of Providence—illustrated by instances.

The knowledge of great events and splendid characters, and even of the customs, laws, and manners of different nations; an acquaintance, however accurate, with the state of the arts, sciences, and commerce of those nations, important as is this knowledge, must not however be considered as of primary importance in the study of history.—There are still higher uses to which that study may be turned. History furnishes a strong practical illustration of one of the fundamental doctrines of our religion, the corruption of human nature. To this truth it constantly bears witness by exemplifying it under every shape and shade, and colour, and gradation; the annals of the world, indeed, from its commencement to the present hour, presenting little else than a strongly interwoven tissue of those corruptions, and their attendant calamities.

History every where proves the helplessness and natural inability of man, the insufficiency of all such moral principles as can be derived from nature and experience; the necessity of explicit instruction respecting our true happiness, and of divinely communicated strength in order to its attainment; and consequently, the inconceivable worth of that life and immortality, which are so fully brought to light by the gospel.

That reader looks to little purpose over the eventful page of history, who does not accustom himself to mark therein the finger of the Almighty, governing kings and kingdoms; prolonging or contracting the duration of empires; tracing out beforehand, in the unimpeachable page of the prophet Daniel,* an outline of successive empires, which subsequent events have

* The parts of the book of Daniel chiefly alluded to are Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation of it, in the second chapter; and his own vision of the four beasts, in the eighth. These two passages alone, preserved as they have been by the most inveterate enemies of Christianity, amount to an irrefragible demonstration that our religion is divine. One of the most ancient and most learned opposers of revelation is said to have denied the possibility of these prophecies having existed before the events. But we know they *did* exist, and no modern infidel *dares* to dispute it.—But, admitting this, however they may take refuge in their own inconsequence of mind, they inevitably, though indirectly, allow the truth of Christianity

realized with the most critical exactness; and describing their eventful subservience to the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, with a circumstantial accuracy which the well-informed Christian, who is versed in scripture language, and whose heart is interested in the subject, reads with unutterable and never-ceasing astonishment. It is, in fact, this wonderful correspondence, which gives its highest value to the more ancient half of the historic series. What would it profit us, at this day, to learn from Xenophon, that the Assyrian monarch had subjugated all those countries, with the exception of Media, which spread eastward from the Mediterranean, if it were not that, by this statement, he confirms that important portion of sacred and prophetic history! And to what solidly useful purpose would the same historian's detail of the taking of Babylon be applicable, if it did not forcibly as well as minutely, illustrate the almost equally detailed denunciations of the prophet Isaiah? It was partly for the purpose of elucidating this correspondence between sacred prophecy and ancient history; and showing, by how regular a providential chain the successive empires of the ancient world were connected with each other, and ultimately with Christianity, that the excellent Rollin composed his well-known work; and the impression which his researches left upon his own mind, may be seen in those sublimely pious remarks with which his last volume is concluded.

A careful perusal of the historical and prophetical parts of scripture will prepare us for reading profane history with great advantage. In the former we are admitted within the veil. We are informed how the vices of nations drew down on them the wrath of the Almighty; and how some neighbouring potentate was employed as the instrument of divine vengeance. How his ambition, his courage, and military skill were but the means of fulfilling the divine prediction, or of inflicting the divine punishment. How, when the mighty conqueror, the executioner of the sentence of Heaven, had performed his assigned task, he was put aside, and was himself, perhaps in his turn, humbled and laid low. Such are the familiar incidents of historic and prophetic Scripture. But, in addition to the stock of knowledge which we received from thence, we shall have learned in the divine school to little purpose, if we do not find the benefit of our studies in the general impression and habits of mind which we derive from them; if we do not open our eyes to the agency of Providence in the varying fortunes of nations, and in the talents, characters, and fates of the chief actors in the great drama of life.

Do we read in the prophetic page the solemn call and designations of Cyrus?—Let us learn to recognise no less, as the instrument of the Almighty, a Gustavus, and a Marlborough! Are we many hundred years before informed, by Him who can alone see the end from the beginning, of the military exploits of the conqueror of Babylon, and the overturner of the Assyrian empire?—Let us learn to refer no less to that same all-disposing power, the victories of Lutzen and of Blenheim, the humiliation of Austrian arrogance, and of French ambition.

Another important end to the study of general history, distinct from that which has just been mentioned, but by no means unconnected with it, is the contemplation of divine wisdom and goodness, as exercised in gradually civilizing the human race, through the instrumentality of their own agitation. In this view the mind of the pupil should be particularly led to observe that mysterious yet most obvious operation of Providence, by which, through successive ages, the complicated chaos of human agency has been so over-ruled as to make all things work together for general good: the hostile collision of nations being often made conducive, almost in its immediate consequences, to their common benefit, and often rendered subservient to the general improvement, and progressive advancement of the great commonwealth of mankind.

If this view, respecting the world at large, should be deemed too vast for satisfactory consideration, it may be limited to that part with which we are most nearly connected; and to which it is hardly too bold to say, that Divine Providence itself has, during the latter ages of the world, seemed to direct its chief attention—I mean the continent of Europe. Let it simply be asked, what was the state of this continent two thousand years ago? The answer must be—from the Alps to the Frozen Ocean, a moral as well as physical wilderness. That the human powers were formed for extended exercise, and in some sense for boundless improvement, tho very contemplation of those powers is sufficient to evince. But that improvement had not then begun, nor was the frost of their dreariest winter more benumbing than that in which their minds had been for ages locked up. To what then but a regular design of Providence can we attribute the amazing change! And it is doubtless the part, no less of religious gratitude than of philosophical curiosity, to inquire into the series of instrumental causes by which the transformation was effected. This interesting and most instructive intelligence is conveyed to us by history. We mark the slow but steady developement of the wise and benevolent plan. We see the ambition of Rome breaking up the soil with its resistless plough-share, and scattering even through these British isles the first seeds of civilization. We see the northern invaders burst forth with irresistible violence, bringing back, to all human appearance, the former desolation; but, in reality, conducing, though with an operation like that of lava from a volcano, to a richer harvest of social and civil happiness. We see all that was really valuable spring up again afresh, mingled with new principles of utility and comfort; and above all, quickened and enriched by the wide-spread influences of a pure and heavenly religion. We see the violent passions providentially let loose, when it was necessary for society to be roused from a pernicious torpor. We see an enthusiastic rage for conquests in Asia, inducing an activity of mind, and enlargement of view, out of which eventually grew commerce, liberty, literature, philosophy, and at length, even religious reformation. In brief, if in our perusal of history, we take true wisdom for our guide, we shall not only be instructed by that gracious progressiveness

which is discernable in past events, but, notwithstanding the awful concussions of the present period, we shall learn to trust Almighty wisdom and goodness for what is to come. And we shall be ready to indulge the hope of a yet greatly increased happiness of mankind, when we consider, that the hand which brought us from barbarism to our present circumstances is still over us;—that progression to still better habits is equally possible, and equally necessary; and that no means were rendered more conducive to such progress, in the period which is passed, than the agitations of the same awful and afflictive kind which we are now doomed to contemplate.

It will be seen that the same Infinite wisdom often permits human evils to balance each other, and in subservience to his grand purpose of general good, not only sets good against evil, but often, where the counteracting principle of religion seems wholly suspended, prevent any fatal preponderance in the scale of human affairs, by allowing one set of vices to counterbalance another.—Thus, societies, which appear, on a general view, to have almost wholly thrown off the divine government, are still preserved for better things, or perhaps, for the sake of the righteous few, who still remain in them, by means of those exertions which bad men make from selfish motives; or by the vigilance with which one party of bad men watches over another. The clash of parties, and the opposition of human opinion, are likewise often overruled for good. The compages of the public mind, if we may use such a term, are no less kept together, than the component parts of matter, by opposite tendencies. And, as all human agents are nothing but the instruments of God, he can with equal efficacy, though doubtless not with the same complacency, cause the effects of evil passions to be counteracted by each other, as well as by the opposite virtues. For instance, were it not for indolence and the dread of difficulty and danger, ambition would deluge the world in blood. The love of praise, and the love of indulgence, assist, through their mutual opposition, to keep each other in order. Avarice and voluptuousness are almost as hostile to each other, as either is to the opposite virtues; therefore, by pulling different ways, they contribute to keep the world in equipoise. Thus, the same divine hand, which had so adjusted the parts and the properties of matter, as that their apparent opposition produces, not disruption, but harmony, and promotes the general order, has also conceived, through the action and counteraction of the human mind, that no jar of passion, no abuse of free agency, shall eventually defeat the wise and gracious purposes of heaven.

For an illustration of these remarks, we scarcely need go farther than the character of our own heroic Elizabeth. Her passions were naturally of the strongest kind; and it must be acknowledged, that they were not always under the controul of principle. To what then can we so fairly ascribe the success which, even in such instances, attended her, as the effect of one strong passion forcibly operating on another? Inclinations which were too violent to be checked by reason were met and counteracted by opposite inclinations of equal violence; and through the direction of Providence, the passion finally predominant was generally favourable to the public good.

Do we then mean to admit, that the Almighty approves of these excesses in individuals, by which his wisdom often works for the general benefit? God forbid. Nothing surely could be less approved by him, than the licentiousness and cruelty of our eighth Henry, though He over-ruled those enormities for the advantages of the community, and employed them, as his instruments for restoring good government, and for introducing, and at length establishing, the reformation. England enjoys the inestimable blessing but the monarch is not the less responsible personally for his crimes. We are equally certain, that God did not approve of the insatiable ambition of Alexander, or of his incredible acquisition of territory by means of unjust wars. Yet, from that ambition, those wars, and those conquests, how much may the condition of mankind have been meliorated? The natural humanity of this hero, which he had improved by the study of philosophy under one of the greatest masters in the world, disposed him to turn his conquests to the benefit of mankind. He founded seventy cities, says his historian, so situated as to promote commerce and diffuse civilization. Plutarch* observes, that had those nations not been conquered, Egypt would have had no Alexandria, Mesopotamia, no Selucia. He also informs us, that Alexander introduced marriage into one conquered country, and agriculture into another; that one barbarous nation, who used to eat their parents, was led by him to reverence and maintain them; that he taught the Persians to respect, and not to marry their mothers; the Scythians to bury, and not to eat their dead.

There was on the whole, something so extraordinary in the career of this monarch, and in the results to which it led, that his historian Arrian, amidst all the darkness of paganism, was induced to say, that Alexander seemed to have been given to the world by a peculiar dispensation of Providence.

Did the same just Providence, approve of the usurpation of Augustus over his fallen country?—No—but Providence employed it as the means of restoring peace to remote provinces, which the tyrannical republic had so long harassed and oppressed; and also of establishing a general uniformity of law, and facility of intercourse between nation and nation, which were signally subservient to the diffusion of that divine religion, which was so soon to enlighten and to bless mankind.

To adduce one or two instances more, were thousands might be adduced—Did the Almighty approve those frantic wars which arrogated to themselves the name of *holy*? Yet, with all the extravagance of the enterprise, and the ruinous failure which attended its execution, many beneficial consequences, as has been already intimated, were permitted, incidentally, to grow out of them. The Crusaders, as their historians demonstrate,† beheld in their march, countries

* Quoted by Gillies vol. iii. p. 385.

† See especially Robertson's State of Europe.

in which civilization had made a greater progress than in their own. They saw foreign manufactures in a state of improvement to which they had not been accustomed at home. They perceived remains of knowledge in the East, of which Europe had almost lost sight. Their native prejudices were diminished in witnessing improvements to which the state of their own country presented comparative barbarity. The first faint gleam of light dawned on them, the first perceptions of taste and elegance were awakened, and the first rudiments of many an art were communicated to them by this personal acquaintance with more polished countries. Their views of commerce were improved, and their means of extending it were enlarged.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that the excess to which the popes carried their usurpation, and the Romish clergy, their corruptions, was, by the Providence of God, the immediate cause of the reformation. The taking of Constantinople by the Turks, though in itself, a most deplorable scene of crimes and calamities, became the occasion of most important benefits to our countries, by compelling the only accomplished scholars then in the world to seek an asylum in the western part of Europe. To these countries they carried with them the Greek language, which ere long proved one of the providential means of introducing the most important event that has occurred since the first establishment of Christianity.

May we not *now* add to the number of instances in which Providence has over-ruled the crimes of men for good, a recent exemplification of the doctrine, in the ambition of that person, who, by his unjust assumption of imperial power in a neighbouring nation, has, though unintentionally, almost annihilated the wild outcry of false liberty, and the clamour of mad democracy?

All those contingent events which lie without the limits and calculations of human foresight; all those variable loose uncertainties which men call chance, has God taken under his own certain disposal and absolute controul. To reduce uncertainty to method, confusion to arrangement, and contingency to order, is solely the prerogative of Almighty power.

Nothing can be further from the intention of these remarks, than to countenance, in the slightest degree, the doctrine of optimism in the sense in which it was maintained by Mr. Pope. Far be it from the writer, to intimate that the good which has thus providentially been produced out of evil, is greater than the good, which would have been produced had no such evil been committed; or to insinuate, that the crimes of men do not diminish the quantity of good which is enjoyed. This would, indeed, be to furnish an apology for vice. That God *can* and *does* bring good out of evil, is unquestionably true; but to affirm, that he brings more, or so much good out of evil as he would have brought out of good, had good been practised, would be indeed a dangerous position.

If, therefore, God often 'educes good from ill,' yet man has no right to count upon his always doing it in the same degree in which he appoints that good shall be productive of good. To resume the illustration, therefore, from a few of the instances already adduced; what an extensive blessing might Alexander, had he acted with other views and to other ends, have proved to that world, whose happiness he impaired by his ambition, and whose morals he corrupted by his example! How much more effectually, and immediately might the reformation have been promoted, had Henry, laying aside the blindness of prejudice, and subduing the turbulence of passion, been the zealous and consistent supporter of the protestant cause; the virtuous husband of one virtuous wife, and the parent of children *all* educated in the sound principles of the reformation? Again, had the popes effectually reformed themselves, how might the unity of the churches have been promoted: and even the schisms, which have arisen in protestant communities, been diminished! It would be superfluous to recapitulate other instances; these, it is presumed, being abundantly sufficient to obviate any charge of the most distant approach towards the fatal doctrine of Necessity.

CHAP. XV.

On the distinguishing character of Christianity.

The great leading truths of Scripture are few in number, though the spirit of them is diffused through every page. The being and attributes of the Almighty; the spiritual worship which he requires; the introduction of natural and moral evil in the world; the restoration of man; the life, death, character, and offices of the Redeemer; the holy example he has given us; the divine system of ethics which he has bequeathed us; the awful sanctions with which they are enforced; the spiritual nature of the eternal world; the necessity of repentance; the pardon of sin through faith in a Redeemer; the offer of divine assistance; and the promise of eternal life. The Scripture describes a multitude of persons who exemplify its truth; whose lives bear testimony to the perfection of the divine law; and whose characters, however clouded with infirmity, and subject to temptation, yet, acting under its authority and influence, evince, by the general tenor of their conduct, that they really embrace religion as a governing principle of the heart, and as the motive to all virtue in the life.

In forming the mind of the royal pupil, an early introduction to these Scriptures, the depository of such important truths, will doubtless be considered as a matter of prime concern. And as her mind opens, it will be thought necessary to point out to her, how one great event led to another still greater; till at length we see a series accomplished, and an immovable foundation laid for our faith and hope, which includes every essential principle of moral virtue and genuine happiness.

To have given rules for moral conduct might appear, to mere human wisdom, the aptest method of improving our nature.—And, accord

ingly, we find such a course generally pursued by the ancient moralists, both of Greece and Asia. Of this, it is not the least inconvenient result, that rules must be multiplied to a degree the most burthensome and perplexing. And there would be, after all, a necessity for incessant alteration, as the rules of one age could not be expected to correspond with the manners of another. This inconvenience might perhaps, in some degree be avoided, by entailing on a people an undeviating sameness of manners. But, even when this has been effected, how oppressively minute, and how disgustingly trivial are the authorized codes of instruction! Of this every fresh translation from the moral writings of the east is an exemplification; as if the mind could be made pure by overloading the memory!

It is one of the perfections of revealed religion, that, instead of multiplying rules, it establishes principles. It traces up right conduct into a few radical dispositions, which, when once fully formed, are the natural sources of correspondent temper and action. To implant these dispositions, then, is the leading object of what we may venture to call the Scripture philosophy. And as the heart must be the seat of that which is to influence the whole man, so it is chiefly to the heart that the holy Scriptures address themselves. Their object is to make us *love* what is *right*, rather than to occupy our understandings with its theory. *Knowledge puffeth up*, says one of our divine instructors, but it is love that edifieth. And the principle which is here assumed, will be found most strictly true, that if a love of goodness be once thoroughly implanted, we shall not need many rules; but we shall act aright from what we may almost call a noble kind of instinct. 'If thine eye be single,' says our Saviour, 'thy whole body shall be full of light.' Our religion, as taught in the Scripture, does, in this very instance, evince its heavenly origin. St. Paul, whose peculiar province it seems to have been to explain, as it were scientifically, the great doctrines of his master, gives us a definition of Christianity, which outdoes at once in brevity, in fulness, and even in systematic exactness all that has been achieved in the art of epitomizing, by the greatest masters of human science,—*Faith which worketh by love.*

It is not too much to affirm, that this expression substantially contains the whole scope and tenor of both Testaments; the substance of all morality, and the very life and soul of human virtue and happiness. A want of attention to what St Paul means by *faith*, too generally makes the sense of the passage be overlooked. But the well-directed student will discern, that St. Paul assumes exactly what has been intimated above, that God's object in Revelation is not *merely* to convey his *will*, but also to manifest *himself;* not *merely* to promulgate laws for restraining or regulating conduct, but to display his *own* nature and attributes, so as to bring back to himself the hearts and affections of fallen man; and that, accordingly, he means by faith, the effectual and impressive apprehension of God, thus manifested. In his language, it is not a notion of the intellect, nor a tradition coldly residing in the recollection, which the Scriptures exhibit, but an actual persuasion of the divine realities. It is, in short, such a conviction of what is revealed, as gives it an efficacy equal for every practical purpose, to that which is derived through the evidence of our senses.

Faith, then, in St. Paul's language, is religion in its simplest, inward principle. It is the deep and efficacious impression, which the manifestation of God, made to us in the Scripture, ought in all reason to produce in our hearts; but which it does not produce until, in answer to our earnest prayer, his holy Spirit 'opens, as it were, our hearts,' to receive the things which are thus presented to our minds. When the unseen realities of religion, are able to do more with us than the tempting objects of this visible world, then and not before, is the divine grace of faith really formed within us.

That this is the scriptural idea of faith, will appear at once, from a perusal of that most interesting portion of Scripture the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. The definition with which the chapter commences, states this precise notion:—'Faith is the *substantiation* of things hoped for, the *demonstration* of things not seen.'* And the instances adduced are most satisfactory exemplifications. 'By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, being moved with fear, prepared an ark,' &c. 'By faith, Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.' 'With the heart,' says St. Paul, 'man believeth unto righteousness; that is, when the infinitely awful and inexpressibly engaging views of God, manifesting himself in the Scripture, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, really, and effectually impress themselves on our hearts, so as to become the paramount principle of inward and outward conduct; then, and not before, we are in the Scripture sense, believers. And this faith, if real, must produce love; for, when our minds and hearts are thus impressed, our affections must of necessity yield to that impression.—If virtue, said a heathen, could be seen with human eyes, what astonishing love would it excite in us! St. Paul's divine faith realizes this very idea. If Moses 'endured as *seeing* him who is invisible,' it could only be, because, in seeing God, he beheld what filled up his whole soul, and so engaged his hopes and fears, but, above all, his love, as to raise him above the low allurements of the world, and the puny menaces of mortals. It is said of him; that 'he accounted even the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;' a preference which implies the strongest *affection*, as well as the deepest *conviction*. His case, then, clearly illustrates what St. Paul says of *faith working by love;* his apprehension of God being so deep and lively, as to fix his supreme love on that supreme excellence, which was thus, as it were, visible to his mind; the current of his temper, and the course of his actions, followed this paramount direction of his heart.

* I thus venture to strengthen the expression in the authorised translation, in order to convey some clearer idea of the original terms, which, as the best critics allow, have, perhaps, a force to which no English words can do justice.

The Scripture then, in reality, does not so much *teach us how* to be virtuous, as, if we comply with its intention, actually *makes* us so. It is St. Paul's argument through the Epistle to the Romans, that even the most perfect code of laws which could be given, would fall infinitely short of our exigencies, if it only gave the rules without inspiring the disposition.

The law of Moses had afforded admirable moral precepts, and even the sages of the heathen world had found out many excellent maxims; but, an inspiriting principle, by which men might be made to *love* goodness as well as to *know* it, was that of which the Gentiles, and, in some measure, the Jews also, stood in need. and to furnish this principle by inspiring such a faith in God, as must produce love to God, and, by producing love to God, become operative in every species of virtue, is avowedly the supreme object of the gospel of Christ.

And, therefore, it is that the Scripture represents to us *facts*, and doctrines founded on facts, rather than *theories;* because facts are alone fitted to work on the heart. In theories, the understanding acts for itself; in apprehending facts, it acts subserviently to the higher powers of the soul, merely furnishing to the affections those objects for which they naturally look; and distinguishing false and seductive appearances from real sources of delight and comfort. In this way the sacred Scriptures make the fullest use of our rational powers, uniformly presenting such facts, as grow clearer the more severely they are examined: completely satisfying our understandings, as to their aptness to the great purpose of working on our hearts, and, on the whole, making our religion as reasonable, as if, like the mathematical truth, it had been exclusively addressed to our intellect; while its influence on the rightly disposed heart gives such an inward proof of its divinity as no merely rational scheme could, in the nature of things, possess.

Let, then, the royal pupil be carefully taught, that Christianity is not to be examined, nor the sacred Scriptures perused, as if they were merely to be believed, and remembered, and held in speculative reverence. But, let it rather be impressed upon her, that the holy Scriptures are God's great means of producing in her heart, that awe of his presence, that reverence of his majesty, that delight in his infinite perfections, that practical affectionate knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent, which constitutes the *rest*, the *peace*, the *strength*, the *light*, the *consolation* of every soul which attains to it. Let her be taught to regard the oracles of God, not merely as a light to guide her steps, but, as a sacred fire to animate and invigorate her inmost soul. A purifying flame, like that upon the altar, from whence the seraph conveyed the coal to the lips of the prophet, who cried out, 'Lo! this hath touched my lips, and mine iniquity is taken away, and my sin is purged.'

That fear of God, which the Scripture, when used as it ought, never fails to inspire, is felt by the possessor to be essential wisdom; and that love of God, which it is no less fitted to excite, equally acknowledged by him whom it influences, to be at once essential virtue, and essential happiness; and both united, are found to be that pure element in which rational intelligences are formed to live, and out of which they must ever be perturbed and miserable.

But, to make the Scripture thus efficacious, it must be studied according to the will of him who gave it. It is said of our Saviour in the instance of his disciples,—'Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures;' and it is said of Lydia, saint Paul's first convert at Philippi, 'That the Lord opened her heart, to attend to the things which were spoken of Paul.' We read of others of whom it is observed, 'the gospel was preached, but it did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it.' What follows? evidently, that the Scripture, to be read effectually, must be read devoutly, with earnest and constant prayer to him whose word it is, that he would so impress it on our hearts, by his good Spirit, that it may become the power of God unto salvation. 'If any man lack wisdom let him ask it of God,' says St. James, 'who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.'

But, one grand peculiarity of Christianity remains to be mentioned—That it addresses us not merely as ignorant, but as prejudiced and corrupt; as needing not merely instruction, but reformation. This reformation can be accomplished, these prejudices and these corruptions can be removed, only by divine power. It is a new creation of the soul, requiring no less than its original formation, the hand of the divine artificer. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him.' God must reveal them by his Spirit: he must produce the disposition to receive them.

To this end no kind of previous knowledge is more conducive than the knowledge of ourselves as fallen, depraved, and helpless creatures; and, therefore, absolutely requiring some such gracious interposition in our favour as that which the Scripture offers. Exactly as the malady is felt, will the remedy be valued; and, consequently, no instruction can be more indispensable for the royal pupil, than that which tends to impress on her mind, that in this respect she stands on a level with the meanest of her fellow-creatures. That, from the natural corruption of every human heart whatever amiable qualities an individual may possess, each carries about with him a root of bitterness, which, if not counteracted by the above means, will spread itself through the whole soul, disfigure the character, and disorder the life; that this malignant principle, while predominant, will admit but of a shadowy and delusive semblance of virtue, which temptation ever dissipates, and from which the heart never receives solid comfort. Who can enumerate the hourly calamities which the proud, the self-willed, the voluptuous, are inflicting on themselves; which rend and lacerate the bosom, while no eye perceives it? Who can express the daily disappointment, the alternate fever and lassitude of him, whose heart knows of no rest, but what this disordered world can afford?

Who then is happy? He alone, whether prince or subject, who, through the powerful and salutary influence of revealed religion on his heart, is so impressed with things invisible, as to rise superior to the vicissitudes of mortality: who so believes and feels what is contained in the Bible, as to make God his refuge, his Saviour his trust, and true practical holiness the chief object of his pursuit. To such a one his Bible, and his closet, are a counterpoise to all the trials and the violence to which he may be exposed. 'Thou shalt hide them privily,' says the Psalmist, 'by thine own presence, from the provoking of all men; thou shalt keep them secretly in thy pavilion from the strife of tongues.

CHAP. XVI.

On the Scripture evidences of Christianity.—The Christian religion peculiarly adapted to the exigencies of men; and especially calculated to supply the defects of heathen philosophy.

If Christianity were examined with attention, and candour, it would be found to contain irresistible evidences of its divine origin. Those who have formed continued trains of argument in its support, have, no doubt, often effected very valuable purposes; but it is certain, that conviction may be attained in a much simpler method. In fact, it would imply a very reasonable charge against Christianity, if its proofs were of such a nature, that none but scholars or philosophers could feel their conclusiveness.

A book exists in the world, purporting to contain the authentic records, and authoritative principles of the one true religion. It is obviously the work not of one person, or of one age. Its earliest pages, on the contrary, are, beyond all sober question, the most ancient writings in the world; while its later parts were confessedly composed at a time much within the limits of historic certainty; a time, indeed, with which we are better acquainted than with any other period in the retrospect of ancient history; and which, like a distant eminence brightly illuminated by the rays of the sun, is distinctly seen, while intermediate tracts are involved in impenetrable mist.

Against the authority of this most interesting volume, numberless objections have been raised. But, who has yet clearly and satisfactorily shown how its existence, in the form it bears, can be rationally accounted for, on the supposition of its spuriousness? That a series of records originating so variously both as to time, occasion, and circumstances, should involve some obscurity or difficulty, or even in some instances apparent incongruity, is surely no cause of wonder: and that these should be dwelt upon and exaggerated by persons hostile to the principles which the volume contains, and which its truth would establish, is most natural. But, which of those objectors has ever been able to substitute a system less liable to objection? Have any of them given a satisfactory solution of the unparalleled difficulties which clog *their* hypothesis? Which of them has even attempted fully to explain the simple phenomenon of such a volume being in the world, on the supposition of fabrication or imposture?

This book divides itself into two great portions, the first containing the account of a preparatory religion, given to a single nation; the latter describing the completion of the scheme, so far as to fit this religion for general benefit, and unlimited diffusion.

Respecting the first great portion which we call the Old Testament, the leading features appear peculiarly striking. In this book alone, during those ages, was maintained the first great truth, of there being *only* one *living and true God:* which, though now so universally acknowledged, was then unconceived by the politest nations, and most accomplished philosophers. And respecting both portions of this book, but especially the latter, known by the name of the New Testament, this no less interesting remark is to be made, that, in every essential point, nearly the same view is taken of man's weaknesses and wants, of the nature of the human mind, and what is necessary to its ease and comfort, as is taken by the wisest heathen philosophers; with this most important difference, however, that the *chief good* of man, that *pure perennial mental happiness*, about which they so much discoursed, after which they so eagerly panted, but of which they so confessedly failed, is here spoken of substantially, in their notion of it, as a blessing actually *possessed*, and the feeling of it described in such language as bears, so far as it is possible for human expressions to bear, the stamp of conscious truth and unsophisticated nature.

May we be allowed, in this connexion, to give a superficial sketch of the defects in the system of the ancient philosophers? The belief in a life to come was confined to a few, and even in them this belief was highly defective. Those who asserted it, maintained it only in a speculative and sceptical way; and it would not be easy to produce an instance of their using any doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state, as their *instrument in promoting virtue.* They decorated their system with beautiful sayings, on the immortality of the soul; but they did not support it upon *this* basis. There was, therefore, no foundation to their fabric. *Poetry*, indeed, had her Elysium, and her Tartarus. It appears, however, that the *philosophy* of Greece and Rome, in proportion as it advanced, diminished the strength of the impression which the poets had made on the minds of the vulgar, and thus the very religion of the sages tended to lessen among the people the sense of a future responsibility.

The ancient philosophers had no idea of what we designate by the name of the *grace and mercy of God.* They had some conception of his bounty, of his providential care, of all his natural perfections; and of some even of his moral excellences; for example, of his benevolence and justice. But their united wisdom never framed a sentence like that in which the true God was revealed to Moses: 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' It is on this part

of the character of God, that the Scripture is so abundantly full. This ignorance of the mercy of God associated itself in the heathens, with much other religious and moral blindness. From this ignorance, that God was merciful, their only means of persuading themselves that they were in his favour, was to assume that they were upright. And, who can estimate the moral consequences of an habitual effort to represent to ourselves all our own actions, as not having any of the guilt of sin, and as not impeaching our claims to the justice of the Almighty? The lofty sentiment, that they were themselves a species of gods, was sometimes resorted to, at once as a source of self-complacency, and as the supposed means of virtue. The Stoic affected to rise superior to the temptations of the body, to soar above all sense of guilt, and all dread of pain, by the aid of an extravagant, and almost atheistical sentiment, which was opposite to common sense, and subversive of all true humility, a quality which is the very basis of Christian virtues. He was his own god: for he assumed to himself to be able, by his own strength, if he would but exert it, to triumph over fortune; in other words, over Providence, over pain, fear, and death itself; and to rise, by the same strength, into a participation of the nature of the Eternal. Thus, as an eminent writer has observed, 'those who endeavoured to cure voluptuousness, resorted to pride as the means of virtue.' In the latter ages, indeed, not a few appear to have been at once elated by stoical pride, and dissolved in epicurean luxury.

Their doctrine even of a Providence, connected as it was with the merely mundane system, led to much misconception of the nature of true morality, and to gross superstition. From ignorance of future retribution, they imagined that virtue and vice received their exact recompence *here*. They were religious, therefore, even to superstition, in assuming the existence of providential interference in the case of the commission of palpable crimes; and they were tempted to esteem those actions, however sinful, to be no offences against God, which God did not mark by some temporal punishment.*

Such appear to have been some of the chief deficiencies of the heathen system; a system which strongly points out the want of such a light as that which the Gospel affords. The philosophers themselves seemed conscious of some great defect, and thus the very revelation which Christianity has furnished, supplied all that was necessary to man, and comes recommended by the acknowledged occasion for it.

How striking are the peculiarities, how obvious the superiority, which even on a first attentive perusal, fill the mind of the serious reader of the Scripture! But what infidel writer has so much as taken its most obvious facts into sober consideration? who has attempted to explain how the writers of the Old Testament should differ as they have done from all the writers in the world, not only in maintaining so pure a theology, but in connecting with it a national history, through which that theology passes as a chain, binding together and identifying itself with their whole system, civil and religious? This history, involving supernatural events, may be a reason why the wilful infidel should reject it without examination. But let him who pretends to candour, attentively consider these records, and try if he can project even an outline of Jewish history, from which those miraculous interpositions shall be consistently excluded. There are facts in this narration which cannot be disputed: the Jews necessarily having a history as well as other nations. Let the sober infidel, then, endeavour to make out for them an hypothetic history, in which, leaving out every thing miraculous, all the self-evident phenomena shall be accounted for with philosophic plausibility. If this be possible, why has it not been attempted? But if this be really impracticable, I mean, if these events do actually so make up the body of their national history, that no history would be left, if they were to be taken away; then let some farther theory be devised, to explain how a history, thus exclusively strange, should stand connected with a theology as exclusively true? Let the sober deist prove, if he can, that it was unworthy of the God of nature to distinguish, by such extraordinary interferences, that nation, which alone, of all the nations of the earth, acknowledged him; or let him separate, if he be able, that national recognition of the true God from their belief of those distinguishing interpositions. If they alone acknowledged the rightful sovereign of the universe, who believed that that sovereign had signally manifested himself in their behalf, can the deist show that the belief of the events was not essential to the acknowledgment of the supposed author of them? Or will he assert, that the establishment of such a truth amongst that people, who have since actually communicated it to so many other men, perhaps to all, deists not excepted, who really do embrace it; I say, will he soberly assert that such a purpose did not justly and consistently warrant the very kind of interposition, which the Jewish history presents?

But let the honest infidel, if such there be, take further into the account the manner in which the maintainers of the one true God have acted upon that belief. Let him examine the principles of the Jewish *moralists*, and see where else, in the ancient world, the genuine interests of virtue are so practically provided for. Let him read the sublime and most cordial effusions of the Old Testament *poets*, and say, where else the Author of Being, and of all good, is so fully recognised, or so suitably adored? Let him consider the expostulation of the *prophets*, and the self-criminating records of the *historian*, and find for them any shadow of parallel in the history of mankind. Let the man of *genius* observe how the minds of the writers were elevated, on what a strong and steady pinion they soared. Let the man of *virtue* reflect how deeply their hearts were engaged; and let the man of *learning* compare what he reads here with all that has come from heathen poets, sages, or lawgivers; and then, let it be soberly pronounced, whether it is conceivable that all this should exist, without some adequate cause, and whether

* A striking instance of this disposition to abuse the doctrine of Providence, was exhibited in the speech of Nicias to his soldiers, after they were defeated at Syracuse.

any cause can be so rationally assigned, as that which their venerable lawgiver has himself expressed in terms the most critically opposite, and the most unaffectedly impressive? 'Ask now,' says he, 'of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon earth; and ask from the one side of heaven to the other, whether there had been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, and live? or has God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you, in Egypt, before your eyes? Unto thee it was shown that the Lord He is God; there is none else beside him. Know, therefore, this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord He is God; in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, there is none else.'

If such be the inevitable conclusion respecting the Old Testament, how much more irresistible must be the impression made by the New! The peculiarity which was adverted to above, ought, even in the eye of a philosophical inquirer, to engage deep attention. I mean, that to which heathen sages pointed, as the only valuable object of human pursuit, is in this wonderful volume described as matter of *possession*. Here, and here only, amongst all the records of human feelings, is *happiness* seriously claimed, and consistently exemplified. To the importance of this point, witness is borne by every wish which a human being forms, and by every sigh which heaves his bosom. But, it is a fact, perhaps not yet sufficiently adverted to, that at no period do heathen sages seem so strongly to have felt the utter insufficiency of all their schemes for attaining this object, as at the period when the light of Christianity diffused itself through the earth. Cicero, that brightest of Roman luminaries, had not only put his countrymen in possession of the substance of Grecian wisdom, to which his own rich eloquence gave new force and lustre, but he had added thereto the deep results of his own observations, during a life of the most diversified experience, and a period the most eventful. And, to this point, he uniformly brings all his disquisitions, that man can only be happy by *a conquest over himself;* by some energetic principle of wisdom and virtue so established in his bosom, as to make him habitually superior to every wrong passion, to every criminal or weak desire, to the attractions of pleasure, and the shocks of calamity. But it was not Cicero only, who rested in this conclusion: Horace, the gayest of the Latin poets, is little less explicit in his acknowledgment, that man should then only find ease when he had learnt the art *of flying, in a moral sense, from himself.*

To the sentiment of a great philosopher and poet, let us add that of a no less eminent historian. Polybius says, 'It seems that men, who, in the practice of craft and subtlety, exceed all other animals, may, with good reason, be acknowledged to be no less depraved than they; for other animals are subservient only to the appetites of the body, and by them are led to do wrong. But men, who have also sentiment to guide them, are guilty of ill conduct, not less through the abuse of their acquired reason, than from the force of their natural desires.*

Although, therefore, the doctrine of human depravity be, strictly speaking, a tenet peculiar to Revelation; since it is the Bible alone which teaches how sin entered into the world, and death, with all its attendant woes and miseries, by sin; though it is there alone that we discover the obscurity and confusion which there is in the understanding of the natural man, the crookedness of his will, and the disorder of his affections; though it is there alone that we are led to the origin, and, blessed be God, to the remedy of this disease, in the renewal of our nature, which is the peculiar office of the holy Spirit to effect; yet, the wiser and more discerning among the heathens both felt and acknowledged, in no inconsiderable degree, the thing itself. They experienced not a little of the general weight and burthen of the effect, though they were still puzzled and confounded in their inquiry after the cause. And their continual disappointment here was an additional source of conviction, that the malady, which they painted in the deepest colourings of language, *did* exist. They seemed to have a perception, that there was an object somewhere, which might remedy these disorders, aid these infirmities, satisfy these desires, and bring all their thoughts and faculties into a due obedience and happy regulation. They had a dawning on their minds, that a capacity for happiness was not entirely lost, nor the object to fill and satisfy it quite out of reach. In fact, they felt the greatness of the human mind, but they felt it as a vast vacuity in which, after all, they could find nothing but phantoms of happiness, and realities of misery.

To these deep-toned complaints, in which all sorts and conditions of men united, Christianity comes forward to make the first propositions of relief. She recognises every want and weakness precisely as these sages represented it: and she confidently offers the very remedy for which they so loudly called. Her professed object is to establish, in the human mind, that collateral principle of virtuous and happy superiority to every thing earthly, sensual, and selfish, on which philosophy had so long fixed its anxious, but hopeless desires, and to which alone it looked for real felicity.

In this view, then, Christianity rests her pretensions, not merely on historical evidences, however satisfactory, nor on the fidelity of successive transcribers, however capable of proof; but, on a much more internal, and even more conclusive title; its exquisite correspondence to the exigencies of human nature, as illustrated by the wisest of all ages and nations, and as felt by every reflecting child of mortality.

Let, then, the deepest sentiments of heathen philosophers and poets, respecting human nature, be dispassionately compared with those expressions of our blessed Saviour, in which he particularly describes the benefits to be enjoyed

* Hampton's Polybius, book 17, p. 393.

by his faithful followers; and let it be judged, whether there is not such a correspondence between what *they want*, and what *he professes to bestow*, as occurs in no other instance in the intellectual world.—*Rest* for their souls, is what they anxiously sought: and, a burning fever of the mind, in which corroding care, insatiable desire, perpetual disappointment, unite in torturing, is the malady of which they uniformly complain. Is it not then wonderful to hear our Saviour so admirably adapt his language to their very feelings? 'Come unto me,' says he, 'all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find *rest* to your souls.'—'He that drinketh of this water, shall thirst again,' intimating by this very expression, the insufficiency of every thing earthly to satisfy the mind, 'but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.'

Whoever is acquainted with the language of the ancient philosophers must see, that in these expressions our Saviour meets their wishes; we do not mean to say, that they had or could have any right apprehensions of that preliminary abasement which the Scripture calls repentance, and which was put to them in possession of the rest and peace for which they sought, and which Christ does actually bestow. We do not mean to say, that the pride of unassisted nature could allow them to see that they were indeed objects of pure mercy on the part of God: and that their knowledge of themselves, or of him, could be such as to bring the real spirit of their wishes to any actual coincidence with the wonderful means which God, in his goodness, had devised to satisfy them. Though they did occasionally express a sense of an evil nature, and a wish for relief from it, yet who but the author of our religion ever met those wishes? In what other instance has a moral physician thus pledged himself to relieve angonised human nature? If there be no such instance, the conclusion is inevitable: that Christianity, from the deep importance, as well as the unrivalled singularity of its overtures, justly claims our most serious inquiry, whether what has been thus promised has been actually accomplished.

Christianity has amply provided for this natural demand; for it has been ordered, that while the New Testament contains every principle necessary for the attainment of human happiness, it should also give us a perfect specimen of its own efficacy. This we accordingly have in the fully delineated character of the apostle St. Paul. There is, perhaps, no human person in all antiquity, of whose inmost feelings, as well as outward demeanour, we are so well enabled to judge, as of this great Christian teacher. The particulars respecting him the Acts of the Apostles, compared with, and illustrated by, his own invaluable epistles, make up a full length portrait of him, in which no lineament is wanting. And, the wisdom of God, in this single arrangement, has furnished a body of evidence in support, both of the truth and the efficacy of our holy religion, which, when attentively examined, will ever satisfy the sincere, and silence the caviller.

The numberless minute and unobvious coincidences between the narrative and the epistles, have been so illustrated in a late invaluable work,* as to make the authenticity of both matter of absolute demonstration; and, from such an instance of Christian influence, thus authenticated, the pretensions of Christianity itself may be brought to a summary and unequivocal test.

Was St. Paul, then, or was he not, an exemplification of that nobly-imagined wise man, which the heathen philosophers had pictured to themselves; as the height of human felicity? Does he appear to have found that rest, for which sages panted, and which his divine master proposed to bestow? Did he possess that virtuous and happy superiority to every thing earthly, sensual, and selfish, which was acknowledged to constitute the very essence of true philosophy? Let him that understands human nature read, and answer for himself. Let him collect all that has been spoken on this subject by Socrates or Plato, by Cicero or Seneca, by Epictetus or Marcus Antonius, and judge coolly, whether St. Paul does not substantially exemplify, and, I may add, infinitely out do it all?

Horace has celebrated the fortitude of Regulus, in one of his most animated odes; but it may most soberly be asked, what was the fortitude of this pagan hero, when compared with that which was unconsciously displayed by St. Paul in his way to Jerusalem? Regulus, we are told, would not turn his eyes towards his wife or his children. In his heroism, therefore, he sinks his humanity. Not so our apostle; while he fears nothing for himself, he feels every thing for those around him. 'What mean ye thus to weep, and to break my heart,' says he, 'for I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.' If this be not perfect magnanimity, where was it ever exhibited?

I will add but two instances.—One expressing the feelings which were habitual to himself; the other describing that perfection of goodness, which he wished to be pursued by others: and let the learned infidel find, if he can, a parallel for either. In speaking of himself, after acknowledging an act of friendship in those to whom he writes, he says, 'Not as though I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' What a testimonial this to the faithfulness of the offer of our Saviour, to which we have already referred! How consummately does it evince, that when he engaged to fulfil that deepest of human desires, the thirst of happiness, he promised no more than he was infinitely able to perform! The apostle's exhortation to others, is no less worthy of attention. 'Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things

* Paley's Horæ Paulinæ.

are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report—If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.' In what human words did genuine moral feelings ever more completely embody itself? Are they not, as it were, the very soul and body of true philosophy? But what philosopher, before him, after such a lesson to his pupils, could have dared to add the words which immediately follow?—'The things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, *do*, and the God of peace shall be with you.'

This is a most imperfect portion of that body of internal evidence, which even the most general view of Christianity presses on the attentive and candid mind: and with even this before us, may it not be boldly asked, what else like this has come within human knowledge? On these characters of the gospel then, let the infidel fairly try his strength. Let him disprove, if he can, the correspondence between the wishes of philosophy, and the achievements of Christianity, or destroy the identity of that common view of man's chief good, and paramount happiness. Let him account, if he can, for these unexampled congruities, on any other ground than that of the truth of Christianity; or let him even plausibly elude the matter-of-fact evidence to this truth, which arises from St. Paul's character. In the mean time, let the pious Christian enjoy his sober triumph in that system, which not in St. Paul only, but in all its true votaries, in every age and nation, it has produced—'a hope full of immortality,'—'a peace which passeth all understanding,'—'a wisdom pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.'

If any difficulty, attending particular doctrines of Christianity, should present itself; it will be well first to inquire, whether the doctrine in question be really Christian? and this can only be determined by a dispassionate and impartial recurrence to the Scriptures themselves, particularly the New Testament. Whatever is clearly asserted there, follows inevitably from the established divinity of that which contains it. And in what conceivable case can, not only humility, but rational consistency, be more wisely exercised, than in receiving, without question, the obvious parts, and then no doubt can be entertained respecting the whole. Happy had it been for the Christian world, had this self-evident maxim been practically attended to; for then what dispute could possibly have arisen about—'that Word which was made flesh, and dwelt among us, being also God over all, blessed for evermore?' Or whether the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose name we are baptised, must not be essentially divine? Or whether there can be any misconception in what the redeemed in heaven make the subject of their eternal song: 'that the Lamb which was slain, had redeemed them to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?'

That plain and simple readers think they find each other's doctrines clearly set forth in the sacred volume, is a matter of fact, authenticated by abundant evidence; and that, where they have been disputed, those who have agreed in holding them, have evidently derived a deeper influence from Christianity, both as to the conduct of their lives, and the comfort of their minds, than those who have rejected them,—if it could not be substantiated by innumerable proofs, would be almost self-evident, on a merely theoretic view of the two cases. For who ever derived either partial strength, or mental comfort, from indulging a habit of metaphysical disquisition! And who but such have, in any age of the church, questioned the doctrines of our Saviour's divinity, the three fold distinction in the divine nature, or the expiatory efficacy of Christ's *one oblation of himself, once offered for the sins of the whole world?*

The Scriptures are so explicit on the last mentioned great doctrine of our religion, that we are not left to infer its truth and certainty as we might almost do from the obvious exigencies of human nature. That guilt is one of the deepest of the natural feelings, will not be disputed; and, that the sense of guilt has been, in every age and nation a source of the deepest horrors, and has suggested even still more horrible methods of appeasing the perturbed mind, can be questioned by none who is acquainted, however slightly, with the history of the world. Atheists in pagan countries have made this very fact the great apology for their impiety, charging upon religion itself the dismal superstitions, which appeared to them to arise from it. And Plutarch, one of the most enlightened of heathen moralists, concludes that even Atheism itself is preferable to that superstitious dread of the gods, which he saw impelling so many wretched victims to daily and hourly self-torture. The fact is, no misery incident to man involves either greater depth, or complication, than that of a guilty conscience. And a system of religion, which would have left this unprovided for, we may venture to pronounce, would have been utterly unsuitable to man, and, therefore, utterly unworthy of the wisdom and goodness of God.

How appositely to this awful feeling, does the doctrine of the atonement come into the christian system! How astonishingly has even its general belief chased from the christian world those superstitious phantoms with which paganism ever has been, and even at this day is, haunted! But above all, what relief has it afforded to the humble penitent! 'This,' said the pious Melancthon, 'can only be understood in conflicts of conscience.' It is most true. Let those therefore, who have never felt such conflicts, beware how they despise what they may yet be impelled to resort to, as the only certain stay and prop of their sinking spirits. 'It is a fearful thing,' says an inspired writer, 'to fall into the hands of the living God.' Against this fear to what resource could we trust, but that which the mercy of God has no less clearly revealed to us? 'Seeing, then, that we have a great high priest that is passed for us into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a high priest who can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly to

the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.'

CHAP. XVII.

The use of history in teaching the choice of favourites.—Flattery.—Our taste improved in the arts of adulation.—The dangers of flattery exemplified.

It is not from the history of good princes alone, that signal instruction may be reaped. The lives of the criminal and unfortunate, commonly unfortunate because criminal, will not be read in vain. They are instructive, not only by detailing the personal calamities with which the misconduct was followed, but by exhibiting that misconduct as the source of the alienation of the hearts of their subjects; and often as the remote, sometimes as the immediate, cause of civil commotions and revolutions.

But caution is to be learned, not from their vices only, but from their weaknesses and errors; from their false judgments, their ignorance of human nature, their narrow views arising from a bad education, their judging from partial information, deciding from infused prejudices, and acting on party principles; their being habituated to consider petty unconnected details, instead of taking in the great aggregate of public concerns; their imprudent choice of ministers, their unhappy spirit of favouritism, their preference of selfish flatterers to disinterested counsellors, and making the associates of their pleasures the dispensers of justice and the ministers of public affairs.*

'Tis by that close acquaintance with the characters of men which history supplies, that a prince must learn how to avoid a jealous Sejanus, a vicious Tigellinus, a corrupt Spenser and Gavaston, a rapacious Epsom and Dudley, a pernicious D'Ancre, and ambitious Wolsey, a profligate Buckingham; we allude at once to the minister of the first James, and to the still more profligate Buckingham of the Second Charles; a tyrannical Richelieu, a crafty Mazarin, a profuse Louvois, an intriguing Ursini, an inefficient Chamillard, an imperious duchess of Marlborough, and a supple Masham.

History presents frequent instances of an inconsistency not uncommon in human nature,—sovereigns the most arbitrary to their subjects, themselves the tools of favourites. He who treated his people with disdain, and his parliaments with contempt, was, in turn, the slave of Arran, of Car, and of Villiers. His grandson, who boldly intrenched on the liberties of his country, was himself governed by the Cabal.

It may sound paradoxical to assert, that in a period of society, when characters are less strongly marked, a sovereign is, in some respects, in more danger of choosing wrong. In our days, and under our constitution, indeed, it is scarcely possible to err so widely, as to select, for ministers, men of such atrocious characters as those who have been just held up to detestation. The very improvement of society, therefore, has caused the question to become one of a much nicer kind. It is no longer a choice between men, whose outward characters exhibit a monstrous disproportion to each other. A bold oppressor of the people, the people would not endure. A violent infringer, on the constitution, the parliament would not tolerate. But still out of that class, from which the election must be made, the moral dispositions, the political tendencies, and the religious principles of men may differ so materially, that the choice may seriously affect at once, the credit and happiness of the prince, and the welfare of the country. The conduct of good and bad men will always furnish no inconsiderable means of distinction; yet at a time when gross and palpable enormities are less likely to be endured, it is the more necessary for a prince to be able accurately to discriminate the shades of the characters of public men.

While, therefore, every tendency to art or dissimulation should be reprobated, the most exact caution should be inculcated, and the keenest discernment cultivated, in the royal education. All that can improve the judgment, sharpen the penetration, or give enlarged views of the human mind, should be put in exercise. A prince should possess that sort of sight, which, while it takes in remote views, accurately distinguishes near objects. To the eye of the lynx, which no minuteness can elude, should be added that of the eagle, which no brightness can blind, for whatever dazzles darkens. He should acquire that justness, as well as extent of mind, which should enable him to study the character of his enemies, and decide upon that of his friends; to penetrate keenly, but not invidiously, into the designs of others, and vigilantly to scrutinize his own. His mind should be stored, not with shifts and expedients, but with large and liberal plans; not with stratagems, but resources; not with subterfuges, but principles; not with prejudices, but reasons. He should treasure up sound maxims to teach him to act consistently; be provided with steady measures suited to the probable occasion, together with a promptitude of mind, prepared to vary them so as to meet any contingency.

In no instance will those who have the care of forming the royal pupil find a surer exercise of their wisdom and integrity, than in their endeavours to guard the mind from the deadly poison of flattery. 'Many kings,' says the witty South, 'have been destroyed by poison, but none has been so efficaciously mortal as that drunk in by the ear.'

Intellectual taste, it is true, is much refined, since the Grecian sophist tried to cure the melancholy of Alexander by telling him, that 'Justice was painted, as seated near the throne of Jupiter, to indicate that right and wrong depended on the will of kings; and all whose actions ought to be accounted just, both by themselves and others.'

Compliments are not now absurd and extravagant, as when the most elegant of Roman poets invited his imperial master to pick out his

* The Romans seem to have had just ideas of the dignity of character and office attached to the friend of a prince by denominating him, not favourite, but *particeps curarum*.

own lodging among the constellations: nor, as when the bard of Pharsalia offered to the emperor his choice, either of the sceptre of Jupiter, or the chariot of Apollo; modestly assuring him, that there was not a god in the pantheon, who would not yield his empire to him, and account it an honour to resign in his favour. This meritorious prince, so worthy to displace the gods, was Nero, who rewarded Lucan, not for his adulation, but for being a better poet than himself, with a violent death.

The smooth and obsequious Pliny improved on all anterior adulation. Not content with making his emperor the imitator or the equal of Deity, he makes him a pattern for it; protesting that 'men needed to make no other prayers to the gods, than that they would continue to be as good and propitious lords to them as Trajan had been.'

But the refined sycophant of modern days is more likely to hide the actual blemishes, and to veil the real faults of a prince from himself than to attribute to him incredible virtues the ascription of which would be too gross to impose on his discernment. There will be more danger of a modern courtier imitating the delicacy of the ancient painter, who, being ordered to draw the portrait of a prince who had but one eye, adopted the conciliating expedient of painting him in profile.

But if the modern flatterer be less gross, he will be, on that very account the more dangerous. The refinement of his adulation prevents the object of it from putting himself on his guard. The prince is led, perhaps, to conceive with self-complacency that he is hearing the language of truth, while he is only the dupe of a more accomplished flatterer. He should especially beware of mistaking freedom of manner, for frankness of sentiment; and of confounding the artful familiarities of a designing favourite, with the honest simplicity of a disinterested friend.

Where, in our more correct day, is the courtier who would dare to add profaneness to flattery so far, as to declare, as was done by the greatest philosopher this country ever produced, in his letter to prince Charles, that, 'as the Father had been his Creator, so he hoped the Son would be his Redeemer?'* But what a noble contrast to this base and blasphemous servility in the chancellor of James, does the conduct of the chancellor of his grandson exhibit! The unbending rectitude of Clarendon not only disdained to flatter, in his private intercourse, a master to whom however his pen is always too partial, but it led boldly and honestly to remonstrate against his flagitious conduct. A standing example for all times, to the servants and companions of kings, he resolutely reproved his master to his face, while he thought it his duty to defend him, somewhat too strongly, indeed, to others. He boldly besought the king, 'not to believe that he had a prerogative to declare vice to be virtue.' And in one of the noblest speeches on record, in answer to a dishonourable request of the king, that he would visit some of his majesty's infamous associates; he laid before him with a lofty sincerity, 'the turpitude of a man in his dignified office, being obliged to countenance persons scandalous for their vices, for which by the laws of God and man, they ought to be odious and exposed to the judgment of the church and state.' In this instance superior to his great rival Sully; that no desire of pleasing the king, no consideration of *expediency*, could induce him to visit the royal mistresses, or to countenance the licentious favourites.

Princes have generally been greedy of praise in a pretty exact proportion to the pains which they have taken not to deserve it. Henry the VIIIth was a patron of learned men, and might himself be accounted learned. But his favourite studies, instead of preserving him from the love of flattery, served to lay him open to it. Scholastic divinity, the fashionable learning of the times, as Burnet observes, suited his vain and contentious temper, and as ecclesiastics were to be his critics, his pursuits of polemical theology brought him in the largest revenue of praise, so that there seemed to be a contest between him and them, whether they could offer, or he could swallow, the most copious draughts of flattery.

But the reign of James the first was the great epocha of adulation in England; and a prince who had not one of the qualities of a warlike, and scarcely one of the virtues of a pacific king, received from clergy and laity, from statesmen philosophers, and men of letters, praises not only utterly repugnant to truth and virtue, but directly contrary to that frankness of manners, and magnanimity of spirit, which had formerly characterized Englishmen. This ascription of all rights, and all talents, and all virtues, to a prince, bold through fear, and presumptuous because he wished to conceal his own pusillanimity, rebounded, as was but just, on the flatterers; who, in return for their adulation, were treated by him with a contempt, which not the boldest of his predecessors had ever ventured to manifest. His inquiry of his company at dinner, whether he might not take his subjects' money when he needed it, without the formality of parliament, indicates that one object was always uppermost in his mind;* his familiar intercourse was employed in diving into the private opinions of men, to discover to what length his oppressive schemes might be carried; and his public conduct occupied in putting those schemes into practice.

But the royal person whom we presume to advise, may, from the very circumstance of her sex, have more complicated dangers to resist; against which her mind should be early fortified. The dangers of adulation are doubled, when the female character is combined with the royal. Even the vigorous mind of the great Elizabeth did not guard her against the powerful assaults of the flattery paid to her person. That masculine spirit was as much the slave of the most egregious vanity, as the weakest of her sex could have been. All her admirable prudence and profound policy, could not preserve her from the childish and silly levity with which

* See Howell's Letters.

* The requisition was allowed in a phrase as disgustingly servile, by bishop Neile; as it was pleasantly evaded by Andrews.

she greedily invited the compliments of the artful minister of her more beautiful rival. Even that gross instance of Melvil's extravagance enchanted her, when, as she was playing on Mary's favourite instrument, for the purpose of being overheard by him, the dissembling courtier affected to be so ravished by her skill, as to burst into her apartment, like an enraptured man, who had forgotten his reverence in his admiration. It was a curious combat in the great mind of Elizabeth, between the offended pride of the queen, and the gratified vanity of the woman; but Melvil knew his trade in knowing human nature;—he calculated justly. The woman conquered.

Princes have in all ages complained that they have been ill served. But, is it not because they have not always carefully selected their servants? Is it not because they have too often bestowed confidence on the unwise, and employments on the unworthy? Because, while they have loaded the undeserving with benefits, they have neglected to reward those who have served them well, and to support those who have served them long? Is it not because they have sometimes a way of expecting every thing, while they seem to exact nothing? And have not too many been apt to consider that the honour of serving them is itself a sufficient reward?

By a close study of the weaknesses and passions of a sovereign, crafty and designing favourites have ever been on the watch to establish their own dominion, by such appropriate means as seem best accommodated to the turn of those weaknesses and passions. If Leonore Concini, and the duchess of Marlborough, obtained the most complete ascendancy over their respective queens, both probably by artful flattery at first, they afterwards secured and preserved it by a tyranny the most absolute. In connexions of this nature, it is usually on the side of the sovereign, that the caprice and the haughtiness are expected; but the domineering favourite of Anne exclusively assumed to herself all these prerogatives of despotic power, and exercised them without mercy, on the intimidated and submissive queen; a queen, who, with many virtues, not having had the discernment to find out, that the opposite extreme to what is wrong, is commonly wrong also, in order to extricate herself from her captivity to one favourite, fell into the snares spread for her by the servility of another. Thus, whether the imperious duchess, or the obsequious Masham, were lady of the ascendant, the sovereign was equally infatuated, equally misled.

That attachments formed without judgment, and pursued without moderation, are likely to be dissolved without reason; and that breaches the most trivial in themselves may be important in their consequences, were never more fully exemplified than in the trifling cause, which, by putting an end to the intercourse between the above named queen and duchess, produced events the most unforeseen and extraordinary. While the duke was fighting her majesty's battles abroad, and his duchess supporting his interest against a powerful party at court; a pair of gloves of a new invention, sent first by the milliner to the favourite (impatient to have them before the queen, who had ordered a similar pair,) so incensed her majesty, as to be the immediate cause, by driving the duchess from her post, of depriving the duke of his command, compelling the confederates to agree to a peace, preserving Louis from the destruction which awaited him, making a total revolution in parties at home, and determining the fate of Europe.*

To a monarch more eager to acquire fame than to deserve it, to pension a poet will be a shorter cut to renown than to dispense blessings to his country. Louis XII. instead of buying immortality of a servile bard, earned and enjoyed the appellation of *father of his people;* that people whom his brilliant successor, Louis the *great*, drained and plundered, or in the emphatic language of the prophet, *peeled and scattered* to provide money for his wars, his mistresses, his buildings, and his spectacles. Posterity, however, has done justice to both kings, and *le bien aime* is remembered with affectionate veneration, while *le grand* is regarded as the fabricator of the ruin of his race.

How totally must adulation have blunted the delicacy of the latter prince, when he could shut himself up with his two royal historiographers, Boileau and Racine, to hear them read portions of his own history. Deservedly high as was the reputation of these two fine geniuses, in the walks of poetry, was that history likely to convey much truth or instruction to posterity, which, after being composed by two pensioned poets, was read by them to the monarch, who was to be the hero of the tale? Sovereigns, indeed, may elect poets to record their exploits, but subjects will read historians.

The conquest of every town and village was celebrated by Boileau in hyperbolic song; and the whole pantheon ransacked for deities, who might furnish some faint idea of the glories of the immortal Louis.—The time, however, soon arrived, when the author of the adulatory ode on the taking of Namur, in which the king and the gods were again identified, was as completely overturned by the incomparable travesty of our witty Prior, as the conqueror of Namur himself was, by its glorious deliverer—

> Little Will, the scourge of France,
> No godhead, but the first of men.†

A prince should be accustomed to see and know things as they really are, and should be taught to dread that state of delusion in which the monarch is the only person ignorant of what is doing in his kingdom. It was to little purpose that the sovereign last named, when some temporary sense of remorse was excited by an affecting representation of the miseries of the persecuted protestants, said, 'that he hoped God would not impute to him as a crime, punishments which he had not commanded.' Delusive hope! It was crime enough for a king to be ignorant of what was passing in his dominions.

There have been few princes so ill-disposed, as not to have been made worse by unmeasured

* Examen du Prince.

† See Boileau's Ode sur la prise de Namur, by Louis and Prior's Poem on the taking of Namur, by king William.

flattery. Even some of the most depraved Roman emperors began their career with a fair promise. Tiberius set out with being mild and prudent; and even Nero, for a considerable time, either wore the mask, or did not need it. While his two virtuous friends maintained their entire influence, every thing looked favourable.—But when his sycophants had succeeded in making Seneca an object of ridicule; and when Tigellinus was preferred to Burrhus all that followed was a natural consequence. The abject slavery of the people, the servile decrees of the senate, the obsequious acquiescence of the court, the prostrate homage of every order, all concurred to bring out his vices in their full luxuriance, and Rome, as was but just, became the victim of the monster she had pampered. Tacitus, with his usual honest indignation, declares, that as often as the emperor commanded banishments or ordered assassinations, so often were thanks and sacrifices decreed to the gods!

But, in our happier days, as subjects, it is presumed, indulge no such propensities, so under our happier constitution, have they no such opportunities. Yet powerful, though gentler, and almost unapparent means, may be employed to weaken the virtue, and injure the fame of a prince. To degrade his character, he need only be led into one vice, idleness; and be attacked by one weapon, flattery. Indiscriminate acquiescence and soothing adulation will lay his mind open to the incursion of every evil without his being aware of it; for his table is not the place where he expects to meet an enemy, consequently, he is not on his guard against him. And where he is thus powerfully assailed, the kindest nature, the best intentions, the gentlest manners, and the mildest dispositions, cannot be depended on for preserving him from those very corruptions, to which the worst propensities lead; and there is a degree of facility, which, from softness of temper, becomes imbecility of mind.

For there is hardly a fault a sovereign can commit, to which flattery may not incline him. It impels to opposite vices: to apathy and egotism, the natural failings of the great; to ambition which inflames the heart, to anger which distorts it, to hardness which deadens, and to selfishness which degrades it. He should be taught, as the intrepid Massilon* taught his youthful prince, that the flattery of the courtier, contradictory as the assertion may seem, is little less dangerous than the disloyalty of the rebel. Both would betray him; and the crime of him who would dethrone, and of him who would debase his prince, however they may differ in a political, differ but little in a moral view: nay, the ill effects of the traitor's crime may, to the prince at least, be bounded by time, while the consequences of the flatterer's may extend to eternity.

CHAP. XVIII.

Religion necessary to the well-being of states.

The royal pupil should be informed, that there are some half Christians, and half philosophers, who wish, without incurring the discredit of renouncing religion, to strip it of its value, by lowering its usefulness. They have been at much pains to produce a persuasion, that however beneficial Christianity may be to individuals, and however properly it may be taken as the rule of their conduct, it cannot be safely brought into action in political concerns; that the intervention of its spirit will rarely advance the public good, but on the contrary, will often necessarily obstruct it; and in particular, that the glory and elevation of states must be unavoidably attended with some violation even of those laws of morality, which, they allow, ought to be observed in other cases.*

These assertions, respecting the political disadvantages of religion, have not been urged merely by the avowed enemies of Christian principles, the Bolingbrokes, the Hobbeses, and the Gibbons: but there is a more sober class of sceptics, ranged under the banners of a very learned and ingenious sophist,† who have not scrupled to maintain, that the author of Christianity has actually forbidden us to improve the condition of this world, to take any vigorous steps for preventing its misery, or advancing its glory. Another writer, an elegant wit, but whimsical and superficial, though doubtless a sincere Christian,‡ who would be shocked at the excess to which impiety has carried the position, has yet afforded some countenance to it, by intimating, that God has given to men a religion which is incompatible with the whole economy of that world which he has created, and in which he has thought proper to place them. He allows, that 'government is essential to men, and yet asserts, that it cannot be managed without certain degrees of violence, corruption, and imposition, which yet Christianity strictly forbids. That perpetual patience under injuries, must every day provoke new insults, and injuries, yet is this, says he, *enjoined*.'

The same positions are also repeatedly affirmed, by a later, more solid, and most admirable writer, whose very able defence of the divine authority of Christianity and the Holy Scriptures, naturally obtains credit for any opinions which are honoured with his support.

It may be expected, that those who advance such propositions, should at least produce proofs from history, that those states, in the government of which Christian principles have been most conspicuous, other circumstances being equal, have either failed through error, or sunk through impotence; or in some other way have suffered from introducing principles into transactions to which they were inapplicable.

But how little the avowed sceptic, or even the paradoxical Christian seems to understand the genius of our religon; and how erroneous is their conception of the true elementary principles of

* See Massilon's Sermons, abounding equally in the sublimest piety and the richest eloquence.

* It were to be wished that Cromwell had been the only ruler who held, that the rules of morality must be dispensed with on great political occasions.

† Mr. Bayle.

‡ Soame Jenyns. It is true, he puts the remark in the mouth of 'refined and speculative observers.' But he afterwards affirms in his own proper person—*That such is indeed the Christian Revelation.*

political prosperity, we learn from one, who was as able as either to determine on the case. He who was not only a politician but a king, and eminently acquainted with the duties of both characters, has assured us, that RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION. And does not every instinct of the unsophisticated heart, and every clear result of dispassionate and enlarged observation, unite in adopting as a moral axiom this divinely recorded aphorism?

It would, indeed, be strange, if the great Author of all things had admitted such an anomaly in his moral government; if in direct contradiction to that moral ordination of causes and effects, by which, in the case of individuals, religion and virtue generally tend, in the way of natural consequence, to happiness and prosperity, irreligion and vice, to discomfiture and misery, the Almighty should have established the directly opposite tendencies, in the case of those multiplications of individuals, which are called civil communities. It is a supposition so contrary to the divine procedure, in every other instance, that it would require to be proved by incontestible evidence. It would indeed amount to a concession, that the moral Author of the world had appointed a premium as it were, for vice and irreligion; the very idea is profaneness. Happily it is clearly contrary also both to reason and experience. Providence, the ordinations of which will ever exhibit marks of wisdom and goodness, in proportion to the care with which they are explored, has, in this instance, as well as in others, made our duty coincident with our happiness; has furnished us with an additional motive for pursuing that course, which is indispensable to our eternal welfare, by rendering it, in the case both of individuals and of communities, productive also of temporal good. It was not enough to make the paths of virtue lead to 'the fulness of joy' hearafter, they are even now rendered to those who walk in them, 'paths of pleasantness and peace.

It would not be difficult to prove, by a reference to the most established principles of human nature, that those dispositions of mind, and principles of conduct, which both directly and indirectly, tend to promote the good order of civil communities, are, in general, produced or strengthened by religion. The same temper of mind which disposes a man to fear God, prompts him to honour the king. The same pride, self-sufficiency, and impatience of controul, which are commonly the root and origin of impiety, naturally produce civil insubordination and discontent. One of the most acute of our political writers has stated, that all government rests on *opinion;* on the opinion entertained by the mass of the people, of *the right to power* in their governors, or in the opinion of its being *their own interest to obey.* Now, religion naturally confirms both these principles; and thereby strengthens the very foundations of the powers of government. It establishes the *right to power* of governors, by teaching, that 'there is no power but of God;' it confirms in subjects the sense of its being *their interest to obey* by the powerful intervention of its higher sanctions and rewards: 'they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation.'

Religion teaches men to consider their lot in life, as a station assigned to them, by Him, who has a right to dispose of his creatures as he will. It therefore tends to prevent in the great mass of the community which must ever be comparatively speaking, poor, the disposition to repine at the more favoured lot, and superior comforts of the higher orders; a disposition which is the real source of the most dangerous and deadly dissensions.

Religion, again, as prompting men to view all human events as under the divine direction, to regard the evils of life as the dispensation of Heaven, and often as capable of being rendered conducive to the most essential and lasting benefit, disposes men to bear all their sufferings with resignation and cheerfulness. Whereas, on the contrary, they who are not under its power, are often inclined to revenge on their rulers, the misfortunes, which unavoidably result from natural causes, as well as those which may be more reasonably supposed to have owed their existence to human imprudence and actual misconduct.

Again, if from contemplating these questions in their principles and elements, we proceed to view them, as they have been exhibited and illustrated by history and experience, we shall find the same positions established with equal clearness and force. Is there any proposition more generally admitted, than that political communities tend to decay and dissolution, in proportion to the corruption of their morals? How often has the authority of the poet been adduced (an author acute and just in his views of life, but not eminent for being the friend of morals or religion) to prove the inefficacy of laws, to avert the progress of a state's decline and fall, while it should be carried forward, too surely, in the downward road, by the general corruption of manners. We have already exemplified these truths, in enumerating the causes of the fall of Rome.* On more than one occasion, that state had owed its preservation to its reverence for the awful sanction of an oath. This principle, and indeed the duty which is so closely connected with it, of truth and general fidelity to engagements, are the very cement which holds together societies, and indeed all, whether greater or smaller, associations of men; and that this class of virtues is founded and bottomed on religion, is undeniably evident.

If we pass from the page of history to a review of private life, are we not led to exactly the same conclusions? Where do the politicians, who reason from the evidence of facts, expect to find a spirit of insubordination and anarchy? Is it not in our crowded cities, in our large manufacturing towns, where wealth is often too dearly purchased at the price of morality and virtue? And if we resort to individual instances, who is the man of peace and quietness? Who is the least inclined to 'meddle with them that are given to change?' Is it not the man of religious and domestic habits whose very connexions, pursuits and hopes, are so many pledges for his adherence to the cause of civil order and to the support of the laws and institutions of his country?

* Chap. viii.

It is the more extraordinary that any writers, not deliberately hostile to the cause of religion and virtue, should have given any degree of countenance to the pernicious error, which we have been so long combating; because the opposite opinion has been laid down as an incontestible axiom, by those who will not be suspected of any extravagant zeal for the credit of religion, but, who speak the dictates of strong sense and deep observation. Hear then the able, but profligate Machiavel—'Those princes and commonwealths, who would keep their governments entire and uncorrupt, are above all things, to have a care of religion and its ceremonies, and preserve them in due veneration, for in the whole world, there is not a greater sign of imminent ruin, than when God and his worship are despised.'—'A prince therefore, ought most accurately to regard, that his religion be well-founded, and then his government will last; for there is no surer way, than to keep that good and united. Whatever therefore occurs, that may any way be extended to the advantages and reputation of the religion they design to establish, by all means, they are to be propagated and encouraged; and the wiser the prince, the more sure it is to be done.'—'And if this care of divine worship were regarded by christian princes, according to the precepts and instructions of him who gave it at first, the states and commonwealths of Christendom would be much more happy and firm.'*

Machiavel, it will be said, was at once an infidel and a hypocrite, who did not believe the truth of that religion, the observance of which he solicitously enforced. Be it so; it still deducts nothing from the force of the argument as to the political uses of religion.—For if the mere forms and institutions, the outward and visible signs, of Christianity, were acknowledged to be, as they really are, of so great value, by this shrewd politician, what might not be the effect of its 'inward and spiritual grace?'

When two able men of totally opposite principles and characters, pointedly agree in any important topic, there is a strong presumption that they meet in a truth. Such an unlooked for conformity may be found, in two writers, so decidedly opposite to each other, as our incomparable bishop Butler, and the Florentine secretary above cited. Who will suspect Butler of being a visionary enthusiast? Yet has he drawn a most beautiful picture of the happiness of an imaginary state, which should be perfectly virtuous for a succession of ages. 'In such a state,' he insists, there would be no faction. Public determinations would really be the result of united wisdom. All would contribute to the general prosperity, and each would enjoy the fruits of his own virtue. Injustice, force, and fraud, would be unknown—Such a kingdom would influence the whole earth; the *head* of it indeed would be a universal monarch, in a new sense, and *all people, nations, and languages should serve him.*'†

The profound Butler, was indeed, too great an adept in the knowledge of human nature, and too thoroughly versed in the whole history of mankind, not to know, as he afterwards observes, the impossibility without some miraculous interposition, that a great body of men should so unite in one nation and government, in the fear of God, and the practice of virtue; and that such a government should continue unbroken for a succession of ages; yet supposing it could be so, indeed, such, he affirms, would be the certain effect. And may we not also affirm, that even allowing for all the failings and imperfections of human nature, which the prelate has excluded from his hypothesis, would not a state really approach nearer to this supposed happiness, in proportion as it taught and practised with more sedulity the principles of religion and virtue?

We cordially agree, with the famous Cosmo di Medici that princes cannot govern their states, by 'counting a string of beads, or mumbling over paternosters.' But we are, at the same time, equally averse from the religion which assigns such practices to any class of people; and from that ignorance which would make the religion of any order of men, especially of princes, consist in mere ceremonies and observances. Charles the wise, was at least as sound a judge as Cosmo of what constituted the perfection of a royal character, when he declared, that, 'if there were no honour and virtue left in the rest of the world, the last traces of them should be found among princes.' There should indeed, be found in the royal character, an innate grandeur; a dignity of soul which should show itself under all circumstances, and shine through every cloud of trial or difficulty. It was from such inherent marks of greatness, that the infant Cyrus, exiled and unknown, was chosen king by the shepherd's children.

It would not, perhaps, be easy to cite an higher authority, on the point in question, the importance of religion to a state, than that of the great and excellent chancellor de L'Hospital. It was a common observation of his, that, 'religion had more influence upon the spirits of mankind, than all their passions put together; and that the cement, by which it united them, was infinitely stronger than all the other obligations of civil society. This was not the observation of a dreaming monk who in his cell, writes maxims for a world of which he knows nothing; but the sentiment derived from deep experience, of an illustrious statesman, whose greatness of mind, zeal, disinterestedness, and powerful talents, supported France under a succession of weak and profligate kings. Frugal for the state in times of boundless prodigality; philosophical in a period of enthusiastic fury; tolerant and candid in days of persecution, and deeply conscientious under all circumstances; worthy, in short, and it is perhaps his best eulogium, to be driven, for his virtues, by Catharine di Medici from councils, which his wisdom might have controlled; and who, on giving up the seals which she demanded, withdrew to an honourable literary retreat, with the remark, that 'the world was too depraved for him to concern himself any longer with it. These are the men whom corrupt princes drive from the direction of those states, which their wisdom might save and their virtue might reform.

* Machiavel's Discourses on Livy.

† This is only a short abstract of this fine passage, to the whole of which the reader is referred. Butler's Analogy, part first, chap. iii. p. 89, and following.

Another of the political advantages of religious rectitude in a state, is the *security* it affords. For, with whatever just severity we may reprobate the general spirit of revolution, yet, it must be confessed, that it has not, on *all* occasions, been excited by undue discontent, by unprovoked impatience, nor even by selfish personal feelings; but sometimes also from a virtuous sense of the evils of oppression and injustice; evils which honest men resent for others as well as for themselves.

Again, there is something so safe and tranquilizing in Christian piety, as we have already observed, that, though we would be far from reducing it to a cold political calculation; yet, content, submission, and obedience, make so large a practical part of religion, that wherever it is taught in the best and soundest way, it can hardly fail to promote, in the people, the ends of true policy, any more than of genuine morality.

Our wisest sovereigns, partly, perhaps for this reason, have paid the deepest attention to the moral instruction of the lower classes of their subjects. Alfred and Elizabeth,* among others, were too sound politicians to lose this powerful hold on the affections of their people. In addition to their desire to promote religion, they had no doubt discerned, that it is gross vice, that it is brutal ignorance, which leave the lower class a prey to factious innovators, and renders them the blind tools of political incendiaries. When the youth of this class are carefully instructed in religion by their rightful teachers, those teachers have the fairest opportunities of instilling into them their duty to the state, as well as to the church; and they will find that the same lessons which form good Christians, tend to make good subjects. But, without that moderate measure of sound and sober instruction, which should be judiciously adapted to their low demands, they will be likely neither to honour the king, reverence the clergy, nor obey the magistrate. While, on the contrary, by interweaving their duty to their governors, with their duty to God, they will at once be preserved from mischief in politics, and delusion in religion. The awful increase of perjury among us is of itself a loud call sedulously to pursue this object. How should those who are not early instructed in the knowledge of their Maker, fear to offend him, by that common violation of the solemnity of oaths, for which we are unhappily becoming notorious? Let us not be deemed needlessly earnest in the defence of a truth of such extreme importance.—The political value of religion never can be too firmly believed, or too carefully kept in view, in the government of nations. May it be deeply rooted in the mind of every prince, as a fundamental principle! Let it be confirmed by all the various proofs and examples, by which its truth can be established, and its authority enforced!*

But, to return.—We most readily concede, that by that exultation of a state of which Solomon speaks, is not meant, that sudden flash of temporary splendor, which is occasioned by the mutable advantages of war, the plunder of foreign countries, the acquisition of unwieldy territory, or the vertigo of domestic revolutions: but that sober and solid glory, which is the result of just laws; of agriculture, and sobriety, which promote population; of industry and commerce, which increase prosperity; of such well regulated habits in private life, as may serve to temper that prosperity, and by strict consequences, give direction and steadiness to public manners. For it never can be made a question, whether the solidity of the parts must not contribute to the firmness of the whole; and whether the virtue exercised by collective bodies, can any farther be hoped for, than as it exists in the individuals who compose them. But, on what basis can this superstructure rest, by what principle can individual virtue be either substantially promoted or lastingly secured, except by that sense of an invisible, almighty, and infinitely just, and holy Sovereign of the universe, which revelation alone has effectually disclosed to us, and reason has recognized as the essence of religion?

Far be it indeed, from us to deny, that this religious principle may not frequently oppose itself to *apparent* means of aggrandizement, both personal and national.—Doubtless it will often condemn that to which human pride would aspire. Even when an object might in itself be fairly desirable, it will forbid the pursuit, except through lawful paths. But in the severest of such restrictions, it only sacrifices what is shadowy to what is substantial, the evanescent triumphs of a day to the permanent comfort of successive generations.

But though we do not assert that national prosperity is always, and infallibly, an indication of virtue, and of the distinguishing favour of God, yet we conceive, that such outward marks of divine favour may more generally be expected, in the case of communities, than of in-

* See a letter of archbishop Whitgift to the bishops, of which the following is an extract:

'Your lordship is not ignorant, that a great part of the dissoluteness of manners, and ignorance in the common sort, that reigneth in most parts of this realm, even in this clear light of the gospel, ariseth hereof, for, that the youth, being as it were, the frie and seminary of the church and commonwealth, through negligence, both of natural and spiritual fathers, are not, as were meet, trained up in the chief and necessary principles of Christian religion, whereby they might learn their duty to their God, their prince, their country, and their neighbours; especially in their tender years, when these things might best be planted in them, and would become most hardly to be afterwards removed. This mischief might well, in mine opinion, be redressed, if that which in this behalf hath been godly and wisely provided, were as carefully called on and executed, namely, by catechizing and instructing in churches the youth of both sexes, on the Sabbath days, in the afternoon. And, that if it may be convenient, before their parents, and others of the several parishes, who thereby may take comfort and instruction also.'—Strype's Life of Whitgift.

* Mr. Addison speaks of the religious instruction of the poor as the best means of recovering the country from its degeneracy and depravation of manners. And, after drawing an animated picture of a procession of charity children on a day of thanksgiving for the triumphs obtained by the queen's arms, he adds, 'for my part, I can scarce forbear looking on the astonishing victories our arms have been crowned with, to be, in some measure, the blessings returned upon these charities; and that the great successes of the war, for which we lately offered up our thanks, were, in some measure, occasioned by the several objects (of religiously instructed children) which then stood before us.'—Guardian, No. 105. *These were the sentiments of a Secretary of State!*

dividuals. In communities we see not so much the effect of each particular act of virtue, as of the generally diffused principle. Though virtue is often obstructed in labouring to obtain for itself the advantages which belong to it, this is no proof against its having a tendency to obtain them. The natural tendency indeed, being to produce happiness, though it may fail to do it in certain expected cases.

In the case, therefore, of communities and states, where the result of *many* actions, rather than the particular effect of *each*, is seen, it may not altogether unfairly be asserted, that virtue is its own reward. Perhaps it also may be affirmed, that the system of temporal rewards and punishments, which, though chiefly exemplified in the Jewish dispensation, was by no means confined to it, has not equally passed away, with respect to states and nations, as with respect to individuals. The learned Bossuet has observed, that while the New Testament manifests to us the operation of God's grace, the Old Testament exhibits to us his providential government of the world. We will not dwell on this remark further than to suggest, that even in this view the study of the Old Testament may not be without its uses, even to the modern statesman, as we know that the Jewish law has clearly been held important, by some of our wisest legislators.

On the whole, we need not hesitate to assert, that in the long course of events, nothing, that is morally wrong, can be politically right. Nothing that is inequitable, can be finally successful. Nothing, that is contrary to religion, can be ultimately favourable to civil policy. We may therefore confidently affirm, that impiety and vice, sooner or later, bring states, as well as individuals, to misery and ruin. That, though vice may sometimes contribute to temporary exaltation; in the same degree, it will, in the end, contribute to promote decay, and accelerate the inevitable period of dissolution.

Let it then be ever kept in view, that the true exaltation is, in fact, that prosperity which arises from the goodness of the laws, and the firmness and impartiality with which they are executed; which results from moderation in the government, and obedience in people; from wisdom and foresight in council, from activity and integrity in commerce, from independence of national character, from fortitude in resisting foreign attack, and zeal in promoting domestic harmony; from patience under sufferings, hardiness in danger, zeal in the love of civil, and vigour in the reprobation of savage liberty; from a spirit of fairness and liberality in making treaties, and from fidelity in observing them. Above all, from a multiplication of individual instances of family comfort and independence, from the general prevalence, throughout the great mass of the people, of habits of industry, sobriety, and good order, from the practice in short, of the social and domestic virtues; of all those relative duties and kindnesses, which give body and substance to the various charities of life, and the best feelings of our nature.

If sinful nations appear prosperous for a time, it is often because there has been some proportion of good mixed with the evil; or it is because the Providence of God means to use the temporary success of guilty nations for the accomplishment of his general scheme, or the promotion of a particular purpose, of humbling and correcting other, perhaps less guilty nations; or it is because 'the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full; and the punishment of the more corrupt states is delayed, to make their ruin more signal and tremendous, and their downfall a more portentous object, for the instruction of the world. God, without any impeachment of his moral government, may withhold retribution, because it is always in his power: he may be long-suffering, because he is everlasting. He may permit the calamity which we see, in order to extract from it the good which we see not.—He is never the author of moral evil, and the natural evil which he does authorise, is both the punishment and the corrective of the moral. Though God never intended this world for such a complete state of retribution, as entirely to hinder either vice or virtue from occasionally receiving the recompences, and the penalties due to the other; yet there is this obvious difference, between nations and individuals, that, whereas individuals the most virtuous are often the most visited with temporal misfortunes, the best governed empires are, on the whole, the most secure of prosperity. And if, in the calamities brought on corrupt states, the innocent always unavoidably suffer with the guilty, this furnishes no just charge against the equity of divine Providence, who *here* reckons tremendously with the state *as* a state, but will, separately and ultimately, reckon with every individual; and thus finally and fully vindicate his own infinite, and much calumniated justice.'*

CHAP. XIX.

Integrity the true political wisdom.

The tendency of a religious temper to exalt a prince into a hero, might be sufficiently illustrated by the single instance of Louis the ninth. It is notorious, that nothing more severely tries the character of princes as well as of individuals, than remarkable success. It was, however, in this circumstance precisely, that the prince just mentioned evinced how completely his christian temper had corrected, both the selfishness natural to man, and the arrogance habitual to prosperity.

When, under the unfortunate reign of our Henry the third, the affairs of England were reduced to a low condition, while those of France were in a highly flourishing state; Louis, in making a treaty with England, generously refused to take an unfair advantage of the misfortunes of this country, or to avail himself to the utmost of his own superiority. His concessions to the depressed enemy were liberal; and he soon after reaped the reward of his moderation, in the confidence which it inspired. Louis was chosen, both by Henry and his nobles, to settle the differences between them. In consequence

* See bishop Butler's Analogy, a work which cannot be too strongly recommended

of the recent instance of his public integrity, the foreign adversary was invited to be the arbiter of domestic disagreements; and they were happily terminated by his decision. Let infidels remark, to the disgrace of their scepticism, that the monarch who was, perhaps, one of the greatest instances of christian piety and devotion, furnished also an example of the most striking moral rectitude!

Henry the fourth, when only king of Navarre, discovered no less integrity after his glorious victory at Coutras. Being asked what terms he would require from the king of France, after gaining such a victory, 'just the same,' replied he, 'that I should ask after losing one.'

It is, however, necessary to observe, that integrity, in order to be successful, must be uniform. Truth, for example, occasionally spoken, may not afford to the speaker any part of the profit which attends the regular observance of truth. The error of corrupt politicians consists much in treating each question, as if it were an insulated case, and then arguing, perhaps not unjustly, that the practice of virtue, in this or that particular instance, will not be productive of good; forgetting that if, in all instances, they would be virtuous, they would then most probably obtain the success and full reward of virtue.

We know that even in that particular branch of political transactions, the diplomatic, wherein the strongest temptations to dissimulation, and chicanery are held forth to little minds, some of the most able and successful negotiators have generously disdained the use of any such mean expedients. The frankness and integrity of Temple and De Witt are not more esteemed by the moralist for their probity, than by the statesman for their true wisdom. What can there be, indeed, so different between the situation of two public men, who on the part of their several countries respectively, are negotiating on questions of policy or commerce; and that of two private men who are treating on some business of ordinary life, which should render impolitic, in the public concern, that honesty which, in the private, is so universally acknowledged to be the best policy, as to have grown into an adage of universal and unqualified acceptance. Indeed, as the adage may refer to what is truly politic in the long run, and with a view to general consequences, we might rather expect, that fraud would be admissible into the transactions of private men, whose short span of life might not be likely to be more than counterbalanced by future loss rather than in the concerns of states, which, by containing a long continued existence, a political identity, under all the successive generations of the members of which they are composed, may pay, and pay perhaps severely too, in later times, the price of former acts of fraud and treachery.—Again, in public, no less than in private business, will not any one find the benefit of employing an agent, who possesses a high character for probity and honour? Will not larger and more liberal concessions be made to him who may be safely relied on for paying their equivalent? Once more, how often are public wars, as well as private differences, produced or fermented by mutual distrust! and how surely would a confidence in each other's trust and honesty tend to the restoration of peace and harmony! Even the wily Florentine* allows, that it is advantageous to have a high character for truth and uprightness And how can this character be in any way so well obtained as by deserving it? It is the disgrace of nations, that in their diplomatic concerns, the maxims of solid wisdom have not been always observed.

Without going the length of admitting the truth of Sir Henry Wotton's light definition of the duties of an ambassador, is it not too often assumed, that the laws which bind private men, and which would doubtless bind the individual minister himself, in his private concerns, may occasionally be dispensed with, in the administration of public affairs; and that strict truth, for instance, which in the ordinary transactions of life is allowed to be indispensable, is too frequently considered as impracticable in diplomatic negotiations?

Don Louis De Haro, the Spanish minister, at the treaty of the Pyrennees, seems to have entertained just views of the value of simple integrity in politicians, for speaking of cardinal Mazarin, with whom he was negotiating, he said, 'that man always pursued one great error in politics, he would always deceive.' Mazarin was a deep dissembler and a narrow genius;† so true it is that vanity and short-sightedness are commonly at the bottom of dissimulation, though it be practised from a totally opposite idea; worldly politicians frequently falling into the error of fancying, that craft and circumvention are indications of genius; while, in reality, suspicion is the wisdom of a little mind, and distrust the mean and inefficient substitute for the penetration of a great one. Many, says lord Bacon, who know how to pack the cards, cannot play them well. Many who can manage canvasses and factions, are yet not wise men. Considering the credit which sincerity stamps on a political character, it is so far from being opposed to discretion, that it constitutes the best part of it. True rectitude neither implies nor requires imprudence; while it costs a politician as much trouble to maintain the reputation of a quality which he has not, as it would really cost him to acquire it. The mazes and windings, the doublings and intricacies of intriguing spirits, ultimately mislead them from the end they pursue. They excite jealousy, they rouse resentment, they confirm suspicion, they strengthen prejudices, they foment differences; and thus call into action a number of passions, which commonly oppose themselves to the accomplishment of their designs. Politicians therefore would do well to remember the remark of the learned Barrow, who was as great a proficient in mathematics, as in morality, that 'the straightest line is always the shortest line, in morals as well as in geometry.' When the cha-

* Machiavel.

† Mazarin himself had spread his own maxims to such good purpose, that one of his creatures whom he intended to send to negotiate with the duke of Savoy, implored his eminence not to insist on his deceiving the duke *just at that time*, as the business was but a trifle; because he thought it would answer better to reserve the sacrifice of his reputation for deceiving, till some more important object was at stake.

racter of integrity is once lost, falsehood itself loses all its uses. The known dissembler is suspected of insincerity even when he does not practise it, and is no longer trusted, though he may happen to deserve to be so.

The character of lord Sunderland presents a striking instance of the political inefficacy of duplicity. His superior genius, so admirably qualified for business, availed him but little in securing the public esteem when it was observed, that of three successive princes, who severally set out with a view to establish different interests, he gained the favour of all, by adopting the system of each, with the same accommodating veracity. His reputation for honesty sunk, and he ceased to be trusted in the degree in which he came to be known.

We sometimes hear the more decent politicians, who sanction the appearance, and commend the outward observances of religion lament that religion does not produce any great effects upon society. And they are right, if by religion they mean that shell and surface, which merely serve to save appearances. But, is it not to be feared, that these very politicians sometimes disbelieve the reality, and the power of that religion, the exterior of which they allow to be decorous? Yet, this reality and power, believed and acted upon, would certainly produce more substantial effects than can ever *rationally* be expected from mere forms and shadows. These sage persons frequently lament the deficiency of morals in society, but never the want of religion in the heart. Though, to expect that morality to be firm, which stands on no religious foundation, is to expect stability from an inverted pyramid.

Besides, it is infinitely laborious to maintain an undeviating course of dissimulation, a moment's intermission of which may defeat the policy of years. Yet, this unremitting attention, this wearying watchfulness, is essential to that worldly policy, of which South says, that 'folly being the superstructure, it is but reasen, that the foundation should be falsity. The same acute judge of mankind observes, that the designing politicians of the party he was combating, seemed to act as if they thought 'that speech was given to ordinary men to communicate their mind, but to wise men for concealing it.'

The dissembler should also remember, that however deeply interest and industry enable him to lay his plans, the interest and industry of others will be equally at work to detect them. Besides, the deepest politician can carry on no great schemes alone, and as all association depends on opinion, few will lend their aid, or commit their safety to one whose general want of probity forbids the hope of perpetual confidence, or of permanent security.

Why do many politicians fail finally of the full accomplishment of their object? Not for want of genius to lay a plausible plan; not for want of judgment to seize the most favourable occasions; not for want of due contempt of conscientious scruples in pushing those occasions; not for want of fearless impiety in giving full scope to their designs; but from that ever wakeful Providence, which if he does not dash their projects before they are acted, defeats the main intention afterwards.—Even the successful usurper, Cromwell, lost the confidence of his army, when they found in the sequel, that he meant to place himself on the very throne which he had made them believe it was his great object to abolish. Nor was he ever able to adorn his own brows with that crown, for the hope of which he had waded through a sea of crimes. The very means employed by Alexander the sixth, and Cæsar Borgia, to destroy the cardinals, rebounded on themselves, and both were poisoned by the very wine which they had prepared for the destruction of their guests.

It is, therefore, the only safety, and the only wisdom, and the only sure, unfading prudence, instead of pursuing our own devious paths, to commit our concerns to God; to walk in his straight ways, and obey his plain commands. For, after all, the widest sphere of a mere worldly politician is but narrow. The wisdom of this world is bounded by this world, the dimensions of which are so contracted, and its duration so short, in the eye of true philosophy, as to strip it of all real grandeur. All the enjoyments of this world, says the eloquent South, are much too short for an immortal soul to stretch itself upon: a soul which shall persist in being, not only when honour and fame, but when time itself shall cease to be. The deepest worldly projector, with the widest views, and the strongest energies, even when flushed with success, must, if his mind has never learned to shoot forward into the boundless eternity of an unseen world, feel his genius cramped, his wing flag, and his spirit at a stand. There seems to have been a spark of the immortal fire even in the regrets of Alexander. It is probable he would not have wept, because he had no more worlds to conquer, had he not deeply felt the sting of disappointment at finding no joy in having conquered this, and thence inferred a kind of vague and shapeless idea of another. There will be always too vast a disproportion between the appetites and enjoyments of the ambitious to admit of their being happy. Nothing can fill the desires of a great soul, but what he is persuaded will last as long as he himself shall last.

To worldly minds it would sound paradoxical to assert that ambition is a *little* passion. To affirm that if really great views, and truly enlarged notions were impressed upon the soul, they would be so far from promoting that they would cure this passion. The excellent bishop Berkeley, beholding the ravages which ambition had made in his time in France, could not help wishing that its encroaching monarch had been bred to the study of astronomy, that he might learn from thence how mean and little that ambition is which terminates in a small part of what is of itself but a point, compared with that part of the universe which lies within our view.

But, if astronomy shows the diminutiveness of that globe, for a very small portion of which kings contend, in comparison with the universe, how much nobler a cure does Christianity provide for ambition, by showing that not this globe only, but the whole universe also,

> Yea, all that it inherits shall dissolve;

by reminding the ambitious of the utter in-

sufficiency to true glory or real happiness of all that has been created, of all that shall have an end; by carrying on their views to that invisible, eternal world, which to us shall then emphatically begin to be, when all which we behold shall be no more.

He, therefore, is the only true politician who uniformly makes the eternal laws of truth and rectitude, as revealed from heaven the standard of his actions, and the measure of his ambition. 'To do justly,' is peculiarly the high and holy vocation of a prince. And both princes and politicians would do well to inquire, not only whether their scheme was planned with sagacity, and executed with spirit, but whether they have so conducted it, as to leave proper room, if we may so speak, for the favourable interference of God; whether they have supplicated his blessing; and given to him the glory of its happy issue? Perhaps more well-meant endeavours fail through neglect in these respects, particularly of fervent prayer for success, than through any deficiency in the wisdom of the plan itself. But because under a fanatic usurpation, in the seventeenth century, hypocrites abused this duty, and degraded its sanctity, by what they profanely called *seeking the Lord;* the friends of the restored constitution too generally took up the notion, that irreligion was a proof of sincerity, and that the surest way to avoid the hypocrisy, was to omit the duty.

We cannot too strongly censure that most mistaken practice, which, at the period before mentioned, reduced the language of Scripture to that of common conversation; nor too warmly condemn that false taste, which, by quaint allusions, forced conceits, and strained allegories, wrested the Bible to every ordinary purpose, and debased its dignity, by this colloquial familiarity. But is there no danger of falling into the opposite error? If some have unseasonably forced it into the service, on occasions to which it could never apply; may not others acquire the habit of thinking it seasonable on no occasion at all?

Again—how strangely do we overlook the consummate wisdom, as well as goodness of God, in having made that practice of prayer the instrument of obtaining his blessing, which is so powerfully operative in purifying and elevat- our own hearts. Politicians, with all their sagacity, would do well to learn, that it is likewise one of the many beneficial effects of prayer, that it not only reasonably increases our hopes of success, but teaches us to acquiesce in disappointment. They should learn also, not to wonder, if God refuses to answer those prayers, which are *occasionally* put up on great public emergencies, when those who offer them do not live in the exercise of habitual devotion. They should take it as an axiom of good experience from the incomparable Hooker, that 'All things religiously begun are prosperously ended; because whether men, in the end, have that which religion allowed them to desire, or that which it teacheth them contentedly to suffer, they are, in neither event, unfortunate.'

Nor will a truly pious prince ever be eventually defeated in his designs; he may not indeed be successful in every negotiation, he may not be victorious in every battle; yet in his leading purpose he will never be disappointed. For his ultimate end was to act conscientiously, to procure the favour of God, to advance the best interests of his people, and to secure his own eternal happiness.—Whatever the event may be to others, to himself it must be finally good. *The effect of righteousness is peace. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* And, to conclude in the words of the able and profound Barrow—'If God shall not cease to be; if he will not let go the reins; if his word cannot deceive; if the wisest men are not infatuated; if the common sense of mankind is not extravagant; if the main props of life, if the great pillars of society do not fail;—he that walketh uprightly doth proceed on sure grounds.'

CHAP. XX.

On the true arts of Popularity.

Cicero says, 'that it is the property of justice not to injure men, and of politeness not to offend them.' True Christianity not only unites, but perfects both these qualities; and renders them, thus associated and exalted, powerful instruments, especially in princes, for the acquisition of popularity.

The desire of praise and reputation is commonly the first motive of action in second rate, and a secondary motive in first rate characters. That, in the former case, men who are not governed by a higher principle, are often so keenly alive to human opinion, as to be restrained by it from such vices as would disturb the peace of society, is an instance of the useful provision made by the great Governor of all things for the good order of the world.

But in princes, none of whose actions are indifferent, who are 'the observed of all observers,' reputation cannot be too highly prized. A negligence respecting public opinion, or a contempt for the judgment of posterity, would be inexcusable in those, whose conduct must, in no inconsiderable degree, give, in their own time, the law to manners, and whose example will hereafter be adduced, by future historians, either to illustrate virtue, or to exemplify vice, and to stimulate the good or evil, monarchs yet unborn.

'A prince,' however, as a late eloquent statesman* observed in his own case, 'should love that fame which follows, not that which is pursued.' He should bear in mind, that shadows owe their being to substances; that true fame derives its existence from something more solid than itself; that reputation is not the precursor, nor the cause, but the fruit and effect of merit.

But though, in superficial characters, the hunger of popularity is the mainspring of action: and though the vain-glorious too often obtain, what they so sedulously seek, the acclama-

* The first earl of Mansfield.

tions of the vulgar; yet a temperate desire to be loved and esteemed is so far from being a proof of vanity, that it even indicates the contrary propensity: for reasonably to wish for the good opinion of others, evinces that a man does not overvalue and sit down contented with his own. It is an over estimation of himself, an undue complacency in his own merit, which is one of the causes of his disdain of public opinion. In profligate characters, another cause is, that, anticipating the contempt which they must be aware, they have deserved, they are willing to be beforehand with the world in proclaiming their disdain of that reputation which they know that their course of life has made unattainable.

Pagan philosophy, indeed, overrated *the honour which cometh from man.* But even the sacred scripture, which, as it is the only true fountain, is also the only just standard of all excellence, does not teach us to despise, but only not to set an undue value upon it. It teaches us to estimate this honour in its due order and just measure; and above all, it exhorts us to see that it be sought on right grounds; to take care that it tempt not to vanity, by exciting to trifling pursuits; nor to vice, by stimulating to such as are base; nor to false honour, by seeking it in the paths of ambition. A prince must not be inordinate in the desire, nor irregular in the pursuit, nor immoderate in the enjoyment, nor criminally solicitous for the preservation of fame; but he must win it fairly, and wear it temperately. He should pursue it not as the ultimate end of life, but as an object, which, by making the life honourable makes it useful. It must not, however, be omitted that the scriptures exhort, that when reputation can only be attained or preserved by the sacrifice of duty, it must then be renounced; that we must submit to the loss even of this precious jewel, rather than by retaining it, wound the conscience, or offend God. Happily, however, in a country in which religion and laws are established on so firm a basis, a prince is little likely to be called to such an absolute renunciation, though he may be called to many trials.

But all these dangers being provided for, and all abuses guarded against, the word of God does not scruple to pronounce reputation to be a valuable possession. In a competition with *riches*, the pre-eminence is assigned to a *good name;* and *wisdom*, that is, Religion in the bold language of eastern imagery, is described as bearing *honour* in her left hand. Nor has the sacred volume been altogether silent, respecting even that posthumous renown which good princes may expect in history. That *the memory of the just shall be blessed*, was the promise of one who was himself both an author and a monarch. And that *the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*, was the declaration of another royal author.*

A desire of popularity is still more honest in princes than in other men. And when the end for which it is sought, and the means by which it is pursued are strictly just, the desire is not only blameless, but highly laudable. Nor is it ever censurable, except where the affection of the people is sought, by plausible means, for pernicious purposes. On the part of the people attachment is a natural feeling, which nothing but persevering misconduct in their rulers can ever wear out. A prince should learn not to listen to those flatterers who would keep him ignorant of the public opinion. The discontents of the people should not be stifled before they reach the royal ear; nor should their affection be represented as a fund which can never be drained. It is a rich and precious stock, which should not be too often drawn upon. Imprudence will diminish, oppression will exhaust it. A prince should never measure his rights over a people by the greatness of their attachment; the warmth of their zeal being a call for his kindness, not a signal for his exactions. Improvident rigour would wear out that affection, which justice would increase, and consideration confirm.

Britons, in general, possess that *obsequium erga reges*, which Tacitus ascribes to the Swedes. While they passionately love liberty, they also patiently bear those reasonable burdens which are necessary in order to preserve it. But this character of our countrymen seems not to have been so well understood, at least not so fairly represented, by one of their own sovereigns, as by a foreigner and an enemy. The unfortunate James calls them 'a fickle, giddy, and rebellious people.' If the charge were true, he and his family rather made, than found them such. Agricola had pronounced them to be a people, 'who cheerfully complied with the levies of men, and the imposition of taxes, and with all the duties enjoined by government, provided they met with just and lawful treatment from their governors.'—'Nor have the Romans,' continues he, 'any farther conquered them, than only to form them to obedience. *They never will submit to be slaves.*'* It is pleasant to behold the freest of nations, even now, acting up the character given them by the first of historians, on such unquestionable authority as that of their illustrious invader, near two thousand years ago.

Even the fatal catastrophe of Charles I. was not a national act, but the act of a fanatical party. The kingdom at large beheld the deed with deep abhorrence, and deplored it with unfeigned sorrow. The fascinating manners of his son and successor so won the hearts of every one who approached him, that it required all his vices to alienate them. If that gracious outward deportment was of so much use to him, in veiling for a time the most corrupt designs, how essentially must it serve a prince who meditates only such as are beneficial! William was not so happy as to find out this secret. Satisfied with having saved the country, he forgot that it was important to please it; and he in some measure lost, by his forbidding manners, and his neglect of studying our national character, the hearts of a people who owed him their best blessings.

——Charles, the abject tool of France,
Came back to smile his subjects into slaves,
While Belgic William, with his warrior frown,
Coldly declared them free.

The charming frankness and noble simplicity

* See an admirable sermon of Dr. Barrow, on the reward of honouring God.

* Tacitus's life of Agricola.

of manners which distinguished Henry IV. of France, gained the affections of his subjects more than all the refinements of artifice could have done. He had established such a reputation for sincerity, that when, on a certain occasion, he offered hostages to his mortal enemies the Spartans, they refused to accept them, and would only take his *word*. He frequently declared, that he would lose his crown rather than give, even to his worst foe, the least suspicion of his fidelity to his engagements. So happily infectious is this principle in a king, that not only Sully, but his other minister, Jeannin, was distinguished by the same strict regard to truth; and the popularity both of the king and his ministers was proportionably great.

The only way then for a prince to secure the affection of the people, is to deserve it; by letting them see that he is steadily consulting their interests, and invariably maintaining them. What but this so long preserved to Elizabeth, that rooted regard in the hearts of her subjects? Certainly no pliancy of manners, no gracious complaisance. She treated even her parliaments in so peremptory a manner, that they sometimes only bore with it from a thorough conviction that the interests of the country were secure in her hands, and its happiness as dear to her as her own.* These are the true foundations of popularity. He, who most consults the good of his people, will, in general, be most trusted by them: he who best merits their affection, will be most sure to obtain it, in spite of the arts of a cabal, or the turbulence of a faction.

Pagan fable relates, that when the inferior gods had once formed a conspiracy to bind Jupiter, Minerva advised him to send for Briareus, the monster with the hundred hands, to come to his assistance; the poets, doubtless, intimating by this fiction, that wisdom will always suggest to a prince, that his best security will ever be found in the ready attachment and assistance of the people. And it was a good practice which the famous Florentine secretary† records of the then king of France, that he would never allow any person to say, that *he was of the king's party*, which would always imply that there was another party against him; whereas the king prudently desired not to have it thought that there were any parties at all. And, indeed, wise sovereigns will study carefully to repress all narrowing terms, and dividing ideas. Of such sovereigns *the people are the party*.

Princes will have read history with little attention if they do not learn from it, that their own true greatness is so closely connected with the happiness of their subjects, as to be inseparable from it. There they will see that while great schemes of conquest have always been productive of extreme suffering to the human race, in their execution, they have often led to ultimate dishonour and ruin to the monarchs themselves. Herein a pious mind will recognise the goodness of the Almighty, which, notwithstanding the temptations and impediments that, in this probationary state, obstruct the progress and render difficult the practice of virtue in private life, has yet held out to those, who are endowed with kingly power, a strong inducement to use it for the promotion of their people's happiness, by rendering such designs as tend to the gratification of many vicious appetites which they are most tempted to indulge, far more difficult of execution, than such as are prompted by benevolent emotions, and have in view the advancement of civil and social happiness.

Thus, projects of conquest and ambition are circumscribed and obstructed by a thousand inherent and unavoidable difficulties. They are often dependent for their success on the life of a single man, whose death perhaps when least expected, at once disconcerts them. Often they depend on what is still more uncertain,—the caprice or humour of an individual. When all is conceived to be flourishing and successful, when the prosperous enterpriser fancies that he is on the very point of gaining the proud summit to which he has so long aspired; or at the very moment when it is attained, and he is exulting in the hope of immediate enjoyment,—at once he is dashed to the ground, his triumphs are defeated, his laurels are blasted, and he himself only remains,

To point a moral, or adorn a tale,

a lasting monument of the folly of ambition, and of the uncertainty of all projects of worldly grandeur.

But the monarch, on the contrary, whose nobler and more virtuous ambition prompts him to employ his superior power of promoting the internal prosperity and comforts of his subjects, is not liable to such defeats. His path is plain; his duty is clear. By a vigilant, prompt, and impartial administration of justice, his object is to secure to the industrious the enjoyment of their honest gains; by a judicious use of his supreme power, to remove difficulties and obstructions, out of the way of commercial enterprise, and to facilitate its progress; to reward and foster ingenuity; and to encourage and promote the various arts by which civilized societies are distinguished and embellished; above all, to countenance and favour religion, morality, good order, and all the social and domestic virtues. A monarch, who makes these benevolent ends the objects of his pursuit, will not so easily be disappointed. The reason is obvious; nothing depends on a single individual. His plans are carrying on through ten thousand channels, and by ten thousand agents, who, while they are all labouring for the promotion of their own peculiar object, are, at the same time, unconsciously performing their function in the great machine of civil society. It is not, if we may change the metaphor, a single plant, perhaps an exotic, in a churlish climate, and an unwilling soil, which raised with anxious care, a sudden frost may nip, or a sudden blight may wither; but it is the wide-spread vegetation of the meadow, which abundantly springs up in one unvaried face of verdure, beauty and utility. While the happy monarch, whose large and liberal mind has pro

* 'You have lived,' says lord Thomas Howard to his friend in James I.'s reign, 'to see the trim of old times, and what passed in the queen's days. These things are no more the same; your queen did not talk of her subjects' love and good affections, and in good truth she aimed well: our king talketh of his subjects' fear and subjection, &c. &c.

† Machiavel.

jected and promoted this scene of peaceful industry, has the satisfaction of witnessing the gradual diffusion of comfort; of comfort which, enlarging with the progress of his plans to their full establishment has been completed; not like the successful projects of triumphant ambition, in the oppression and misery of subjugated slaves, but in the freedom and happiness of a contented people.

To the above important objects of royal attention, such a sovereign as we are contemplating, will naturally add a disposition for the promotion of charitable and religious institutions, as well as of those whose more immediate object is political utility, proportioning, with a judicious discrimination, the measure of support, and countenance, to the respective degree of excellence. To these will be superadded a beneficent patronage to men of genius, learning, and science. Royal patronage will be likely not only to contribute to the carrying of talents into beneficial channels, but may be the means of preventing them from being diverted into such as are dangerous. And when it is received as an universally established principle, that the direction of the best abilities to none but the soundest purposes, is the way to insure the favour of the prince, it will be an additional spur to genius to turn its efforts to the promotion of virtue and of public utility.—Such are the views, such the exertions, such the felicities of a patriot king, of a Christian politician.

CHAP. XXI.

The importance of royal example in promoting loyalty.—On false patriotism.—Public spirit.

A wise prince will be virtuous, were it only through policy. The measure of his power is the rule of his duty. He who practises virtue and piety himself, not only holds out a broad shelter to the piety and virtue of others, but his example is a living law, efficacious to many of those who would treat written laws with contempt. The good conduct of the prince will make others virtuous; and the virtuous are always the peaceable. It is the voluptuous, the prodigal, and the licentious, who are the needy, the unsettled, and the discontented, who love change and promote disturbance. If sometimes the affluent, and the independent, swell the catalogue of public disturbers, they will frequently be found to be men of inferior abilities, used by the designing as necessary implements to accomplish their work. The one set furnish mischief, the other means. Sallust has, in four exquisitely chosen words, given, in the character of one innovator, that of almost the whole tribe, *Alieni appetens, sui profusus.* But allegiance is the fruit of sober integrity; and fidelity grows on the stock of independent honesty. As there is little public honour, where there is little private principle; so it is to be feared there will be little private principle, at least among young persons of rank, where the throne holds out the example of a contrary conduct.

It is true, that public virtue and public spirit are things, which all men, of all parties, and all characters, equally agree to extol, equally desire to have the credit of possessing. The reputation of patriotism is eagerly coveted by the most opposite characters; and pursued by the most contradictory means; by those who sedulously support the throne and constitution, and by those who labour no less sedulously to subvert them. Even the most factious, those who are governed by the basest selfishness, aspire to the dignity of a character, against which their leading principle and their actual practice constantly militate.

But patriots of this stamp are chiefly on the watch to exemplify their public spirit in their own restless way; they are anxiously looking out for some probable occurrence, which may draw them into notice, and are more eager to fish for fame, in the troubled waters of public commotion, than disposed to live in the quiet exercise of those habitual virtues, which, if general, would preclude the possibility of any commotion at all. These innovating reformers always affect to suppose more virtue in mankind, than they know they shall find, while their own practice commonly exhibits a low standard of that imaginary perfection on which their fallacious reasonings are grounded. There is scarcely any disposition which leads to this factious spirit more than a restless vanity, because it is a temper which induces a man to be making a continual comparison of himself with others. His sense of his own superior merit and inferior fortune, will fill his mind with perpetual competition with the inferior merit and superior fortune of those above him. He will ever prefer a storm in which he may become conspicuous, to a calm in which he is already secure. Such a soidisant patriot does not feel for the general interests of his country, but only for that portion of it which he himself may have a chance of obtaining. Though a loud declaimer for the privileges of universal man, he really sees no part of the whole circle of human happiness, except that segment which he is carving for himself. He does not rejoice in those plentiful dews of heaven which are fertilizing the general soil, but in those which fatten his own pastures. It is not,' says the admirable South, 'from the common, but the inclosure, from which he calculates his advantages.'

But true public spirit is not the new-born offspring of sudden occasion, nor the incidental fruit of casual emergency, nor the golden apple thrown out to contentious ambition. It is that genuine patriotism, which best prevents disturbance, by discouraging every vice that leads to it. It springs from a combination of disinterestedness, integrity, and content. It is the result of many long cherished domestic charities. Its seminal principles exist in a sober love of liberty, order, law, peace, and justice, the best safeguards of the throne, and the only happiness of the people. Instead of that selfish patriotism which, in ancient Rome, consisted in subverting the comfort of the rest of the world, the public spirit of a British patriot is not only consistent with Christianity, but (maugre the assertion of a wit already quoted)* in a good degree dictated

* Soame Jenyns.

by it. His religion, so far from forbidding, even enjoins him to consider himself as such a member of the body politic, such a joint of the great machine, that, remembering the defect of a pin may disconcert a system, he labours to fill up his individual part as assiduously as if the motion of every wheel, the effect of every spring, the success of the whole operation, the safety of the entire community depended on his single conduct. This patriotism evinces itself by sacrifices in the rich, by submission in the poor, by exertions in the able, strong in their energy, but quiet in their operation; it evinces itself by the sober satisfaction of each in cheerfully filling the station which is assigned him by Providence, instead of aspiring to that which is pointed out by ambition, by each man performing with conscientious strictness his own proper duty, instead of descanting with misleading plausibility, and unprofitable eloquence on the duties of other men.

CHAP. XXII.

On the graces of deportment.—The dispositions necessary for business.—Habits of domestic life.

'Those,' says lord Bacon, 'who are accomplished in the forms of urbanity, are apt to please themselves in it so much as seldom to aspire to higher virtue.' Notwithstanding the general truth of the maxim, and the high authority by which it comes recommended, yet condescending and gracious manners should have their full share in finishing the royal character; but they should have only their *due* share. They should never be resorted to as a substitute for that worth, of which they are the best decoration. In all the graces of deportment, whatever appears outwardly engaging, should always proceed from something deeper than itself.—The fair fabric, which is seen, must be supported by a solid foundation which is out of sight; the loftiest pyramid must rise from the broadest base; the most beautiful flower from the most valuable root; sweetness of manners must be the effect of benevolence of heart; affability of speech should proceed from a well regulated temper; a solicitude to oblige should spring from an inward sense of the duty owing to our fellow-creatures; the bounty of the hands must result from the feelings of the heart; the proprieties of conversation, from a sound internal principle; kindness, attention, and all the outward graces, should be the effect of habit and dispositions lying in the mind, and ready to show themselves in action, whenever the occasion presents itself.

Just views of herself, and of what she owes to the world, of that gentleness which Christianity inculcates, and that graciousness which her station enjoins, will, taking the usual advantages into the account, scarcely fail to produce in the royal pupil a deportment, at once dignified and engaging. The firmest substances alone are susceptible of the most exquisite polish, while the meanest materials will admit of being varnished. True fine breeding never betrays any tincture of that vanity, which is the effect of a mind struggling to conceal its faults; nor of that pride, which is not conscious of possessing any. This genuine politeness resulting from illustrious birth, inherent sense, and implanted virtue, will render superfluous the documents of Chesterfield, and the instructions of Castiglione.

But the acquisition of engaging manners, and all the captivating graces of deportment, need less occupy the mind of the royal person, as she will acquire these attractions by a sort of instinct, almost without time or pains. They will naturally be copied from those illustrious examples of grace, ease, and condescending dignity, which fill, and which surround the throne. And she will have the less occasion for looking to remote, or foreign examples, to learn the true arts of popularity, while the illustrious personage who wears the crown, continues to exhibit not only a living pattern by what honest means the warm affections of a people are won, but by what rectitude, piety, and patriotism, they may be preserved, and increased, under every succession of trial, and every vicissitude of circumstance.

Among the habits which it is important for a prince to acquire, there is not one more essential than a love of business.—Lord Bacon has, among his essays, an admirable chapter, both of counsel and caution, respecting despatch in affairs, which as it is short and pointed, the royal pupil might commit to memory. He advises to measure despatch not by the time of sitting to business, but by the advancement of the business itself. and reprobates the affectation of those, who, 'to gain the reputation of men of despatch, are only anxious for the credit of having done a great deal in a little time; and who abbreviate, not by contracting, but by cutting off.'—On the other hand, procrastination wears out time, and accomplishes nothing. Indistinctness also in the framing of ideas, and confusion in the disorderly disposition of them, perplex business as much as irresolution impedes it. Julius Cæsar was a model in this respect; with all his turbulence of ambition, with all his eagerness of enterprise, with all his celerity of despatch, his judgment uniformly appears to have been cool and serene; and even in the midst of the most complicated transactions, no perplexity is ever manifest in his conduct, no entanglement in his thoughts, no confusion in his expressions. Hence, we cannot but infer, that an unambiguous clearness in the planning of affairs, a lucid order in arranging, and a persevering but not precipitate, despatch in conducting them, are the unequivocal marks of a superior mind.

Yet though distribution, order, and arrangement, are the soul of business, even these must not be too minute, 'for he that does not divide,' says the great authority above cited, 'will never enter clearly into business, and he who divides too much, will not come out of it clearly.'

A prince should come to the transaction of business, with a prepared, but not with a prejudiced mind: and the mind which is best furnished for the concern which it is about to investigate, while it will be least liable to be drawn

aside by persuasion, will be most open to truth, and most disposed to yield to conviction, because it will have already weighed the arguments, and balanced the difficulties.

A great statesman of that nation to which we are rather apt to ascribe steadiness than rapidity, has bequeathed a valuable lesson to princes for the despatch of business. It is well known that De Wit assigned as the chief reason why he had himself been enabled to prosecute such a multiplicity of concerns so easily was, *by always doing one thing at a time.*

It is therefore important, not only fully to possess the mind with the affair which is under consideration, but to bestow on it an undivided attention, an application which cannot be diverted by irrelevant or inferior objects; and to possess a firmness which cannot be shaken from its purpose by art or flattery; cautions the more necessary, as we are assured by a penetrating observer, that even the strong mind of Elizabeth was not always proof against such attacks. One of the secretaries of this great queen never came to her to sign bills, that he did not first take care to engage her in deep discourse about other weighty business, that, by thus pre-occupying her mind, he might draw off her attention from the bills to which he wanted her signature.

For the private habits of life, and propriety of conduct to those around her, queen Mary, as described by bishop Burnet* and Fowler, seems to have been a model. Her goodness was the most unostentatious, her gentleness the most unaffected, her piety the most inwoven into her habits, her charity the best principled, and her generosity the most discriminating! Vanity and self-love seem to have been not merely outwardly repressed from a sense of decorum, but to have been inwardly extinguished; and she did not want the veil of art to conceal faults which were not working within. She seems to have united consummate discretion, with the most conscientious sincerity. She could deny, says her admiring biographer, the most earnest solicitations, with a true firmness, when she thought the person for whom they were made did not merit them. She possessed one quality of peculiar value in her station, a gentle, but effectual method of discouraging calumny. If any indulged a spirit of censoriousness in her presence, continues he, she would ask them if they have read archbishop Tillotson's sermon on evil-speaking? or give them some other pointed, but delicate reproof.

Princes should never forget, that where sincerity is expected, freedom must be allowed; and, that they who show themselves displeased at truth, must not be surprised if they never hear it. In all their intercourse, they should not only be habituated to expect from others, but to practise themselves, the most simple veracity; they should no more employ flattery, than exact it. It will be necessary for them to bear in mind, that such is the selfishness of the human heart, that we are not disinterested in our very praises; and that, in excessive commendation, we commonly consider ourselves the more than the person we commend. It is often rather a disguised effect of our own vanity, than any real admiration of the person we extol. That flattery which appears so liberal is in fact, one of the secret artifices of self-love; it looks generous, but it is in reality covetous; and praise is not so much a free gift, as a mercenary commerce, for which we hope to receive, in return, more than an equivalent.

Is there not something far more cunning than noble, in that popular art, which Pliny recommends, 'to be liberal of praise to another for any thing in which you yourself excel?'—The motive is surely selfish, that whether you deserve it or not, you may thus either way, be certain of securing the superiority to yourself. —If censure wants the tenderness of charity to make it useful, praise requires the modesty of truth, and the sanctity of justice to render it safe. It is observable, that in the sacred Scripture, which we should do well always to consult as our model, though there is sometimes simple commendation, yet there is no excessive praise, nor even the slightest tincture of exaggeration.

But there is a fault, the direct opposite to flattery, which should with equal vigilance be guarded against. There is nothing which more effectually weans attachment, and obstructs popularity, than the indulgence of intemperate speech, and petulent wit. And they who in very exalted stations, unfortunately feel a propensity to impetuosity or sarcasm, would do well, if they will not repress the feeling (which would be the shortest way) not to let it break out in pointed sentences, or cutting sayings, sharp enough to give pain, and short enough to be remembered. It has this double disadvantage, every wound made by a royal hand is mortal to the feelings of those on whom it is inflicted; and every heart which is thus wounded is alienated. Besides, it is an evil, which gathers strength by going.' The sayings of princes are always repeated, and they are not always repeated faithfully. Lord Bacon records several instances of sovereigns who ruined themselves by this sententious indiscretion. The mischief of concise sayings, he observes, is that 'they are darts, supposed to be shot from their secret intentions, while long discourses are flat, less noticed, and little remembered.'

CHAP. XXIII

On the choice of society.—Sincerity the bond of familiar intercourse.—Liberality.—Instances of ingratitude in princes.—On raising the tone of conversation—and of manners.

Princes can never fall into a more fatal error, than when, in mixing with dishonourable society, they fancy, either that their choice can confirm merit, or their presence compensate for the want of it. It is, however, sometimes very difficult for them to discover the real character of those around them, because there may be a kind of conspiracy to keep them in the dark. But there is one principle of selection, which will in general direct them well, in the choice

* See especially bishop Burnet's essay on queen Mary

of their companions, that of choosing persons, who, in their ordinary habits, and in selecting the companions of their own hours of relaxation, show their regard for morality and virtue. From such men as these, princes may more reasonably expect to hear the language of truth. Such persons will not be naturally led to connive at the vices of their master, in order to justify their own; they have no interest in being dishonest.

The people are not unnaturally led to form their judgment of the real principles and character of the prince, from the conduct and manners of his companions and favourites. Were not the subjects of the unhappy Charles I. in some degree excusable for not doing full justice to the piety and moral worth, which really belonged to his character, when they saw that those who were his most strenuous advocates, were, in general, avowedly profligate and profane?—If a monarch have the especial happiness of possessing a friend, let him be valued as the most precious of all his possessions. Let him be encouraged to discharge the best office of friendship, by finding, that the frankest reproofs, instead of generating a formality too fatally indicative of decaying affection, are productive, even when they may be conceived to be misplaced, of warmer returns of cordiality.

But kings, whether actual or expectant, must not hope, in general, to find this honest frankness. They must not expect to have their opinions controverted, or their errors exposed directly or openly. They should, therefore accustom themselves to hear and understand the still small voice, in which any disapprobation will be likely to be conveyed; they should use themselves to catch a hint, and to profit from an analogy: they should be on the watch to discover the sense which is entertained of their own principles or conduct, by observing the language which is used concerning similar principles and conduct in others. They must consider themselves as lying under special disadvantages, in respect to the discovery of truth, wherever they are themselves concerned; and must, therefore, strive to come possessed of it, with proportionate diligence and caution.

If an insinuating favourite find it more advantageous to himself to flatter than to counsel his prince, counsel will be withheld, and obsequiousness will be practised. The prince, in return, will conclude himself to be always in the right, when he finds that he is never opposed; and the remembrance of his faults, and the duty of correcting them, will be obliterated in the constant approbation which he is confident of receiving.

Discretion is a quality so important in the royal person, that he should early be taught the most absolute controul over his own mind! He should learn, that no momentary warmth of feeling should ever betray a prince into the disclosure of any thing which wisdom or duty requires him to conceal. But while he is thus vigilantly careful not to commit himself, he should seldom appear to entertain any distrust of those, in whom prudence forbids him to confide. There is scarcely a more unquestionable evidence of sound sense and self-possession, than never to seem burthened with a secret of one's own; nor a surer mark of true politeness, than not to pry curiously into that of another. 'The perfection of behaviour,' says Livy, though he said it on another occasion, 'is for a man (he might have said a prince) to retain his own dignity without intruding on the liberty of another.'

Those who have solicitations to make, should never have reason given them to suspect, that they can work their way to the royal favour by flatteries which sooth rather than by truths which enlighten. Above all a prince should avoid discovering such weaknesses as may encourage suiters to expect success in their applications, by such a spirit of accommodation, such silly compliments, servile sacrifices, and unworthy adulation, as are derogatory to his understanding, and disgraceful to his character.*

A royal person should early be taught that it is no small part of wisdom and virtue to repel improper requests. But while firm in the principle, as Christian duty requires, it is no violation of that duty to be as gentle in the expression, as christian kindness demands; never forgetting the well known circumstance, that of two sovereigns of the house of Stuart, one *refused* favours in a more gracious manner than the other *granted* them. It is, therefore, not enough that a prince should acquire the disposition to confer favours, he should also cultivate the talent. He should not only know how and when to commend, and how and when to bestow, but also how and when to refuse; and should carefully study the important and happy art of discriminating between those whose merit deserves favour, and those whose necessities demand relief. It should be established into a habit, to make no vague promises, raise no false hopes, and disappoint no hopes which have been fairly raised.

Princes should never shelter their meaning under ambiguous expressions: nor use any of those equivocal or general phrases, which may

* It would seem superfluous to guard the royal mind against such petty dangers, did not history furnish so many instances of their ill effects. How much the weak vanity of king James I. laid him open to these despicable flatteries, we have some curious specimens in a letter of lord Thomas Howard to Sir John Harrington, from which we extract the following passage. In advising his friend how to conduct himself in the king's presence, in order to advance his fortune, after some other counsel, he adds, 'Touch but lightly on religion. Do not of yourself say, "this is good or bad;" but if it were your majesty's good opinion, I myself should think so. In private discourse, the king seldom speaketh of any man's temper, discretion, or good virtues; so meddle not at all; but find out a clue to guide you to the heart, most delightful to his mind. I will advise one thing: the roan Jennet, whereon the king rideth every day, must not be forgotten to be praised, and the good furniture above all. What lost a great man much notice the other day, a noble did come in suit of a place, and saw the king mounting the roan, delivered his petition, which was heeded and read, but no answer given. The noble departed, and came to court the next day, and got no answer again. The lord treasurer was then pressed to move the king's pleasure touching the petition. When the king was asked for answer thereto, he said in some wrath, "shall a king give heed to a dirty paper when the beggar noticeth not his gilt stirrups?" Now it fell out, that the king had new furniture, when the noble saw him in the court yard, but he being over charged with confusion, passed by admiring the dressing of the horse. Thus, good night, our noble failed in his suit.'—Nugæ Antiquæ.

be interpreted any way, and which either from their ambiguity, or indeterminate looseness, will be translated into that language, which happens to suit the hopes or the fears of the petitioner. It should ever be remembered that a hasty promise given to gain time, to save appearances, to serve a pressing emergency, or to avoid a present importunity, and not performed when the occasion occurs, does as much harm to the promiser in a political, as in a moral view. For the final disappointment of such raised expectations will do an injury more than equivalent to any temporary advantage, which could be derived from making the promise. Even the wiser worldly politicians have been aware of this. Cardinal Richelieu, overbearing as he was, still preserved the attachment of his adherents by never violating his engagements: while Mazarin, whose vices were of a baser strain, was true to no man, and therefore, attached to no man. There was no set of people on whom he could depend, because there was none whom he had not deceived. Though his less elevated capacity, and more moderate ambition, enabled him to be less splendidly mischievous than his predecessor, yet his bad faith and want of honour, his falsehood and low cunning, as they prevented all men from confiding in him during his life, so have they consigned his memory to perpetual detestation.

In habituating princes to delight to confer favours on the deserving, it should be remembered, that where it is right to bestow them at all, it is also right not to wait till they are solicited. But while the royal person is taught to consider munificence as a truly princely virtue, yet an exact definition of what true, and especially what royal, munificence is, will be one of the most salutary lessons he can learn. Liberality is one of the brightest stars in the whole constellation of virtues; but it shines most benignantly, when it does not depend on its own solitary lustre, but blends its rays with the confluent radiance of the surrounding lights. The individual favour must not intrench on any superior claim; no bounty must infringe on its neighbouring virtues, justice, or discretion; nor must it take its character from its outwardly resembling vices, ostentation, vanity or profusion. Real merit of every kind should be remunerated; but those who possess merits foreign from their own profession, though they should be still rewarded, should not be remunerated out of the resources of that profession. Nor should talents, however considerable, which are irrelevant to the profession, be made a motive for placing a man in it. Louis XIV. chose father la Chaise for his confessor, because he understood something of medals!

There is an idea of beautiful humanity suggested to princes in the Spectator,* in a fictitious account of the emperor Pharamond, who made it his refreshment from the toils of business, and the fatigues of ceremony, to pass an hour or two in the apartment of his favourite, in giving audience to the claim of the meritorious, and in drying the tears of the afflicted. The entrance by which the sorrowful obtained access, was called THE GATE OF THE UNHAPPY. A munificent prince may, in some degree, realize this idea. And what proportions in architecture, what magnificence in dimensions, what splendour of decoration, can possibly adorn a royal palace, so gloriously as such *a gate of the unhappy*.

A royal person should be early taught, by an invincible love of justice, and a constant exercise of kindness, feeling, and gratitude, to invalidate that maxim, that in a court *les absens et les mourans ont toujours tort*. He should possess the generosity, not to expect his favourites to sacrifice their less fortunate friends in order to make their court to him. Examples of this ungenerous selfishness should be commented on in reading. Madame de Maintenon sacrificed the exemplary cardinal de Noailles, and the elegant and virtuous Racine, to the unjust resentment of the king, and refused to incur the risk of displeasing him by defending her oppressed and injured friends.

We have already mentioned the remuneration of services. In a reign where all was baseness, it is not easy to fix on a particular instance; else the neglect manifest by Charles II. towards the author of Hudibras, carries on it a stain of peculiar ingratitude. It is the more unpardonable, because the monarch had taste enough to appreciate, and frequently to quote with admiration the wit of Butler: a wit not transiently employed to promote his pleasure, or to win his favour; but loyally and laboriously exercised in composing one of the most ingenious and original, and unquestionably the most learned poem in the English language. A poem, which independently of its literary merit, did more to advance the royal cause, by stigmatizing with unparalleled powers of irony and ridicule, the fanaticism and hypocrisy of the usurper's party, than had perhaps been effected by all the historians, moralists, divines, and politicians put together. It is not meant, however, to give unqualified praise to this poem. From the heavy charges of levity, and even of profaneness, Hudibras cannot be vindicated; and a scrupulous sovereign would have wished that his cause had been served by better means.—Such a sovereign was not Charles. So far from it, may it not be feared, that these grievous blemishes, instead of alienating the king from the poet, would too probably have been an additional motive for his approbation of the work, and consequently, could not have been his reason for neglecting the author.*

A somewhat similar imputation of ingratitude towards Philip de Comines, though on different grounds of service, detracts not a little from the far more estimable character of Louis XII. As it was this monarch's honourable boast, on another occasion, that the king of France never resented the injuries offered to the duke of Orleans, it should have been equally his care, that the

* Number 84.

* Dryden also materially served the royal cause by his admirable poem of Absalom and Achitophel which determined the conquest of the tories, after the exclusion parliaments. But Dryden was a profligate, whom no virtuous monarch could patronise. Though, when a prince refuses to remunerate the actual services of a first rate genius, because he is an unworthy man, it would be acting consistently to withhold all favour from those who have only the vices without the talents.

services performed for the one should never have been forgotten by the other.

To confer dignity and useful elegance on the hours of social pleasure and relaxation, is a talent of peculiar value, and one of which an highly educated prince is in more complete possession than any other human being. He may turn even the passing topics of the day to good account, by collecting the general opinion; and may gain clearer views of ordinary events and opinions, by hearing them faithfully related, and fairly canvassed. Instead of falling in with the prevailing taste for levity and trifles, he may, without the smallest diminution of cheerfulness or wit in the conversation, insensibly divert its current into the purest channels. The standard of society may be gracefully, and almost imperceptibly raised by exciting the attention to questions of taste, morals, ingenuity, and literature. Under such auspicious influence, every talent will not only be elicited, but directed to its true end. Every taste for what is excellent will be awakened; every mental faculty, and moral feeling will be quickened; and the royal person by the urbanity and condescension with which he thus calls forth abilities to their best exercise, will seem to have infused new powers into his honoured and delighted guests.

A prince is 'the maker of manners;' and as he is the model of the court, so is the court the model of the metropolis, and the metropolis of the rest of the kingdom. He should carefully avail himself of the rare advantage which his station affords, of giving through this widely extended sphere, the tone to virtue as well as to manners. He should bear in mind, that high authority becomes a most pernicious power, when, either by example or countenance, it is made the instrument of extending and establishing corruptions.

We have given an instance of the powerful effect of example in princes, in the influence which the *sincerity* of Henry IV. of France had on those about him. An instance equally striking may be adduced of the eagerness with which the same monarch was imitated in his *vices*. Henry was passionately addicted to gaming, and the contagion of the king's example unhappily spread with the utmost rapidity, not only through the whole court, but the whole kingdom.

And when, not gaming only, but other irregularities; when whatever is notoriously wrong, by being thus countenanced and protected, becomes thoroughly established and fashionable, few will be ashamed of doing wrong. Every thing, indeed, which the court reprobates will continue to be stigmatized; but unhappily, every thing which it countenances will cease to be disreputable. And that which was accounted infamous under a virtuous, would cease to be dishonourable under a corrupt reign. For, while vice is discouraged by the highest authority, notwithstanding it may be practised, it will still be accounted disgraceful; but when that discountenance is withdrawn, shame and dishonour will no longer attend it. The contamination will spread wider, and descend lower, and purity will insensibly lose ground, when even notorious deviations from it are no longer attended with disgrace.

Anne of Austria has been flattered by historians, for having introduced a more refined politeness into the court of France, and for having multiplied its amusements. We hardly know whether this remark is meant to convey praise or censure. It is certain that her cardinal, and his able predecessor, had address enough to discover, that the most effectual method of establishing a despotic government, was to amuse the people, by encouraging a spirit of dissipation, and sedulously providing objects for its gratification. These dexterous politicians knew, that to promote a general passion for pleasure and idleness, would by engaging the minds of the people, render them less dangerous observers, both of the ministers and of their sovereigns This project, which had perhaps only a temporary view, had lasting consequences. The national character was so far changed by its success, that the country seems to have been brought to the unanimous conclusion, that it was pleasanter to amuse than to defend themselves.

It is also worth remarking, that even where the grossest licentiousness may not be pursued, an unbounded passion for exquisite refinement in pleasure, and for the luxurious gratification of taste, is attended with more deep and serious mischiefs than are perhaps intended. It stagnates higher energies; it becomes itself the paramount principle, and gradually by debasing the heart, both disinclines and disqualifies it for nobler pursuits. The court of Louis XIV. exhibited a striking proof of this degrading perfection. The princes of the blood were so enchanted with its fascinating splendours, that they ignominiously submitted to the loss of all power, importance, and influence in the state, because with a view to estrange them from situations of real usefulness and dignity, they were graciously permitted to preside in matters of taste and fashion, and to become the supreme arbiters in dress, spectacles, and decoration.*

CHAP. XXIV.

On the art of moral calculation, and making a true estimate of things and persons.

A ROYAL person should early be taught to act on that maxim of one of the ancients that the chief misfortunes of men arise from their never being learned *the true art of calculation*. This moral art should be employed to teach him how

* It is humiliating to the dignity of a prince when his subjects believe that they can recommend themselves to his favour by such low qualifications as a nice attention to personal appearance, and modish attire. Of this we shall produce an instance from another passage of Lord Thomas Howard's Letters to Sir John Harrington. 'The king,' says he, 'doth admire good fashion in cloaths. I pray you give good heed hereunto. I would wish you to be well trimmed; get a good jerkin well bordered, and not too short: The king saith, he liketh a flowing garment. Be sure it be not all of one sort, but diversely coloured; the collar falling somewhat down, and your ruff well stiffened and bushy. We have lately had many gallants *who have failed in their suit for want of due observance in these matters*. The king is nicely heedful of such points, and dwelleth on good looks and handsome accoutrements.'—Nugæ Antiquæ

to pay the comparative value of things; and to adjust their respective claims; assigning to each that due proportion of time and thought to which each will, on a fair valuation, be found to be entitled. It will also teach the habit of setting the concerns of time, in contrast with those of eternity. This last is not one of those speculative points on which persons may differ without danger, but one in which an erroneous calculation involves inextricable misfortunes.

It is prudent to have a continual reference not only to the value of the object, but also to the probability there is of attaining it; not only to see that it is of sufficient importance to justify our solicitude; but also to take care, that designs of remote issue, and projects of distant execution, do not supersede present and actual duties. Providence, by setting so narrow limits to life itself, in which these objects are to be pursued, has clearly suggested to us, the impropriety of forming schemes, so disproportionate in their dimensions, to our contracted sphere of action. Nothing but this doctrine of moral calculation, will keep up in the mind a constant sense of that future reckoning, which, even to a private individual, is of unspeakable moment; but, which to a prince, whose responsibility is so infinitely greater, increases to a magnitude, the full sum of which, the human mind would in vain attempt to estimate. This principle will afford the most salutary check to those projects of remote vainglory, and posthumous ambition, of which in almost every instance, it is difficult to pronounce, whether they have been more idle, or more calamitous.

History, fertile as it is in similar lessons, does not furnish a more striking instance of the mischiefs of erroneous calculation, than in the character of Alexander. How falsely did he estimate the possible exertions of one man, and the extent of human life, when, in the course of his reign, which eventually proved a short one, he resolved to change the face of the world; to conquer its kingdoms, to enlighten its ignorance, and to redress its wrongs! a chimera, indeed, but a glorious chimera, had he not, at the same time, and to the last hour of his life, indulged passions inconsistent with his own resolutions, and subversive of his own schemes. His thirty-third year put a period to projects, for which many ages would have been insufficient! and the vanity of his ambition forms a forcible contrast to the grandeur of his designs.—His gigantic empire, acquired by unequalled courage, ambition, and success, did not gradually decay by the lapse of time; it did not yield to the imperious control of strange events and extraordinary circumstances, which it was beyond the wisdom of man to foresee, or the power of man to resist; but naturally, but instantly, on the death of the conqueror, it was at once broken in pieces, all his schemes were in a moment abolished, and even the dissolution of his own paternal inheritance was speedily accomplished, by the contests of his immediate successors.

But we need not look back to ancient Greece for proofs of the danger of erroneous calculation, while Louis XIV. occupies the page of history. This descendant of fifty kings, after a triumphant reign of sixty years, having, like Alexander, been flattered with the name of *the great*, and having, doubtless, like him, projected to reign after his decease, was not dead an hour before his will was cancelled; a will not made in secret, and like some of his former acts, annulled by its own inherent injustice, but publicly known and generally approved by princes of the blood, counsellors, and parliaments. This royal will was set aside with less ceremony, than would have been shown, in this country, to the testament of the meanest individual. All formalities were forgotten; all decencies trodden under foot. This decree of the new executive power became, in a moment, as absolute as that of the monarch, now so contemptuously treated, had lately been. No explanation was given, no arguments were heard, no objections examined. That sovereign was totally and instantly forgotten—

> ——whose word
> Might yesterday have stood against the world;
> And none so poor to do him reverence.

The plans of Cæsar Borgia were so ably laid, that he thought he had put himself out of the reach of Providence. It was the boast of this execrable politician, that he had, by the infallible rules of a wise and foreseeing policy, so surely laid the immutable foundations of his own lasting greatness, that of the several possibilities which he had calculated, not one could shake the stability of his fortune. If the pope, his father, should live, his grandeur was secure; if he died, he had, by his interest secured the next election. But this deep schemer had forgotten to take his own mortality into account. He did not calculate on that sickness, which would remove him from the scene where his presence was necessary to secure these events; he did not foresee, that when his father died, his mortal enemy, and not his creature, would succeed, and by succeeding, would defeat every thing. Above all he did not calculate, that, when he invited to his palace nine cardinals, for whose supper he had prepared a deadly poison, in order to get their wealth into his own hands—he did not, I say, foresee, that

> ——he but taught
> Bloody instructions, which being taught, returned
> To plague the inventor—

He did not think that *literally*

> ——Even-handed justice
> Would give the ingredients of the poison'd chalice
> To his own lips.

He had left out of his calculation, that the pope, his father, would perish by the very plot which was employed to enrich him; while he, Borgia himself, with the mortal venom in his veins, should only escape to drag on a life of meanness, and misery, in want, and in prison; with the loss of his boundless wealth and power, losing all those adherents which that wealth and power had attracted.

It is of the last importance, that persons of high condition should be preserved from entering on their brilliant career with false principles, false views, and false maxims. It is of the last importance, to teach them not to confound

splendour with dignity, justice with success, merit with prosperity, voluptuousness with happiness, refinement in luxury with pure taste, deceit with sagacity, suspicion with penetration, prodigality with a liberal spirit, honour with christian principle, christian principle with fanaticism, or conscientious strictness with hypocrisy.

Young persons possess so little clearness in their views, so little distinctness in their perceptions, and are so much inclined to prefer the suggestions of a warm fancy to the sober deductions of reason, that, in their pursuit of glory and celebrity, they are perpetually liable to take up with false way-marks; and where they have some general good intentions respecting the end, to defeat their own purposes by a misapplication of means; so that, very often, they do not so much err through the seduction of the senses, as by accumulating false maxims into a sort of system, on which they afterwards act through life.

One of the first lessons that should be inculcated on the great is, that God has not sent us into this world to give us consummate happiness, but to train us to those habits which lead to it. High rank lays the mind open to strong temptations; the highest rank to the strongest. The seducing images of luxury and pleasure, of splendour and of homage, of power and independence, are too seldom counteracted by the only adequate preservative, a religious education. The world is too generally entered upon as a scene of pleasure, instead of trial; as a theatre of amusement, not of action. The high born are taught to enjoy the world at an age when they should be learning to know it; and to grasp the prize when they should be exercising themselves for the combat. They consequently look for the sweets of victory, when they should be enduring the hardness of the conflict.

From some of these early corruptions, a young princess will be preserved, by that very supereminent greatness, which, in other respects, has its dangers. Her exalted station, by separating her from miscellaneous society, becomes her protection from many of its maxims and practices. From the dangers of her own peculiar situation she should be guarded by being early taught to consider power and influence, not as exempting her from the difficulties of life or insuring to her a large portion of pleasures, but as engaging her in a peculiarly extended sphere of duties, and infinitely increasing the demands on her fortitude and vigilance.

The right formation of her judgment will much assist in her acquisition of right practical habits; and the art of making a just estimate of men and things, will be one of the most useful lessons she will have to learn. Young persons, in their views of the world, are apt to make a false estimate of character, something in the way in which the Roman mob decided on that of Cæsar. They are dazzled with the glitter of a shining action, without scrutinizing the character, or suspecting the motive of the actor. From the scene which followed Cæsar's death, they may learn a salutary lesson. How easily did the insinuating Antony persuade the people, that the man who had actually robbed them of their liberty, and of those privileges in defence of which their ancestors had shed their best blood, was a prodigy of disinterested generosity, because he had left them permission to walk in his pleasure-grounds! the bequest of a few drachms to each, was sufficient to convince these shallow reasoners, that their deceased benefactor, was the most disinterested, and least selfish, of mankind. In this popular act they forgot, that he had ravaged Greece, depopulated Gaul, plundered Asia, and subverted the commonwealth!

The same class of ardent and indiscriminating judges will pass over, in the popular character of our fifth Henry, the profligacy of his morals, and the ambition of his temper, and think only of his personal bravery, and his splendid success. They will forget, in the conqueror of Agincourt, the abettor of superstition and cruelty, and the unfeeling persecutor of the illustrious lord Cobham.

But, in no instance has a false judgment been more frequently made, than in the admired and attractive character of Henry IV. of France. The frankness of his manners, the gallantry of his spirit, and the generosity of his temper, have concurred to unite the public judgment in his favour, and to obtain too much indulgence to his unsteady principles, and his libertine conduct. But the qualities which insure popularity too seldom stand the scrutiny of truth. Born with talents and dispositions to engage all hearts, Henry was defective in that radical principle of conscience, which is the only foundation of all true virtue. The renunciation of his religion for the crown of France, which was thought a master-stroke of policy, which was recommended by statesmen, justified by divines, and even *approved by Sully*, was probably, as most acts of mere worldly policy, often eventually prove to be, the source of his subsequent misfortunes. —Had he preferred his religion to the crown of France, he had not fallen the victim of a fanatical assassin. Had he limited his desires to the kingdom of Navarre, when that of France could only be obtained by the sacrifice of his conscience, the heroism of his character would then have been unequivocal, and his usefulness to mankind might have been infinitely extended. Nor is it impossible, that those who urged the condition might by the steady perseverance of his refusal, have been induced to relinquish it; and French protestantism, from his conscientious adherence to its principles, might have derived such a strength, as soon to have made it paramount in the state: an event which would probably have saved Europe from those horrors and agitations, with which the late century closed, and the present has commenced, the termination of which remains awfully concealed in the yet unrolled volume of eternal Providence.

How much more solid, though neither sung by the poet nor immortalized by the sculptor,* was the virtue of his illustrious mother, honourably introducing, with infinite labour and hazard, the reformation into her small territory!

* Henry IV. was chosen by Voltaire for the hero of his Epic Poem, and his statue was for a long time respected in France, when those of other kings were destroyed.

' thing, says her warm eulogist, bishop Burnet, was wanting to make the queen of Navarre perfect, but a larger dominion. ' She not only reformed her court, but her whole principality, to such a degree, that the golden age seems to have returned under her, or rather Christianity, appeared again, with its pristine purity and lustre. Nor is there one single abatement to be made her. *Only her sphere was narrow.*' But is not this to make greatness depend too much on extrinsic accident? That sphere is large enough which is rounded with perfection. A Christian queen during her troubled life! A martyr in her exemplary death, hastened, as is too probable, by the black devices of one, as much the opprobrium, as she herself was the glory of queens; the execrable plotter of the massacre of St. Bartholomew! Happy for Catherine di Medici, and for France, of which she was regent during the minority of three kings, had her sphere been as contracted as was that of Jane of Navarre!*

For want of having learned to make a just estimate of the relative value of actions, Louis XIV. while he was laying Flanders waste, and depopulating whole provinces, probably persuaded himself, that he was actuated by pure charity and love of the people, because he carried in his military caleche some bags of bread and money, which he distributed, as he passed, to the famished peasantry; beings, whose hunger was caused by his ambition: hunger which the ostentatious distribution of a few loaves and livres could relieve but for a moment. He might have given them peace, and saved his bread. He should have reflected, that the most munificent charities of a prince, commendable as they are in themselves, can be only local and partial; and are almost nothing, in the way of benefit, compared with a deliverance, which it was in his power to have granted them, from the miseries of war. In a prince, to love peace, is to be charitable on a grand scale.—The evils which he personally relieves, in consequence of their presenting themselves to his senses, highly as that species of bounty should be rated, must be out of all proportion few, compared, with those which never meet his eyes. If, by compassionating the one, he soothes his own feelings, while he forgets the other, only because they are too remote to come in contact with these feelings, his charity is little better than self-love.

* Nature, perhaps, never produced a more perfect contrast, than these two contemporary queens. The intellectual subtilty of Catharine's vices more resembled those of an infernal spirit, than of a corrupt woman. She had an exquisite genius for crimes. The arts she employed against those, whose destruction she meditated, were varied and applied with the nicest appropriation to their case and character: and her success was proportioned to her skill. Power, riches, pleasures, were the baits which she held out, with exact discrimination, to different men, according as their tempers inclined them to either. Her deep knowledge of mankind she converted to the purpose of alluring, betraying, and destroying all, against whom she had designs: and she had the ingenuity to ruin every one in his own way. She not only watched the vices and weaknesses, but the very virtues of men, in order to work with them to their destruction.—The excess of a good quality, the elevation of a virtue, was in her hands a better implement for working the ruin of its possessor than even his faults. Her dissimulation was so exquisite, her patience in evil so persevering, that no time appeared too long for nourishing impious projects, and ripening them to perfection. Aware, at length, that that rare combination of deceit and cruelty which met in her character was detected; in order to complete the destruction of the protestants more signally, her son, a puppet in her hands, was taught to foster and caress them. Two years did this pernicious Italian brood over this plot.† Its dire catastrophe who does not know? Queen Jane was poisoned, as a prologue to this bloody tragedy, a sovereign to whom even the bigotted historians of the popish communion concur in ascribing all that was elegant, accomplished, and pure in woman, with all that was wise, heroic, learned, and intrepid in man!

† For a more detailed character of Catharine, see the Life of Agrippa D'Aubigne.

CHAP. XXV.

On erroneous judgment.—Character of queen Christina of Sweden.—Comparison of Christina with Alfred.

Nothing leads more to false estimates than our suffering that natural desire of happiness, congenial to the human heart, to mislead us by its eagerness. The object in itself is not only natural, but laudable; but the steps which are supposed to lead to it, when ill regulated, never attain the end. Vice, of whatever kind, leads to inevitable misery; yet, through a false calculation, even while happiness is intended, vice is pursued. The voluptuous will not be persuaded to set bounds to their indulgencies. Thus they commonly destroy both health of body, and peace of mind; yet the most voluptuous never *intend* to be miserable. What a necessity hence arises, for early infusing right principles, and training to safe and temperate habits, when even the very desire of happiness, if left merely to its instinctive movement, is almost certain to plunge its votary into final and irremediable wretchedness!

But in no instance is the defective judgment which leads to false estimates, more to be regretted, than in the case of those who apply themselves to pursuits, and affect habits foreign from their station; who spend their season of improvement in cultivating talents, which they can rarely bring into exercise, to the neglect of those which they are peculiarly called to acquire; who run out of their proper road in pursuit of false fame, while they renounce the solid glory of a real, an attainable, and an appropriate renown.

The danger of a prince often becomes, in this respect, the greater, because, while he sees a path open before him, suppose in the case of the fine arts, by which he beholds others rising into universal notice and celebrity, he feels, perhaps, a natural propensity to the same pursuits, and a consciousness of being able to excel in them. Meanwhile, even his weakest efforts are flattered by those around him, as the sure presages of excellence; and he is easily led to believe, that if he will condescend to enter the lists, he is certain to attain the palm of victory. When we consider the amount of the temptation, we should be almost ready to forgive the emperor Nero, had it been only in displaying his musical or theatrical talents, that he had de

parted from the line of rectitude. But to see a Roman emperor travelling through Greece in character of an artist, in order to extort the applause of a people eminent for their taste, was an indication of farther evils. The infatuation remained to his last hour; for, in his dying moments, instead of thinking how Rome must rejoice to be rid of such a master, he only wondered how the world could submit to the loss of such a performer.

It is one of the many evils which result from indulging such misplaced propensities, that it produces a fatal forgetfulness of all the proper duties of a sovereign, and of his legitimate sphere of emulation. Having once eaten of the forbidden fruit of this meretricious praise, he becomes fonder of the relish, his taste is corrupted,—his views are lowered,—his ambition is contracted; and indolence conspires with vanity, in perpetuating his delusion, and in making him take up with pursuits, and gratifications, far below the level of his high original.

For a prince, who has formed a just estimate of his own exalted station, will ever bear in mind, that as its rank, its rights, and its privileges, are all of a kind peculiar to itself, so also must be its honours. Providence has laid open to a prince an elevated and capacious field of glory, from which subjects must be ever excluded, by the very circumstances of their civil condition. A prince will but degrade himself, when he descends from his vantage ground, which he naturally occupies, to mix in the competitions of ordinary men. He engages in a contest in which, though failure may disgrace, success cannot do him honour. Monarchs, therefore, would do well to remember, and to improve upon the principle of the dignified reply of Alexander, who being asked whether he would not engage in the competition for the prize at the Olympic games, answered, '—Yes, if KINGS are to be my competitors.' Nor perhaps would the high-minded answer of Alcibiades be unbecoming in a prince,—'It is not for me to give, but to receive delight.'

Ever therefore, let those whose important duty it is, to superintend the education of a royal person, labour to fix in him a just conception of the *proprieties* of his princely character. Let them teach him how to regulate all his judgments and pursuits, by the rule of reason, by a sound and serious estimate of his own condition, and of the *peculiar* duties, excellencies, and honours, which belong to it, on grounds no less of wisdom than of virtue.

We know not how better to illustrate the nature and confirm the truth of these remarks, than by adducing, as an eminent instance of a contrary kind, the character of queen Christina of Sweden, the memorable tale of her false judgment, and perverted ambition.—Christina, a woman whose whole character was one mass of contradictions! That same defect in judgment, which, after she had, with vast cost and care, collected some of the finest pictures in Rome, led her to spoil their proportions, by clipping them with sheers, till they fitted her apartment, appeared in all she did. It led her, while she thirsted for adulation, to renounce, in abdicating her crown, the means of exacting it. It led her, to read almost all books, without digesting any; to make them the theme of her discourse, but not the ground of her conduct. It led her, fond as she was of magnificence, to reduce herself to such a state of indigence, as robbed her of the power of enjoying it. And it was the same inconsistency which made her court the applause of men, eminent for their religious character, while she valued herself on being an avowed infidel.

This royal wanderer roamed from country to country, and from court to court, for the poor purpose of entering the lists with wits, or of discussing knotty points with philosophers: proud of aiming to be the rival of Vossius, when her true merit would have consisted in being his protector. Absurdly renouncing the solid glory of governing well, for the sake of hunting after an empty phantom of liberty, which she never enjoyed, and vainly grasping at the shadow of fame, which she never attained.

Nothing is right, which is not in its right place.—Disorderly wit, even disorderly virtues, lose much of their natural value. There is an exquisite symmetry and proportion in the qualities of a well-ordered mind. An ill-regulated desire of that knowledge, the best part of which she might have acquired with dignity, at her leisure hours: an unbounded vanity, eager to exhibit to foreign countries those attainments which ought to have been exercised in governing her own;—to be thought a philosopher by wits, and a wit by philosophers;—this was the preposterous ambition of a queen born to rule a brave people, and naturally possessed of talents, which might have made that people happy. Thus it wasthat the daughter of the great Gustavus, who might have adorned that throne for which he so bravely fought, for want of the discretion of a well-balanced mind, and the virtues of a well-disciplined heart, became the scorn of those, whose admiration she might have commanded. Her ungoverned tastes were, as is not unusual, connected with passions equally ungovernable; and there is too much ground for suspecting that the mistress of Monaldeschi ended with being his murderer.—It is not surprising that she who abdicated her throne should abjure her religion. Having renounced every thing else which was worth preserving, she ended by renouncing the protestant faith.

It may not be without its uses to the royal pupil, to compare the conduct of Christina with that of Alfred, in those points in which they agreed, and those in which they exhibited so striking an opposition.—To contrast the Swede, who with the advantage of a lettered education, descended from the throne, abandoned the noblest and wisest sphere of action in which the instructed mind could desire to employ its store, and renounced the highest social duties which a human being can be called to perform, with Alfred, one of the few happy instances in which genius and virtue surmounted the disadvantages of an education so totally neglected, that at twelve years old he did not even know the letters of the alphabet. *He* did not abdicate his crown, in order to cultivate his own talents, or to gratify his fancy

with the talents of others, but laboured right royally to assemble around the throne all the abilities of his country. Alfred had no sooner tasted the charms of learning, than his great genius unfolded itself. He was enchanted with the elegancies of literature to a degree which at first seemed likely to divert him from all other objects. But he soon reflected that a prince is not born for himself. When therefore, he was actually called to the throne, did *he* weakly desert his royal duties, to run into distant lands, to recite Saxon verses, or to repeat that classic poetry of which he became so enamoured? No. Like a true patriot he devoted his rare genius to the noblest purposes. He dedicated the talents of the sovereign to the improvement of the people. He did not renounce his learning when he became a king, but he consecrated it to a truly royal purpose. And while the Swedish vagrant was subsisting on eleemosynary flattery, bestowed in pity to her real but misapplied abilities, Alfred was exercising his talents like the father of his country. He did not consider study as a mere gratification of his own taste. He knew that a king has nothing exclusively his own, not even his literary attainments. He threw his erudition, like other possessions, into the public stock. He diffused among the people his own knowledge, which flowed in all directions, like streams from their parent fountain, fertilizing every portion of the human soil, so as to produce, if not a rapid growth, yet a disposition both for science and virtue, where shortly before there had been a barbarous waste, a complete moral and mental desolation.

CHAP. XXVI.

Observations on the age of Louis XIV. and on Voltaire.

If in the present work we frequently cite Louis XIV. it is because on such an occasion his idea naturally presents itself. His reign was so long; his character so prominent; his qualities so ostensible; his affairs were so interwoven with those of the other countries of Europe, and especially with those of England; the period in which he lived produced such a revolution in manners; and, above all, his encomiastic historian, Voltaire, has decorated both the period and the king, with so much that is great and brilliant, that they fill a large space in the eye of the reader. Voltaire writes as if the *age of Louis* XIV. bounded the circle of human glory; as if the antecedent history of Europe were among those inconsiderable and obscure annals, which are either lost in fiction, or sunk in insignificance; as if France, at the period he celebrates, bore the same relation to the modern, that Rome did to the ancient world, when she divided the globe into two portions, Romans and barbarians; as if Louis were the central sun from which all the lesser lights of the European firmament borrowed their feeble radiance.

But whatever other countries may do, England at least is able to look back with triumph to ages anterior to that which is exclusively denominated the age of Louis XIV. Nay, in that vaunted age itself we venture to dispute with France the palm of glory. To all they boast of arms, we need produce no other proof of superiority than that we conquered the boasters. To all that they bring in science, and it must be allowed that they bring much, or where would be the honour of eclipsing them? we have to oppose our Locke, our Boyle, and our Newton. To their long list of wits and poets, it would be endless, in the way of competition, to attempt enumerating, star by star, the countless constellation which illuminated the bright contemporary reign of Anne.

The principal reason for which we so often cite the conduct, and, in citing the conduct, refer to the errors of Louis, is, that there was a time, when the splendor of his character, his imposing magnificence and generosity, made us in too much danger of considering him as a model. The illusion has in a good degree vanished; yet the inexperienced reader is not only still liable, by the dazzling qualities of the king, to be blinded to his vices, but is in danger of not finding out that those very qualities were themselves little better than vices.

But it is not enough for writers, who wish to promote the best interests of the great, to expose *vices*, they should also consider it as part of their duty to strip off the mask from *false virtues*, especially those to which the highly born and the highly flattered are peculiarly liable. To those who are captivated with the shining annals of the ambitious and the magnificent; who are struck with the glories with which the brows of the bold and the prosperous are encircled; such calm, unobtrusive qualities as justice, charity, temperance, meekness, and purity, will make but a mean figure; or, at best, will be considered only as the virtues of the vulgar, not as the attributes of kings. While in the portrait of the conqueror, ambition, sensuality, oppression, luxury, and pride, painted in the least offensive colours, and blended with the bright tints of personal bravery, gayety, and profuse liberality, will lead the sanguine and the young to doubt whether the former class of qualities, *can* be very mischievous, which is so blended and lost in the latter, especially when they find that hardly any abatement is made by the historian for the one, while the other is held up to admiration.

There is no family in which the showy qualities have more blinded the reader, and sometimes the writer also, to their vices, than the princes of the house of Medici. The profligate Alexander, the first usurper of the dukedom of Florence, is declared by one of his historians, Sandoval, *to be a person of excellent conduct;* and though the writer himself acknowledges his extreme licentiousness, yet he says, 'he won the Florentines by his *obliging manners*:' those Florentines whom he not only robbed of their freedom, but dishonoured in the persons of their wives and daughters; his unbounded profligacy not even respecting the sanctity of convents! Another writer, speaking of the house of Medici collectively, says, 'their having restored knowledge and elegance will, in time, obliterate their faults. Their *usurpation, tyranny, pride, perfidy,*

vindictive cruelty, parricides, and incest, will be remembered no more. Future ages will forget their atrocious crimes in fond admiration!'* Ought historians to teach such lessons to princes? Ought they to be told that 'knowledge and elegance' cannot be bought too dear, though purchased by such atrocious crimes?—The illustrious house of Medici seems to have revived in every point of resemblance, the Athenian character. With one or two honourable exceptions, it exhibits the same union of moral corruption, with mental taste; the same genius for the arts, and the same neglect of the virtues; the same polish and the same profligacy; the same passion for learning, and the same appetite for pleasure; the same interchange of spectacles and assassinations; the same preference of the beauty of a statue to the life of a citizen.

So false are the estimates which have ever been made of human conduct; so seldom has praise been justly bestowed in this life; so many wrong actions not only escape censure, but are accounted reputable, that it furnishes one strong argument for a future retribution. This injustice of human judgment led even the pagan Plato, in the person of Socrates, to assign, in an ingenious fiction, a reason why a judgment after death was appointed. He accounts for the necessity of this, by observing, that in a preceding period each person had been judged in his *lifetime* and by *living judges*. The consequence was, that false judgments were continually passed. The reason of these unjust decisions, he observes, is, that men being judged in the *body*, the blemishes and defects of their *minds* are overlooked, in consideration of their beauty, their high rank, or their riches; and being also surrounded by a multitude who are always ready to extol their virtues, the judges of course are biassed; and being themselves also in a body, their own minds also are darkened. It was therefore determined, that men should not be called to their trial till after death, when they shall appear before the judge, himself a pure ethereal spirit, stripped of that body and those ornamental appendages which had misled earthly judges.† The spirit of this fable is as applicable to the age of Louis XIV. as it was to that of Alexander, in which it was written.

Liberality is a truly loyal virtue, a virtue too, which has its own immediate reward in the delight which accompanies its exercise. All wealth is in order to diffusion. If novelty be, as has been said, the great charm of life, there is no way of enjoying it so perfectly as by perpetual acts of beneficence. The great become insensible to the pleasure of their own affluence, from having been long used to it: but, in the distribution of riches, there is always something fresh and reviving; and the opulent add to their own stock of happiness all that their bounty bestows on others. It is pity, therefore, on the mere score of voluptuousness, that neither Vitellius nor Eliogabalus, nor any of the other imperial gourmands, was ever so fortunate as to find out this multiplied luxury of 'eating with many mouths at once.'—Homage must satiate, intemperance will cloy, splendor will fatigue, dissipation exhaust, and adulation subject; but the delights of beneficence will be always new and refreshing. And there is no quality in which a prince has it more in his power to exhibit a feint resemblance of that great being, whose representative he is, than in the capacity and the love of this communicative goodness.

But, it is the perfection of the Christian virtues, that they never intrench on each other. It is a trite remark, yet a remark that requires to be repeated, that liberality loses the very name of virtue, when it is practised at the expense of justice, or even of prudence. It must be allowed, that of all the species of liberality, there is not one more truly royal than that which fosters genius and rewards letters. But the motive of the patron, and the resources from which his bounty is drawn, must determine on the merit of the action. Leo X. has been extolled by all his historians as a prodigy of generosity; a quality, indeed, which eminently distinguished his whole family: but the admiration excited by reading the numberless instances of his munificent spirit that in remunerating men of talents, will receive a great drawback, by reflecting, he drew a large part of the resources necessary for his liberality from the scandalous *sale of indulgences*. This included not only selling the good works of the saints, (of which the church had always an inexhaustible chest on hand,) over and above such as were necessary to their own salvation. To any affluent sinner who was rich enough to pay for them; not only a full pardon for sins past and present of the living offender, but for all that were to come, however great their number or enormous their nature.*

The splendid pontiff earned an immortal fame in the grateful pages of those scholars who tasted of his bounty, while by this operation of fraud upon folly, the credulous multitude were drained of their money, the ignorant tempted to the boldest impiety, the vicious to the most unbounded profligacy, and the measure of the iniquities of the church of Rome was filled up.

But Louis XIV. carried this honourable generosity to an extent unknown before. He bestowed presents and pensions on no less than sixty men of the most eminent talents and learning in different countries of Europe. One is sorry to be compelled, by truth, to detract from the splendour of such liberality, by two remarks. In the first place, it is notorious, that the bounty originated from his having learned that cardinal Richelieu had sent large presents to many learned foreigners, who had written panegyrics on him. Who can help suspecting, that the king, less patient or less prudent than the cardinal, was eager to pay beforehand for his own anticipated panegyrics? Secondly, who can help regretting, that the large sums thus liberally bestowed, had not been partly subtracted from the expense of his own boundless self-gratifications, which were at the same time carried on with a

* Noble's memoirs of the illustrious house of Medici.

† See Guardian, No. 27.

* This munificent pope, not contented with supplying his own wants by this spiritual traffic, provided also for his relations by setting them up in the same lucrative commerce. His sister Magdalen's portion was derived from the large sphere assigned her for carrying on this merchandize; her warehouse was in Saxony. More distant relations had smaller shops in different provinces for the sale of this popular commodity.

profusion without example? For Louis was contented with bringing into action a sentiment which Nero even ventured to put into words, that there was no other use of treasure but to squander it. Who can forget that this money had been extorted from the people, by every impost and exaction which Colbert, his indefatigable minister, himself a patron of genius, could devise? How ineffectually does the historian and eulogist of the king labour to vindicate him on this very ground of profusion, from the imputed charge of avarice, by strangely asserting, that a king of France, who possesses no income distinct from the revenues of the state, and who only distributes the public money, cannot be accused of covetousness! an apology almost as bad as the imputed crime. For, where is the merit of any liberality which not only subtracts nothing from the gratification of the giver, but which is exercised at the positive expense of the public comfort?*

Colbert has been even preferred to Sully, for his zeal in diminishing peculation and public abuses. But though Colbert was a very able minister, yet there was a wide difference between his motives of action and those of Sully, and between their application of the public money. But, even the profuseness of the extortioner Fouquet, in squandering the revenues of the state as freely as if they had been his own private property, is converted by Voltaire into a proof of the greatness of his soul, because his depredations were spent in acts of munificence and liberality; as if the best possible application of money could atone for injustice or oppression in the acquisition of it!

In how different a mould was the soul of Gustavus Adolphus cast! and how much more correct were the views of that great king as to the true grounds of liberality! As brave a warrior as Charles XII. without his brutal ferocity; as liberal as Louis, without his prodigality; as zealous a patron of letters as Henry VIII. without his vanity!—He was, indeed, so warm a friend to learning, that he erected schools, and founded universities, in the very uproar of war. —These he endowed, not by employing his ministers to levy taxes on the distressed people, not by exhausting the resources of the state, meritorious as was the object to be established; but by converting to these noble institutions, almost all *his own* patrimonial lands of the house of Vasa.

Against the principles of Voltaire, it is now scarcely necessary to caution the young reader. His disgrace has become almost as signal as his offences; his crimes seem to have procured for his works their just reprobation. To enter on a particular censure of them, might be only to invite our readers to their perusal; and, indeed, a criticism on his philosophical and innumerable miscellaneous writings, pestilential as their general principle is, would be foreign from the present purpose, as there is little danger that the royal pupil should ever be brought within the sphere of their contamination. I shall therefore confine myself to a very few observations on his character of the monarch, in the work under consideration; a work which is still most likely to be read, and which, notwithstanding its faults, perhaps, best deserves a perusal—His age of Louis the fourteenth.

In summing up the king's character, he calls his unbounded profligacy in the variety of his mistresses, and the ruinous prodigality with which they were supported, by the cool term of *weakness*. Voltaire again does not blush to compliment a sovereign, whose life was one long tissue of criminal attachments, with having 'uniformly observed the strictest rules of decency and decorum towards his wife.' His rancour against the Jansenists; his unjust ambition and arbitrary temper; his wars, which Voltaire himself allows 'to have been undertaken without reason;' his cruel ravaging of the Palatinate with fire and sword, and its wretched inhabitants driven from shelter to woods and dens, and caves of the earth; his bloody persecution of the protestants; these he calls by the gentle name of *littleness;* not forgetting, in the true modern spirit of moral calculation, to place in one scale his admired qualities of whatsoever class, his beauty, valour, taste, generosity, and magnificence; and to throw into the other, his crimes and vices, which being assumed to be only *littlenesses* and *weaknesses*, it is no wonder if he glories in the preponderance of his virtues in the balance.

By thus reducing a mass of mischief into almost impalpable frailties, and opposing to them with enthusiastic rapture, qualities of no real solidity, he holds out a picture of royalty too alluring to the unformed judgment of young and ardent readers, to whom it ought to be explained, that this tinsel is not gold, that *les bienseances* are not virtues, and that graces of manner are a poor substitute for integrity of heart and rectitude of conduct.

By the avowal of the same author, it was in the very lap of pleasure, when all was one unbroken scene of joy, when life was one perpetual course of festive delight, masked balls, pageants, and spectacles, that the Palatinate was twice laid in ashes, the extermination of the Protestants decreed, and the destruction of Holland planned.—The latter, not by the sudden ardour of a victorious soldiery, but by a cool deliberate mandate, in a letter under the king's own hand.

Voltaire has expressed his astonishment that these decrees, which he himself allows to have been 'cruel and merciless,' should proceed from the bosom of a court distinguished for softness of manners, and sunk in voluptuous indulgences. We might rather wonder at any such expression of astonishment in so ingenious a writer, were we not well assured, that no acuteness of genius can give that deep insight into the human heart, which our religion alone teaches, in teaching us the corruption of our nature; much

* The person who now holds the reins of government in a neighbouring nation, is said successfully to have adopted similar measures. He early made it his studious care to buy up the good report of authors and men of talents, knowing mankind well enough to be assured, that this was the sure and immediate road to that fame for which he pants. Near spectators instantly detect the fallacy; but strangers, as he foresaw, would mistake the adulation of these bribed witnesses for the general opinion; the assertion of the declaimer for the sentiment of the public. Accordingly the sycophantry of the journalist has been represented as the voice of the people.

less can it inspire the infidel with that quickness of moral taste, which enables the true disciples of Christianity, to appreciate, as if by a natural instinct, human characters.

It is indeed obvious to all who have sound views of religion, and a true knowledge of mankind, that this cruelty, so far from being inconsistent with, actually sprung from that very spirit of voluptuousness, which, by concentrating all feeling into *self*, totally hardens the heart to the happiness of others.—Who does not know that a soul dissolved in sensual pleasure, is naturally dead to all compassion, and all kindness, which has not fame, or interest, or self-gratification, for its object? Who are they of whom the prophet declares, that 'they are not moved by the affliction of their brethren?'—It is they 'who lie in beds of ivory, that chant to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with ointments.' Selfishness was the leading charge brought by the apostle against the enemies of religion. It stands foremost in that catalogue of sins assigned by him as the mark of the apostate times, that *men should be lovers of their ownselves.*

But even without this divine teaching, Voltaire might have been informed by general history, of which he was not only an universal reader, but an universal writer, of the natural connection between despotism and licentiousness. The annals of all nations bear their concurrent testimony to this glaring truth. It would be endless to enumerate exemplifications of it from the melancholy catalogue of Roman emperors. Nero, who claims among the monarchs of the earth the execrable precedency in cruelty, was scarcely less pre-eminent in voluptuousness. Tiberius was as detestable for profligacy at Caprea, as infamous for tyranny at Rome.—In the history of the Mohammedan kings, barbarity and self-indulgence generally bear a pretty exact proportion to each other.—Sensuality and tyranny equally marked the character of our eighth Henry. Shall we then wonder, if, under Lewis, feasts at Versailles, which eclipsed all former splendour, and decorations at Trianon and Marli, which exhausted art and beggars invention, were the accompaniments to the flight, despair, and execution of the Hugonots? So exactly did luxury keep pace with intolerance, and voluptuousness with cruelty.

Even many of the generally admired qualities of Louis, which assumed the air of more solid virtues, were not sterling. His resolution and spirit of perseverance were nothing better than that obstinacy and self-sufficiency, which were the common attributes of ordinary characters. Yet, this pride and stubbornness were extolled in the measure they were persisted in, and in proportion to the evils of which they were the cause: and his parasites never failed to elevate these defects to the dignity of fortitude, and the praise of firmness.

CHAP. XXVII.

Farther observations on Louis XIV. An examination of the claims of those princes who have obtained the appellation of "the great."

In considering the character of Louis XIV. in the foregoing chapter, we are led by the imposing appellation of THE GREAT, which has been conferred on this monarch, to inquire how far a passion for shows and pageants; a taste for magnificence and the polite arts; a fondness for war, the theatre of which he contrived to make a scene of the most luxurious accommodation; together with a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, entitled Louis to that appellation, which would seem to imply the possession of all the heroic qualities, of which he appears to have been utterly destitute.

We are aware that the really heroic virtues are growing into general disesteem.—*The age of chivalry is gone!* said a great genius of our own time; one who laboured, though with less effect, to raise the spirit of true chivalry, as much as Cervantes had done to lay the false. 'The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone!'*

Selfishness is scarcely more opposite to true religion than true gallantry. Men are not fond of establishing a standard so much above ordinary practice. Selfishness is become so predominant a principle, especially among the rich and luxurious, that it gives the mind an uneasy sensation to look up to models of exalted and disinterested virtue. Habits of indulgence cloud the spiritual faculties, and darken those organs of mental vision which should contemplate truth with unobstructed distinctness. Thus, in characters which do not possess one truly heroic virtue, superficial qualities are blindly adopted as substitutes for real grandeur of mind.

But, in pursuing our inquiry into the claims of those princes who have acquired the title of THE GREAT, many difficulties occur. It requires not only clearness of sight, but niceness of position to enable us to determine.—Perhaps the fifty years which the church of Rome wisely ordained should elapse, before she allows inquiries to be made into the characters of her intended saints, previous to their canonization, pass away to an opposite purpose in the case of ambitious princes; and the same period which is required to make a saint would probably unmake a hero, and thus annul the posthumous possession of that claim, which many living kings have put in for the title of *the great.*

From all that we are able to collect of the annals of so obscure a period, it must be allowed, that the emperor Charlemagne appears to have had higher claims to this appellation, than many on whom we have been accustomed to bestow it. But, while this illustrious conqueror gallantly defeated the renowned pagan prince and his Saxons; while he overthrew their temples, destroyed their priests, and abolished their wor-

* We cannot pass over the brilliant passages of Mr. Burke, of which this is a part, without hazarding a censure on the sentiment which closes it. He winds up the paragraph by asserting, that under the old system, 'vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness.' Surely one of the great dangers of vice is its *attractiveness* Now, is not grossness rather repulsive than attractive? So thought the Spartans, when they exposed their drunken slaves to the eyes of their children. Had Mr. Burke said, that those who add grossness to it make it more odious, it would have been just. Not so, when he declares that its absence mitigates the evil.

ship;—while he made kings in one country, and laws in another; while he seems to have governed with justice, as well his hereditary realms as those which he obtained by the sword; while, in a subsequent engagement with the same pagan prince, he not only obtained fresh conquests, but achieved the nobler victory of bringing his captive to embrace Christianity, and to become its zealous defender; while he vigorously executed, in time of peace, those laws which he enacted even in the tumult of war; and while he was the great restorer and patron of letters, though he could not write his name;—and while as Alfred is the boast of the English for having been the founder of their constitution by some of his laws, so the French ascribe to Charlemagne the glory of having suggested, by those learned conferences which he commanded to be held in his presence, the first idea of their academies of sciences and letters;—while he seemed to possess the true notion of royal magnificence, by employing it chiefly as a political instrument;* and though, for his various merits, the ancient Romans would have deified him, and the French historians seem to have done little less:—yet, this destroyer of paganism, this restorer of learning, this founder of cities, laws, schools, colleges, and churches, by the unprovoked murder of near five thousand Saxons, for no other crime but their allegiance to their own legitimate prince, must ever stand excluded, by the Christian censor, from a complete and unqualified right to the appellation of *the great;* a title to which the pretensions of our Alfred, seem to have been, of all princes, the least questionable.

Nor can we dismiss the character of Charlemagne, without producing him as a fresh instance of the political mischief arising from the private vices of princes. The licentiousness of this monarch's conduct, proved an irreparable injury to the state, the number of natural children which he left behind him, being the occasion of long contentions respecting the division of the empire.

In not a few respects the emperor Charles V. possesses a considerable claim to the name of great, while yet there is an invincible flaw in his title.—So eminent in the field as to have equalled the most skilful, and to have vanquished the most successful generals of his age.—So able in the cabinet, that he formed plans with as much wisdom, deliberation, and foresight, as he afterwards executed them with promptitude and vigour; and constantly manifesting a prudence which secured his superiority over his pleasure-loving contemporaries, the unguarded Francis, and the jovial Henry. But his principal claim to greatness arises from that species of wisdom, which his admirable historian allows him to have possessed in the highest degree; that science, which of all others, is the most important in a monarch, 'the exact knowledge of mankind, and the great art of adapting their talents to the departments which he allotted them. So that he employed,' continues Robertson, 'no general in the field, no minister in the cabinet, no ambassador to a foreign court, no governor of a province, whose abilities were inadequate to the trust reposed in him.' Yet, the grandeur of Charles, consisted entirely in the capacity of his mind, without any consonant qualities of the heart. And it was the misfortune of this renowned politician and warrior to fail of the character of true greatness alike when he pursued, and when he renounced human glory; to err, both when he sought happiness in the turmoil of war and politics, and when he at last looked for it, in the quiet shelter of religious retreat. In the latter, his object was indeed far more pure; but his pursuit was almost equally mistaken. In the bustling scenes of life, he was sullen, cruel, insidious, malignant; the terror of mankind by his ambition, the scourge of protestantism by his intolerance. In his solitude he was the tormentor of himself, by unhappily mistaking superstitious observances for repentance, and uncommanded austerities for religion.

Who can figure to himself a more truly pitiable state, than that of a capacious mind, which, after a long possession of the plenitude of power, and an unbounded field for the indulgence of ambition, begins to discover the vanity of its loftiest aims, and actually resolves to renounce its pursuits, but without substituting in its stead any nobler object, without replacing the discarded attachment with any better pursuit, or any higher hope? To abandon what may almost be called the empire of this world, without a well-grounded expectation of happiness in the world to come! To renounce the full-blown honours of earthly glory, without any reasonable hope of that glory which fadeth not away; this perhaps is, of all human conditions, that which excites the deepest commiseration in the bosom of a Christian!

There are few things which more strikingly evince the value of true religion than the despondency and misery experienced by great, but perverted minds, when after a long and successful course of ambition, they are thus brought to a deep feeling of its emptiness. Alexander weeping for more worlds! Diocletian weary of that imperial power, which had been exercised in acts of tyranny and persecution; abdicating his throne, and retiring to labour in a little garden at Salona forgetting that solitude requires innocence to make it pleasant, and piety to make it profitable! And though the retreat was voluntary, and though he deceived himself in the first moments of novelty, by declaring that he found more pleasure in cultivating cabbages, than in governing Rome; yet, he soon gave the lie to this boast, by terminating his life in a way more congenial to the manner in which it had been spent, by poison, or madness, or, as some assert, by both!—The emperor Charles, after having, for a long series of years, alarmed and agitated Europe by his restless ambition, yet, just when its objects were accomplished, flying to a gloomy retreat, devoting himself to severe austerities, and useless self-discipline, and mournfully acting the weak, but solemn farce of his own living funeral!

How does the reflecting mind regret that these great, but misguided princes, Charles

* See the extraordinary account of Charlemagne's splendid reception of the ambassadors from the emperor of the East.

especially, in whose heart deep remorse seems to have been awakened, should fail finally of that only consolation which could have poured balm into their aching bosoms, and administered relief to their lacerated consciences! Had Charles, instead of closing his days with ignorant and bigoted monks, been surrounded by enlightened Christians, they would have prevented his attempting to heal his wounded spirit by fruitless and unexpiating self-inflictions. Instead of 'laying this flattering unction to his soul,' he might have been led to sound and rational repentance. His weary and heavy-laden spirit might have been conducted thither, where alone true rest is to be found. He might have been directed to the only sure source of pardon for sin, and have closed his guilty and perturbed life with a hope full of immortality. Peace might have been restored to his mind, not by lessening his sense of his own offences, but on the only true ground, by exalting the mercies of God, as displayed in the Christian dispensation.

It must be confessed, however, that there seems to be something sublime in the motive of his abdication, as far as related to himself. Yet, might he not far better have made his peace with heaven, by remaining on a throne, where he would have retained the power of making some compensation to the world, for the wrongs which he had done it; and of holding out his protection to the reformed faith, of which he had been so unrelenting an enemy, and to which his dying sentiments are suspected to have been favourable?

From a view of such striking examples, one important lesson is held out to princes, in the bloom of life, who have yet their path to choose in the world that lies before them. It is this.—Though it is good to repent of ambition and injustice, it is still better never to have been guilty of either.

If we were to estimate the true greatness of a prince, not so much by the virtues attached to his own personal character, as by the effects which the energy of that character, produced on the most enormous empire in the world, there is, perhaps, no monarch, ancient or modern, who could produce a fairer claim to the title of great, than Peter the first, emperor of Russia. It was said of Augustus, that he had found Rome built of brick, and had left it of marble. It may be said, with more truth of Peter, that he found Muscovy a land of savages, and left it a land of men; of beings at least rapidly advancing, in consequence of his exertions, to that character.

This monarch early gave many of those sure indications, of a great capacity, which consist in catching from the most trivial circumstances hints for the most important enterprises. The casual sight of a Dutch vessel from a summer house on one of his lakes, suggested at once to his creative mind the first idea of the navy of Russia.—The accidental discourse of a foreigner, of no great note, in which he intimated that there were countries in a state of knowledge, light, and comfort, totally dissimilar to the barbarism and misery of Russia, kindled in the czar an instantaneous wish to see and judge of this difference for himself; not merely as a matter of curiosity, but with a resolution to bring home whatever advantages he might find abroad. With the same instinctive greatness, his natural dread of the sea, which was extreme, was made at once to give way, when voyages of improvement were to be made abroad, or a marine established at home.

Having resolved to procure for his country this necessary instrument of strength and defence, a navy; fired by true genius and genuine patriotism, he quitted for a time his throne and country, not like Sesostris, Alexander, or Cæsar, to despoil other nations, but to acquire the best means of improving his own. Not like Nero, to fiddle to the Athenians; not like Dioclesian to raise coleworts in Dalmatia; nor like Charles V. to bury himself in a monastic cell in Spain, torturing his body for the sins of his soul; not like Christina, to discuss at Rome, and intrigue at Versailles;—but having formed the grand design of giving laws, civilization, and commerce to his vast unwieldy territory; and being aware that the brutal ignorance of his barbarous subjects wanted to be both stimulated and instructed; he quitted his throne for a time only that he might return more worthy to fill it. He travelled not to feast his eyes with pictures, or his ears with music, nor to dissolve his mind in pleasures, but to study laws, politics, and arts. Not only to scrutinize men and manners with the eye of a politician, which would have sufficed for a monarch of a polished state; but, remembering that he reigned over a people rude, even in the arts of ordinary life, he magnanimously stooped, not only to study, but to practice them himself. He not only examined docks and arsenals with the eye of an engineer, but laboured in them with the hand of a mechanic. He was a carpenter in Holland, a shipwright in Britain, a pilot in both. His pleasures had a relish of his labours. The king of England, apprised of his taste, entertained him, not with a masquerade, but a naval combat. Previous to this, he had entered upon his military career in Russia, where he set out by taking the lowest situation in his own regiment, and would accept no rank, but as he obtained it by deserving it. Accordingly, he filled successively every station in the army from the drummer to the general; intending hereby to give his proud and ignorant nobility a living lesson, that desert was the only true road to military distinctions.

We must not determine on the greatness of a sovereign's character entirely by the degree of civilization, morals, and knowledge, which his people may be found to have reached after his death: but, in order to do full justice to his character, we must exactly appreciate the state in which he found, as well as that in which he left them. For though they may be still far behind the subjects of neighbouring states, yet that measure of progress which they will have made, under such a monarch as Peter, will reflect greater honour on the king, than will be due to the sovereign of a much more improved people, who finds them already settled in habits of decency and order, and in an advanced state of arts, manners and knowledge.

The genius of Peter was not a visionary ge

nius, indulging romantic ideas of chimerical perfection, but it was a great practical understanding, realizing by its energy whatever his genius had conceived. Patient under difficulties, cheerful even under the loss of battles, from the conviction that the rough implements, with which he must hereafter work his way to victory, could only learn to conquer by being first defeated, he considered every action in which he was worsted, as a school for his barbarians. It was this perseverance under failures, which paved the way for the decisive victory at Pultowa, the consummation of his military character. His conduct to the Swedish officers, his prisoners, was such as would have done honour to a general of the most polished state.

He manifested another indisputable proof of greatness in his constant preference of utility to splendor, and in his indifference to show and decoration. The qualities which this prince threw away, as beneath the attention of a great mind, were precisely such as a tinsel hero would pick up, on which to build the reputation of greatness. The shreds and parings of Peter would make a Louis.

With this truly vigorous and original mind, with an almost unparalleled activity and zeal, constantly devoted to all the true ends which a patriot king will ever keep in view—it is yet but too obvious, why the emperor Peter failed of completely deserving the title of *the great*. This monarch presents a fresh exemplification of the doctrine which we have so frequently brought forward, the use which Providence makes of erring men to accomplish great purposes. He affords a melancholy instance how far a prince 'may reform a people, without reforming himself.' A remark, indeed, which Peter had the honesty and good sense to make, but without having the magnanimity to profit by his own observation. Happy for society that such instruments are raised up! Happy were it for themselves, if a still higher principle directed their exertions; and if, in so essentially serving mankind, they afforded a reasonable ground of hope, that they had saved themselves!

This monarch, who like Alexander, perpetuated his name by a superb city which he built: who refined barbarism into policy, who so far tamed the rugged genius of an almost polar clime, as not only to plant arts and manufactures, but colleges, academies, libraries, and observatories, in that frozen soil, which had hitherto scarcely given any signs of intellectual life! who improved, not only the condition of the people, but the state of the church, and considerably raised its religion, which was before scarcely Christianity;—this founder, this patriot, this reformer, was himself intemperate and violent, sensual and cruel, a slave to passions and appetites as gross as could have been indulged by the rudest of his Muscovites before he had civilized them!

If the true grandeur of a prince consists not in adding to his territory by conquests; not in enriching it by plunder; not in adorning it by treasures wrung from the hard hand of industry; but in converting a neglected waste into a cultivated country; in peopling and rendering fruitful a land desolated by long calamities: in preserving peace in his small state, when all the great states of Europe were ravaged by war; in restoring plenty to a famished people, and raising a depressed nobility to affluence; in paying the debts of a ruined gentry, and giving portions to their daughters; in promoting virtue, literature, and science; in making it the whole object of his reign to render his subjects richer, happier, and better than he found them; in declaring that *he would not reign a moment longer than he thought he could be doing good to his people*, —then was Leopold, sovereign of the small dukedom of Lorrain, more justly entitled to the appellation of *the great*, than the Alexanders, the Cæsars, and the Louises, who filled the page of history with praises, and the world with tears.*

If Gustavus Adolphus put in his undisputed claim to the title of *the great*, it is not merely on the ground of his glorious victories at the battle of Leipsic and Lutzen, but because that amidst the din of arms, and the tumult of those battles, he was never diverted from snatching some portion of every day for prayer, and reading the Scriptures. It is because, with all his high spirits, he was so far from thinking that it derogated from the dignity of a gentleman, or the honour of an officer, to refuse a challenge, that he punished with death whoever presumed to decide a quarrel with the sword; to prevent the necessity of which, he made a law that all disputes should be settled by a court of honour.† He deserved the appellation of *great*, when he wished to carry commerce to the West Indies, that he might carry thither also by those means, the pure doctrines of the reformation. He deserved it, when he invited by an edict all the persecuted protestants from every part of Europe, to an asylum in Sweden, offering them not only an immunity from taxes, but full permission to return home when the troubles of their respective countries should be healed.

When such was the union of piety and heroism in the gallant monarch himself, it was the less wonderful to find the same rare combination in the associates of his triumphs. Hence the pious *meditations* of the celebrated leader of the Scotch brigade‡ in the service of Gustavus! Compositions of which would be scarcely a discredit to a father of the church, and which exalts his character as highly in a religious and moral view, as it was raised, by his bravery and skill in war, in the annals of military glory.

If Alexander deserved the title in question it was when he declared in a letter to his immortal master, that *he thought it a truer glory to excel in knowledge than in power.* It was in that equally moral and poetical reprehension of those flatterers who had ascribed divine honours to him, when, on the bleeding of his wounds, he said, *Look! this is my blood! This is not that*

* See Siecle de Louis XIV. for a fuller account of Leopold.

† The king of France, at this same military period, severely prohibited duelling, the practice of which he was so far from considering as an indication of courage, that he took a solemn oath to bestow rewards on such military men as had *the courage to refuse a challenge.* It was an indication that this prince understood wherein true magnanimity consisted. See also sir Francis Bacon's charge, when attorney general against duels.

‡ Monro.

divine liquor of which Homer speaks, which ran from the hand of Venus when Diomedes pierced it! His generous treatment of the family of the conquered Darius was, perhaps, eclipsed by the equally magnanimous, and more disinterested moderation of our own heroic Edward, the black prince, to the captive king of France. The gallant prince seems to have merited, without obtaining the appellation of *the great.*

But, if splendid parade, and costly magnificence be really considered as unequivocal proofs of exalted greatness, then must the Trajans, the Gustavuses, the Alfreds, the Peters, the Williams, and the Elizabeths, submit their claims to this appellation to those of Louis XIV. Louis himself must, without contest, yield the palm of greatness to pope Alexander the sixth, and Cæsar Borgia; and they, in their turn, must hide their diminished heads, in reverence to the living exhibitor of the late surpassing pomp and unparalleled pageantry in a neighbouring nation, displayed in the most gorgeous and costly farce that was ever acted before the astonished and indignant world!

If, to use the very words of the historian and panegyrist of Louis, 'to despoil, disturb, and humble almost all the states of Europe,'—if this appeared in the eyes of that panegyrist a proof of greatness; in the eye of reason and humanity, such a course of conduct will rather appear insolence, injustice, and oppression. Yet, as such irreligious authors commonly connect the idea of glory with that of success, they themselves ought not to vindicate it even on their own principle of *expediency;* since this passion for false glory, carried to the last excesss, became, at length, the means of stirring up the other European powers; the result of whose confederacy terminated in the disgrace of Louis.

If ever this vain-glorious prince appeared truly *great,* it was in his dying speech to his infant successor, when, taking him in his arms, he magnanimously intreated him not to follow his example, in his love of wars and his taste for expense; exhorting him to follow moderate counsels, to fear God, reduce the taxes, spare his subjects, and to do whatever he himself had not done to relieve them.

In like manner, our illustrious Henry V. in the midst of his French conquests, conquests founded on injustice (unpopular as is the assertion to an English ear) never so truly deserved to be called the *great* as in that beautiful instance of his reverence for the laws, when he submitted, as prince of Wales, to the magistrate who put him under confinement for some irregularities; as when, afterwards, being sovereign, he not only pardoned, but commended and promoted him.

If ever Henry IV. of France, peculiarly deserved the appellation of *great,* it was after the victory at Coutras, for that noble magnanimity in the very moment of conquest, which compelled a pious divine, then present, to exclaim—'Happy and highly favoured of heaven is that prince, who sees at his feet his enemies humbled by the hand of God; his table surrounded by his prisoners, his room hung with the ensigns of the vanquished without the slightest emotion of vanity or insolence! who can maintain in the midst of such glorious successes, the same moderation with which he has borne the severest adversity!'—He deserved it, when as he was besieging Paris, which was perishing with famine, he commanded the besiegers to admit supplies to the besieged.—He deserved it at the battle of Irvi, not when he gallantly ordered his soldiers to follow his white plume, which would be the signal of victory, nor afterwards when that victory was complete; but it was, when just before the engagement, he made a solemn renunciation of his own might and his own wisdom, and submitted the event to God in this incomparable prayer.

'O Lord God of Hosts, who hast in thy hand all events; if thou knowest that my reign will promote thy glory, and the safety of thy people; if thou knowest that I have no other ambition, but to advance the honour of thy name, and the good of the state, favour O great God, the justice of my arms. But if thy good Providence has decreed otherwise; if thou seest that I should prove one of those kings whom thou givest in thine anger; take from me, O merciful God, my life and my crown. Make me this day a sacrafice to thy will; let my death end the calamities of my country, and let my blood be the last that shall be spilt in this quarrel.'—

O si sic omnia!

CHAP. XXVIII.

Books.

Conversation, says the sagacious Verulam, 'makes a *ready* man.' It is, indeed, one of the practical ends of study. It draws the powers of the understanding into exercise, and brings into circulation the treasures which the memory has been amassing. Conversation will be always an instrument particularly important in the cultivation of those talents which may one day be brought into public exercise. And as it would not be easy to start profitable topics of discourse between the pupil and those around her, without inviting some little previous introduction, it might not be useless to suggest a simple preparation for the occasional discussion of topics, somewhat above the ordinary cast of familiar intercourse.

To burthen the memory with a load of dry matter would, on the one hand, be dull; and with a mass of poetry, which she can have little occasion to use, would, on the other, be superfluous. But, as the understanding opens, and years advance, might she not occasionally commit to memory, from the best authors in every department, one select passage, one weighty sentence, one striking precept, which in the hours devoted to society and relaxation, might form a kind of thesis for interesting conversation? For instance, a short specimen of eloquence from South, or of reasoning from Barrow; a detached reflection on the analogy of religion to the constitution of nature from Butler; a political character from Clarendon; a maxim of prudence from the proverbs; a precept of government from Bacon; a moral document from the Ram-

bler; a passage of ancient history from Plutarch; a sketch of national manners from Goldsmith's Traveller, or of individual character from the Vanity of Human Wishes; an aphorism on the contempt of riches from Seneca, or a paragraph on the wealth of nations from Adam Smith; a rule of conduct from sir Mathew Hale, or a sentiment of benevolence from Mr. Addison; a devout contemplation from bishop Hall, or a principle of taste from Quintilian; an opinion on the law of nations from Vattel, or on the law of England from Blackstone.

Might not any one of the topics thus suggested by the recitation of a single passage, be made the ground of a short rational conversation, without the formality of a debate, or the solemnity of an academical disputation? Persons naturally get a custom of reading with more sedulous attention, when they expect to be called upon to produce the substance of what they have read; and in order to prevent desultory and unsettled habits, it would be well on these occasions, to tie the mind down to the one selected topic, and not to allow it to wander from the point under consideration. This practice, steadily observed would strengthen the faculties of thinking, and reasoning, and consequently highly improve the powers of conversation.

Of books, a considerable number, besides those in the foregoing passage, has already been suggested. But though we have ventured to recommend many works which seemed peculiarly applicable to the present purpose, we do not presume to point out any thing like a systematic course of reading. This will be arranged by far abler judges, especially in that most important instance, the choice of books of divinity. In a language so abounding as the English in the treasures of theological composition, the difficulty will consist, not in finding much that is excellent, but in selecting that which unites the most excellences.

Of elementary books which teach the first rudiments of Christianity, there is no doubt but the best use has been already made. In aid of these, the deepest and most impressive knowledge will be communicated to the mind, by familiar colloquial explanation of every portion of Scripture, daily, as it is read. Such an habitual, and, at the same time, clear and simple exposition, would tend to do away the most material of those difficulties and obscurities, with which the sacred writings are charged, and which are pleaded as a reason for not putting them, in their genuine form, into the hands of youth. There is no book whatever which affords more matter for interesting and animated conversation, and for variety, there is no book which is at all comparable to it. It were to be wished that the sacred volume were not too generally made to give way to histories and expositions of the Bible. These last are excellent subordinate aids; but it is to be feared that they are sometimes almost exclusively adopted, to the neglect of the Bible itself. Thus the mere facts and incidents being retained, separated from the doctrines, sentiments, and precepts which, like a golden thread, run through every part of the history, and are every where interwoven with its texture; and the narrative being also stripped of its venerable phraseology and touching style, the Bible is robbed of its principal charm; and the devotional and historical ideas being thus separated, the impression both on the memory and the feelings becomes much weakened.—Our remarks on the Scripture itself we shall reserve for a future chapter.

It has been a rule observed throughout this work, to forbear naming living authors, except incidentally in one or two instances. This rule, which was adopted from delicacy, is at present become inconvenient, as it prevents our giving highly merited commendation to various religious works, of almost every description; to critical as well as practical elucidations of Scripture;—to treatises on the internal principles, and on the duties of religion; on the efficacy, as well as the evidences of Christianity;—works not less admirable in point of composition, than estimable for their substantial worth; and which will inevitably be adopted, as the royal education advances.

We would only presume to offer one remark on the study of divines, whether ancient or modern. A luminous style, and a perspicuous expression, will cast a lustre on the brightest truths, and render grave and serious subjects more engaging and impressive. To the young, these attractions are particularly necessary. Yet, in the discourses to be perused, one principle of selection should be observed. The graces of language should never be considered as an equivalent for a sound principle. Dissertations or sermons, should not be preferred for having more smoothness than energy, for being more alluring than awakening, nor because they are calculated to make the reader satisfied rather than safe. The distinguishing characters of Christianity, both in doctrine and practice, should always be considered as the most indispensable requisite.—For the absence of the great fundamental truths of our religion, no ingenuity of thought, no elegance of style, no popularity of the author can atone. A splendid diction is a pleasing ornament, but it should never be used as an instrument for lowering the standard of religious truth. Happily we are not wanting in divines, living and dead, who unite all the required excellences.

Of moral writers we shall speak hereafter. Next to history, biography must be considered as useful. Those who have properly selected, and judiciously written the lives of eminent persons, have performed the office of instruction, without assuming the dignity of instructors. Well-chosen, and well-written lives would form a valuable substitute for no small portion of those works of imagination, which steal away the hearts and time of our youth. Novels, were there no other objection to them, however ingeniously they may be written, as they exhibit only fictitious characters, acting in fictitious scenes, on fictitious occasions, and being sometimes the work of writers, who rather *guess* what the world is than describe it from their own knowledge, can never give so just or vivid a picture of life and manners, as is to be found in the memoirs of men who were actual performers on the great stage of the world. We may apply to many of these fabricators of ad

ventures what lord Bacon says, when he regrets that philosophers, ignorant of real business, chose to write about legislation, instead of statesmen, whose proper office it was.—'They make,' says he, 'imaginary laws for imaginary commonwealths.'

Of this engaging species of literature, biography, it is to be regretted, that we do not possess more lives of distinguished men, written with a view to moral instruction, in the manner of those of bishop Burnet, and Isaac Walton. The lives of the bishop are seriously instructive, as well as highly interesting. Of Walton's it is difficult to say, whether they are more amusing or informing.

Voyages and travels will also form a very necessary class of books; but some of the more recent works of this kind are so interlarded with infidelity, and under the mask of ridiculing popery, aim such mischievous side-strokes at Christianity itself; and many, especially of the modern French travels, are exceptionable, not only for their impiety, but also on so many other accounts, that they will require to be selected with the nicest discrimination. Our own language, however, can boast many valuable works of this kind, which are clear of these offences. Voyages of discovery, though perhaps less interesting to ordinary readers will be peculiarly suited to the royal pupil; especially those which have been undertaken, greatly to his honour, by command of his present majesty, and which contain the discoveries actually made in the hitherto unexplored parts of the southern hemisphere.

Telemachus.

Among works of imagination, there are some peculiarly suited to the royal pupil. She should never, it is presumed, peruse any authors below those who have always been considered, as standards in their respective departments. With the talents which she is said to possess, she will soon be competent to understand great part of a work, which, though it ranks in the very first class of this species of composition, has, it is to be feared, fallen into unjust disregard from its having been injudiciously employed by teachers as the first book in acquiring the French language. The fine sentiments which it contains have been overlooked, while only the facility of the style has been considered.—Telemachus is a noble political romance, delightful to every reader, but specifically adapted to what indeed was its original object, the formation of a character of a prince. It is free from the moral defects of the classic poets, whose very deities are commonly exhibited with a grossness dangerous to the modesty of youth. Fenelon, while with a true taste, he never puts any thing into their mouths incompatible with the Grecian fable, never fails to give the imperfect pagan moral a tincture of Christian purity. The finest precepts are illustrated by the most instructive examples; and every royal duty is, as it were, personified. His morality is every where founded on the eternal principles of truth and justice. He refers all goodness to God, as its origin and end. He exhibits a uniform lesson of the duty of sacrificing private interest to public good, and of forgetting ourselves in the love of our country. He reconciles the soundest policy with the most undeviating integrity, and puts to shame those otherwise admirable writers of our own time, who have laboured to establish the dangerous doctrine of *expediency* at the expense of immutable justice and everlasting truth. From Telemachus she will learn, that the true glory of a king is to make his people good and happy; that his authority is never so secure as when it is founded on the love of his subjects; and that the same principles which promote private virtue, advance public happiness. He teaches carefully to distinguish between good and bad governments; delivers precepts for the philosophical, the warlike, the pacific, and the legislative king; and shows the comparative value of agriculture, of commerce, of education, and of arts; of private justice, and of civil polity. His descriptions, comparisons, and narratives, instead of being merely amusing, are always made to answer some beneficial purpose. And, as there is no part of public duty, so there is scarcely any circumstance of private conduct, which has been overlooked. The dangers of self-confidence; the contempt of virtuous counsels; the perils of favouritism; the unworthiness of ignoble pursuits; the mischiefs of disproportionate connexions; the duty of inviolable fidelity to engagements, of moderation under the most prosperous, and of firmness under the most adverse circumstances; of patience and forbearance, of kindness and gratitude; all these are not so much animadverted on, as exemplified in the most impressive instances.

Children love fiction. It is often a misleading taste. Of this taste Fenelon has availed himself, to convey, under the elegant shelter of the Greek mythology, sentiments and opinions which might not otherwise so readily have made their way to the heart. The strict maxims of government, and high standard of public virtue, exhibited in Telemachus, excited in the jealous mind of the reigning king of France, a dread that if those notions should become popular, that work would hereafter be considered as a satire on his own conduct and government, on his fondness for grandeur, for pleasure, for glory, and for war: so that it has been supposed probable, that Fenelon's theological works, for which he was disgraced, were only made the pretext for punishing him for his political writings.

The Cyropædia of Xenophon it may be thought out of date to recommend; but genius and virtue are never antiquated. This work may be read with advantage, not as an entirely authentic history, which is a more than doubtful point, but as a valuable moral work, exhibiting a lively image of royal virtue and showing, in almost all respects, what a sovereign ought to be.—The *princes* of Xenophon and of Fenelon are models. The 'Prince' of Machiavel is a being elaborately trained in every art of political and moral corruption. The lives of the pupils are the best comments on the works of the respective authors. Fenelon produced 'Telemaque' and the duke of Burgundy.—Machiavel, 'Il Principe' and Cæsar Borgia!

CHAP. XXIX.

Of periodical essay writers, particularly Addison and Johnson.

To hardly any species of composition has the British public been more signally indebted than to the periodical Essay; and, perhaps, it was only from the British press, that such a publication could have issued. The attempt to excite mental appetite, by furnishing, from day to day, intellectual aliment of such peculiar freshness, must have been fatally obstructed by any jealousy of superintendance, or formality of licensing. The abuse of the press is to be deplored as a calamity, and punished as a crime. But let neither prince nor people forget the providential blessings which have been derived to both from its constitutional liberty. As this was one of the invaluable effects of the revolution in 1688, so perhaps no other means more contributed to carry the blessings of that period to their consummate establishment, in the accession of the house of Brunswick.

The two writers who have most eminently distinguished themselves in this path of literature, are Addison and Johnson. At a period when religion was held in more than usual contempt, from its having been recently abused to the worst purposes; and when the higher walks of life still exhibited that dissoluteness which the profligate reign of the second Charles had made so deplorably fashionable, Addison seems to have been raised by Providence for the double purpose of improving the public taste, and correcting the public morals. As the powers of the imagination had, in the preceding period, been peculiarly abused to the purposes of vice, it was Addison's great object to show that wit and impurity had no necessary connexion. He not only evinced this by his reasonings, but he so exemplified it in his own compositions, as to become in a short time more generally useful, by becoming more popular than any English writer who had yet appeared. This well-earned celebrity he endeavoured to turn to the best of all purposes; and his success was such as to prove, that genius is never so advantageously employed as in the service of virtue, nor influence so well directed as in rendering piety fashionable. At this distance, when almost all authors have written the better, because Addison wrote first, and when the public taste which he refined has become competent through that refinement, to criticise its benefactor, it is not easy fully to appreciate the value of Addison. To do this, we must attend to the progress of English literature, and make a comparison between him and his predecessors.

But noble as the views of Addison were, and happily as he has, in general, accomplished what he intended; the praise which justly belongs to him must be qualified by the avowal, that it does not extend to every passage he has written. From the pernicious influence of those very manners which it was his object to correct, some degree of taint has occasionally affected his own pages, which will make it necessary to guard the royal pupil from a wholly promiscuous perusal. It is however, but justice to add, that the few instances referred to, however exceptionable, are of such a kind as to expose him to the charge rather of inadvertence, or momentary levity, than of any unfixedness of principle, much less of any depravity of heart.

Of all the periodical works, those of Johnson, in point of strict and undeviating moral purity, unquestionably stand highest. Every page is invariably delicate. It is, therefore, the rare praise of this author, that the most vigilant preceptor may commit his voluminous works into the hands of even his female pupil, without caution, limitation, or reserve: secure that she cannot stumble on a pernicious sentiment, or rise from the perusal with the slightest taint of immorality. Even in his dictionary, moral rectitude has not only been scrupulously maintained, but, as far as the nature of the work would admit, it has been assiduously inculcated. In the authorities which he had adduced, he has collected, with a discrimination which can never be enough admired, a countless multitude of the most noble sentences which English literature afforded; yet he has frequently contented himself with instances borrowed from inferior writers, when he found some passage, which at once served *his* purpose, and that of religion and morality; and also, as he declared himself, lest he should risk contaminating the mind of the student, by referring him to authors of more celebrity, but less purity. When we reflect how fatally the unsuspected title of *Dictionary* has been made the vehicle for polluting principle, we shall feel the value of this extreme conscientiousness of Johnson.

Still, however, while we ascribe to this excellent author all that is safe, and all that is just, it is less from Johnson than from Addison that we derive the interesting lessons of life and manners; that we learn to trace the exact delineations of character, and to catch the vivid hues, and varied tints of nature. It is true, that every sentence of the more recent moralist is an aphorism, every paragraph a chain of maxims for guiding the understanding and guarding the heart. But when Johnson describes *characters*, he rather exhibits vice and virtue in the abstract, the real existing human being: while Addison presents you with actual men and women; real life figures, compounded of the faults and the excellencies, the wisdom and the weaknesses, the follies and the virtues of humanity.—By the Avarus, the Ebulus, the Misellus, the Sophron, the Zosima, and the Viator of Johnson, we are instructed in the soundest truths, but we are not struck by any vivid exemplification. We merely *hear* them, and we hear them with profit, but we do not *know* them. Whereas with the members of the Spectator's club we are *acquainted*. Johnson's personages are elaborately carved figures that fill the niches of the saloon; Addison's are the living company which animate it: Johnson's have more drapery; Addison's more countenance, Johnson's gentlemen and ladies, scholars and chambermaids, philosophers and coquets, all argue syllogistically, all converse in the same academic language; divide all their sentences into the same triple members, turn every

phrase with the same measured solemnity, and round every period with the same polished smoothness. Addison's talk learnedly or lightly, think deeply, or prate flippantly, in exact accordance with their character, station, and habits of life.

What reader, when he meets with the description of Sir Roger de Coverly, or Will Wimble, or of the Tory fox-hunter in the Freeholder does not frame in his own mind a living image in each, to which ever after he naturally recurs, and on which his recollection, if we may so speak, rather than his imagination, fastens, as on an old intimate? The lapse of a century, indeed, has induced a considerable change in modes of expression and forms of behaviour. But though manners are mutable, human nature is permanent. And it can no more be brought as a charge against the truth of Addison's characters that the manners are changed, than it can be produced against the portraits of sir Peter Lely and Vandyck, that the fashions of dress are altered. The human character, like the human figure, is the same in all ages; it is only the exterior and the costume which vary. Grace of attitude, exquisite proportion, and striking resemblance, do not diminish of their first charm, because ruffs, perukes, satin doublets, and slashed sleeves are passed away. Addison's characters may be likened to that expressive style of drawing, which gives the exact contour by a few careless strokes of the pencil. They are rendered amusing, by being in some slight degree carricatures; yet, all is accurate resemblance, nothing is wanton aggravation. They have, in short, that undiscribable grace which will always captivate the reader in proportion to the delicacy of his own perceptions.

Among the benefits which have resulted from the writings of Addison, the attention first drawn to Paradise Lost by his criticisms was not one of the least. His examination of that immortal work, the boast of our island, and of human nature, had the merit of subduing the violence of party-prejudice, and of raising its great author to an eminence in the minds of his countrymen, corresponding to that which he actually held, and will hold, on the scale of genius, till time shall be no more.*

If the critical writings of Addison do not possess the acuteness of Dryden, or the vigour of Johnson, they are familiar and elegant, and serve to prepare the mind for more elaborate investigation. If it be objected, that he deals too much in gratuitous praise and vague admiration, it may be answered, that the effect produced by poetry on the mind cannot always be philosophically accounted for; and Addison was too fair, and, in this instance, too cordial a critic to withhold expressions of delight, merely because he could not analyse the causes which produced it.—At any rate, it must be allowed, that he who wrote those exquisite *Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination*, could not be superficial through penury. It is allowed, that the criticisms of Johnson are, in general, much more systematic; they possess more depth, as well as more discrimination; but they are less pleasing, because they are not equally good natured. They are more tinctured with party spirit, and breathe less generous and voluntary admiration. But no critic has been more successful in laying open the internal structure of the poet;—though he now and then handles the knife so roughly as to disfigure what he means to dissect. His learning was evidently much deeper, as well as better digested, than that of Addison, and the energy of his understanding was almost unrivalled. He therefore, discovers a rare ability in appreciating, with the soundest and most sagacious scrutiny, the poetry of reason and good sense; in the composition of which he also excels.—But to the less bounded excursions of high imagination, to the bolder achievements of pure invention he is less just, because less sensible. He appears little alive to that species of writing, whose felicities consist in ease and grace, to the floating forms of ideal beauty, to the sublimer flights of the lyric muse, or to finer touches of dramatic excellence. He would consequently be cold in his approbation, not to say perverse in his discussion of some of these species of beauty, of which, in fact, his feelings were less susceptible.

He had, however, that higher perfection which has been too rarely associated with those faculties, the most discerning taste and the liveliest relish, for the truest as well as the noblest species of the sublime and beautiful. I mean that which belongs to moral excellence. Where this was obvious, it not only conquered his aversion, but attracted his warm affection. It was this which made him the ardent eulogist of Watts, in spite of his non-conformity, and even the advocate of Blackmore, whom it must have been natural for him to despise as a bad poet, and to hate as a whig. It is this best of tastes which he also most displays in that beautiful eulogium of Addison, to which in the present comparison, it would be injustice to both, not to refer the reader.

His *Tour to the Hebrides* exhibits a delightful specimen of an intellectual traveller, who extracts beauty from barrenness, and builds up a solid mass of instruction with the most slender materials. He leaves to the writer of natural history, whose proper province it is, to run over the world in quest of mosses and grasses, of minerals and fossils. Nor does he swell his book with catalogues of pictures which have neither novelty nor relevancy; nor does he copy, from

* Milton has dropt his mantle on a poet, inferior indeed to himself, in the loftiness of his conceptions, the variety of his learning, and the structure of his verse; but the felicity of whose genius is only surpassed by the elevation of his piety; whose devout effusions are more penetrating, and almost equally sublime; and who, in his moral and pathetic strokes, familiar illusions, and touching incidents, comes more home to the bosom than even his immortal master. When we observe of this fine spirit that he felt the beauties of nature with a lover's heart, beheld them with a poet's eye, and delineated them with a painter's hand;—that the minute accuracy of his lesser figures, and the exquisite finishing of his rural groups, delight the fancy, as much as the sublimity of his nobler images exalt the mind;—that in spite of faults and negligencies, and a few instances of ungraceful asperity, he gratifies the judgment as much as he enchants the imagination; that he directs the feelings to virtue, and the heart to heaven. Need we designate the sketch by affixing to it the name of Cowper.

preceding authors, the ancient history of a country of which we only want to know the existing state; nor does he convert the grand scenes which display the wonder of the Creator's power into doubts of his existence, or disbelief of his government: but fulfilling the office of an inquisitive and moral traveller, he presents a lively and interesting view of men and things; of the country which he visited, and of the persons with whom he conversed. And though his inveterate Scottish prejudices now and then break out, his spleen seems rather to have been exercised against trees than men. Towards the latter, his seeming illiberality has in reality more of merriment than malice. In his heart he respected that brave and learned nation.—When he is unfair, his unfairness is often mitigated by some stroke of humour, perhaps of good humour, which effaces the impression of his severity. Whatever faults may be found in the Tour to the Hebrides, it is no small thing, at this period, to possess a book of travels entirely pure from the lightest touch of vanity or impurity, of levity or impiety.

His Rasselas is a work peculiarly adapted to the royal pupil; and though it paints human life in too dark shades, and dwells despondingly on the unattainableness of human happiness, these defects will afford excellent occasions for the sagacious preceptor to unfold, through what pursuits life may be made happy by being made useful; by what superinduced strength the burthens of this mortal state may be cheerfully borne, and by what a glorious perspective its termination may be brightened.

The praise which has been given to Addison as an essayist can rarely be extended to many of his coadjutors. Talent more or less we every where meet with, and very ingenious sketches of character; but moral delicacy is so often, and sometimes so shamefully violated, that (whatever may have been the practice,) the Spectator ought to be accounted an unfit book for the indiscriminate perusal of youth.*

However the collection of periodical papers, entitled *The Freeholder*, may be passed over by common readers, it would be unpardonable not to direct to them the attention of a royal pupil. The object at which they aim, the strengthening of the Hanoverian cause against the combined efforts of the house of Stuart and the French court, makes them interesting; and they exhibit an exquisite specimen of political zeal without political acrimony. They abound in strokes of wit; and the Tory Fox-hunter is perhaps next to the Rural Knight in the Spectator, one of the most entertaining descriptions of character in our language. Of these, as well as of his other essays, it may be said, that in them the follies, the affectations, and the absurdities of life are pourtrayed with the lightest touches of the most delicate pencil; that never was ridicule more nicely pointed, nor satire more playfully inoffensive.

In the *Guardian* there is hardly any thing that is seriously exceptionable; and this work is enriched with some essays that are not to be placed beneath even those of Addison. It will be obvious, that we allude to the papers ascribed to bishop Berkeley. These essays bear the marks of a mind at once vigorous and correct, deep in reflection, and opulent in imagery. They are chiefly directed against the free-thinkers, a name by which the infidels of that age chose to call themselves. And never, perhaps, has that wretched character been more admirably illustrated than in the simile of the fly on St. Paul's cathedral.

Another difference between Addison and Johnson is, that the periodical writings of the former are those in which the powers of his mind appear to most advantage. Not so in the case of Johnson. Solidly valuable as the Rambler must be accounted in the point of celebrity, it probably owes much more to its author than it has conferred on him. A forbidding stateliness, a rigid and yet inflated style, an almost total absence of ease and cheerfulness, would too probably bring neglect on the great and various excellencies of these volumes, if they had been the single work of their author. But his other writings, and, above all, that inexhaustible fund of pleasure and profit, the Lives of the Poets, will secure perpetuated attention to every work which bears the name of Johnson. On the ground of distinct attractiveness, the Idler is the most engaging of Johnson's perodical works: the manner being less severe, and the matter more amusing.

The *Adventurer*, perhaps, on account of its interesting tales, and affecting narratives, is, of all others of its class, the most strictly suitable to youth. It also contains much general knowledge, elegant criticism, and various kinds of pleasing information. In almost all these works, the Eastern Tales, Allegories, and Visions, are interesting in the narrative, elevated in the sentiment; pure in the descriptions, and sublime in the moral; they convey lessons peculiarly appropriated to the great, most of the fictitious personages who are made the vehicles of instruction, being either princes or statesmen.

If we advert to religion, the praise of Addison in this infinitely important instance must not be omitted. Johnson never *loses sight* of religion; but on very few occasions does he particularly dwell upon it. In one or two passages* only has he given vent to his religious feelings; and his sentiments are so soundly, indeed so sublimely excellent, that it is impossible not to regret the scantiness with which he has afforded them. But Addison seems to delight in the subject, and, what is remarkable, his devout feelings seem to have much transcended his theological accuracy. To the latter, exception might justly be taken in one or two instances;† to the former, never. If it were to be asked, where are the elevating, ennobling, felicitating effects of religion on the human mind as safely stated, and as happily expressed, as in any English author? perhaps a juster answer could scarcely be given than—*in the devotional papers of Addison.*

* Happily all Addison's papers have been selected by Tickell, in his edition of Addison's works.

* Number VII. in the Rambler; paper on affliction in the Idler; and the noble passage in the account of Iona.

† See particularly that very exceptionable paper in the Spectator, No. 459.—Also another on Superstition and Enthusiasm.

CHAP. XXX.

Books of Amusement.

As the royal person will hereafter require books of amusement, as well as instruction, it will be a task of no small delicacy to select such as may be perused with as much profit, and as little injury, as is to be expected from works of mere entertainment. Perhaps there are few books which possess the power of delighting the fancy, without conveying any dangerous lesson to the heart, equally with Don Quixote.

It does not belong to our subject to animadvert on its leading excellence; that incomparable delicacy of satire, those unrivalled powers of ridicule, which had sufficient force to reclaim the corrupted taste, and sober the distempered imagination of a whole people. This, which on its first appearance was justly considered as its predominant merit, is now become less interesting; because the evil which it assailed no longer existing, the medicine which cured the mad is grown less valuable to the sane; yet Don Quixote will be entitled to admiration on imperishable grounds.

Though Cervantes wrote between two and three hundred years ago, and for a people of a national turn of thinking dissimilar to ours; yet that *right good sense*, which is of all ages, and all countries, and which pervades this work more almost than even its exquisite wit and humour; those masterly portraits of character; those sound maxims of conduct; those lively touches of nature; those admirably serious lessons, though given on ridiculous occasions; those penetrating strokes of feeling; those solemnly sententious phrases, tinctured with the characteristic absurdity of the speaker, without any injury to the truth of the sentiment; that mixture of the wise and the ludicrous, of action always pitiably extravagant, and of judgment often exemplarily sober. In all these excellences Don Quixote is without a parallel.

How admirable (to produce only one instance out of a thousand) is that touch of human nature, where the knight of La Mancha having bestowed the most excessive and high-flown compliments on a gentleman whom he encountered when the delirium of chivalry raged most strongly in his imagination!—The gentleman, who is represented as a person of admirable sense, is led by the effect which these compliments produced on his own mind, to acknowledge the weakness of the heart of man, in the foolish pleasure it derives from flattery. 'So bewitching is praise,' says he, 'that even I have the weakness to be pleased with it, though at the same time, I know the flatterer to be a madman.'

Wit, it has been said, is gay, but humour is grave. It is a striking illustration of this opinion, that the most serious and solemn nation in the world has produced the work of the most genuine humour. Nor is it easy to express how admirably the pomp and stateliness of the Spanish language are suited to the genius of this work. It is not unfavourable to the true heroic, but much more especially it is adapted to the mock dignity of the sorrowful knight. It is accommodated to the elevation of the fantastic hero's tiptoe march, when he is sober, and still more to his stilts, when he is raving.

The two very ingenious French and English novelists, who followed Cervantes, though with unequal steps even as to talent, are still farther below their great master both in mental and moral delicacy. Though the scenes, descriptions, and expressions of Le Sage, are far less culpable, in point of decency, than those of his English competitor; yet both concur in the same inexpiable fault, each labouring to excite an interest for a vicious character, each making the hero of his tale an unprincipled profligate.

If novels are read at all in early youth, a practice which we should think, 'more honoured in the breach than the observance,' we should be tempted to give the preference to those works of pure and genuine fancy, which exercise and fill the imagination, in preference to those which, by exhibiting passion and intrigue in bewitching colours, lay hold too intensely on the feelings. We should even venture to pronounce those stories to be most safe, which, by least assimilating with our own habits and manners, are less likely to infect and soften the heart, by those amatory pictures, descriptions, and situations, which too much abound, even in some of the chastest compositions of this nature. The young female is pleasantly interested for the fate of Oriental queens, for Zobeide, or the heroine of Alamoran and Hamet; but she does not put herself in their *place;* she is not *absorbed* in their pains or their pleasures; she does not identify her feelings with *theirs*, as she too probably does in the case of Sophia Western and the princess of Cleves.—Books of the former description innocently invigorate the fancy, those of the latter convey a contagious sickliness to the mind. The one raises harmless wonder or inoffensive merriment: the other awaken ideas, at best unprofitable. From the flights of the one, we are willing to descend to the rationality of common life; from the seduction of the other, we are disgusted at returning to its insipidity.

There is always some useful instruction in those great original works of invention, whether poetry or romance, which transmit a faithful living picture of the *manners* of age and country in which the scene is laid. It is this which, independently of its other merits, diffuses that inexpressible charm over the Odyssey: a species of enchantment which is not afforded by any other poem in the world. This, in a less degree, is also one of the striking merits of Don Quixote. And this after having soared so high, if we may descend so low, is the principal recommendation of the Arabian Tales. These Tales also, though faulty in some respects, possess another merit which we should be glad to see transferred to some of the novels of a country nearer home. We learn from these Arabian stories, and indeed from most of the works of imagination of the Mahometan authors, what was the specific religion of the people about whom they write: how much they made religion enter into the ordinary concerns of life; and how observant persons professing religion were of its peculiarities and its worship.

It is but justice to observe, how far more deep-

ly mischievous the French novel writers are, than those of our own country; they not only seduce the heart through the senses, and corrupt it through the medium of the imagination, but fatally strike at the very root and being of all virtue, by annihilating all belief in that religion, which is its only vital source and seminal principle.

Shakspeare.

But lessons of a nobler kind may be extracted from some works which promise nothing better than mere entertainment; and which will not, to ordinary readers, appear susceptible of any nigher purpose. In the hands of a judicious preceptor, many of Shakspeare's tragedies, especially of his historical pieces, and still more such as are rendered peculiarly interesting by local circumstances, by British manners, and by the introduction of royal characters who once filled the English throne, will furnish themes on which to ground much appropriate and instructive conversation.

Those mixed characters especially, which he has drawn with such a happy intuition into the human mind, in which some of the worst actions are committed by persons not destitute of good dispositions and amiable qualities, but overwhelmed by the storm of unresisted passion, sinking under strong temptation, or yielding to powerful flattery, are far more instructive in the perusal than the 'faultless monsters,' or the heroes of unmixed perfection of less skilful dramatists.—The agitations, for instance of the *timorous Thane*, a man not destitute of generous sentiments; but of a high and aspiring mind, stimulated by vain credulity, tempting opportunity, and an ambitious wife.—Goaded by the woman he loved to the crime he hated,—grasping at the crown, but abhorring the sin which was to procure it;—the agonies of guilt combating with the sense of honour—agonies not merely excited by the vulgar dread of detection and of punishment which would have engrossed an ordinary mind, but sharpened by unappeasable remorse: which remorse, however, proves no hindrance to the commission of fresh crimes, —crimes which succeed each other as numerously, and as rapidly, as the visionary progeny of Banquo.—At first,

What he would highly, he would holily:

But a familiarity with horrors soon cured this delicacy; and in his subsequent and multiplied murders, necessity became apology. The whole presents an awful lesson on the terrible consequences of listening to the first slight suggestion of sin, and strikingly exemplifies that from harbouring criminal thoughts, to the forming black designs, and perpetrating the most atrocious deeds, the mind is led by a natural progress, and an unresisted rapidity.

The conflicting passions of the capricious Lear! tender and affectionate in the extreme, but whose irregular affections were neither controuled by nature, reason, or justice; a character weak and vehement, fond and cruel; whose kindness was determined by no principle, whose mind was governed by no fixed sense of right, but vibrating with the accident of the moment, and the caprice of the predominant humour sacrificing the virtuous child, whose sincerity should have secured his affection, to the preposterous flattery of her unnatural sisters—These highly wrought scenes do not merely excite in the reader a barren sympathy for the pangs of self-reproach, of destitute age, and suffering royalty, but inculcate a salutary abhorrence of adulation and falsehood; a useful caution against partial and unjust judgment; a sound admonition against paternal injustice and filial ingratitude.

The beautiful and touching reflection of Henry IV. in those last soul-searching moments, when the possession of a crown became nothing, and the unjust ambition by which he had obtained it every thing—Yet, exhibiting a prince still so far retaining to the last the cautious policy of his character, as to mix his concern for the state, and his affection for his son, with the natural dissimulation of his own temper; and blending the finest sentiment on the uncertainty of human applause and earthly prosperity, with a watchful attention to confine the knowledge of the unfair means by which he had obtained the crown to the heir who was to possess it;—the wily politician predominating to the last moment, and manifesting rather regret than repentance:—disclosing that the assumed sanctity with which he had been preparing for a crusade, was only a project to check those inquiries into his title to the crown to which peace and rest might lead; and exhorting the prince, with a foreseeing subtlety which little became a dying monarch, to keep up quarrels with foreign powers, in order to wear out the memory of domestic usurpation;—all this presents a striking exhibition of a superior mind, so long habituated to the devious paths of worldly wisdom, and crooked policy, as to be unable to desert them, even in the pangs of dissolution.

The pathetic soliloquies of the repentant Wolsey fallen from the pinnacle of wealth and power, to a salutary degradation! A disgrace which restored him to reason, and raised him to religion; which destroyed his fortune but rescued his soul:—his counsels to the rising statesman Cromwell, on the perils of ambition, and the precariousness of royal favour; the vanity of all attachment which has not religion for its basis; the weakness of all fidelity which has not the fear of God for its principle; and the perilous end of that favour of the courtier, which is enjoyed at the dear price of his 'integrity to Heaven!'—

The pernicious power of flattery on a female mind, so skilfully exemplified in that memorable scene in which the bloody Richard conquers the aversion of the princess Anne to the murderer of her husband, and of all his royal race! The deplorable error of the feeble-minded princess, in so far forgetting his crimes in his compliments, as to consent to the monstrous union with the murderer! Can there be a more striking exemplification of a position we have ventured so frequently to establish, of the dangers to which vanity is liable, and of the miseries to which flattery leads?

The reflections of Henry VI. and of Richard

II. on the cares and duties, the unsatisfactoriness and disappointment attending great situations, the vanity of human grandeur while enjoyed, and the uncertain tenure by which it is held! These fine soliloquies preach powerfully to the hearts of all in high stations, but most powerfully to those in the highest.

The terribly instructive death-bed of cardinal Beaufort, whose silence, like the veil in the celebrated picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Timanthes, thrown over the father's face, penetrates the soul more by what it conceals, than could have been effected by any thing that its removal might have discovered.

These, and a thousand other instances, too various to be enumerated, too obvious to require specifying, and too beautiful to stand in nced of comment, may, when properly selected, and judiciously animadverted on, not only delight the imagination, and gratify the feelings, but carry instruction to the heart.

The royal pupil may discern in Shakspeare an originality which has no parallel. He exhibits humour the most genuine, and, what is far more extraordinary, propriety of sentiment, and delicacies of conduct, where, from his low opportunities, failure had been pardonable. A fidelity to character so minute, that it seems rather the accuracy of individual history, marking the incidental deviations, and delineating the casual humours of actual life, than the invention of the poet. Shakspeare has seized every turn and flexure of the ever-varying mind of man in all its fluctuating forms; touched it in all its changeful shades; and marked it in all its nicer gradations, as well as its more abrupt varieties. He exhibits the whole internal structure of man; uniting the correctness of anatomy with the exactness of delineation, the graces of proportion, and often the highest beauty of colouring.

But with these excellences, the works of this most unequal of all poets contain so much that is vulgar, so much that is absurd, and so much that is impure; so much indecent levity, false wit, and gross description, that he should only be read in parcels, and with the nicest selection. His more exceptionable pieces should not be read at all; and even of the best much may be omitted. But the qualified perusal here suggested, may on account of his wonderful acquaintance with the human heart, be attended with peculiar advantages to readers of the class in question, one of whose chief studies should be that of mankind, and who from the circumstance of station and sex, have few direct and safe means of acquiring a knowledge of the world, and an acquaintance with the various characters which compose it.

To the three celebrated Greek tragedians we have already adverted, as uniting with the loftiest powers of genius, a general prevalence of virtuous, and often even of pious sentiments. The scenes with which they abound, of meritorious, of suffering, of imprudent, of criminal, of rash, and of penitent princes; of royalty under every vicissitude of passion, of character, and circumstance, will furnish an interesting and not unprofitable entertainment. And Mr. Potter has put the English reader in possession of these ancient bards, of Eschylus especially, in a manner highly honourable to his own taste and learning.

Most of the tragedies of Racine are admirably written, and are unexceptionable in almost all respects. They possess, though conveyed in the poor vehicle of French versification,* all the dramatic requisites, and to their author we can safely ascribe one merit, superior even to that of the critical exactness with which he has regulated the unities of his plays by Aristotle's clock; we mean his constant care not to offend against modesty or religion. His Athalie exhibits at once, a chief d'œuvre of the dramatic art, a proof of what exquisite poetic beauties the Bible histories are susceptible; a salutary warning to princes on the miseries attendant upon treachery, impiety, and ambition; and a lively instance of not only the private value but the great political importance of eminently able and pious ministers of religion.

If the Italian language should form a part of the royal education, we might name Metastatio as quite inoffensive in a moral view, though necessarily mixing something of the flimsy texture of the opera with the severer graces of Melpomene.—His muse possesses an equable and steady pinion: if she seldom soars into sublimity, she never sinks to meanness; she is rather elegant and pleasing, than vigorous or lofty. His sacred dramas are particularly excellent, and are scarcely less interesting to the reader of taste than of piety. They also exempt from a certain monotony, which makes his other pieces too much to resemble each other.

It is with no small regret that, persuaded as we are that England is the rich native soil of dramatic genius, we are driven to the painful necessity of recommending exotics in preference to the indigenous productions of our own fruitful clime. The truth is, that though we possess in our language admirable single pieces, yet our tragic poets have afforded scarce any instances, except Milton in his exquisite Comus and Samson Agonistes, and Mason in his chaste and classic dramas, in which we can conscientiously recommend their *entire unweeded* volumes, as never deviating from that correctness and purity which should be the inseparable attendant on the tragic muse.†

We shall, indeed, find not only that virtuous scenes, and even pious sentiments, are scattered throughout most of our popular tragedies, but that the general moral also is frequently striking and impressive. Its *end*, however is often defeated by the *means* employed to accomplish it. In how many, for instance, of the favourite tragedies of Rowe and Otway, which are most frequently acted, do we find passages, and even

* It is a curious circumstance in the history of French dramatic poetry, that the measure used by their best poets in their sublimest tragedies is the anapæstic, which, in our language, is not only the lightest and most undignified of all the poetic measures, but is still more degraded by being chiefly applied to burlesque subjects. It is amusing to an English ear, to hear the Brutus of Racine, the Cid of Corneille, and the Orosmane and Orestes of Voltaire, declaim, philosophize, sigh, and rave in the precise measure of

A cobler there was, and he liv'd in a stall

† Thompson's tragedies furnish the best exception to this remark of any with which the author is acquainted.

whole scenes of a directly contrary tendency; passages calculated to awaken those very passions which it was the professed object of the author to counteract?

> First raising a combustion of desire,
> With some cold moral they would quench the fire.

When we contrast the purity, and I had almost said, the piety of the works of the tragic poets of pagan Greece, and even the more select ones of popish France, with some of the pieces of the most shining bards of protestant Britain, do they not all appear to have been in an inverse ratio with the advantages which their authors enjoyed?

It may be objected, that in speaking of poetic composition, we have dwelt so long, and almost so exclusively on the drama. It would, indeed, have been far more pleasant to range at large through the whole flowery fields of the muses, where we could have gathered much that is sweet, and much that is sslutary. But we must not indulge in excursions which are merely pleasurable. We have on all occasions made it a point not to recommend books because they are pleasant or even good, but because they are appropriate. And as it is notorious

> ———that gorgeous tragedy
> With *sceptred* palls comes sweeping by
> Presenting Thebes' or Pelops' line:

that she prefers the splendid scenes of royal courts to the retired courts of private life; that she delights to exemplify virtue, to designate vice, or dignify calamity, by choosing her personages among kings and princes, we therefore thought it might not be altogether unuseful, in touching on this topic, to distinguish between such authors as are safe, and such as are dangerous; by mentioning those of the one class with deserved commendation, and by generally passing over the names of the others in silence.

CHAP. XXXI.

Books of instruction, &c. Lord Bacon, &c.

In the 'prophet of unborn science,' who brought into use a logic almost entirely new, and who rejected the study of words for that of things, the royal pupil may see the way, rarely used before his time, of arguing by induction; a logic grounded upon observation, fact, and experiment. To estimate the true value of Lord Bacon, we should recollect what was the state of learning when he appeared; we should remember with what a mighty hand he overthrew the despotism of that absurd system which had kept true knowledge in shackles, arrested the progress of sound philosophy, and blighted the growth of the human intellect.

His first aim was to clear the ground, by rooting out the preconceived errors, and obstinate projudices, which long prescription had established; and then to substitute what was useful, in place of that idle and fruitless speculation which had so long prevailed.—He was almost the first rational investigator of the laws of nature, who made genuine truth and sound knowledge, and not a barren curiosity and an unprofitable ingenuity the object of his pursuit. His instances are all said to be collected with as much judgment, as they are recorded with simplicity. He teaches the important art of viewing a question on all sides, and of eliciting truth from the result; and he always makes reasoning and experiment go hand in hand, mutually illustrating each other.

One principal use of being somewhat acquainted with this great author is, to learn that admirable method and order which he uniformly observes. So excellent is the disposition he makes, that the reader is not lost, even in that mighty mass of matter in which he arranges the arts of history, poetry, and philosophy, under their three great corresponding faculties, of memory, imagination, and understanding. This perspicuous clearness of distribution; this breaking up his subject into parts, without losing sight of that whole to which each portion preserves its exact subordination, enables the reader to follow him without perplexity, in the wide stretch and compass of his intellectual researches.

With the same admirable method he has also made a distribution of the several branches of history. He separates it into three divisions —chronicles, or annals, lives, and relations· assigning in his luminous way, to each its respective properties. Lives of individuals, he is of opinion, exhibit more faithful and lively narratives of things; and he pronounces them capable of being more safely and advantageously transferred into example, than general history. He assigns a great degree of usefulness to special relation of actions, such as Cataline's conspiracy, and the expedition of Cyrus; conceiving them to be more pleasant by presenting a subject more manageable, because more limited. And as a more exact knowledge and full information may be obtained of these individual relations, the author, he observes, is not driven like the writer of general history, to fill up chasms and blank spaces, out of his own imagination.*

* There is one instance in which even this great author has poorly executed his own ideas. After so ably laying down the outline of history, he has shown little skill, in an individual instance, in filling it up. Few writers have more remarkably failed, than Lord Bacon in his history of Henry VII. It is defective in almost all the ingredients of historic composition; neither possessing majesty nor dignity on the one hand, nor ease and perspicuity on the other. There is a constant aim at wit and pleasantry, with a constant failure in both. The choice of matter is injudicious; great circumstances are often slightly touched, while he enlarges upon trifles. The history is feeble narrative; the style is affected declamation; loaded, as if in defiance of Quintilian's precept, with those double epithets, which, as that noblest of critics observes, when each does not furnish a fresh idea, is as if every common soldier in an army should carry a footman, increasing the incumbrance without adding to the strength. The history of Henry VII. wants perspicuity, simplicity, and almost every grace required of the historic muse. And what is more strange, we neither discover in this work the deep politician, the man of business, the man of genius, or the man of the world. It abounds with those colloquial familiarities, we had almost said vulgarisms, with which the works of that reign are generally infected, but which we do not expect in this great author Bad

Politics he arranges with the same methodical order, dividing them into three several parts, —the preservation of a state, its prosperity, and its enlargement. Of the two former branches, allows that preceding authors had already created, but intimates that he himself was the first who had discussed the latter. As political economy will hereafter form an important branch of study for the royal pupil, we are, happily, not wanting in very able modern authors, who, living in our time, are likely to be more extensively useful, from their intimate acquaintance with existing circumstances, and with the revolutions which have led to them.

Nothing seems to have been too great, or too small, for the universal mind of Bacon; nothing too high for his strong and soaring wing; nothing too vast for his extensive grasp; nothing too deep for his profound spirit of investigation; nothing too minute for his microscopic discernment. Whoever dives into the depths of learning, or examines the intricacies of politics, or explores the arcana of nature, or looks into the mysteries of art, or the doctrines of religion, or the scheme of morals, or the laws of jurisprudence, or the decorums of court, or the duties of public conduct, or the habits of domestic life; whoever wanders among the thorns of metaphysics, or gathers the flowers of rhetoric, or plucks the fruits of philosophy, will find that this noble author has been his precursor; and that he himself can scarcely deviate into any path which Bacon has not previously explored.

Nor did the hand which so ably treats on the formation of states, disdain to arrange the plants of the field, or the flowers of the parterre; nor was the statesman, who discoursed so largely and so eloquently on the methods of improving kingdoms, or the philosopher, who descanted on the means of augmenting science, above teaching the pleasing art to select the sheltered spot for the tender exotic, to give minute instructions for polishing 'the dry smooth-shaven green,' for raising a strawberry, or cultivating a rose.

His moral essays are fraught with familiar wisdom, and practical virtue. With this intellectual and moral treasure the royal pupil cannot be too intimately conversant. His other writings are too voluminous, as well as too various and too scientific, to be read at large; and it is become the less necessary, the works of Bacon having been the grand seed-plot, out of which all the modern gardens of philosophy, science, and letters, have been either sown or planted.

It is with deep regret we add, that after admiring in the works of this wonderful man to what a pitch the human mind can soar, we may see, from a few unhappy instances in his conduct, to what debasement it can stoop. While his writings store the mind with wisdom, and the heart with virtue, we may, from his practice, take a melancholy lesson on the imperfection of human excellence, by the mortifying consideration of his ingratitude as a friend, his adulation as a courtier, and his venality as a chancellor.

Of the profound and various works of Locke, the most accurate thinker, and justest reasoner, which this or perhaps any other country has produced, we would particularly recommend the short but very valuable treatise on the *Conduct of the Understanding*. It contains a familiar and popular illustration of some important discoveries in his most distinguished work, the Essay on the Human Understanding, particularly that great and universal law of nature, 'the support of so many mental powers (that of memory under all its modifications) and which produces equally remarkable effects in the intellectual, as that of gravitation does in the material world, *the association of ideas*.'—A work of which even the sceptical rhapsodist, lord Shaftsbury, who himself possessed much rhetoric and little logic, pronounced, that 'it may qualify men as well for business and the world, as for the sciences and the university.'

There are few books with which a royal person ought to be more thoroughly acquainted, than with the famous work of Grotius on the *Rights of War and Peace*. In this work the great principles of justice are applied to the highest political purposes; and the soundest reason is employed in the cause of the purest humanity. This valuable treatise owed its birth to the circumstance of the author, a statesman and ambassador, having, as he himself observes, personally witnessed in all parts of the Christian world, 'such an unbridled licentiousness with regard to war, as the most barbarous nations might blush at.' 'They fly to arms,' says he 'on frivolous pretences; and when once they have them in their hands, they trample on all laws, human and divine, as if from the time of their assumption of arms they were authorized so to do.'

In the course of the work he inquires, with a very vigorous penetration, into the origin of the rights of war, its different kinds, and the extent of the power of the sovereign. He clearly explains the nature and extent of those rights, the violation of which authorizes the taking up arms. And finally, after having ably descanted on all that relates to war in its beginning, and its progress, he as ably enlarges on the nature of those negociations and treaties of peace which terminate it.*

With an intrepidity worthy of his genius, he was not afraid of dedicating a book containing such bold and honest doctrines to a king of France. This admirable treatise was found in the tent of the great Gustavus after his death. It had been one of the principal objects of his

gell has published in the Guardian, a collection of numberless passages from this history, exemplifying almost every kind of literary defect; not with an invidious design to injure so great a name, but lest the authority of that name should sanction bad writing. The present criticism is offered, lest it should sanction bad taste.

* The censure frequently expressed in these volumes, against princes who inconsiderately engage in war, can never apply to that in which we are involved. A war, which, on the part of the enemy, has levelled the just fences which separated nations, and destroyed the good faith which united them. A war, which on our part was entered upon, not for conquest but existence; not from ambition but necessity; not for revenge but justice; not to plunder other nations but to preserve our own. And not exclusively, even to save ourselves, but for the restoration of desolated nations, and the final safety and repose of the whole civilized world.

study. The Swedish monarch knew how to choose his books and his ministers. He studied Grotius, and he employed Oxenstiern.

If the royal person would peruse a work, which to the rhetoric of ancient Greece, and the patriot spirit of ancient Rome, unites the warmth of cotemporary interest and the dearness of domestic feeling; in which to the vigour of a rapid and indignant eloquence, is superadded the widest extent of general knowledge, and the deepest political sagacity:—a work

> Where old experience doth attain,
> To something like prophetic strain:

a work which first unlocked the hidden springs of revolutionary principles; dived into the complicated and almost unfathomable depths of political, literary, and moral mischief; penetrated the dens and labyrinths, where Anarchy who long had been mysteriously brooding, at length hatched her baleful progeny;—laid bare to view the dark recesses, where sacrilege, murder, treason, regicide, and atheism were engendered.—If she would hear the warning voice which first sounded the alarm in the ears of Britain, and which, by rousing to a sense of danger, kindled the spirit to repel it, which, in Englishmen, is always but one and the same act, she should peruse *Mr. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution.*

It was the peculiar felicity of this great, but often misguided man, to light at last upon a subject, not only singularly congenial to the turn of his genius, but of his temper also. The accomplished scholar, the wit of vivid imagination, the powerful orator rich in imagery, and abounding in classic allusion, had been previously displayed to equal advantage in his other works, but with considerable abatements, from prejudices which sometimes blinded his judgment, from a vehemence which often clouded his brightness. He had never wanted genius: it would be hard to say he had ever wanted integrity;—but he had often wanted that consistency which is so necessary to make the parts of a great character cohere to each other. A patriot, yet not unfrequently seeming to act against the interests of his country; a senator, never heard without admiration, but sometimes without effect; a statesman, often embarrassing his adversaries, without always serving his friends, or advancing his cause. But in this concentration of his powers, this union of his faculties and feelings, *the Reflection on the French Revolution*, his impetuosity found objects which rendered its exercise not only pardonable but laudable. That violence, which had sometimes exhausted itself, unworthily in party, or unkindly on individuals, now found full scope for its exercise, in the unrestrained atrocities of a nation, hostile not only to Britain but to human nature itself. A nation not offending from the ordinary impulse of the passions, which might have been repelled by the ordinary means of resistance, but 'committing the oldest crimes the newest kind of way,' and uniting the bloody inventions of the most selfish ambition, and the headlong appetites of the most unbridled vices, with all the exquisite contrivances of gratuitous wickedness. And happily for his fame, all the successive actors in the revolutionary drama took care to sin up to any intemperance of language which even Mr. Burke could supply.

CHAP. XXXII.

The Holy Scriptures.—The Old Testament.

In speaking of the nature and evidences of revealed religion, it was impossible to avoid anticipating the subject of this chapter, as it is from the Holy Scriptures alone that the nature of our divine religion can be adequately ascertained, and as it is only in that sacred volume that we can discover those striking congruities between Christianity, and all the moral exigencies of man, which form so irresistible an evidence of its coming from that God, 'who is above all, and through all, and in us all.'

There are, however, some additional points of view in which the Holy Scripture ought to be considered. It is doubtless most deeply interesting, as it contains in it that revelation from heaven which was 'to give light to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. But while we joyfully follow this collected radiancc, we may humbly endeavour to examine the apparatus itself by which those beams of heaven are thrown on our path. Let us then consider the divine volume somewhat more in detail, endeavouring at the same time not to overlook those features which it presents to the critic, or philologist. We do not mean to him who, while he reads, affects to forget, that he has in his hands the *book of God*, and therefore indulges his perverse or profligate fancy, as if he were perusing the poems of Homer or Hafez. But we mean the Christian critic, and the Christian philologist; characters, it is true, not very common, yet through the mercy of God so exemplified in a few nobler instances, even in our own days, as to convince us, that in the formation of these volumes of eternal life, no faculty, no taste, no impressible point in the mind of man, has been left unprovided for. They show us, too, what an extensive field the sacred Scriptures furnish for those classical labours, of which they possibly were deemed scarcely susceptible before the admirable Lowth gave his invaluable Prelections.

The first circumstance which presents itself, is the variety of composition which is crowded into these narrow limits. Historical records extending through thousands of years;—poetry of almost every species;—biographic memoirs of that very kind which the modern world agrees to deem most interesting; epistolary correspondence which even for excellence of manner might challenge a comparison with any composition of that nature in the world; and lastly, that singular kind of writing, peculiar to this sacred book, in which the veil that hides futurity from man is penetrated, remote occurrences so anticipated, as to imply a demonstration that God alone could have communicated such knowledge to man.

In the historic parts, we cannot but be struck with a certain peculiar consciousness of accurate

knowledge, evincing itself by its two grand characteristics, precision and simplicity. They are not the annals of a nation which are before us, so much as the records of a family. Truth is obviously held in supreme value, since, even where it is discreditable, there is not the slightest attempt to disguise it. The affections are cordially at work; but they are more filial than patriotic, and more devout than filial. To these writers the God of their fathers is of more importance than their fathers themselves. They therefore preserve, with the greatest care, those transactions of their ancestors, which were connected with the most signal interferences of heaven; and no circumstance is omitted, by which additional motives might be afforded for that habitual reverence, supreme love and unshaken confidence, towards the Eternal Father, which constituted the pure and sublime religion of this singly enlightened people. What Moses magnificently expresses in the exordium of that noble ode, the 90th psalm, contains the central principle which all their history was intended to impress. 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place from one generation to another; before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst made the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting, THOU ART GOD.'

Other nations have doubtless made their history subservient to their mythology; or rather, being ignorant of the facts; they have at once gratified their national vanity, and indulged their moral depravity in imagining offensive and monstrous chimeras. But do these humiliating infatuations of human kind, universal as they have been, bear any shadow of analogy to the divinely philosophic grandeur of Hebrew piety? All other mythologic histories degrade our nature. This alone restores its primeval dignity. The pious Jews were doubtless the greatest zealots on earth. But for whom? 'For no grisly terror,' 'nor execrable shape,' like all other Orientalists, ancient and modern; no brute like the Egyptians, nor deified monster worse than brute, like the Greeks and Romans. But it was for HIM, whom philosophers in all ages have in vain laboured to discover; of whose character, nevertheless, they have occasionally caught some faint idea from those very Jews, whom they have despised, and who, in the description even of the heathen Tacitus, awes our minds, and claims the natural homage of our hearts.—'The Egyptians,' says that unbribed evidence, in the midst even of an odious representation of the Jewish nation, 'venerate various animals, as well as likenesses of monsters. The Jews acknowledge, and that with the *mind* only, a single Deity. They account those to be profane, who form images of God of perishable materials, in the likeness of men. There is *the one supreme eternal God, unchangeable, immortal.* They therefore suffer no statues in their cities, and still less in their temples. They have never shown this mark of flattery to their kings. They have never done this honour to the Cæsars.'*

What then was zeal for such worship as this, but the purest reason, and the highest magnanimity? And how wise as well as heroic do they appear who made no account of life in such a cause? 'O king,' say they, 'we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us out of thine hand! But if not, be it known unto thee, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.'

Of such a religion as this, what can be more interesting than the simple, the affectionate history? it is not men whom it celebrates; it is 'Him who only hath immortality, who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.' And how does it represent him? That single expression of the patriarch Abraham will fully inform us: 'Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right.' A sentiment, short and simple as it is, which carries more light to the mind, and more consolation to the heart, than all the volumes of all the philosophers.

But what was the *moral* efficacy of this religion? Let the youthful Joseph tell us. Let him, at the moment of his victory over all that has most effectually subdued human nature, discover to us where his strength lay. 'How,' says he, 'shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.'

Of the lesser excellences of these historic records, little on the present occasion can, and, happily, little needs be said. If the matter is unmixed truth, the manner is unmixed nature. Were the researches of Sir William Jones, and those who have followed him in the same track, valuable on no other account, they would be inestimable in this respect, that through what they have discovered and translated, we are enabled to compare other eastern compositions with the sacred books of the Hebrews; the result of which comparison, supposing only taste and judgment to decide, must ever be this, that in many instances, nothing can recede farther from the simplicity of truth and nature than the one, nor more constantly exhibit both than the other. This assertion may be applied with peculiar justness to the poetic parts of the Old Testament. The character of the eastern poetry, in general, would seem to be that of floridness and exuberance, with little of the true sublime, and a constant endeavour to outdo rather than to imitate nature. The Jewish poetry seems to have been cast in the most perfect mould. The expressions are strictly subordinate to the sense; and while nothing is more energetic, nothing is more simple and natural. If the language be strong, it is the strength of sentiment allied with the strength of genius, which alone produces it. For this striking dissimilarity the difference of subject will account. There is one God.—*This* is perfect simplicity. He is omniscient, omnipotent, infinite, and eternal.—*This* is sublimity beyond which nothing can rise. What evinces this to be the real source of excellence in Hebrew poetry is, that no instance of the sublime, in the whole compass of human composition, will bear a comparison with what the Hebrew poets say of the Almighty. For example: what in all the poetry, even of Homer, is to be compared with this passage of David—'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from

* Tacitus Hist. Lib. v. 5.

thy presence? if I climb up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the utmost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.'

It is a peculiarity of Hebrew poetry, that it alone, of all the poetry we know of in the world, retains its poetic structure in the most literal translation; nay, indeed, the more literal the translation, the less the poetry is injured. The reason is, that the sacred poetry of the Hebrews does not appear to depend on cadence or rhythm, or any thing merely verbal, which literal translation into another language necessarily destroys; but on a method of giving to each distinct idea a two-fold expression, so that when the poetry of the Old Testament is perfect, and not injured by erroneous translation, it exhibits a series of couplets, in which the second member of each couplet repeats the same, or very nearly the same sense, in a varied manner—As in the beginning of the 95th psalm:

O come let us sing unto the Lord,
Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation;
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
And show ourselves glad in him with psalms:
For the Lord is a great God,
And a great king above all gods:
In his hands are the deep places of the earth,
And the strength of the hills is his also.

The motive for adopting such a structure we easily conceive to have been, that the composition might be adapted to responsive singing. But, can we avoid acknowledging a much deeper purpose of infinite wisdom, that that poetry which was to be translated into all languages, should be of such a kind as literal translation could not decompose?

On the subject of Hebrew poetry, however, it is only necessary to refer the reader to bishop Lowth's work already mentioned, and to that shorter, but most luminous discourse on this subject, prefixed to the same excellent author's translation of Isaiah.

Moral philosophy in its truest and noblest sense, is to be found in every part of the Scriptures. Revealed religion being, in fact, that 'day spring from on high,' of whose happy effects the Pagan philosophers had no knowledge, and the want of which they were always endeavouring to supply by artificial but most delusive contrivances. But the portion of the sacred volume which is most distinctly appropriated to this subject are the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. In the former of these, amid some difficult passages, obscured to us by our ignorance of ancient nations and manners, there are some of the deepest reflections on the vanity of all things earthly, and on the indispensable necessity of sincere religion, in order to our ease and happiness, that ever came from the pen of man. It asserts the immortality of the soul, of which some have supposed the Jews ignorant, in terms the most unequivocal. 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, *and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.*' And it ends with a corollary to which every human heart ought to respond, because all just reflections lead to it.—'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is *the whole of man.*—For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'

The Proverbs are an invaluable summary of every species of practical wisdom. The first nine chapters being a discourse on true wisdom, that is, sincere religion, as a principle, and the remainder a sort of magazine of all its varied parts, civil, social, domestic, and personal, in this world; together with clear and beautiful intimations of happiness in a life to come. As for example:—'The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' Here, one of the most delightful objects in nature, the advancing dawn of the morning, is educed as an emblem of that growing comfort and cheerfulness which inseparably attend a life of piety. What then, by inevitable analogy, is that perfect day in which it is made to terminate, but the eternal happiness of heaven? Both these books, with the greater part of the Psalms, have this suitable peculiarity to the present occasion, that they issued from a royal pen. They contain a wisdom, truly, which belongs to all; but they also have much in them which peculiarly concerns those, who, by providential destination, are shepherds of the people. The 101st psalm, in particular, may be considered as a kind of abridged manual for princes, especially in the choice of their company.

CHAP. XXIII.

The Holy Scriptures.—The New Testament

The biographic part of the New Testament is above all human estimation, because it contains the portraiture of 'him in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'—If it were, therefore, our hard lot to say what individual part of the Scriptures we should wish to rescue from an otherwise irreparable destruction, ought it not to be that part which describes to us the conduct and preserves to us the instructions of *God manifest in the flesh?* Worldly Christians have affected sometimes to prefer the Gospel to the rest of the New Testament, on the intimated ground that our Saviour was a less severe preceptor, and more of a mere moralist than his inspired followers, whose writings make up the sequel of the New Testament. But never surely was there a grosser delusion. If the object be to probe the heart of man to the centre; to place before him the terrors of that God, who to the wicked 'is a consuming fire;' to convince him of that radical change which must take place in his whole nature, of that total conquest which he must gain over the world and himself, before he can be a true subject of the Messiah's spiritual kingdom; and of the desperate disappointment which must finally await all who rest in the mere profession, or even the plausible outside of Christianity; it is from our Lord's discourses that we shall find the most resistless means of accomplishing each of these awfully important purposes.

To the willing disciple our Saviour is in

deed the gentlest of instructors; to the contrite penitent he is the most cheering of comforters; to weakness he is most encouraging; to infirmity, unspeakably indulgent; to grief or distress of whatever sort, he is a pattern of tenderness. But in all he says or does, he has one invariable object in view, to which all the rest is but subservient. He lived and taught, he died and rose again, for this one end, that he might 'redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of *good works*.' His uniform declarations therefore, are—'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.—Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'—'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.' 'Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me, he cannot be my disciple.'

To corrupt human nature these lessons can never be made engaging. Their object is to conquer, and finally to eradicate that corruption. To indulge it, therefore, in any instance, is wholly to reject them; since it is not with particular vices that Christ contends, nor will he be satisfied with particular virtues. But he calls us, indispensably to a *state of mind*, which contains, as in a root or principle, all possible virtue, and which avoids, with equally sincere detestation, every species of evil. But to human nature itself, as distinct from its depravity, to native taste, sound discriminating sense, just and delicate feeling, comprehensive judgment, profound humility, and genuine magnanimity of mind, no teacher upon this earth ever so adapted himself. In his inexhaustible imagery, his appropriate use of all the common occurrences of life, his embodying the deepest wisdom in the plainest allegories, and making familiar occurrences the vehicle of most momentous instruction, in the dignified ease, with which he utters the profoundest truths, the majestic severity which he manifests where hollow hypocrisy, narrow bigotry, unfeeling selfishness, or any clearly deliberate vice called forth his holy indignation; in these characters we recognise the purest, and yet most popular, the most awful, and yet the most amiable of all instructors. And when we read the Gospels with rightly prepared hearts, we see him with our mind's eye, as he actually was in this world, scarce less effectually than those who lived and conversed with him. We too, 'behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.'

The acts of the Apostles belong in some degree to the biographic class. Where the matter of a work is of the deepest moment the more agreeableness of its manner is of less importance. But where a striking provision has been made for pleasure, as well as benefit, it would be ingratitude as well as insensibility not to notice it. It is indeed impossible for a reader of taste, not to be delighted with the combination of excellences, which this short but most eventful narrative exhibits. Nothing but clearness and accuracy appear to be aimed at, yet every thing which can give interest to such a work is attained. Neither Xenophon nor Cæsar could stand a comparison with it. St. Luke in this piece has seen every thing so clearly has understood it so fully, and has expressed it so appositely, as to need only a simple rendering of his own exact words in order to his having, in every language, the air of an original.

The epistolary part of the New Testament is, perhaps, that with which the generality of readers are least acquainted. Some profess to be discouraged by the intricacy of the sense, particularly in the writings of St. Paul; and others fairly acknowledge that they conceive this part of the Scripture to be of less moment, as being chiefly occupied in obsolete controversies peculiar to the time in which they were written, consequently uninteresting to us. Though our limits do not admit of a particular reply to those unfounded prejudices, yet we cannot forbear regretting, what appears to be a lamentable ignorance of the nature and design of Christianity, which distinguishes our times, and which has given rise to both these suppositions. They, for example, who regard religion but as a more sublimated system of morality, and look for nothing in the Scripture but rules of moral conduct, must necessarily feel themselves at a stand, when something infinitely deeper seems to present itself before them. But if it were first fully known, what the Christianity of the Apostles actually was, their sentiments would soon become intelligible. They treat of Christianity as an inward principle still more than as a rule of conduct. They by no means neglect the latter; but the former is their leading object. In strict observance of that maxim, so variously given by their divine master—'Make the tree good and its fruit will be good.'—They accordingly describe a process, which, in order to real goodness, must take place in the depths of the heart. They detect a root of evil which disqualifies man for all real virtue, and deprives him of all real happiness. And they describe an influence proceeding from God himself, through a divine Mediator, ready to be communicated to all who seek it, by which this evil nature is overcome, and a holy and heavenly nature formed in its room. They describe this change as taking place by means of the truths and facts revealed in the Gospel, impressing themselves by the power of God's holy Spirit upon the mind and heart; in consequence of which new desires, new tastes, new powers, and new pursuits succeed. Things temporal sink down into complete subordination, to things eternal; and supreme love to God and unfeigned charity to man, become the master passions of the soul. These are the subjects which are chiefly dwelt on in the Epistles, and they will always in a measure be unintelligible to those who do not 'receive the truth in the love of it.' Even in many human pursuits, actual practice is indispensable to a clear understanding of the principles.

If this be a fair state of the case, ought we not to study these portions of Scripture with an attention suitable to their acknowledged depth, instead of attempting to force a meaning upon them, at the expense of common sense, in order to make them seem to correspond with our superficial religion? Should we not rather endeavour to bring our religion to a conformity with their plain and literal import? Such attempts,

sincerely made, would soon give clearness to the understanding; and a more than philosophic consistency, as well as a more than human energy, would be found there, where all before had seemed perplexed and obscure.—We do not, however, deny, that the Epistles contain more reference than the Gospels to Jewish customs, and to a variety of local and temporary circumstances not well understood by us. Yet, though written to individual men, and to particular churches; not only general inferences, applicable to us may be drawn from particular instructions, but by means of them, the most important doctrines are often pointedly exhibited.

Where this truly Christian discernment is exercised, it will be evident how much it softens and enlarges the heart! how it extends and illuminates the mental view! how it quickens and invigorates the feeling! how it fits the mind for at once attending to the minutest, and comprehending the vastest things! In short, how pure, how wise, how disinterested, how heavenly,—we had almost said how morally omnipotent it makes its complete votary!

On this head we will add but one remark more. Even through the medium of a translation, we observe a remarkable difference of manner in the apostolic writers.—There is indeed a very close resemblance between the views and topics of St. Paul and St. Peter, though with much difference of style. But St. James and St. John differ from both these, and from each other, as much as any writers could, who agree cordially in one general end. The Christian philosopher will be able to account for this difference by its obvious correspondence with what he sees daily in natural tempers. In St. John he will discover the cast and turn of a sublimely contemplative mind, penetrating the inmost springs of moral action, and viewing the heart as alone secured and perfected by an habitual filial reverence to, and, as he expresses it, 'communion with the Father of spirits.' In St. James he will see the remarks of a plain and more practical mind, vigilantly guarding against the deceits and dangers of the world, and somewhat jealous lest speculation should, in any instance, be made a pretext for negligence in practice. And lastly, he will perhaps recognise in St. Paul, that powerful character of mind, which, being under the influence of no particular temper, but possessing each in its full strength, and all in due temperament, gives no colouring to any object but what it actually possesses, pursues each valuable end in strict proportion to its worth, and varies its self-directed course, in compliance with no attraction, but that of truth, of fitness, and of utility. In such a variety, then, he will find a new evidence to the truth of Christianity, which is thus alike attested by witnesses the most diversified; and he will, with humble gratitude, adore that condescending wisdom and goodness, which has thus, within the sacred volume itself, recognised, and even provided for, those distinctions of the human mind, for which weak mortals are so unwilling to make allowance in each other.

The prophetic part is mentioned last, because it peculiarly extends itself through the whole of the divine volume. It commences with the first encouraging promise which was given to man after the primeval transgression, and it occupies the last portion of the New Testament. It might naturally have been expected, that in a revelation from the sovereign of all events, the future designs of Providence should be so far intimated, as clearly to evince a more than human foresight, and by consequence a divine origin. It might also have been thought probable, that those prophecies should embrace so extended a series of future occurrences, as to provide for successive confirmations of the revelation, by successive fulfilments of the predictions. And lastly, it might be thought reasonable, that while such intimations should be sufficiently clear to be explained by the actual event, they should not be so explicit as to gratify curiosity respecting future contingencies; such an anticipation of events being clearly unsuitable to that kind of moral government under which the author of our nature has placed us.

It is conceived that such precisely are the characters of those predictions which are so numerous in the Scripture. They point to a continued succession of great occurrences; but, in general, with such scattered rays of light, as to furnish few materials for premature speculation. Even to the prophet himself the prospect is probably enveloped in a deep mist, which while he looks intently, seems for a short space to open, and to present before him certain grand objects, whose fleeting appearances he imperfectly catches, but whose connexion with, or remoteness from, each other he has not sufficient light to distinguish.

These remarks, however, apply most strictly to prophecies of remote events.—When nearer occurrences are foretold, whether relating to the Jewish nation, or to the countries in its neighbourhood, there is often a surprising clearness, as if in these cases, the intention was to direct conduct for the present, as well as confirm faith by the result. And in a few important instances, even distant futurity is so distinctly contemplated, as to make such predictions a permanent, and to every candid reader, an irrefragable evidence, that a volume so undeniably ancient, and yet so unequivocally predictive, can be no other than divine.

Of this last class of prophecies, as most directly interesting, it may not be useless to point out the following striking examples.—The denunciation by Moses of what should be the final fate of the Jews, in case of obstinate disobedience.*—Isaiah's astonishing picture of the sufferings, death, and subsequent triumph of the Redeemer;† a prediction upon which every kind of sophistry has been tried in vain. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar, with Daniel's interpretation;‡ a prophecy which contains in it an absolute demonstration of revealed religion. Daniel's own vision of the four empires, and of that divine one which should succeed them.§ His amazing prophecy of the seventy weeks,‖ which, however involved in obscurity as to niceties of chronology, is in clearness of prediction a standing miracle; its fulfilment in the death of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem, being as self

* Deut. xxviii. † Isaiah. liii. ‡ Daniel, ii.
§ Daniel, vii. ‖ Daniel, ix.

evident as that Cæsar meant to record his own actions in his Commentaries. To these I would add, lastly, that wonderful representation of the papal tyranny in the Apocalypse,* which, however, involving some obscure circumstances, is nevertheless so luminous an instance as to preclude the possibility of evasion. The extreme justness of the statement respecting papal Rome must force itself on every mind at all acquainted with the usual language of the Old Testament prophets, and with the authentic facts of ecclesiastical history.

Among circumstantial prophecies of near events may be reckoned Jeremiah's prediction of the taking of Babylon,† by the king of the Medes, on which the history of the event, as given by Xenophon in the Cyropedia, is the best possible comment. The prophecy of the fall of Tyre in Ezekiel,‡ in which there is the most remarkable detail of the matter of ancient commerce that is perhaps to be any where found. But of all such prophecies, that of our Saviour, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, as given in repeated parables and express denunciations, is most deeply worthy the attention of the Christian reader.

A question has been started among scholars respecting the double sense of prophecy; but it seems astonishing to any plain reader of the Bible how it could ever become a matter of doubt. —What can be more likely, for instance, than that some present event in which David was interested, perhaps his inauguration, suggested to him the subject of the second psalm? Yet what can be more evident than that he describes a dominion infinitely beyond what can be attributed to any earthly potentate? The fact seems to be, that the Jewish dispensation being, in its most leading parts, a prefiguration of the christian dispensation and the most celebrated persons, as well as events, being typical of what was to come, the prophetic spirit could not easily contemplate the type without being carried forward to its completion. And, therefore, in almost every case of the kind the more remote object draws the attention of the prophet as if insensibly, from the nearer,—the greatness of the one naturally eclipsing the comparative littleness of the other. This occurs in such a number of instances as to form one of the most prominent characters of prophecy.

We shall conclude the subject with observing on that over-ruling Providence which took care that the Scriptures of the Old Testament should be translated into the Greek language, before the original dialect became obscure, by which means, not only a most important preparation was made for the fuller manifestation which was to follow; but the sense of the Scriptures, in all important instances, was so unequivocally fixed, as to furnish both a guide for the learned Christian in after-times, and a means of confronting Jewish misrepresentations with the indisputable acknowledgments of earlier Jews, better used to the language, and uninfluenced by any prejudice. And, may we add, that the choice of the Greek for the original language of the New Testament, is not less worthy of attention? By that wise and gracious arrangement every lineament and every point of our divine religion has acquired an imperishable character; since the learned have agreed, that no language is so capable of expressing every minute distinction and shade of thought and feeling, or is so incapable of ever becoming equivocal: the works which have been composed in it, ensuring its being studied to the end of the world.

* Chap. xvii. † Jeremiah l. and li.
‡ Ezekiel xxvi. and xxvii.

CHAP. XXXIV.

On the abuse of terms.—Enthusiasm.—Superstition.—Zeal for religious opinions no proof of religion.

To guard the mind from prejudice is no unimportant part of a royal education. Names govern the world. They carry away opinion, decide one character, and determine practice. Names, therefore, are of more importance than we are aware. We are apt to bring the quality down to the standard which the name establishes, and our practice rarely rises higher than the current term which we use when we speak of it.

The abuse of terms has at all times been an evil. To enumerate only a few instances. We do not presume to decide on the measure which gave birth to the clamour, when we assert, that in the progress of that clamour, greater violence has seldom been offered to language than in the forced union of the two terms, *Liberty and Property.** A conjunction of *words*, by men who were, at the same time labouring to disjoin the *things*. If liberty, in their sense, had been established, property would have had an end, or rather would have been transferred to those, who, in securing what they termed *their* liberty, would have made over to themselves that property, in the pretended defence of which the outcry was made. At a more recent period, the term *equality* has been substituted for that of property. The word was altered, but the principle retained. And, as the preceding clamour for liberty was only a plausible cover for making *property* change hands, so it has of late been tacked to equality, with a view to make *power* change hands. Thus, terms the most popular and imposing, have been uniformly used as the watch-words of tumult, plunder, and sedition.

But the abuse of terms, and especially their unnecessary adoption, is not always limited to the vulgar and the mischievous. It were to be wished that those persons of a better cast, who are strenuous in counteracting the evils themselves, would never naturalize any terms which convey revolutionary ideas. In England, at least, let us have no *civic* honours, no *organization* of plans.

There are perhaps few words which the reigning practice has more warped from its legitimate meaning and ancient usage than the term *proud*. Let us try whether Johnson's definition sanctions the adopted use.—'Proud,' says that accurate philologist, 'means, *elated—haughty—daring—presumptuous—ostentatious*,' &c. &c.

* By Wilkes, and his faction.

Yet do we not continually hear, not merely the journalist and the pamphleteer, but the legislator and the orator, sages who give law, not to the land only, but to the language, using the term exclusively, in an honourable sense.—'They are proud to acknowledge, 'proud to confess.' Instead of the heart-felt language of gratitude for a deliverance or a victory, we hear of 'a proud day,' 'a proud circumstance,'—'a proud event,' thus raising to the dignity of virtue, a term to which lexicographers and moralists have annexed an odious, and divines an unchristian sense. If pride be thus enrolled in the list of virtues, must not humility by a natural consequence be turned over to the catalogue of vices? If pride was made for man, has not the Bible asserted a falsehood?

In the age which succeeded to the reformation, 'holiness' and 'practical piety' were the terms employed by divines when they would inculcate that conduct which is suitable to Christians. The very words conveyed a solemnity to the mind, calculated to assist in raising it to the prescribed standard. But those very terms being unhappily used, during the usurpation, as masks to cover the worst purposes, became, under Charles, epithets of ridicule and reproach; and were supposed to imply hypocrisy and false pretence. And when, in a subsequent period, decency resumed her reign, and virtue was countenanced, and religion respected: yet mere decorum was too often substituted for religious energy, nor was there such a general superiority to the dread of censure, as was sufficient to restore the use of terms, which hypocrisy had abused, and licentiousness derided.*

Indifference in some assumed the name of moderation, and zeal in others grew cool, or was ashamed to appear warm. The standard of language was either let down to accommodate itself to the standard of practice, or piety itself was taken some notes lower, to adapt it to the established phraseology. Thus, morality, for instance, which heretofore, had only been used (and very properly) as one name amongst many, to express right conduct, now began to be erected into the exclusive term. The term itself is most unexceptionable. Would that all who adopt it, acted up to the rectitude which it implies! but, partly from its having been antecedently used to express the pagan virtues; partly from its having been set up by modern philosophers, as opposed to the peculiar graces of Christianity, and consequently converted by them into an instrument for decrying religion; and partly because many who profess to write theories of morality, have founded them on a mere worldly principle, we commonly see it employed, not in its own distinct and limited meaning, but, on the contrary, as a substitute for that comprehensive principle of elevated, yet rational piety, which forms at once the vital spring and essential characteristic of Christian conduct.

It is necessary also to apprise those whose minds we are forming, that when they wish to inquire into the characters of men, it is of importance to ascertain the principles of him who gives the character, in order to obtain a fair knowledge of him of whom the character is given. To exemplify this remark by the term enthusiasm. While the wise and temperate Christian deprecates enthusiasm as highly pernicious, even when he hopes it may be honest—justly ascribing it to a perturbed and unsound, or at least, an over eager and weak mind—the irreligious man, who hates piety, when he fancies he only hates fanaticism, applies the term enthusiast to every religious person, however sober his piety, or however correct his conduct.

But even he who is far from remarkable for pious ardors, may incur the stigma of enthusiasm, when he happens to come under the censure of one who piques himself on still greater latitude of sentiment. Thus, he who professes to believe in 'the only begotten Son of God as in glory equal with the Father,' will be deemed an enthusiast by him who embraces the chilling doctrines of Socinus. And we have heard, as if it were no uncommon thing, of a French philosopher of the highest class, accounting his friend *un peu fanatique*, merely because the latter had some *suspicion* that there was a God. In fact we may apply to enthusiasm, what has been said on another occasion:

> Ask where's the North—At York 'tis on the Tweed,
> In Scotland at the Orcades; and there,
> At Greenland, Zembla————

But it may be asked, has religious enthusiasm, after all, no definite meaning? or are religion and frenzy *really* so nearly allied, that no clearly distinctive line can be drawn between them? One of our most eminent writers has told us, that 'enthusiasm is a kind of excess in devotion, and that superstition is the excess, not only of devotion, but of religion in general.' A strange definition! For what is devotion; and what is religion, if we cannot be in earnest in them without hazarding our rationality, which, however, must be the case, if this definition were accurate? For if the excess of devotion were enthusiasm, and the excuse of religion were superstition, it would follow, that to advance in either would be to approximate to fanaticism. Of course, he who wished to retain his mental sanity, must listen with caution to the apostolic precept, of *growing* in grace.

But, with all due respect to Mr. Addison, may we not justly question whether there can be such a thing as an excess of either devotion or religion, in the proper sense of the terms? We never seriously suppose that any one can be too wise, too pure, or too benevolent. If at any time we use a language of this apparent import, we always conceive the idea of some spurious intermixture, or injudicious mode of exercise. But

* It is however to be observed, that at no period, perhaps, in English history, was there a more strict attention to public morals, or a more open avowal of religion, than during the short reign of queen Mary. Nothing was with that excellent princess, so momentous an object, as that religion might attain its just credit, and diffuse its effectual influences through society. Upon this her deepest thoughts were fixed; to this her most assiduous endeavours were directed. And it was not wholly in vain. A spirit of pious activity spread itself both through clergy and laity. Religious men took fresh courage to avow themselves, and merciful men laboured in the cause of humanity with increased zeal and success. It seems to have been under this brief, but auspicious government, that the dissolute habits of the two former reigns received their first effectual check.

when we confine our thoughts to the principle itself, we do not apprehend that we *can* become too predominant,—to be too virtuous, being just as inconceivable as to be too happy.

Now if this he true of any single virtue, must it not hold equally good respecting the parent principle of all virtue?—What is religion, or devotion (for when we speak of either, as a principle, it is, in fact, a synonyme of the other) but the 'so loving what God has commanded, and desiring what he has promised, as that, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found?' Now can there be excess in this? We may doubtless *misunderstand* God's commands, and *misconstrue* his promises, and, in either way, instead of attaining that holy and happy fixedness of heart, become the victims of restless perturbation. But if there be no error in our apprehension, can there be any excess in our love? What does God *command?* Every thing that tends to our personal, social, political, as well as eternal well-being. Can we then feel too deep love for the sum of all moral excellence? But what does God *promise?* Guidance, protection, all necessary aids and influences here; and hereafter, 'fulness of joy and pleasures at his right hand for evermore.' Can such blessings as these be too cordially desired? Amid

> The heartaches and the thousand natural shocks
> Which flesh is heir to,

can our hopes of future happiness be too cheering, or our power of rising above the calamities of mortality be too habitual, or too effectual? Such are the questions obviously suggested by the supposition of such a thing as excess in religion. And doubtless the answer of every serious and reflecting mind must be, that in 'pure and undefiled religion,' in 'loving the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves,' the idea of *excess* is as incongruous and inadmissible, as that of a happy life being too long, or of the joys of heaven being less desirable because they are eternal.

But if, instead of cultivating and advancing in this love of God and man,—instead of loving what God has really commanded, and desiring what he has clearly promised in his holy word,—this word be neglected, and the suggestions of an ardent, or of a gloomy fancy be substituted in its room, then the person becomes in the strictest and truest sense, a fanatic; and as his natural temperament may happen to be sanguine or saturnine, he rises into imaginary raptures or sinks down into torturing apprehensions, and slavish self-inflictions.

Here then, if I am not mistaken, we may discover the real nature of both enthusiasm and superstition. It is not *excess* of devotion which constitutes the one, nor *excess* of religion in general which leads to the other. But both are the consequence of a *radical misconception* of religion. Each alike implies a compound of ignorance and passion; and as the person is disposed to hope or fear, he becomes enthusiastical on the one hand, or superstitious on the other. He in whom *fear* predominates, most naturally mistakes *what God commands*, and instead of taking that *law* for his rule, 'whose seat is the bosom of God, and whose voice the harmony of the world,'* in a most unhappy manner, becomes a law unto himself, multiplying observances, which have nothing to recommend them, but their irksomeness or uncouthness; and acting, as if the way to propitiate his Maker were by tormenting himself. He, on the contrary, in whom the *hopeful* passions are prevalent, no less naturally misconceives what *God has promised* and pleases himself with the prospect, or persuades himself into the imaginary possession, of extraordinary influences and supernatural communications. Both, it is evident, mean to pursue religion, but neither has sufficient judgment to ascertain its real nature. Perhaps, in general, some mental morbidness is at the bottom, which, when of the depressive kind, disposes to the superstitious view of religion, and when, of the elevating kind, to the enthusiastical.

Religion, the religion of the Scriptures, is itself an exquisite temperament, in which all the virtues, of which man is capable, are harmoniously blended. He, therefore, who studies the Scriptures, and draws thence his ideas and sentiments of religion, takes the best method to escape both enthusiasm and superstition. Even infidelity is no security against either. But it is absolutely impossible for an intelligent votary of scriptural Christianity to be in any respect fanatical. True fanatics, therefore, are apt to neglect the Scriptures, except so far as they can turn them to their own particular purpose. The Romish church, for example, became negligent of the Scriptures, nearly in proportion as it became superstitious. And every striking instance of enthusiasm, if inquired into, will be found to exemplify the same dereliction. In a word, Christianity is eternal truth, and they who soar *above* truth, as well as they who sink *below* it, equally overlook the standard by which rational action is to be regulated: whereas to adhere steadily to this, is to avoid all extremes, and escape, not only the tendency toward pernicious excess, but any danger of falling into it.

Did we accustom ourselves to exact definitions, we should not only call the disorderly religionist an enthusiast; we should also feel, that if irrational confidence, unfounded expectations, and assumptions without a basis, be enthusiasm, then is the term most justly applicable to the mere worldly moralist. For does not he wildly assume effects to be produced without their proper means, who looks for virtue without piety, for happiness without holiness; for reformation without repentance; for repentance without divine assistance; for divine assistance without prayer; and for acceptance with God without regard to that Mediator, whom God has ordained to be our great high priest?

But, while accuracy of definition is thus recommended, let it not be forgotten, that there is need on all sides of exercising a candid judgment. Let not the conscientious Christian sus-

* Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, conclusion of the first book.

pect, that the advocate for morality intends by the term to depreciate religion, unless it appear that he makes morality the root as well as the produce of goodness.—Nor let the moralist, whose affections are less lively, and whose views are less elevated, deem the religious man a fanatic, because he sometimes adopts the language of Scripture to express feelings to which human terms are not always adequate. We mean not to justify, but to condemn, as a gross defect of good sense, as well as of taste and elegance, that ill-conditioned phraseology, which, by disfiguring the comeliness of piety, lessens its dignity, and injures its interests. Doubtless, a good understanding cannot be more usefully exercised, nor can the effects of mental cultivation be better shown, than in bringing every aid of a sound judgment, and every grace of a correct style into the service of that divine religion, which does not more contain all that is just and pure, than it coalesces with all that is 'lovely, and of good report.'

The too frequent abuse of such terms as *moderation*, *candour*, *toleration*, *&c.* should be pointed out to those whose high station prevents their communication with the world at large. It should be explained, that moderation, in the new dictionary, means the abandonment of some of the most essential doctrines of Christianity.—That candour in the same school of philology, denotes a latitudinarian indifference, as to the comparative merits of all religious systems.—That toleration signifies such a low idea of the value of revealed truth, and perhaps such a doubt even of its existence, as makes a man careless, whether it be maintained or trampled on, vindicated or calumniated.—A toleration of *every* creed generally ends in an indifference to *all*, if it does not originally spring from a disbelief of all. Even the noble term *rational*, which so peculiarly belongs to true religion, is frequently used to strip Christianity of her highest attributes and her sublimest energies, as if in order to be rational, divine influences must be excluded. Or, as if it were either suitable to our necessities, or worthy of God, that when he was giving 'his word to be a light to our paths,' he should make that light a kind of moral moonshine, instead of accompanying it with such a vital warmth, as might invigorate our hearts, as well as direct our footsteps.

Though it would be absurd for a prince to become a wrangling polemic like Henry VIII. or 'a royal doctor,' like the first James; yet he should possess so much information, as to be enabled to form a reasonable judgment between contending parties, and to know the existing state of religion. And, that he may learn to detect the artifices of men of loose principles, he should be apprised, that the profane and the pious do not engage on equal terms. That the carelessness of the irreligious gives him an apparent air of good humour, and his levity the semblance of wit and gayety; while his Christian adversary ventures not to risk his soul for a bon-mot, nor dares to be witty on topics which concern his eternal interests.

It will be important, on the other hand, to show that it is very possible to be zealous for religious opinions, without possessing any religion; nay, that a fiery religious zeal has been even found compitable with the most flagitious morals. The church of Rome so late as the sixteenth century, presented numberless examples of men, whose lives were a tissue of vices, which cannot so much as be named, who yet, at the risk of life, would fight in defence of a ceremony, for the preservation of a consecrated vase, or a gift devoted to a monastery.

To show that it is possible to be zealous for religious opinions, without being religious, we need not look back to the persecuting powers of Pagan or Papal Rome; nor need we select our instances from the disciples of Dominic; nor from such monsters as Catharine di Medici; nor from such sanguinary bigots as the narrow-souled Mary, nor the dark-minded Philip. Examples from persons less abhorrent from human feelings, more mixed characters, the dark shades of whose minds are blended with lighter strokes, and whose vices are mitigated with softer qualities, may be more properly considered, as approaching nearer to the common standard of human life.

That a prince may be very zealous for religious opinions and observances, and yet be so defective in moral virtue, as to be both personally and politically profligate, is exemplified in our second James, who renounced three kingdoms for his religion, yet neither scrupled to live in the habitual violence of the seventh commandment, nor to employ the inhuman Jefferies as his chancellor.

Harlai, archbishop of Paris, distinguished himself by his zeal in attacking heresy: so all religion was called except that of the Jesuits. His activity proceeded from no love of piety, but from a desire to make his way at court, where zeal, just then, happened to be the fashion. His religious activity however, neither prevented, nor cured, the notorious licentiousness of his moral conduct.* The king, his master, fancied, that to punish Jansenism, was an indubitable proof of religion; but to persecute protestantism, he conceived to be the consummation of piety. What a lesson for princes, to see him, after the revocation of the edict of Nantz, gratefully swallowing the equally false and nauseous compliments of his clergy, for having, to borrow their own phrase, *without violent hands made the whole kingdom of one opinion, and united all his subjects to the faith of Rome!* Iniquitous flattery, when FOUR MILLIONS of those subjects were either groaning under torture, or flying into exile; turning infidels, if they resolved to retain their property; or chained to the gallies, if they preferred their conscience to their fortune!

As the afflicted Hugonots were not permitted to carry their complaints to the foot of the throne, the deluded king fancied his bloody agents to be mild ministers, and the tortured protestants to be mischievous heretics. But,

* It was a fact well known at the court of Versailles, that madame de Montespan, during the long period in which she continued the favourite mistress of the king, by whom she had seven children,) was so strict in her religious observances, that, lest she should violate the austerity of fasting, her bread, during Lent, was constantly *weighed*.

though the kingdom was, in many parts, nearly depopulated by exile and executions, the sword, as usual, made not one proselyte. The subjects were tortured, but they were not converted. The rack is a bad rhetorician. The gallies may harrass the body, but do not convince the understanding, nor enforce articles of faith.*

Under all these crimes and calamities, Louis, as a French memorialist observes, was not ashamed to hear, what Boileau was not ashamed to sing,

L'Univers sous ton regne a-t-il des Malheureux ?

Colbert, who was a wise man, might have taught his royal master, that in this persecution there was as little policy as piety, and that he was not only injuring his conscience, but his country. By banishing so many useful subjects, he impoverished the state doubly, not only by robbing it of the ingenuity, the manufactures, and the labours of such multitudes, but by transferring to hostile countries all the industry and talents which he was driving from his own. If the treachery of detaining the protestants under false promises, which were immediately violated, is to be charged on Louvois, the crime of blindly confiding in such a minister is to be charged on the king.

How little had this monarch profited, by the example given, under similar circumstances, by Louis XII. When some of the pious Waldenses, while they were improving his barren land in Provence by their virtuous industry, had been grievously persecuted, through false representations; that prudent prince commanded the strictest inquiry to be made into their real character; the result was, that he was so perfectly convinced of their innocence, that he not only protected them during the rest of his reign, but had the magnanimity to declare, that 'they were better men than himself and his catholic subjects.'

Happy had it been for himself and for the world, if the emperor Charles V. had instituted the same inquiries! Happy, if in the meridian of his power he had studied the character of mankind to as good purpose, as he afterwards, in his monastic retreat, studied the mechanism of watches! Astonished to find, that after the closest application, he never could bring any two to go just alike, he expressed deep regret at his own folly, in having bestowed so much time and pains in the fruitless attempt of bringing mankind to an exact uniformity in their religious opinions. But, the discovery was made too late; he ended where he should have begun.

HAP. XXXV.

The Reformation.

In order to increase the royal pupil's reverence for Christianity, before she is herself able to appreciate its value, she should be taught, that it did not steal into the world in the days of darkness and ignorance, when the spirit of inquiry was asleep; but appeared in the most enlightened period of the Roman empire. That its light dawned, not on the remoter regions of the earth, but on a province of that empire, whose peculiar manners had already attracted much notice, and whose local situation placed it particularly within the view of surrounding nations. Whereas the religion of Mahomet and the corruptions of popery, which started up almost together, arose when the spirit of investigation, learning, and philosophy, had ceased to exert itself. That, during those dark ages, both Christianity and human learning were nearly extinguished; and that, as both had sunk together, so both together awoke from their long slumber. The restoration of letters was the restoration of religion also; the free access to the ancient authors being one grand instrument of the revival of pure Christianity.

The learning which existed in the church antecedently to the Reformation, was limited to very few, and was in the general, but meagre and superficial; and the purposes to which it was confined, formed an effectual obstacle to substantial improvement. Instead of being employed in investigating the evidences of Christianity, or in elucidating the analogy of Christian principles, with the laws of the natural, and the exigencies of the moral world, it was pressed into the service of what was called school divinity; a system, which perhaps had providentially been not without its uses at a previous period, especially when under the discretion of a sound and upright mind, as having served both to elicit and exercise the intellect of a ruder age. Study and industry, however they may be misapplied, are always good in themselves; and almost any state is better than hopeless inanity. These schoolmen perhaps sustained the cause of Religion, when she might utterly have sunk, though with arms little suited to make their support effectual, or to produce solid practical benefit, either to the church or the people. Some of the earlier scholastic divines, though tedious, and somewhat trifling, were, however, close reasoners, as well as pious men, though they afterwards sunk in rationality, as they increased in quibbling and subtlety. Yet, defective as their efforts were, they had been useful, as they had contributed to oppose infidelity, and to keep alive some love of piety and devotion, in that season of drowsy inactivity. But, at the period to which we refer, their theology had become little better than a mazy labyrinth of trivial, and not seldom of pernicious sophistry. Subtle disquisitions, metaphysical nicetics, unintelligible obscurities, and whimsical distinctions, were substituted in the place of revealed truth; for revealed truth was not sufficiently intricate for the speculations of those puzzling theologians, of whom Erasmus said, that, 'they had brought it to be a matter of so much wit to be a Christian, that ordinary heads were not able to reach it.'—And, as genuine Christianity was not sufficiently ingenious for these whimsical doctors, neither was it sufficiently pliant and accommodating to suit the corrupt state of public morals

* Louvois and his master would have done wisely to have adopted the opinion of those two great ministers of Henry IV. who, when pressed to persecute, replied that they thought 'it better to have a peace which had two religions, than a war which had none.'

Almost entirely overlooking the Scriptures, the school-men had built schemes and systems on the authority of the fathers, some of them spurious ones. The philosophy of Aristotle had also been resorted to for some of the chief materials of the system; so that as the author of the History of the Council of Trent informs us, 'if it had not been for Aristotle, the church had wanted for many articles of faith.'

The early reformers defeated these sophisters, by opposing to their unsubstantial system, the plain unadulterated Bible. The very text of holy Scripture, and the most sober, rational, and simple deductions from thence, furnished the ground work of their arguments. And to this noble purpose they applied that sound learning, which Providence had caused to revive just at the necessary period. Their skill in the Greek and Hebrew languages enabled them to read the original Scriptures, and to give correct translations of them to the public. And, in this respect, they had an important advantage over the school divines, who did not understand the language in which their master Aristotle had written. It is no wonder, if an heterogeneous theology should have been compounded out of such discordant materials as were made up from spurious fathers, and an ill-understood pagan philosopher. The works of this great author, which, by an inconsistency not uncommon in the history of man, had not long before been prohibited by a papal decree, and burnt by public authority, came, in the sixteenth century, to be considered as little less than canonical!

But this attachment to sophistry and jargon was far from being the worst feature of the period in question. The generality of the clergy were sunk into the grossest ignorance, of which instances are recorded scarcely credible in our day of general knowledge. It is difficult to say whether the ecclesiastics had more entirely discarded useful learning, or Scripture truth. In the place, therefore, of the genuine religion of the Bible, they substituted false miracles, lying legends, purchased pardons, and preposterous penances. A procedure which became the more popular, as it introduced a religion which did not insist on the inconvenient appendage of a good life; those who had money enough, easily procured indemnity for a bad one; and to the profligate and the affluent, the *purchase* of good works was certainly more agreeable than the *practice*.

We are far from asserting, that there were no mixtures of infirmity in the instruments which accomplished the great work of the reformation. They were fallible men. But it is now evident to every sincere inquirer, that many of their transactions, which have been represented by their adversaries as corrupt and criminal, only appeared such to those who did not take their motives, and the critical circumstances of the times, into the account, or who had an interest in misrepresenting them. Many of those actions, which, through false colourings were made to appear unfavourable, are now clearly proved to have been virtuous and honourable; especially when we take the then situation of things, and the flagitious conduct of the priests and pontiffs with whom they had to deal into the account.

Mr. Hume has been among the foremost to revive and inflame the malignant reports respecting them. He allows indeed the *inflexible intrepidity with which they braved dangers, tortures, and even death itself.* But still they were, in his estimation, the 'fanatical and enraged reformers.' And he carefully suggests, through the course of history, that *fanaticism is the characteristic of the protestant religion.* The terms 'protestant fanaticism,' and 'fanatical churches,' he repeatedly uses. He has even the temerity to assert, in contradiction to all credible testimony, that the reformers placed all merit in a mysterious species of faith, in inward vision, rapture, and ecstacy.' A charge, to say nothing of truth and candour, unworthy of Mr. Hume's good sense, and extensive means of information For there is no fact better known, than that these eminently wise men never pretended to illuminations and impulses. What they undertook honestly, they conducted soberly. They pretended to no inspiration; they did not even pretend to introduce a *new*, but only to restore to its primitive purity 'the *old* religion.' They respected government, practised and taught submission to civil rulers, and desired only the liberty of that conscience which God has made free.*

But though in accomplishing the great work of the reformation, reason and human wisdom, were most successfully exercised; though the divine interference was not manifested by the working of miracles, or the gift of supernatural endowments: yet who can doubt, that this great work was directed by the hand of heaven, especially when we consider the wonderful predisposition of causes, the extraordinary combination of circumstances, the long chain of gradual but constantly progressive occurrences, by which this grand event was brought about? The successive as well as contemporary production of singular characters, calculated to promote its *general* accomplishment, and each peculiarly fitted for his own *respective* work! So many unconscious or unwilling instruments made subservient to one great purpose!—Friends and enemies, even Mussulmen and popes, contributing, certainly without intending it, to its advancement!—Mahomet banishing learning from the east, that it might providentially find a shelter in these countries, where the new opinions were to be propagated!—Several successive sovereign pontiffs, collecting books and patronizing that literature which was so soon to be directed against their own domination!—But above all, the multiplication of contemporary popes, weakening the reverence of the people, by occasioning a schism in the church, and exhibiting its several heads wandering about, under the ludicrous circumstance of each claiming infallibility for himself, and denying it to his competitor!—Infallibility, thus split, was discredited, and in a manner annihilated.—To these preparatory circumstances we may add the infatuation, or ra-

* See an excellent appendix to Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. page 136, on the *spirit* of the reformers, and the injustice of Mr. Hume, by that truly elegant, candid, and accomplished scholar, and most amiable man, the late Rev Dr. Archibald Macleine,

The lover and the love of human kind

ther judicial blindness, of the papal power: the errors, even in worldly prudence, committed by Leo, a pontiff otherwise of admirable talents!—The half measures adopted, at one time, of inefficient violence; at another, of ineffectual lenity!

The temporary want of sagacity in an ecclesiastical court, which was usually remarkable for political acuteness!—The increasing aptitude of men's minds to receive truth, in proportion as events occurred to mature it!—Some who loved learning, and were indifferent to religion, favouring the reformation as a cause connected with good letters; the old doctrines becoming united with the idea of ignorance, as the new ones were with that of knowledge!—The preparatory invention of printing, without which the revival of learning would have been of little general use, and the dispersion of the Scriptures slow, and inconsiderable!—Some able and keen-sighted men, working vigorously from a perception of existing abuses, who yet wanted sufficient zeal for the promotion of religious truth!

The pointed wit, the sarcastic irony, and powerful reasoning of Erasmus, together with his profound theological learning, directed against the corruptions of the Church, with such force as to shake the credit of the clergy, and to be of the utmost service to that cause, which he wanted the righteous courage systematically to defend!* The unparalleled zeal, abilities, and integrity of Luther! His bold genius, and adventurous spirit, not contenting itself, as the other reformers had done, with attacking notorious errors, and stigmatising monstrous abuses; but sublimely exerted in establishing, or rather restoring the great fundamentals of Christianity! While Erasmus, with that truly classic taste of which he was the chief reviver, so elegantly satirized the false views of God and religion, which the Romish church entertained, Luther's aim was to acquire true Scriptural notions of both. Ridicule served to expose the old religion, but something nobler was necessary to establish the new.—It was for Erasmus to shake to its foundation the monstrous system of indulgences; it remained for Luther to restore, not to invent, the doctrine of salvation by remission of sins through a Mediator.—While his predecessors, and even coadjutors, had been satisfied by pulling down the enormous mass of corruptions, the mighty hand of the Saxon reformer not only removed the rubbish, but erected a fair fabric of sound doctrine in its place. The new edifice arose in its just symmetry, and derives impregnable strength, in consequence of its having been erected on a broad foundation. Nothing short of the ardour of Luther could have maintained this great cause in one stage, while perhaps the discreet temperance of Melancthon was necessary to its support in another! The useful violence of Henry in attacking the people, with a zeal as furious as if he himself had not been an enemy to the reformation, exhibiting a wonderful illustration of that declaration of the Almighty, that *the fierceness of man shall turn to his praise!*—The meek wisdom of Cranmer, by which he was enabled to moderate the otherwise uncontrolable temper of his royal master!—The undaunted spirit and matchless intrepidity of Elizabeth, which effectually struggled for and finally established it! These, and a thousand other concurring circumstances, furnish the most unclouded evidence, to every mind not blinded by prejudice, that the divine AUTHOR of Christianity, was also, though by the agency of human means and instruments, the RESTORER of it.

* Every elegant scholar must naturally be an admirer of Erasmus. We should be sorry to incur the censure of any such by regretting, that the wit and indignation of this fine genius sometimes carried him to great lengths. Impiety, doubtless, was far from his heart, yet in some of his Colloquies, when he only professed to attack the errors of popery, religion itself is wounded by strokes which have such a tendency to profaneness, as to give pain to the sober reader.

CHAP. XXXVI.

On the importance of religious institutions and observances.—They are suited to the nature of Christianity, and particularly adapted to the character of man.

THAT torrent of vices and crimes which the French revolution has disembogued into society, may be so clearly and indisputably traced to the source of infidelity, that it has, in a degree become fashionable to profess a belief in the truths, and a conviction of the value of Christianity. But, at the same time, it has too naturally happened, that we have fallen into the habit of defending religion, almost exclusively, on political and secular grounds; as if Christianity consisted merely in our not being atheists or anarchists. A man, however, may be removed many stages from the impiety of French infidels, and yet be utterly destitute of real religion.

Many, not openly profane, but even entertaining a respect for the political uses of religion, have a way of generalizing their ideas, so as to dismiss the revelation from the account.—Others again, who in this last respect agree with the former class, affect a certain superiority over the low contracted notions of churchmen and collegians. These assert, that, if virtue be practised, and public order preserved, the motive on which the one is practised, and the other maintained, is not worth contending for. Many there are, who, without formally rejecting Christianity, talk of it at large, in general, or in the abstract.—As if it were at once to exempt themselves from the trouble of religion, and to escape the infamy of Atheism, these men affect to think so high of the Supreme Being, whose temple is universal space, that he needs not to be worshipped in temples made with hands. And forgetting that the world which he thought it worth while to create, he will certainly think it worth while to govern, they assert, that he is too great to attend to the concerns of such petty beings as we are, and too exalted to listen to our prayers.—That it is a narrow idea which we form of his attributes, to fancy that one *day* or one *place* is more acceptable to him than another.—That all religions are equally pleasing to God, provided the worshipper be sincere.—That the establishment of a public ministry is

perhaps a good expedient of political wisdom, for awing the vulgar; but that every man is his own priest.—That all errors of opinion are innocent; and that the Almighty is too just to punish any man for merely speculative tenets.

But, these lofty contemners of institutions, observances, days, ordinances, and priests, evince, by their very objections, that they are not more ignorant of the nature of God, as he has been pleased to reveal himself in Scripture, than of the character of man, to whose dispositions, wants, desires, distresses, infirmities, and sins, the spirit of Christianity, as unfolded in the Gospel, is so wonderfully accommodated. This admirable congruity would be of itself sufficient, were there no other proof to establish the divine authority of our religion.—Private prayer, public worship, the observation of the Sabbath, a standing ministry, sacramental ordinances, are all of them so admirably adapted to those sublimely mysterious cravings of the mind, which distinguish man from all inferior animals, by rendering him the subject of hopes and fears, which nothing earthly can realize or satisfy, that it is difficult to say, whether these sacred institutions most bespeak the wisdom or the goodness of that supreme benefactor, who alone could have thus applied a remedy, because he alone could have penetrated the most hidden recesses of that nature which required it. Religion, in fact, is not more essential to man, than, in the present state of things, those appointments are essential to religion. And, accordingly, we see, that when they are rejected, however its unprofitable generalities may be professed, religion itself, practically, and in detail, is renounced. Nor can it be kept alive in creatures so abounding in moral, and so exposed to natural evil, by mere metaphysical distinctions, or a bare intellectual conception of divinity. In beings whose minds are so liable to wander, religion to be sustained, requires to be substantiated and fixed, to be realized and invigorated. Conscious of our own infirmity, we ought to look for every outward aid to improve every internal grace; and consequently ought gladly to submit to the control of habits, and the regularity of institutions. Even in the common pursuits of life, our fugitive and unsteady thoughts require to be tied down by exercises, duties, and external circumstances. And while the same expedients are no less necessary to insure the outward observances of religion, instead of obstructing, they promote its spirituality; for they are not more fitted to attract the senses of the ignorant, than they are to engage the thoughts, and fix the attention, of the enlightened. While, therefore, in order to get rid of imaginary burdens, and suspected penalties, men are contending for a philosophical religion, and an imaginary perfection, of which the mind, while incorporated with matter, is little capable, they lose the benefit of those salutary means and instruments, so admirably adapted to the state of our minds, and the constitution of our nature. Means and instruments, which, on a sober inquiry into their origin, will be found as awfully sanctioned, as they are obviously suitable;—in a word, which will be found, and this, when proved, puts an end to the controversy, to be the appointments of God himself.

The Almighty has most certainly declared, that he will be worshipped in spirit and in truth. But does it therefore follow, that he will not be worshipped in *churches*?—We know that *all* our days are his, and for the use of all we are accountable to him. But, does this invalidate the duty of making *Sunday* more peculiarly his?—We are commanded to 'pray without ceasing; in every thing to give thanks;' that is to carry about with us a heart disposed to pray, and a spirit inclined to thankfulness; but is this any argument against our enjoining on ourselves certain stated times of more regular prayer, and fixed periods of more express thanksgiving? Is it not obvious, that the neglect of the religious observance of Sunday, for example, results, in fact, from an irreligious state of the heart, however gravely philosophic reasons for the omissions may be assigned? Is it not obvious also, that the very recurrence of appointed seasons serves to stir up to the performance of the duties allotted to them? The philosopher may deride this as a mechanical religion, which requires to have its springs wound up, and stand in need of external impulses to set it a-going. But the Christian feels, that though he is neither to regulate his devotions by his crucifix, nor to calculate them by his beads, yet, while his intellectual part is encumbered with a body, liable to be misled by temptation without, and impeded by corruption within, he stands in need of every supplemental aid to remind, to restrain, and to support him. These, therefore, are not helps which superstition has devised, or fallible man invented. Infinite wisdom, doubtless, foreseeing that what was left dependent on the choice of mutual human will to be observed, would probably not be observed at all, did not leave such a duty to such a contingency, but established these institutions as part of his written word; the lawgiver himself also sanctioning the law by his own practice.

It would be well if these men of large views and philosophical conceptions, would consider if there be nothing in the very structure of the human mind, we had almost said, in the very constitution of nature, which might lead us to expect, that religion *would* have those grosser, and more substantial parts and relations, which we have represented; instead of being that entirely thin and spiritual essence, of which they vainly dream. It was reserved for a philosopher of our own nation to show, that the richest possessions of the most capacious mind are only the well arranged and variegated ideas which originally entered in through the medium of the senses, or which we derive from contemplating the operations of our own minds, when employed on those ideas of sensation. But, if material bodies are the sources whence general knowledge is derived, why is every thing to be incorporeal which respects religion? If innate ideas have no existence in the human mind, why are our religious notions not to be derived from external objects?

Plato, the purest of heathen philosophers, and the nearest to those who derived their light from heaven, failed most essentially in reducing his theory to practice. He seems to have supposed that we possess certain ready-framed notions of

every thing essential to moral happiness; and that contemplation of the *chief good*, and subjugation of animal nature, were all that was necessary to moral perfection. Is it not then most worthy of attention, that the holy Scripture differs from the plan of the Grecian sage, just where he himself differs from truth and nature, as developed by their most accurate observer, the sagacious and venerated Locke? Man, according to this profound reasoner, derives the original stock of his ideas from objects placed in his view, which strike upon his senses. Revelation as if on this very principle, presents to man impressive objects. From the creation to the deluge, and still more from the call of Abraham, when we may say that our religion commences, to the giving of the Holy Ghost, after our Saviour's ascension, the period in which we may deem its character completed, we are instructed in a great measure, by a series of FACTS.—In the earlier period, especially, we do not meet with theoretic descriptions of the divine nature; but we see the eternal God himself, as with our mind's eye, visibly manifesting himself to the patriarchs, exemplifying his attributes to their senses, and by interpositions the most impressive, both in a way of judgment and of mercy, training them to apprehend him; in the mode of all others the most accommodated to the weakness of human nature.

Thus we see a religion, in some degree a *matter of fact religion*, growing gradually to its completion; until 'HE, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, had spoken to the fathers by the prophets, spoke in these last days by his Son.'

And thus we observe the first preachers of Christianity, not philosophising on abstract truths, but plainly bearing witness to what had been transacted in their presence.—'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.' And again—'That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.'

This then is the particular characteristic of Christianity, that from its origin till its final consummation, it considers *man* critically *as he is;* and, that is, not as he was deemed by the most enlightened sages of earlier times, but as he has been discovered to be, by one of the most penetrating minds in the world, seventeen hundred years after the christian era. To this, now universally acknowledged notion of man, every thing is adapted, both in what is recorded and what is enjoined in the Scripture. Every observance relates to *facts*, and is fitted to impress them. To strip Christianity, therefore, of any of the observances, which are really of scriptural appointment, would be to sublimate it into philosophical inefficacy. In common life we see the affections little engaged in abstract speculation. They then only are moved when those sensible images, which the laws of nature have made moving, are aptly presented to them.

What, for example, could all the mathematical truth in the world do, in exciting our affections, compared with a tale of human misery, or human magnanimity, even though known to be fabricated for our amusement?—When Christianity then is so obviously, in a great measure, a business of the affections, that we are then only under its influence when we *love and delight in*, as well as *assent to*, or *reason upon* its principles;—shall we cavil at that religion which alone accomplishes its end, on account of those very features of it, which, on every ground of philosophy, and by every proof of efficacy, were the fact to be candidly investigated, render it such as it must be, in order to answer its purpose?

There cannot be a more conclusive internal evidence of our holy religion than this, that in every principle which is established, in every lesson which it inculcates, and in every example which it offers; there is throughout one character that invariably prevails, which is, the truest and soundest *good sense*. The Scripture, while in the main so plain and simple, 'that he may run that readeth,' has accordingly been ever most prized by its profoundest and most sagacious readers. And the longer and more attentively such persons have studied it, the higher has their estimation risen. We will not adduce cases from that constellation of shining lights, the learned churchmen, whose testimony might be objected to, from the very circumstance which ought to enhance its value, their professional attachment, because the name of Bacon, Boyle, and Locke is sufficient.

It will be found on the most impartial scrutiny, that that plan or practice which is clearly opposed to Scripture, is no less really hostile to right reason, and to the true interests of man. And it is scarcely to be doubted, that if we could investigate the multiform history of individuals in the Christian world, it would be indisputable, that a deep impression of scripture facts and principles had proved, beyond comparison, the most successful preservative against the worst evils of human life. Doubtless it has been found most difficult to *retain* such an impression amid the business, and pleasures, and entanglements of the world, but, so far as it has been retained, it has been uniformly the pledge of regularity in the conduct, peace in the mind, and an honourable character in society. Thus much by way of introduction to the following chapter.

HAP. XXXVII.

Of the established church of England.

CHRISTIANITY then only answers its end, when it is established as a paramount principle in the heart, purifying the desires and intentions, tranquillizing the temper, enlarging the affection, and regulating the conduct. But, though this alone be its perfect work, it has subordinate operations, which are not only valuable for their direct results, but seem in the order of Providence, to be preliminary to its more inward and spiritual efficacy.

When we observe how extensive is the outward profession of Christianity, and how obviously limited is a consistently Christian practice; the first emotion of a serious mind is naturally that of regret. But a more considerate

view will give occasion to other feelings. It will be seen, that that outward profession of our holy religion, which is secured by an establishment, is an inestimable blessing to a community; that the public benefits which result from it are beyond reckoning, besides the far greater utility of affording to each individual that light of information, and those means of religious worship, which duly used, will insure his eternal salvation.

That there should therefore be a *visible* as well as an *invisible* church, an instituted, as well as a personal religion, and that the one should embrace whole communities, while the other may extend to a comparative few, appears not only the natural consequence of Christianity, as a religious profession, spreading through society, and necessarily transmitted from father to son; but it seems also that kind of arrangement which divine wisdom would sanction, in order to the continuance of Christianity in the world.

Thus much would rational reflection dictate on a view of the case; but we are not left to our own mere reasonings. What in itself appears so probable, our Saviour has intimated to us an essential part of the divine plan, in several of his parables. What is the leaven hid in the three measures of meal, but real Christianity operating in those happy individuals whose hearts and lives are governed by its influence? And what again is the mass of meal with which the leaven is blended, but the great body of mankind, who, by God's gracious Providence, have been led to assume the Christian profession, and thus to constitute that visible church, whose mixed character is again shown in the subsequent parables of the net cast into the sea, as well as in that of the wheat and the tares.

If, then, the public profession of Christianity be thus explicitly sanctioned by the divine wisdom: if also, our own daily experience shows it to be most beneficial to society, as well as obviously conducive to the inward and spiritual purposes of our religion; we must admit, that the establishment which evidently secures such profession, is an object of inestimable value. It was necessary in the order of nature, that what was to impregnate the world, should be first itself prepared and proved. For three centuries, therefore, it pleased God to leave Christianity to make its way, by its own mere strength, that by its superiority, both to the allurements and the menaces of the world, to all that could be desired, and to all that could be suffered by man, its true nature, and its genuine energy, might be for ever demonstrated; and its efficacy to assimilate, at length, the whole world to itself, be evinced, by its restless growth, in circumstances the most apparently desperate.

During this period, therefore, such instruments alone were used as might serve to evince more clearly, that the 'excellency of the power was of God, and not of men.' But when the season had arrived when the intermixture was to be extensively promoted, then another and very different agency was resorted to; when the world was to be brought into the visible Church, then the powers of the world received that impulse from the hand of heaven, which made them, in a deeper sense than ever before, 'ministers of God for good.'—Then, for the first time, kings and princes embraced the profession of Christianity, and enjoined it by laws and edicts, as well as by still better methods, on the great body of their subjects.

How far the national changes which then took place were voluntary or necessitated, there is no occasion for us to inquire.—'The good which is done upon the earth, God doeth it himself.' And what good, next to the actual giving of the Gospel, has been greater than the providential blessing of the leaven of Christianity with the great mass of human society? If the first generation of those nominal Christians were even pagans in their hearts, that did not lessen the greatness of the benefit to posterity. They passed away, and their paganism passed away with them: and the light of Christianity, invaluable in its immediate, but infinitely more so in its ultimate consequences, became the entailed possession of these European nations, under the double guarantee of popular attachment and political power.

Such was the providential origin of religious establishments. Let those who object to them, only keep in their view, that chain of events by which the Christian profession was made national in any country; let them also inquire the fate of Christianity in those countries, where either no such establishments took place, or where they were overthrown by the ascendancy of the Mahometan potentates. Lastly, let them reflect on the benefit and the comfort of that one single effect of 'kings becoming nursing-fathers, and queens nursing-mothers,' of the visible Church, *the legal enforcement of the Christian Sabbath*,—and then see on what grounds, as friends to good order, as honest citizens, or as consistent Christians, they can oppose or condemn so essential and so effectual an instrument of the best blessings which human kind can enjoy?

If then the *national establishment* of Christianity, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances, became the source of invaluable benefits and blessings; what estimate ought to be formed of *that Christian establishment in particular*, which, on the most impartial survey of all similar institutions which have been known in the Christian world, will be found the most admirably fitted for its purpose?

The established church of England may not, it is true, bear a comparison with theoretic perfection, nor will it gain the approbation of those who require that a visible should possess the qualities of an invisible church, and that every member of a national institution should equal in piety, certain individual Christians; nor, in any point of view, can its real character be ascertained, or its just claims be established, except it be contemplated, as a *fixed institution*, existing from the period of the reformation to the present day, independently of the variations and discordances of the successive multitudes who adhered to it.

Let it then, under this only fair notion of it, be compared with all the other national churches of the reformation, and, on such a comparative

view, its superiority will be manifest. The truth is, our church occupies a kind of middle place; neither multiplying ceremonies, nor affecting pompousness of public worship with the Lutheran church, nor rejecting all ceremonies and all liturgical solemnity with the church of Geneva;—a temperament thus singular, adopted and adhered to, in times of unadvanced light and much polemical dissonance, amid jarring interests and political intrigues, conveys the idea of something more excellent than could have been expected from mere human wisdom.

A national establishment is ill-fitted for its purpose, if it present nothing striking to the external senses or imagination. In order to answer its design, it ought at once to be so outwardly attractive, as to attach the great mass of professing Christians to its ordinances; and yet the substance of these ordinances should be so solid and rational, and so spiritual, as to be fitted to the farther and still more important purpose of infusing inward vital Christianity. These characters, we conceive, are exhibited in the Anglican church, in a degree unexampled in any other Christian establishment. She alone avoids all extremes. Though her worship be wisely popular, it is also deeply spiritual; though simple, it is sublime. She has rejected pompous ceremonies, but she has not therefore adopted an offensive negligence. In laying aside all that was ostentatious, she retained all that is solemn and affecting. Her reasonable service peculiarly exemplifies the apostle's injunction of praying with the understanding as well as with the heart. To both these the chief attention is directed while the imagination and the senses are by no means excluded from regard. It is our Saviour's exquisitely discriminating rule applied to another subject. 'These' says he, (the weightier matters,) 'ye ought to have *done*, and not to leave the others *undone*.'

If these remarks had nothing but opinion to support them, a different opinion might no less fairly be opposed to them. But let a matter of fact question be asked. Which of the protestant establishments has best answered its end: In other words—in which of the protestant countries in Europe, have the fundamental truths of Scripture been most strictly adhered to, and the Christian religion most generally respected? If we inquire into the present circumstances of protestant Europe, shall we not find that, in one class of churches on the continent, the more learned of the clergy commonly become Socinians; while, among the clergy of the other, there appears a strange tendency towards absolute deism? Amongst the laity of both churches, French principles, it may be feared, have so much prevailed, as to become in a great measure their own punishment. For to what other cause but a departure from the faith of their fathers, can we ascribe their having so totally lost the ardour and resolution, which once distinguished their communities? Infidelity takes from the collective body its only sure cement, and from the individual his only certain source of courage. It leaves the mass of the people without *that* possession to be defended, in which all ranks and degrees are alike interested; and takes from the individual that *one* principle which alone can, at all times, raise a human being above his natural weaknesses, and make him superior both to pleasure and pain. While religion was an object with the people alluded to, it inspired the lowest, as well as the highest, with a zeal to defend their country against invaders who, if predominant, would have robbed them of their religious liberty. But now, concern for religion being too generally cooled, they prefer the most disgraceful ease to exertions which would necessarily demand self-denial and might deprive them of that only existence for which infidels *can* be concerned.

Why is it otherwise in England? Why are not we also overspread with pernicious principles and sunk in base pusillanimity?—The Germans were once as brave, the Swiss once as religious as any of us; but bravery and religion seem, as far as we can learn, to have abandoned some of those countries together. In England, blessed be God! things present a very different aspect. We have indeed much to lament, and much, very much to blame; but infidelity does not *triumph*, nor does patriotism decline. Why is it thus? Is it not because the temperament of the English establishment has left no room for passing from one extreme to another; because its public service is of that stirring excellence, which must ever be attractive to the impressible mind, edifying to the pious mind, unimpeachable by the severest reasoner, and awful even to the profligate?

For, in enumerating the merits of our admirable establishment, we must not rest in the superiority of her *forms*, excellent as they are, but must extend the praise, where it is so justly due, to the still more important article of her doctrines. For after all, it is her luminous exhibition of Christian truth, that has been the grand spring and fountain of the good which she has produced. It is the spirituality of her worship,—it is the rich infusion of Scripture,*—it is the deep confessions of sin,—it is the earnest invocations of mercy,—it is the large enumeration of spiritual wants, and the abundant supply of correspondent blessings, with which her liturgy abounds, that are so happily calculated to give the tone of piety to her children.

In forming this invaluable liturgy, there was no arrogant self-conceit on the one hand, no relinquishment of strict judgment on the other. The errors of the Romish church were to be rejected, but the treasures of ancient piety which she possessed, were not to be abandoned. Her formularies contained devotional compositions, not more venerable for their antiquity, than valuable for their intrinsic excellence, being at once simple and energetic, perspicuous and profound. What then was more suitable to the sober spirit of reformation, than to separate those precious remnants of ancient piety from their drossy accompaniments,—and, while these last were deservedly cast away, to mould the pure gold which remained into a new form, fitted at once to interest, and edify the public mind?

* Of the vast importance of this one circumstance, an early proof was given. 'Cranmer,' says the learned author of the Elements of Christian Theology, 'found the people so improved by hearing the Epistles and Gospels, as to be brought to bear the alterations he had provided.

It is worthy of observation, that in all reforms, whether civil or religious, wise and good men prove themselves to be such, by this infallible criterion, that THEY NEVER ALTER FOR THE SAKE OF ALTERING, but in their zeal to introduce improvements, are conscientiously careful to depart no further from established usages, than strict duty and indispensable necessity require.

Instead, therefore, of its being any stigma on our church service, that it was collected from breviaries and missals, it adds substantially to its value. The identity of true Christian piety, in all ages, being hereby demonstrated, in a way as satisfactory to the judgment, as it is interesting to the heart. In such a procedure, Christian liberty was united with Christian sobriety; primitive piety with honest policy.—A whole community was to be attached to the new mode of worship, and, therefore, it was expedient to break their habits no more than Christian purity demanded. They only, however, who actually compare those of our prayers which are selected from Romish formularies, with the originals, can form a just idea with what discriminative judgment the work was executed, and what rich improvements are often introduced into the English collects, so as to heighten the sentiment, yet, without at all impairing the simplicity. Indeed, the wisdom and moderation of the founders of our church were equally conspicuous in the whole of their proceedings; never *strenuously* contending for any points, not even in that summary of Christian doctrines, which was to be the established standard, but for such as affected the grand foundations of faith, hope and charity.

How honourable to our reformers, and to the glorious work in which they so successfully laboured, that in the very first formation of the English church, that care to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials should be so strictly exercised, which the brightest philosophical luminary in his own, or perhaps in any age, some years after, so strongly recommended, and so beautifully illustrated. 'We see Moses,' says lord Bacon, 'when he saw the Israelite and the Egyptian fight, he did not say, why strive ye? but drew his sword and slew the Egyptian. But when he saw two Israelites fight, he said, you are *brethren*, why strive you? If the point of doctrine be an Egyptian, it must be slain by the sword of the Spirit; but if it be an Israelite, though in the wrong, then why strive you? We see of the fundamental points Christ pennethi the league thus: *he that is not against us is for us.*'* But of points not fundamental thus,—*he that is not against us is with us.*

To the eternal praise then of our reformers, as well as with the deepest gratitude to God, be it said, that in their concern for matters of faith, in which concern they yielded to none of their contemporaries, they intermingled a charity in which they have excelled them all. And, in consequence of this radical and truly Christian liberality, a noble spirit of tolerance has ever been the characteristic of genuine Church of England divines: of those, I mean who have cordially agreed with the first reformers, and wished no deviation from their principles, either in doctrine or in worship; desiring neither to add to, nor diminish, the comely order which *they* had established in the public service; nor to be dogmatical where *they* had been enlarged; nor relaxed where *they* had been explicit: yet ready at all times to indulge the prejudices of their weaker brethren, and to grant to others that freedom of thought, of which, in their own case, they so fully understood the value. Our first reformers were men of eminent piety, and, happily for the interests of genuine religion, far less engaged in controversy than the divines of the continent. Even those of their own nation, who differed from them in lesser points, and with whom they *did* debate, were men of piety also, and entirely agreed with them in doctrines. Hence, the strain of preaching in our Church of England divines, became less polemical and more pious and practical, than that of the clergy of other churches. To this end the book of Homilies was highly conducive, being an excellent model which served to give the example of useful and practical preaching. In this most important particular, and in that of deep and conclusive reasoning, we may assign the decided superiority to English divines, above all those of the continent, though the latter may perhaps, in some instances, dispute with them the palm of eloquence.

From divines of the above character, happily never wanting in any age, our national establishment has ever derived its best strength at home, and its honour and credit in foreign countries. These have made the Anglican church looked up to by all the churches of the reformation. Their learning has been respected, their wisdom has been esteemed, their liberality has been loved and honoured, their piety has been revered, by all of every protestant communion who were capable of discerning and improving excellence; nay, even in the Romish communion, they have sometimes excited a degree of estimation, which nothing could have called forth but the most indisputable superiority.

But, it is not only in the clerical order that the kindly influences of the English establishment have been manifest; they appear in the brightest point of view, in those illustrious laymen whose labours have contributed not less to raise the British name, than the achievements, unexampled as they have been, of our armies or our navies. On account of these men, we have been termed by foreigners, a nation of philosophers; and, for the sake of their writings, English has become not so much a fashionable as, what is far more honourable, a kind of learned language in almost every country in Europe. Yet, in no writers upon earth, has a sense of religion been more evidently the very key-stone of their excellence. This it is which gives them that sobriety of mind, that intellectual conscientiousness, that penetrating pursuit, not of subtlety, but of truth; that decorous dignity of language, that cordiality as well as sublimity of moral sentiment and expression, which have procured for them, not merely the suffrage of the understanding, but the tribute of the heart.

And let it be attentively inquired, how they came by this rare qualification? how it happen-

* Lord Bacon on the Advancement of Learning, book second.

ed, that in them, so much more strikingly than in the learned and philosophical of perhaps any other nation, increase of knowledge did not generate scepticism, nor the consciousness of their mental strength inspire them with contempt for the religion of their country? Was it not, that that religion was so modified, as equally to endear itself to the vivid sensibility of youth, the quick intelligence of manhood, the matured reflection of age and wisdom? That it did not on the one hand conceal the beauty and weaken the sense of vital truth, by cumbrous and unnecessary adjuncts;—nor on the other hand withhold from it that graceful drapery, without which, in almost all instances, the imagination, as it were, instinctively, refuses to perform its appropriate function of conveying truth to the heart!—And further, have not the above invaluable effects been owing to this also, that the inherent spirit of christian tolerance, which has been described as distinguishing our communion from every other national communion in the world, by allowing to their minds every just claim, has taken the best possible method of preventing intellectual licentiousness? In fine, to what other causes than those just stated, can we ascribe it, that this country above all others, has been the seat of philosophy, unbounded in its researches, yet modest in its assumptions, and temperate in its conclusions?—Of literary knowledge, not only patiently pursued, and profoundly explored, but wisely digested and usefully applied?—Of religion, in its most rational, most influential, most christian shape and character;—not the dreary labour of superstition, not the wild delirium of fanaticism, but the infallible guide of reason, the invincible guard of virtue, the enjoyment of present peace, and the assurance of future happiness?

But whatever providential causes have hitherto contributed among us to restrain infidelity and profaneness, have we no reason to fear that their operations are growing less and less powerful? And should we not bear in mind, that it is not the *form* of our church establishment, incomparable as that is, which can alone arrest the progress of danger, if there should arise any declension of zeal in supporting its best interests, if ever there should be found any lack of knowledge for zeal to work with. The character also of the reigning prince will always have a powerful effect either in retarding or accelerating the evil.

One of our most able writers on history and civil society,* is perpetually inculcating that no political constitution, no laws, no provision made by former ages, can ever secure the actual enjoyment of political happiness and liberty, if there be not a zeal among the living for the furtherance of these objects. Laws will be misconstrued and fall into oblivion and ancient maxims will be superseded, if the attention of the existing generation be not alive to the subject.

Surely it may be said, at least with equal truth, that no excellence of our religious establishment, no orthodoxy in our articles, no, nor even that liturgy on whose excellences we have delighted to expatiate, can secure the maintenance of true religion, but in proportion as the religious spirit is maintained in our clergy; in proportion as it is diffused among the people; in proportion as it is encouraged from the throne.

If such then be the value, and such the results of the English ecclesiastical establishment, how high is the destiny of that personage whom the laws of England recognise as its supreme head on earth! How important is it, that the prince, charged with such unexampled trust, should feel its weight, should understand its grand peculiarities, and be habitually impressed with his own unparalleled responsibility. To misemploy, in any instances, the prerogative which this trust conveys, is to lessen the stability, and counteract the usefulness of the fairest and most beneficial of all the visible fabrics, erected in this lower world! But what an account would that prince, or that minister have to render, who should *systematically* debase this little less than divine institution, by deliberately consulting, not how the Church of England may be kept high in public opinion, influential on public morals, venerable through the meek yet manly wisdom, the unaffected yet unblemished purity, the energetic yet liberal zeal of its clergy;—but, how it may be made subservient to the trivial and temporary interests of the prevalent party, and the passing hour?

Besides the distribution of dignities, and the great indirect influence which this affords the prince, in the disposal of a vast body of preferment; his wisdom and tenderness of conscience will be manifested also in the appointment of the chancellor, whose church patronage is immense. And in the discharge of that most important trust, the appointment of the highest dignitaries, the monarch will not forget, that his responsibility is proportionably the more awful, because the exercise of his power is less likely to be controuled, and his judgment to be thwarted, than may often happen in the case of his political servants.

Nor will it, it is presumed, be deemed impertinent to remark, that the just administration of this peculiar power may be reasonably expected as much, we had almost said even more, from a female, than from a monarch of the other sex. The bishops chosen by those three judicious queens, Elizabeth, Mary, and Caroline, were generally remarkable for their piety and learning. And let not the writer be suspected of flattering either the queen or the bishop by observing, that among the wisdom and abilities which now adorn the bench, a living prelate high in dignity, in talents, and in Christian virtue, is said to have owed his situation to the discerning eye of his present majesty.

What an ancient cannon, cited by the judicious Hooker, suggests to bishops on the subject of preferment is equally applicable to kings —*It expressly forbiddeth them to be led by human affection in bestowing the things of God.**

* Ferguson.

* The Ecclesiastical Polity.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Superintendence of Providence manifested in the local circumstances and in the civil and religious history of England.

Among the various subjects on which the mind of the royal pupil should be exercised, there is none more appropriate, than that which might, perhaps, be most fitly denominated, *the providential History of England.* That it has not hitherto engaged attention, in any degree suitable to its importance, is much more an apology for its being, in the present instance, specially adverted to, than reason for its being any longer neglected.

The marks of divine interference, in the general arrangement of states and empires, are rendered so luminous by the rays which Scripture prophecy has shed upon them, as to strike every mind which is at once attentive and candid, with a force not to be resisted. But, while this indisputable truth leads us necessarily to infer, that a like superintendance to that which is over the whole, acts likewise respecting all the separate parts; the actual tracing this superintendence, in the occurrences of particular nations, must, in general, be a matter of difficulty and doubt, as that light of prophecy, which falls so brightly on the central dome of the temple, cannot reasonably be hoped for, when we turn into the lateral recesses.

There are instances, however, in which God's providential works shine so clearly 'by their own radient light,' as to demonstrate the hand which fashioned, and the skill which arranged them. And though others are of a more doubtful nature; yet, when the attainments of any one particular nation become matter of general influence, so that what was, at first, the fruit of merely local labour, or the effect of a peculiar combination of local circumstances, becomes from its obvious utility or intrinsic excellence an object to other surrounding countries, and grows at length into an universal benefit;—in such a distinction, we can hardly forbear to trace something so like a consistent plan of operations that the duty of observing and acknowledging it, seems incumbent on such communities as appear to have been thus signally favoured. What advantage, for instance, has the whole civilized world derived from the philosophizing turn of the ancient Greeks! How widely extensive, and how durable has been its influence.

Of what importance are the benefits, which the politic spirit of the Roman empire diffused among the countries of Europe, most of which, to this day, acknowledge the hand that reared them from barbarism, by still retaining those laws which that hand transcribed for them, as if Rome were allowed to do that for men's circumstances, which Greece was permitted to effect for their minds!

But a third instance is encumbered with less difficulty,—the designation of Judea to be the local source of true religion. In this small province of the Roman empire, what a scene was transacted, and from those transactions, what a series of consequences have followed, and what a system of influences has been derived, operating, and still to operate on individuals—communities—nations, in ways, and with effects, the happiest, or most awful, as they are embraced or rejected; and leading to results not to be calculated even as to this world,—but wholly inconceivable, as to that future world where all the deep purposes of God are to have their perfect consummation.

But, if such has been the method of Providence in those great designs, which have heretofore been carried on in the world, can we suppose that the same plan is not substantially pursued in his present arrangements? Are not blessings still to be conferred on society? Blessings, yet in general unknown, and greater measures of those which are already in part attained?—How rare, for example, has been hitherto the blessing of complete civil government—of such a political system as combines the apparent contrarieties of public security with personal liberty! An object aimed at by the wisest legislators of earlier times, but regarded by them as a beautiful theory, incapable of being realized! Still more—How limited is the attainment of religious truth *of well-weighed well-digested religious belief*—and of *well-conceived, well-regulated divine worship!* Christianity exists in the Scripture, like virgin gold in the mine; but how few, comparatively, have been able to extract it without loss, or to bring it into public circulation without deplorable alloy! How erroneous, in most instances, are those modes and exercises of it, which are adopted by states and governments; and how seldom does it seem rightly apprehended, even by the most enlightened individuals! To suppose things will always remain in this state, is little short of an imputation on divine wisdom. But, in the mean time, how disastrous are the consequences to individuals and to society!

If there be then a country, long and signally distinguished in both these important instances—in the former, so as to have been the object of universal admiration;—in the latter, so as to have been looked up to by all the most enlightened parts of the Christian world.—If there be such a country, can we help regarding its superiority to other countries as the result of a providential destination, as clear as that which allotted philosophy to ancient Greece, and civil polity to ancient Rome?—And may it not even be added, as really divine, though not miraculous, as that which gave true religion to ancient Judea.

If England be this community, if England be the single nation upon earth,—where that checked and balanced government,—that temperament of monarchic, aristocratic and popular rule, which philosophic statesmen, in ancient times, admired so much in theory, has been actually realized—If it be also distinguished by a temperament in religious concerns little less peculiar, is not every thinking member of such a community bound to acknowledge with deepest gratitude, so extraordinary a distinction? And what employment of thought can be more interesting than to trace the providential means by which such unexampled benefits and blessings have been conferred upon our country!

To enter at large into so vast a subject, would be an impracticable attempt, on such an occasion as the present. It would itself furnish materials for a volume rather than for a few pages;*

* The train of thought pursued in this and the following chapter, as well as some of the thoughts themselves,

and to treat it with justice would be a task, to which the best informed and profoundest mind would alone be competent. A few scattered observations, therefore, are all that we can pretend to offer, not however without hope, that they will excite to a deeper and more extended investigation. We are told by St. Paul, that 'he who made of one blood all nations, fixed not only the time before appointed (the epochs of their rise and fall) but also the bounds of their habitation.' The result of this created arrangement, respecting the greater divisions of the earth, Europe, Asia, and Africa, separated, yet connected by that inland ocean the Mediterranean Sea, have been already noticed. But, nothing has been more pregnant in its consequences in this general plan than the insulated situation of Great Britain, with respect to our national circumstances.—If we are at this day free, while so many neighbouring nations are enslaved.—If we stand erect, while they are trampled on—let us not entirely attribute it to any superiority in ourselves, of spirit, of wisdom, or strength; but let us also humbly and gratefully ascribe it to that appointment of the Creator, which divided us from the continent of Europe. Had we been as accessible to the arms of France, as Holland, Switzerland, or the Austrian Netherlands, we might perhaps have been involved in the same calamities. But we cannot stop here. The entire series of our history, as a nation, seems in a great measure to have been derived from this source; and every link in the chain of our fortune bears some significant mark of our local peculiarity. Without this, where would have been our commercial opulence or our maritime power? If we had not been distinct as a country we had not been distinct as a people. We might have imbibed the taints, been moulded by the manners, and immerged in the greatness of our more powerful neighbours. It was that goodness which made us an island, that laid the foundation of our national happiness. It was by placing us in the midst of the waters that the Almighty prepared our country for those providential uses to which it has served and is yet to serve in the great scheme of his dispensations. Thus, then, we behold ourselves raised as a nation above all the nations of the earth by that very circumstance which made our country be regarded, two thousand years ago, only as a receptacle for the refuse of the Roman empire!

To this, evidently, it has been owing, that, amongst us, the progress of society, from barbarianism to high improvement, has not only been more regular, but more radical and entire, as to all the portions and circumstances of the body politic, than in any instance with which we are acquainted. Shut in from those desolating blasts of war which have ever and anon been sweeping the continent, the culture of our moral soil has been less impeded, and the seeds which have been sown have yielded ampler, as well as maturer harvests. We have had our vicissitudes—but in a manner peculiar to ourselves. They seem clearly providential, and not fortuitous; since it is certain that the agitations which we have experienced, and the apparent calamities which we have suffered have been, in almost every instance, signally conducive to our advancement. When England became possessed by the Saxons, she appeared only to be sharing the fate of other European countries; all of which, about that period, or soon after, became the prey of similar hordes of invaders. But a difference of result, in our particular instance, arising chiefly from our insular situation, after some time, presents itself to us, as already marking that happy destination with which Providence intended to favour us.

It has been observed by historians, that when an army of those northern invaders took possession of any country, they formed their establishment with a view of self-defence, much more than to civil improvement. They knew not how suddenly they might be attacked by some successful army of adventurers; and therefore says Dr. Robertson, 'a feudal kingdom resembles a military establishment, rather than a civil institution.' 'Such a policy,' adds the same historian, 'was well calculated for defence, against the assaults of any foreign power; but its provisions for the interior order and tranquillity of society, was extremely defective; the principles of disorder and corruption being discernible in that constitution under its best and most perfect form.'*

To this 'feudal system,' however, the newly established potentates of the continent seem to have been impelled by necessity; but an inevitable consequence was, that that taste for liberty, which had animated their followers in their native forests, could no longer be cherished, and was of course doomed to extinction.

In Britain alone such a necessity did not exist. The possession of the country being once accomplished, its tenure was comparatively secured by the surrounding ocean. Defence was not to be neglected; but danger was not imminent. Thus no new habit was *forced* on the new settlers, so as to expel their original propensities; and accordingly whatever means of safety they might have resorted to against each other, during the multiplicity of these governments, we see at the distance of four centuries, Alfred, turning from successful warfare against invaders, to exercise that consummate wisdom, with which his mind was enriched, in systematizing those very aboriginal principles of Saxon liberty. A civil polity was thus erected, which was not only in its day the most perfect scheme of government that had yet existed, but it also was formed of such materials, and established on such a solid foundation, as never after to be wholly demolished; until at length, it has been gradually wrought into that magnificent fabric, which, through the bless-

both here, and in one or two former passages may perhaps be recognized by the Rev. and learned Doctor Miller, late fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, as a-kin to those views of providential history, which he has given in a course of lectures in that college. The author gladly acknowledges having received, through a friend, a few valuable hints from this source, of which it is earnestly hoped the public may in due time be put in full possession

* Robertson's View of the State of Europe, prefixed to Charles V. Sect. I.

ing of heaven, is at this day the glory and the defence of our island.

In these rudiments, then, of the first English constitution, let us gratefully recognize the first most striking indication of a particular providence presiding over our country. A genius, the first of his age, is raised in a remote and insulated part of Europe,—where at first view, it might be thought his talents must be destitute of their proper sphere of action. But in what other European country could his enlarged views have been in any adequate degree realized?—Where the feudal government was established, such wise and liberal arrangements as those of Alfred were necessarily precluded; at least they could not have been introduced, without stripping such a government of its essential characters; Alfred's system being as strictly *civil*, as the other was *military*. He provided sufficiently for external safety, but it was internal security and tranquility to which his exquisite policy was peculiarly directed. And from its correspondence with right reason, with the native spirit of the people, and with the local circumstances of the country, it so rooted itself in the English soil, as to out-live all the storms of civil discord, as well as the long winter of the Norman tyranny.

Is it not then remarkable that, when such a concurrence of favourable circumstances existed in that very sequestred spot should arise an individual, so precisely fitted to turn them to, what appears, their allotted purpose? Had there not been an Alfred to accomplish the work, all these capabilities might soon have vanished, and our national happiness never have been realized. On the other hand, had Alfred lived without his appropriate sphere of action, he would no doubt have been a successful warrior, a gracious prince, and clearly, as far as the state of men's minds admitted, a friend to letters, and such rude arts as were then in use; but he would not have been venerated, at the distance of a thousand years as the founder of the best scheme of laws, and the happiest system of government, that the world ever saw. Such a correspondence, then, of so distinguished an agent to so apt a sphere of action, and attended with results so permanent, so beneficial, and so widely influential on human society, was surely far above fortuitous coincidence. Was it not, on the contrary, an adaptation so self-evident, as can only be ascribed to the special interference of overruling Providence?

It is true, that by the Norman conquest, the benefits derived from this wise and happy establishment appeared for the time overwhelmed by a threefold tyranny,—regal, feudal, and ecclesiastical. But this, on an attentive view, will appear no less to have been over-ruled for good. To repress for the purpose of excitement, and to employ gross admixtures in order to higher purification, are procedures congruous with all the laws of nature.

In a constitution formed in so dark an age, and adapted to so rude a people, there could be little more than the crude elements of such a political system, as more advanced times would require. Yet had the enjoyment of those earlier privileges remained undisturbed, nothing better might have been aimed at! and instead of that progressive advance, with which we have been blessed, our nation might, at this day, have only been distinguished by a blind and stupid attachment to some obsolete forms of liberty, from which all substantial worth had long since departed. For the prevention of such an evil, human foresight could make no provision; and we may now look back with wonder, on the wisdom, as well as efficacy of the process. The original plan was guarded by the same gracious hand, until the habits induced by it were fixed in the minds of Englishmen;—then it was suspended, that they might struggle to regain it; and by the activity thus excited, and more and more elicited by new competitions, they might at length attain to the highest civil and political happiness, which has been enjoyed in this imperfect state of being.

But on a yet more enlarged view of our national progress, shall we not be led to conclude, that something more than the improvement of our political constitution was in the design of Providence, when the Norman dynasty became possessed of the throne? A far more important reformation, than that of human laws, or political systems was at length to take place. And in this great ecclesiastical revolution, England was intended to act a conspicuous part. For this, even these preparatory steps would be necessary. And may we not clearly trace such steps from the epoch of which we are speaking? The encroachments of the papal see had, till then, been comparatively little felt in England. But the Norman princes introduced foreign bishops, who exercised in the church as galling a dominion, as that of their royal patrons in the state. 'The consciences of men,' says Sir William Blackstone, 'were enslaved by sour ecclesiastics, devoted to a foreign power and unconnected with the civil state under which they lived; who now imported from Rome, for the first time, the whole farrago of superstitious novelties, which had been engendered by the blindness and corruption of the times, between the first mission of Augustine the monk, and the Norman conquest.'*

Had these pernicious practices been *gradually* and *insensibly* introduced, as they were in most countries on the continent, they would have been inevitably combined with the common habits of the people. But being thus suddenly and forcibly imposed, in conjunction too with such a mass of political grievances, their almost necessary tendency was to excite a spirit of resistance. We accordingly find, that in every advance which was made towards regaining a free government, a conquest was gained over some instances of ecclesiastical as well as of political tyranny; than which, what more effectual course could the most sagacious foresight have pursued, for rousing the national mind from the dead drowsiness of superstition, and preparing it to give a cordial reception to that light of religious truth, which, when the proper season should arrive, was to beam forth with peculiar brightness on this favoured country?

But it is not only in its encroachments and

* Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iv. last chap.

severities that we are to regard the Norman government as an instrument of Providence. It, doubtless, was the means of much direct and positive good. The minds of Englishmen needed improvement, still more than their civil constitution. Alfred had attempted to sow the seeds of learning, as well as of jurisprudence, amongst his countrymen; but to inspire a barbarous people with a love of literature, was what neither he nor his master, Charlemagne, was able in any great degree to accomplish. An advance of general civilization was necessary to strike out such a disposition; and it was not until toward the beginning of the 12th century, that any part of Western Europe appeared to have been visited with the dawn of an intellectual day. A connexion, therefore, with the continent previously to that period, could not have served the moral, and might have injured the political interests of our island. But that it should, just at that time, be brought into such circumstances, as should ensure its participation in all the mental acquirements, of the neighbouring countries, appears evidently to bespeak the same superintendence, as in the instances already noticed.

It is, however, in the great event of the English reformation, that we perceive, as has been already observed,* the most striking marks of divine direction; and it seems to discover to us, why it has pleased God to distinguish us by so many previous instances of favour. We were not only to be blessed with the light of truth ourselves, but we were to be in some sort, 'a city set upon a hill.' The peculiar temperament of the English protestant establishment, which places it in a kind of middle line between the churches of the continent, has been also noticed in a former chapter. But is it not evident, that our national church, humanly speaking, derived that temperament from a previously formed national character? 'The English,' says Voltaire, 'into whom nature has infused a spirit of independence, adopted the opinion of the reformers, but mitigated them, and composed from them a religion peculiar to themselves.'† It is seldom, that, on such a subject, this acute but most perverted pen has so justly described the fact. But, what a striking testimony is this, not only to the worth of that national character, which thus distinguished itself from the whole Christian world, but also to the depth of that Divine wisdom, which made so many remote and unconnected contingences work together in producing so valuable a result!

In establishing a religion, which is founded on truth, and which consists essentially in the love of God and man, what more suitable dispositions could there be provided, than an *independent spirit* and a *mitigating temper*? That both these were eminently exemplified by our venerable reformers, need not here be proved. Nor is it necessary to enlarge upon the obvious tendency of the English laws and constitution, to form such dispositions in those who lived within their influence. If this tendency were doubtful, a striking fact in after times might serve to illustrate it. I mean, that steady zeal with which all the great constitutional lawyers, during the agitations of the seventeenth century, endeavoured to preserve to the English church establishment that very temperament, which had so happily entered into its first formation. Nor can we pass over the care which was taken, in the very occurrences of the reformation, for adapting it to the *independent spirit* of the English, and also for perpetuating, in the establishment itself, that *mild and mitigating temper* which had influenced its first founders.

It was indispensable that the change in the church establishment should be accomplished by the paramount powers of the state; they alone being either legally, or naturally competent. But no act of a king or council, or even of a parliament, was adequate to effect in the minds of the English public, that rational and cordial acquiescence in the new state of things, without which it must have been inefficient, as to influence, and insecure as to duration.

But for this, Providence itself made admirable provision. The pious and amiable Edward was kept upon the throne, until all that was necessary to be done, in an external and political way had been effected.—Then, for a time, the old system was permitted to return, with all its horrible accompaniments, in order, as it should seem, that the protestant church of England might not rest upon human laws *alone*, but might appear to have originated in the same essential principles with those of the apostolic church, and to have been constituted by men of a like spirit, who, when called to it, were similarly prepared to seal their testimony with their blood.

The service that these illustrious men had done, by their temperate wisdom, and admirable judgment, in the reign of Edward, in compiling such a liturgy, and establishing such a worship, and such a form of doctrine, is ever to be held in grateful remembrance. But their passive virtue, their primitive heroism, in patiently, and even joyfully dying for those truths which they had conscientiously adopted; this it was which established protestantism in the hearts of the English populace! They saw the infernal cruelty of the popish leaders, and the calm magnanimity of the protestant martyrs. They saw these holy men, whose connexion with secular politics might be thought to have corrupted them, and whose high station in society might be supposed to have enervated them, facing death in its most dreadful form, with more than human tranquillity! They saw all this, and the impression made upon them was like that which was made on the Israelites at Mount Carmel, by the event of the memorable contest between the priests of Baal, and the prophets of the Lord. Accordingly on the death of Mary, the accession of Elizabeth excited universal joy.—The acquiescence of the people in the changes made by Henry, and even by Edward, were little more than acts of necessity, and therefore implied no revolution in the general opinion. But *now* it was evinced, by every possible proof, that a thorough detestation of popery had extended itself through the whole community. 'Were we to adopt,' says Goldsmith, 'the maxim of the catholics, that evil may be done for the production of good, one might say, that the persecutions in Mary's reign were permitted only to bring the

* Chap xxxv.
† Siecle de Louis XIV. chap. xxxii.

kingdom over to the protestant religion. The people had formerly been compelled to embrace it, and their fears induced them to conform, but now almost the whole nation were protestants from inclination.' Nothing can surely be more just than the substance of this sentiment. The lively writer seems only to have forgotten that we may ascribe to divine Providence the permission of evil, in order to a greater good, without sanctioning any maxim, revolting in theory, or dangerous in practice.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The same subject continued. Tolerant spirit of the church. Circumstances which led to the revolution—And to the providential succession of the house of Hanover.

THE circumstances attending the reformation, which has been most regretted, was, that a portion of the protestants were dissatisfied with it, as not coming up to the extent of their ideas; and that this laid the foundation of a system of dissent, which broke the uniformity of public worship, and led, at length, to a temporary overthrow, both of the ecclesiastical and civil constitution.

On these events, as human transactions, our subject does not lead us to enlarge. If the above remarks, with those in a foregoing chapter, on the peculiar characters of the English establishment be just, these persons, however conscientious, were opposing, without being aware of it, an institution which, from its excellent tendency and effects, seems to have been sanctioned by Providence But may not even their opposition, and subsequent dissent, be considered in the same light as those other transactions, which have been mentioned; that is, as permitted by the all-wise Disposer, in order to beneficial results, which could not in the nature of things, according to our conception, have been equally produced through any other instrumentality! For example: did it not supply the aptest means, which we can conceive, for answering the important purpose, which was mentioned above—*the perpetuating in the establishment itself, that mild and mitigating temper, which had so signally influenced its first founders.*

If Christian virtue be, in every instance, the result, and the reward, of conflict; and if each virtue be formed, as it were, out of the ruins of the opposite vice; then may we not deem it morally certain, that a Christian community, which 'God delighted to honour,' should, as well as individuals, have an opportunity suitable to its circumstances, of not being 'overcome of evil,' but of 'overcoming evil with good?' And would it not, therefore, appear probable that, though it should possess that political strength, and that portion of outward dignity, which might be necessary to its efficiency as a national establishment, it should also have some opposition to encounter, some trials to sustain, some calumnies to surmount, some injuries to forgive? Would not such circumstances strengthen its claim to being deemed an integral part of the church militant? and would they not fit it for answering all the purposes of a Christian establishment, far better than if it had possessed that exclusive ascendancy, which should leave no room for the exercise of passive, and almost supersede the necessity even of active virtue?

That the schism of which we speak, was permitted by Providence, for some such purpose as that just described, appears probable, from the agreement of such an intention with that wise and temperate plan by which the reformation had been effected; from the obvious consistency of providing for the continuance of that moderate and mitigating temper of the first reformers; and, above all, because it is evident that the event in question has actually answered this valuable purpose: the most eminent divines of our church having been generally as much distinguished for candour towards those who differed from them, as for ability and firmness in maintaining their own more enlarged mode of conduct.

That they could not have so fully manifested these amiable and truly Christian qualities, in a state of things where there was nothing to call them forth, is self-evident; and it is almost as certain, that even their possession of such virtues must depend upon their having had motives to exercise them. We accordingly perceive, in the lives and writings of the great luminaries of our church, not only a happy prevalence of liberal principles, and charitable feelings, but also the very process, if we may so speak, by which these principles and feelings were formed. From having continually in their view a set of persons, who had *substantially* the same faith, yet differed in modes of worship, we see them acquiring a peculiar habit of distinguishing between the essentials and circumstantials of religion. Their judgment becomes strong, as their charity becomes enlarged, and above all other divines, perhaps, they investigate religion as philosophers, without injury to the humility of their faith, or the fervency of their devotion. In almost every other communion (though with some admirable exceptions) deep contemplative piety often appears associated with some sentiment or practice, which is apt to abate our estimation of the rationality of the party, or if rationality be preserved, there is too often some diminution of the pious affections. And what proves, that, from the seeming evil of which we have spoken, God has by his overruling influence deduced this good, is, that the completest spirit of toleration, and this high description of character, have not been commonly united, but that seasons which peculiarly called forth in churchmen the exercise of Christian forbearance, were also singularly fruitful in examples of this sublime and philosophic piety.*

In fact, whether we consider the circumstances under which the church of England was formed, the language in which she expresses her sense of the Christian doctrines, the spirit which pervades all her formularies, or the temper which has distinguished the first founders, and all their genuine successors; she evidently appears designed by Eternal Wisdom to

* See bishop Burnet's history of his own times.

have been a tolerant church; and by being such, to be the means of serving the great cause of Christianity, in certain important instances; which could only be accomplished in a state of *religious liberty*. In too many other Christian countries, the established religion has appeared to rest *entirely* upon a political foundation. In consequence of this, men of lively talents have too generally, in such countries, become infidels. In England, the tolerant nature of the church establishment, in honourably maintaining, and giving the highest reverence to a national form of worship, but allowing individuals their unrestrained choice, has left religion itself to be a matter of reason and conviction, as really as it was in the primitive times; and the consequence has been, that reason and conviction have signally done their part. Infidels have made their utmost efforts, with every aid that perverted talents and misapplied learning could give them; but all they could accomplish, has been to call forth far more powerful minds to defeat them with their own weapons; and to demonstrate, that though the divine religion of the Gospel leans on political support, for the sake of greater public utility, yet its appropriate strength is that of *invariable reason*, *irrefragible truth*, and *self-evident excellence*.

And while the English establishment has thus served the general interests of religion, she has most substantially served herself. Making her appeal to reason, she has been estimated accordingly; and what she has not endeavodred to extort by force, has been greatly yielded to her from rational attachment. It was natural, that the toleration which was given, should, in so exclusive a community, be largely made use of. But this leaves room for the establishment to try its comparative fitness to attach more minds, in which, be it said without invidiousness, the result has at all times been such, as signally to strengthen whatever has been adduced to illustrate the high providential uses of the established church of England.

Still, however, as the natural and proper tendency of the very best things may be thwarted by opposite influences, we ought to be aware that the genuine tendency of the establishment to attach men's minds, and recommend itself by its own excellence, should not be trusted in so confidentially, as that any of those to whom this precious deposit is committed should, from an idea that its influence cannot be weakened, become supine, while its enemies are alive and active. We do not mean, that they should oppose the adversaries of the church by acrimonious controversy, but by the more appropriate weapons of activity and diligence. We may reasonably presume, that the Almighty having wrought such a work for us at the Reformation, will still continue his blessing, while the same means are employed to maintain, which were used to establish it. But to this end every aid should be resorted to, every method should be devised, by which the great mass of the people may be brought to the public worship of the church. To one most important means we have already adverted,* and it cannot be too much insisted on—that the lower classes, among which the defection is greatest, should betimes receive an impression on their minds, not only of God's goodness and mercy, but of his *power* and *supremacy;* and also, that God is the real original authority by which 'kings reign, and princes decree justice;' by which obedience and loyalty to government are enforced, and all the subordinate duties of life required of them. It is from the pulpit, undoubtedly, that every duty, both to God and man, is best inculcated, and with a power and sanction peculiar to itself; and it is the clergy that must prepare for God faithful servants and true worshippers; and for the king a willing and obedient people.

But the clergy, however zealous, pious, and active, cannot find time to do all that might be done. A people might be prepared for the clergy themselves. The minds of children should be *universally* familiarized with the moving stories, and their affections excited by the amiable characters in the Bible. When the beautiful allegories of the New Testament have been not only studied, but properly interpreted to them; when their memories have been stored with such subjects and passages as constantly occur in preaching, the service of the church, by becoming more intelligible, will become more attractive. And as we have already observed, with their religious instructions, there should be mixed a constant sense of their *own church*, the privileges belonging to it, the mischief of departing from it, the duties which lie upon them as members of it. They should be taught the nature of the government of this church, the authority from which it is derived, and their duty and obligations, not as children only, but through life to its ministers. They should be taught what all the offices and institutions of the church mean; that none of them are empty ceremonies, but arrangements of genuine wisdom, and to be valued and used accordingly.

We will venture to say, that were such a mode of training the lower classes *every where* adopted, they would then, not *occasionally*, fall in with the stream on Sundays, and be mixed, they know not why, with a congregation of customary worshippers; but they would come with ability to understand, and dispositions to prefer the established mode of worship; their ideas and sentiments would readily mix and assimilate with what they saw and heard. And thus an habitual veneration, both for the church and its pastors, would be an additional preparation for the gradual influence of real religion on their minds. But while these modes of instruction may be maintained by the leisure and the liberality of the laity, the clergy must be the life, and soul and spirit of them.

But to return.—Perhaps, in a fair view of the importance of that truly Christian liberty, which ever since the revolution of 1688 has been established in England, it might be doubted, whether this was not the ultimate object, on account of which, the civil rights of the English community were so providentially fostered. Certain it is, that at every period of our history when an advance is made in civil matters, some step appears generally to have been gained in ecclesiastical concerns also: and the completion of the

* Chap. xviii.

one is equally that of the other. But it seems as if the distinct agency of Providence, in bringing our church to that avowed and established tolerance, which was alike congenial to its spirit, and necessary to its purpose, is even more remarkable than that series of interpositions which has been referred to in the civil history of the country. And let it not be forgotten, that the toleration of our church is connected with our national love of civil liberty, and that the state also is tolerant.*

The long reign of queen Elizabeth seems to have been designed for the purpose of consolidating and perpetuating the great work which had been accomplished. During that period, all the energies of the prerogative were exercised for the exclusive maintenance of the established religion. And may we not believe, that this was necessary, till the new order of things should have established itself in the habits of the people.

That neither civil nor religious liberty was fully enjoyed in England till the revolution, will not be denied. And that the weak, and sometimes most erroneous conduct of the race of Stuart was providentially over-ruled, so as to lead to that glorious consummation, is equally obvious. May we not then suppose, that this family was brought upon the throne for this purpose, when we see, that when that object was ripe for accomplishment, the family, in its male line, was excluded from the sovereignty, on the clearest grounds of invincible necessity, and hopeless bigotry; an event, the occasion for which was as much to be deplored, as its motives are to be revered, and its consequences to be gloried in. This revolution was one of those rare and critical cases, which can never be pleaded as a precedent by discontent or disaffection. It was a singular instance when a high duty was of necessity superseded by a higher; and when the paramount rights of law and conscience united in urging the painful but irresistible necessity.

God has made human society progressive, by the laws of nature, as well as by the order of Providence. At some periods, this progress seems accelerated. It is, doubtless, the wisdom of those who preside over communities, to mark all such periods, and instead of *resisting*, to *regulate* the progress. This did not the unfortunate house of Stuart. Their political errors shall not here be enumerated. Probably they would have been preserved from them if they had not fought against divine Providence, in several instances. The spirit of the English reformation was that of rational but strict piety. This strictness, the conduct both of James and even of the first Charles, had a tendency to extinguish, by sanctioning, and, in a degree, enjoining the profanation of the Lord's day. The order of public worship, as established by the reformers, was sufficiently majestic;—no decorous circumstance being wanting, no exceptionable ceremonies being admitted. Instead of wisely and steadily guarding this admirable arrangement from encroachments, the unfortunate Charles endeavoured to bring back these genuflections, and other ceremonies which the first reformers had discarded; and enforced these innovations by a severity, still more abhorrent from the temper of the Anglican church Under such mismanagement, these dissentient principles, which existed since the reformation, were fanned into that furious flame, from which the English constitution in church and state seems to have come forth unhurt, only because the designs of over-ruling Providence required their preservation.

The second Charles, untaught by the calamities of his virtuous but misguided father, disregarded all principle in his public, and outraged all decency in his private conduct. His reign was a continual rebellion against that Providence, which had destined the English nation to exemplify, both good government and good morals, to the surrounding world. Perhaps, however, nothing short of the enormities of himself, and the misconduct of his successor, could have been sufficient to impel the English, after the miseries they had so lately experienced from anarchy, to the vindication of their just, constitutional rights. And probably again, they would not have possessed that temper, which kept them from demanding *more* than their just rights, if they had not received that previous discipline from the hand of heaven. It is worthy of notice, that when the house of Stuart was dispossessed of the throne of England, that same Providence caused a respite in favour of those two* princesses who had not participated in the vices of their father's house. Of these, the elder was made a chief instrument in the great work which was to be accomplished. She was a cordial protestant, and a pious Christian: and we cannot doubt, but her marriage with that prince, who was appointed to perfect our liberties, was a special link in the chain of intermediate causes. She became a true English sovereign: a lover of the establishment, and an example of christian charity. Strictly and habitually devout amid all the temptations of a court, she was prepared to meet death with almost more than resignation.

The character of her sister was much less impressive; her good qualities being better fitted for a private life than a throne. It would be hard to charge her with inheriting the faults of her ancestors, from all the grosser instances of which she was clearly exempt. Yet there certainly appears, in her attachment, much of that weak subjection of mind, (and a little, it may be feared of that dissimulation too,) which had been so manifest in some former monarchs of her family. Yet even this weakness was overruled to great purposes. Had her attachment to the duchess of Marlborough been more moderate, the duke might not have possessed that supreme authority, which enabled him to humble, by so unexampled a series of victories, that power which had been the scourge of protestantism, and the pest of Europe. And had her temper been less mutable, it might not have been so easy to accomplish a peace, when the reasonable ends of war had been so fully answered

* It is to be lamented that there was a most unhappy instance of departure from this spirit in the reign of Charles II.

* Mary and Anne.

It would almost seem that the issue of this princess was deemed by Providence too central a branch of the Stuart family, to be entrusted with the newly renovated constitution. A more distant connexion had already been specially trained for this most important trust, though with little apparent probability of being called to exercise it, the princess Anne having been no less than seventeen times pregnant. The death of the duke of Gloucester, the last of her family, at length turned the eyes of the English public towards the princess Sophia; from henceforth she and her issue were recognized as presumptive heirs to the crown. Many of the events which occurred during the last years of queen Anne's reign, served not a little to enhance to all who were cordially attached to the English constitution, the providential blessing of so suitable a succession.

A more remarkable event is scarcely to be found in the annals of the world. Nothing could be more essential to the interests of British liberty, than that they, who were concerned for its maintenance, should be possessed of the promptest and most unexceptionable means of filling the vacant throne. No prince was fitted to their purpose, who was not zealously attached to the protestant religion; and it was desirable that he should, at the same time, possess such a title, on ground of consanguinity, as that the principle of hereditary monarchy might be as little departed from as the exigencies of the case would admit. For the securing of both these radical objects, what an adequate provision was made in the princess Sophia, and her illustrious offspring! The connexion thus near was made interesting by every circumstance which could engage the hearts of English protestants. The princess Sophia was the only remaining child of that only remaining daughter of James the first, who being married to one of the most zealous protestant princes of the empire, became his partner in a series of personal and domestic distress, in which his committing himself, on the cause of the protestants of Bohemia, involved him and his family for near half a century. In her, all the rights of her mother, as well as of her father, were vested; and while by the electorial dignity, (of which her father had been deprived) being restored to her husband, the duke of Hanover, she seemed, in part, compensated for the afflictions of her earlier life,—her personal character, in which distinguished wit and talents were united with wisdom and piety,* both these last probably taught her in the school of adversity, procured for her the admiration of all who knew her, as well as the veneration of those whose religious sentiments were congenial with her own.

Such was the mother of George the first! She lived, enjoying her bright faculties to a very advanced age, to see a throne prepared for her son far more glorious than that from which her father had been driven; or, what to her excellent mind was still more gratifying, she saw herself preserved, after the extinction of all the other branches of her paternal house, to furnish in the most honourable instance possible, an invaluable stay and prop for that cause, on account of which her parents and their children seemed, for a time, to have 'suffered the loss of all things.'

Whether, then, we consider the succession of the house of Hanover, as the means of finally establishing our civil and religious constitution, which then only can be regarded as having attained a perfect triumph over every kind of oppression;—or whether we view it as a most signal act of that retributive goodness which has promised 'that every one who forsaketh house, or brethren, or lands, for his sake, shall receive manifold more even in this present life.' I say, in whichsoever light we contemplate it,—especially if we connect it with the series of events in England,—and, above all, compare it with the fate of the family from which the parent princess had sprung—but which, after being chastised to no purpose, was rejected, to make room for those, who had suffered in so much nobler a cause, and with so much better effect,—what can we say, but with the Psalmist, 'that promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south. But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full mixed, and he poureth out of the same. But as for the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them. All the horns also of the wicked shall be cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.'

Another less momentous, yet highly interesting instance of providential remuneration, connected with this great event, must not be passed over. It shall be given in the words of a living and a near observer. 'A wife,' says bishop Burnet, 'was to be sought for prince Charles (the emperor's brother, whom the allies wished to establish on the Spanish throne) among the protestant courts, for there was not a suitable match in the popish courts. He had seen the princess of Anspach, and was much taken with her, so that great applications were made to persuade her to change her religion; but she could not be prevailed on to buy a crown at so dear a rate. And soon after, she was married to the prince Electoral of Brunswick; which gave a glorious character of her to this nation. And her pious firmness is like to be rewarded, even in this life, by a much better crown than that which she rejected.'* Surely this portion of our queen Caroline's history deserves to be had in perpetual remembrance!

The same prelate speaking of king William, says, 'I considered him as a person raised up by God, to resist the power of France, and the progress of tyranny and persecution. The thirty years, from the year 1672 to his death, in which he acted so great a part, carry in them so many amazing steps of a glorious and distinguishing Providence, that in the words of David he may be called,—*The man of God's right hand, whom he made strong for himself.*'

* See M. Chevreau's character of the Princess Sophia, quoted by Addison. Freeholder, No. 30. See also her two letters to Bishop Burnet, in his life annexed *to his own times.*

* Burnet's own times, 1707.

But if there were just grounds for this remark respecting this particular period, and this individual personage: what shall we say of the entire chain of providences, which runs through our whole national history, from the landing of our Saxon ancestors to the present hour? May it not be confidently asked, Is there at this day a nation upon earth, whose circumstances appear so clearly to have been arranged, and bound together, by the hands of HIM, 'who does whatsoever he pleases, both in heaven and earth?'

That the purposes of this great scheme have, as yet been most inadequately answered, as far as our free agency is concerned, is a deep ground for our humiliation, but no argument against the reality of providential direction. The Sacred history of the Jews, the only people who have been more distinguished than ourselves, presents to us not only their unparalleled obligations to the Almighty, but also a series of such abuses of those mercies, as at length brought upon them a destruction as unexampled as their guilt. The great purposes of heaven cannot be frustrated; but the instrument which embarrassed the process may, too surely, be excluded from any share in the beneficial results, and be, on the contrary, the distinguished victim of indignation. Thus Judea, in spite of all its apostacies, was made subservient to its original object. In spite of the barrenness of the parent tree, the mystic branch was made to spring from its roots; but this purpose being once served, the tree itself, nourished as it had been with the chief fatness of the earth, and with the richest dews of heaven, was 'hewn down and cast into the fire.'

Let England, let those especially of rank and influence, and, above all, let the personage whose high, but most awful trust it may be to have the delegated oversight of this vineyard, which God has 'fenced and planted with the choicest vine;' let ALL feel the weight of their responsibility, and avert those judgments which divine justice may deem commensurate to our abused advantages!

We have been the object of admiration to the whole civilized world! Such have been the blessings conferred upon us, and such have been the bright lights, from time to time, raised up among us, that it could not be otherwise. But what would the effect have been, if our unexampled constitution, correspondent to its native design, had called forth, not the unblushing, because unpunishable, baseness of party profligacy, but the unfettered, disinterested, unanimous, exertion of commanding talent, of energetic application, and of invincible virtue! if a solicitude to digest the principles, to imbibe the spirit, and to exemplify the virtues of our illustrious worthies had been as assiduously excited by preceptors in their pupils, and by parents in their children, as a blind admiration of them, or a blinder vanity on account of them:—if those worthies had been as sedulously imitated, as they have been loudly extolled; and above all, if our national church establishment had been as universally influential, as it is intrinsically admirable in its impressive ordinances, its benignant spirit, and its liberal, yet unadulterated doctrines:—We mean not, if these effects had been produced to any improbable Utopian extent, but in that measure, which was, in the nature of things, possible, and which the moral Governor of the Universe had an equitable right to look for.—If this had been realized, who can say what evils might have been prevented, what good might have been accomplished? How might protestantism have spread through Europe, did our national morals keep pace with our profession? How happily might the sound philosophy of the English school, when thus illustrated, have precluded the impious principles and the blasphemous language of Voltaire and his licentious herd! And how would the widely diffused radiance of our then unclouded constitution have poured even upon surrounding countries so bright a day, as to have made rational liberty an object of general, but safe pursuit, and left no place for those works of darkness by which France has degraded herself, and outraged human nature!

Shall we then persevere in our inattention to the indications of Providence? Shall we persist in our neglect or abuse of the talents committed to us? Shall we be still unconscious that all our prosperity hangs suspended on the sole will of God, and that the moment of his ceasing to sustain us, will be the moment of our destruction? And shall not this be felt particularly by those who, by being placed highest in the community, would, in such a ruin, be the most signal victims, so they may now do most toward averting the calamity? On the whole, what is the almost audible language of heaven to prince and people, to nobles and commoners, to church and state, but that of the great Author of our religion in his awful message to the long since desolated churches of Asia? 'Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth; and I will kill thy children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give to every one of you according to your works.'

CHAP. XL.

On Christianity as a principle of action, especially as it respects supreme rulers.

CHRISTIANITY is not an ingenious theory, a sublime but impracticable speculation, a fanciful invention to exercise the genius or sharpen the wit; but it is a system for common apprehension, for general use, and daily practice. It is critically adapted to the character of man, intelligible to his capacity, appropriated to his exigencies, and accommodated to his desires. It contains, indeed, abstruse mysteries to exercise his faith, to inure him to submission, to habituate him to dependence; but the sublimest of its doctrines involve deep practical consequences.

Revelation exhibits what neither the philosophy of the old, nor the natural religion of the modern sceptic, ever pretended to exhibit, a compact system of virtues and graces. Philosophy boasted only fair ideas, independent virtues, and disconnected duties. Christianity presents an

unmutilated *whole*, in which a few simple but momentous premises induce a chain of consequences commensurate with the immortal nature of man. It is a scheme which not only displays every duty, but displays it in its just limitation and relative dependence; maintaining a lovely symmetry and fair proportion, which arise from the beautiful connexion of one virtue with another, and of all virtues with that faith of which they are the fruits.

But the paramount excellence of Christianity is, that its effects are not limited, like the virtues of the Pagans, to the circumscribed sphere of this world. *Their* thoughts and desires, though they occasionally appeared, from their sublimity, to have been fitted, for a wider range, were in a great measure shut in by the dark and narrow bounds of the present scene. At most, they appear to have had but transient glimpses of evanescent light, which, however, while they lasted, made them often break out into short but spirited apostrophes of hope, and even triumph. The Stoics talked deeply and eloquently of self-denial, but never thought of extending, by its exercise, their happiness to perpetuity. Philosophy could never give to divine and eternal things, sufficient distinctness or magnitude to induce a renunciation of present enjoyment, or to insure to the conqueror, who should obtain a victory over this world, a crown of unfading glory. It never was explained, except in the page of Revelation, that God was himself an abundant recompence for every sacrifice which can be made for his sake. Still less was it ascertained, that, even in this life, God is to the good man his refuge and his strength, 'a very present help in time of trouble.' There is more rational consolation for both worlds, in these few words of the Amighty to Abraham, 'Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,' than in all the happy conjectures, and ingenious probabilities, of all the philosophers in the world.

The religion, therefore, which is in this little work meant to be inculcated, is not the gloomy austerity of the ascetic; it is not the fierce intolerance of the bigot, it is not the mere assent to historical evidence, nor the mere formal observances of the nominal Christian. It is not the extravagance of the fanatic, nor the exterminating zeal of the persecutor: though all these faint shadows, or distorting caricatures have been frequently exhibited as the genuine portraits of Christianity; by those who either never saw her face, or never came near enough to delineate her fairly, or who delighted to misrepresent and disfigure her.

True religion is, on the contrary, the most sober, most efficient, most natural, and therefore most happy exercise of right reason. It is, indeed, rationally made predominant by such an apprehension of what concerns us, in respect to our higher nature, as sets us above all undue attraction of earthly objects; and in a great measure, frees the mind from its bondage to the body. It is that inward moral liberty which gives a man the mastery over himself, and enables him to pursue those ends which his heart and his conscience approve, without yielding to any of those warping influences, by which all, except genuine Christians, must be, more or less, led captive. In a word, it is the influential knowledge of Him, whom to know is wisdom—whom to fear is rectitude—whom to love is happiness. A principle this, so just in rational creatures to their infinite owner, benefactor, and end; so demanded by all that is perceivable in outward nature, so suggested by all that is right, and so required by all that is wrong in the human mind, that the common want of it, which almost every where presents itself, is only to be accounted for on the supposition of human nature being under some unnatural perversion, some deep delirium, or fatal intoxication; which by filling the mind with sickly dreams, renders it insensible to those facts and verities, of which awakened nature would have the most awful and most impressive perception.

Thus, to awaken our reason, to make us sensible of our infatuation, to point us to our true interest, duty, and happiness, and to fit us for the pursuit, by making us love both the objects at which we are to aim, and the path in which we are to move, are the grand purposes of the Christian dispensation. If moral rectitude be an evil; if inward self-enjoyment be a grievance, if a right estimate of all things be folly; if a cheerful and happy use of every thing, according to its just and proper value, be misery; if a supreme, undeviating attachment to every thing that is true and honest, and pure, and just, and lovely, and of good report, be weakness: in short, if the true relish for every thing substantially useful, every thing innocently pleasant in life, with the prospect, when life is ended, of felicity unspeakable and eternal, be moping melancholy, then, and not otherwise, ought the religion of the New Testament to be treated with neglect, or viewed with suspicion; as if it were hostile to human comfort, unsuitable to high station, or incompatible with any circumstances which right reason sanctions.

The gospel is, in infinite mercy, brought within the apprehension of the poor and the ignorant; but its grandeur, like that of the God who gave it, is not to be lowered by condescension. In its humblest similitudes, the discerning mind will feel a majestic simplicity, identical with that of created nature; and in its plainest lessons, an extent of meaning which spreads into infinitude. When we yield ourselves to its influences, its effects upon us are correspondent to its own nature. It lays the axe to the root of every kind of false greatness, but it leaves us in a more confirmed, and far happier enjoyment of all which really gives lustre to the character, which truly heightens the spirit, which strengthens, ennobles, and amplifies the mind. It announces to us a spiritual sovereign, to whose unseen dominion the proudest potentates of the earth are in unconscious, but most real subjection; but who, notwithstanding his infinite greatness, condescends to take up his residence in every human heart that truly yields to his influence; suppressing in it every unruly and unhappy passion; animating it with every holy and heavenly temper, every noble and generous virtue; fitting it for all the purposes of Providence, and fortifying it against calamities, by a peace 'which passeth all understanding.'

That this is a view of Christianity, founded

in irrefragable fact, and peculiarly demanding our regard, appears from the uniform language of its divine author, respecting himself and his mission, on all occasions where a summary annunciation was fitting. It is a spiritual kingdom, on the eve of actual establishment, of which he gives notice. To this ultimate idea, the other great purposes of his incarnation are to be referred. They over whom he means to reign are attainted rebels. He, therefore, so fulfils every demand of that law which they had violated, as to reverse the attainder, on grounds of eternal justice. They were, also, captives to a usurper, whose mysterious power he has so broken as to disable him from detaining any who are cordially willing to break their bonds. And having thus removed all obstacles, he offers privileges of infinite benefit; and demands no submission; no dereliction, no observance, but what, in the very nature of things, are indispensable to the recovery of moral health, moral liberty, and moral happiness: and what He, by the gracious influences of his ever-present Spirit, will render, not only attainable, but delightful to the honest and humble heart.

The royal person, then, should early and constantly be habituated to consider herself as peculiarly under the government, and in a most especial manner needing the protection and guidance of this Almighty Sovereign; looking to his word for her best light, and to his Spirit for her best strength; performing all that she undertakes, in the manner most perfectly conformed to his laws, and most clearly subservient to the interests of his spiritual kingdom; submitting all events to his wisdom, and acknowledging no less his particular than his general Providence; and, above all, praying daily for his support, depending on his goodness for success, and submitting to his will in disappointment. In fact, to none, in so eminent a sense as to princes, does that sentiment of an inspired instructor belong: 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.'

She should practically understand, that religion, though it has its distinct and separate duties, yet it is not by any means a distinct and separate thing, so as to make up a duty of itself, disconnected with other duties, but that it is a grand, and universally governing principle, which is to be the fountain of her morality, and the living spring of all her actions: that religion is not merely a thing to be retained in the mind, as a dormant mass of inoperative opinions, but which is to be brought, by every individual, into the detail of every day's deeds: which, in a prince, is to influence his private behaviour, as well as his public conduct; which is to regulate his choice of ministers, and his adoption of measures; which is to govern his mind, in making war and making peace; which is to accompany him, not only to the closet, but to the council; which is to fill his mind, whether in the world or in retirement, with an abiding sense of the vast responsibility which he is under, and the awful account to which he will one day be called, before that Being, who lodges the welfare of so many millions in his hands. In fine, to borrow the words of the pious archbishop Secker, 'It ought to be explicitly taugnt, and much dwelt upon, that religion extends its authority to *every thing:* to the most worldly, the commonest, the lowest' (and surely, still more the highest earthly) 'things; binding us to behave reasonably, decently, humbly, honourably, meekly, and kindly in them all; and that its interfering so far, instead of being a hardship, is a great blessing to us, because it interferes always for our good.'

Parasites have treated some weak princes, as if they were not of the same common nature with those whom they govern; and as if, of course, they were not amenable to the same laws. Christianity, however, does not hold out two sorts of religion, one for the court, and one for the country; one for the prince, and another for the people. Princes, as well as subjects, who, 'by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality,' shall reap 'eternal life.' As there is the same code of laws, so there is the same promise annexed to the observance of them. 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' There are no exempt cases. The maxim is of universal application. There will be no pleading of privilege on that day, when the dead, SMALL and GREAT, shall stand before God; when they shall be 'judged out of those things which are written in the book of God's remembrance, according to their works.'

So far from a dispensation of indulgences being granted to princes, they are bound even to more circumspection. They are set on a pinnacle, the peculiar objects of attention and imitation. Their trust is of larger extent, and more momentous importance.—Their influence involves the conduct of multitudes. Their example should be even more correct, because it will be pleaded as a precedent. Their exalted station, therefore, instead of furnishing excuses for omission, does but enlarge the obligation of performance. They may avail themselves of the same helps to virtue, the same means for duty; and they have the same, may we not rather say, they have even a stronger assurance of divine aid, since that aid is promised to be proportioned to the exigence; and the exigencies of princes are obviously greater than those of any other class of men.

Power and splendor are not to be considered as substitutes for virtue, but as instruments for its promotion, and means for its embellishment. The power and splendor of sovereigns are confirmed to them by the laws of the state, for the wisest and most beneficial purposes. But these illustrious appendages are evidently not meant for their personal gratification, but to give impressiveness and dignity to their station; to be suitable and honourable means of supporting an authority, which Providence has made indispensable to the peace and happiness of society; and on the adequate energy of which, the security and comfort of all subordinate ranks, in their due gradations, so materially depend.

Can we hesitate to conclude, that at the last great audit, princes will be called to account, not only for all the wrong which they have done, but for all the right which they have neglected to do? Not only for all the evil they have per-

petrated, but for all that they, wilfully, have permitted? For all the corruptions which they have sanctioned, and all the good which they have discouraged? It will be demanded whether they have employed royal opulence, in setting an example of wise and generous beneficence, or of contagious levity and voluptuousness? Whether they have used their influence, in promoting objects clearly for the public good, or in accomplishing the selfish purposes of mercenary favourites? And whether, on the whole, their public and private conduct tended more to diffuse religious principle, and sanction Christian virtue, or to lend support to fashionable profligacy, and to undermine national morality?

At the same time it is to be remembered, that they will be judged by that *omniscient* Being, who sees the secret bent and hidden inclinations of the heart; and who knows that the best prince cannot accomplish all the good he wishes, nor prevent all the evil he disapproves:—by that *merciful* Being, who will recompense pure desires and upright intentions, even where providential obstacles prevented their being carried into execution—by that *compassionate* Being, who sees their difficulties, observes their trials, weighs their temptations, commisserates their dangers, and takes most exact cognizance of circumstances, of which no human judge can form an adequate idea. Assured, as we are, that this gracious method of reckoning will be extended to all, may we not be confident, that it will be peculiarly applied, where the case most expressly stands in need of it? And may we not rest persuaded, that if there is a spectacle which our Almighty Ruler beholds with peculiar complacency on earth, and will recompense with a crown of distinguished brightness in heaven, it is a SOVEREIGN DOING JUSTLY, LOVING MERCY, AND WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD.

But is religion to be pursued by princes only as a guide of conduct, a law by which they are to live and act: as a principle which, if cultivated, will qualify them for eternal felicity? These are invaluable benefits, but they do not *wholly* express all that princes in particular need from religion.—*They*, in an eminent degree, require consolation and support for this life, as well as a title to happiness in the life to come. *They*, above all human beings, need some powerful resource to bear them up against the agitations and the pressures, to which their high station inevitably exposes them.

To whom on this earth are troubles and heartachs so sure to be multiplied, as to princes, especially to those of superior understanding and sensibility? Who, of any other rank are exposed to such embarrassing trials, such difficult dilemmas? We speak not merely of those unfortunate monarchs, who have undergone striking vicissitudes, or who have been visited with extraordinary calamities; but of such also whom the world would rather agree to call prosperous and happy:—Yet let him who doubts this general truth, read the accounts given by all our historians of the last years of king William, and the last months of queen Anne; and then let him pronounce what could be more trying, than those disappointments and disgusts which sunk into the very soul of the one, or those cares and agitations which finally destroyed the peace of the other.

If there be then any secret in the nature of things, and clearly infallible remedy by which such distresses may be assuaged, by which self-command, self-possession, and even self-enjoyment may be secured in the midst of the greatest trials to which mortality is liable,—would not this be an object to which the view of princes, even above all the rest of mankind, should be directed; and in comparison of which, they might justly hold cheap all the honours of their birth, and all the prerogatives of their rank?

Christian piety, when real in itself, and when thoroughly established in the heart and in the habits, *is* this secret. When the mind is not only conscientiously, but affectionately religious; when it not only fears God, as the Almighty Sovereign, but loves and confides in him, as the all-gracious Father, not merely inferred to be such, from the beauty and benignity apparent in the works of nature, but rationally understood to be such from the discoveries of divine grace in the word of God;—and let us add, no less rationally felt to be such, from the transforming influence of that word upon the heart: then, acts of devotion are no longer a penance, but a resource, and a refreshment; insomuch that the voluptuary would as soon relinquish those gratifications for which he lives, as the devout Christian would give up his daily intercourse with his Maker. But it is not in stated acts merely that such devotion lives,—it is an habitual sentiment which diffuses itself through the whole of life, purifying, exalting and tranquilizing every part of it, smoothing the most rugged paths,—making the yoke of duty easy, and the burden of care light. It is a perennial spring in the very centre of the heart, to which the wearied spirit betakes itself for refreshment and repose.

In this language there is no enthusiasm. It is in spite of the cold raillery of the sceptic, the language of truth and soberness.—The Scriptures ascribe to Christian piety this very efficacy; and every age and nation furnish countless instances of its power to raise the human mind to a holy heroism, superior to every trial! 'Were there not,' says the sober and dispassionate Tillotson, 'something *real* in the principles of religion, it is impossible that they should have so remarkable and so regular an effect, to support the mind in every condition, upon so great a number of persons, of different degrees of understanding, of all ranks and conditions, young and old, learned and unlearned, in so many distant places, and in all ages of the world, the records whereof have come down to us. I say so real, and so frequent, and so regular an effect as this, cannot with any colour of reason, be ascribed either to blind chance or mere imagination, but must have a real and regular, and uniform cause, proportionable to so great and general an effect.'*

We are persuaded that if the subject of this chapter be considered with an attention equal to its importance every other virtue will spring up, as it were spotaneously, in the mind, and a high degreee of excellence, both public and private,

* Sermon XI.

be instinctively pursued. In such a case, how happy would be the distinguished individual, and how inconceivably benefited and blessed would be the community!

Pious sovereigns are at all times, the richest boon which heaven can bestow on a country. The present period makes us more than ever sensible of their importance. A period in which law has lost its force, rank its distinction, and order its existence; in which ancient institutions are dissolving, and new powers, of undescribed character, and unheard of pretension, are involving Europe in contests and convulsions, of which no human foresight can anticipate the end. In what manner *we* may be affected by this unprecedented state of things, what perils *we* may have to face, what difficulties to struggle with, or what means of final extrication may be afforded us, it is not in man to determine. But certain it is, that even in the most threatening circumstances, the obvious, unaffected, consistent piety of the sovereign will do more to animate and unite a British public, than the eloquence of a Demosthenes, or the songs of a Tyrtæus; and it will be as sure a pledge of eventful success, as either the best disciplined armies or the most powerful navies. Who can say how much we are indebted for our safety hitherto to the blessing of a king and queen who have distinguished themselves above all the sovereigns of their day, by strictness of moral conduct and by reverence for religion? May their successors, to the latest posterity, improve upon, instead of swerving from their illustrious example

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CHRISTIAN MORALS.

In moral actions, Divine law holdeth exceedingly the law of Reason to guide a man's life; but in supernatural it alone guideth.—*Hooker.*

As a slight memorial of sincere esteem and cordial friendship, this little sketch of

CHRISTIAN MORALS

Is, with strict propriety, Inscribed

TO THE REV. THOMAS GISBORNE,

Of Yoxall Lodge;

IN HIS WRITINGS AND IN HIS LIFE, A CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN MORALIST

PREFACE.

Mr. Pope, in his Essay on Criticism, has asserted, that the 'last and greatest art' of literary composition is 'the art to blot.' With a full conviction of the difficulty and the duty of this art, the Author of the following pages ventures to insist, even in contradiction to this high authority, that there is, in writing, an art still more rare, still more slowly learned, still more reluctantly adopted—*the art to stop.*

But when shall this difficult, but valuable, art be resorted to? At what precise moment shall we begin to reduce so wholesome a theory to practice? It may be answered—at the period when time may reasonably be suspected to have extinguished the small particle of fire which the fond conceit of the author might tempt him to fancy he once possessed.

But how is he to ascertain this critical moment of extinction? His own eyes, always dim in the discernment of his own faults, may have become quite blind. His friends are too timid, or too tender, to hazard the perilous intimation. If his enemies, always kindly ready to perform this neglected office of friendship, proclaim the unwelcome truth, they are probably not believed. The public, then, who are neither governed by the misleadings of affection, nor influenced by the hostility of hatred, would seem to be the proper arbiters, the court from whose decision there should lie no appeal.

But if, through generous partiality to good intentions, or habitual kindness to long acquaintance, that the public, instead of checking, continue to cherish, the efforts which they have been accustomed to indulge, and the author be tempted still to persist in writing, may he not be in imminent danger of wearing out the good humour of his protectors, by a successive reproduction of himself—of abusing their kindness, by the vapid exhibition of an exhausted intellect?

May the writer of the following pages, without incurring too heavily the imputation of vanity, be permitted to observe, that there is a sense in which the favour she has uniformly experienced is honourable to that public who have conferred it? Their indulgence has never been purchased

by flattery, their support has never been in payment for softening errors that require, not to be qualified, but combated; has never been a reward for incense offered to the passions, for sentiments accommodated to whatever appeared to be defective tn any reigning opinion, in any prevailing practice. They have received with approbation unvarnished truth, and even borne with patience bold remonstrance. In return, she is willing to hope, that she has paid them a more substantial respect, by this hazardous sincerity, than if she had endeavoured to conciliate their regard by indirect arts and unworthy adulation.

Next to injure any reader, her deepest regret would be to offend him; but when the questions agitated are of momentous concern, would not disguising truth, or palliating error, be, as to the intention, the worst of injuries, however powerless the writer might be in making a bad intention effectively mischievous? Sincere, therefore, as would be her concern, if any stroke of her pen

Should tend to make one worthy man her foe,

yet the feeling of having contributed to mislead a single youthful mind, by the suppression of a right, or the establishment of a false principle, would be more painful than any censures which an imprudent honesty might draw down upon her.

If the humble work now presented to the world, be of little use to the reader, the writer is willing to hope it may not be altogether unprofitable to herself. If it induce her more strenuously to cultivate the habit of rendering speculation practical, if it should dispose her to adopt more cordially what she is so prompt to recommend, she will then have turned to some little account the hours of pain and suffering under which it has been composed.

She does not, however, absurdly presume to plead pain and suffering as an apology for defects in a work which she was at liberty not to have undertaken; for, with whatever other evils sickness may be chargeable, it imposes on no one the necessity of adding one more to the countless catalogue of indifferent books.

Barley Wood, December, 10th, 1812

CHRISTIAN MORALS.

CHAP. I.

On the writers of pious books.

All the things in this world carry in them such evident marks of imperfection, are so liable to be infected with error, good is separated from evil by such slight partitions, and the deflection from what is right is so easy, that even undertakings which should seem most exempt from danger are yet insecure in their conduct, and uncertain in their issue. Writing a soundly-religious book might seem to put in the claim of an exempt case; but does experience prove that the exemption is infallible? The employment is good, the motive is likely to be pure; the work may be unexceptionable in its tendency, and useful in its consequences. But is it always beneficial to the writer in the proportion in which he intends it to be profitable to the reader? Even if the reader, is his own improvement always the leading aim? Does a critical spirit never diminish the benefit which the book was calculated to convey? If he is convinced by the more essential truths it imparts, is not some trivial disagreement of opinion, in a matter on which persons may differ without any charge against the piety of either, made to defeat all the ends of improvement! Is not an insignificant, perhaps an ill founded objection, sufferod to invalidate the merit of the whole work! Is not this eagerly detected fault triumphantly kept in the fore-ground, while all that is valuable is overlooked and its efficacy defeated; the criticism being at once intended to give prominence to the error of the writer and the sagacity of the critic? Another reader is probably searching for brilliancy when he should be looking for truth, or he is only seeking a confirmation of his own opinions, when he should have been looking for their correction.

As to the writer, is he not in danger of being absorbed in the mechanical part of his work, till religious composition dwindles into a mere secular operation? May he not be diverted from his main object by an over-attention to elegance, to correctness, to ornament;—all which indeed are necessary; for if he would benefit he must be read, if he would be read he must please, if he would please he must endeavour to excel;—but may he not, in taking some, take too much pains to please, and so become less solicitous to benefit, to the injury both of his reader and himself? May not the very lopping and pruning his work, the flowers which he is anxiously sticking into it, the little decorations with which he is setting off those parts which he fears may be thought dry and dull, raise a sensation in his mind not unlike that which a vain beauty feels in tricking out her person? May he not, by too much confidence in his own powers, be blind to errors obvious to all but himself; or else may he not use the file too assiduously, and by over-labour in smoothing the asperities of his style, diminish the force of his meaning, and polish honest vigour into unprofitable elegance?

Some indeed have been so indulgent to authors under their many difficulties, as to allow them a certain mixture of inferior excitement, as an under help to assist such motives as are more pure. If they did not feel a little too full of their work, when it was under their hand, it has been said, they would not devote to it the full force of their mind. This anxiety, or rather this absorption, it is presumed, lasts no

longer than till the immediate object is accomplished. It retreats indeed, but waits for the author, seizes him again with undiminished force on his next undertaking. If he fancied that his former subject was all in all while his mind was intent upon it, that preference, like the fondness of an animal for its young, which is lost when they no longer need its fostering care, is transferred to the next.

As this ardour in a rightly-turned mind will not be sufficiently durable to ripen into vanity, but will cool as soon as the end for which it was exerted is answered; it will not materially injure the conscientious writer; for he will probably, when the impetus is taken off, as much undervalue his work, as he had before over-rated it. But woefully deficient in humility is that author, whose enthusiasm does not subside, when it is no longer necessary to keep alive the spirit of his undertaking! Convicted indeed will he be of vanity, who persists in thinking his work as glowing, as when, with a judgment dazzled by his ardour, he viewed it hot, and fresh-drawn from the furnace!

But perhaps when a man engages in any little service, if he did not in some degree exaggerate its value, in his hope of its utility, he would want one motive for attempting it. Is it not therefore a smaller evil that he should a little magnify its importance to his imagination, than that complete hopelessness should totally deter him from all enterprise? Natural indolence is in many, too powerful a subduer even of religious exertion, to allow them to work without hope. If hope flatters, she at least supports; thus something is achieved which else would not have been done at all. Again, the timid writer forsees that many objections may be raised to his work. This would amount to a disqualifying dejection, did he not take comfort in the chance that his censors may possibly disagree among themselves as to the points deserving criticism, and that one may even commend what another condemns. Thus his mind is kept in a just equilibrium; without the expectation of censure, he would be vain; without some hope of approbation, even the purity of his intention might not always secure him from despondency.

But though no mixed motives or human feelings in the author ought to interfere with those of the reader, who has only to do with the book, and not with the man, it is of no small moment to himself, that both feelings and motives be pure. It is of the last importance that he do not impose on himself the belief, that he has only the honour of religion at heart, when literary renown, or victory over an adversary, may be the predominating principle. He will also be careful that his best endowments be not converted into implements of injury; he will be cautious that his learning, which is so useful to arm his zeal, do not help to encumber it; that his prudence, which is so necessary to moderate, do not extinguish it.

But if he comes off clear from these temptations, other and greater lurk behind. He should bear in mind, that in composing a religious work for the public, he is producing the best part of himself: that he is probably exhibiting himself to others as much better than he is; for whatever be the faults of his own character, it is his bounden duty to conduct his reader to the highest approach to excellence. Independent of his general defects, he is at least carefully keeping out of sight every vain thought which may have stolen upon him while writing, every evil temper which may have assailed him, every temptation to indulge too ardent a wish that his book may procure praise for himself, as well as benefit to his readers. To flatter himself inordinately on this head, as well as in over-anticipating the great effects it will produce, is not, perhaps, the smallest of his dangers. That very self knowledge which he has perhaps been inculcating on others, would preserve him from an undue estimation both of himself and his book.

It was the sneer of a witty, but discouraging satyrist, that, 'To mend the world 's a vast design.' It is, indeed, a design from which the purity of his motive may not always secure the humility of the author. Yet modestly to aim at ameliorating that little portion of it which lies within his immediate sphere, is a duty out of which he should not be laughed by wits and epigramatists. Instead of indulging unfounded hopes of improbable effects, the Christian writer will be humbled at the mortifying reflection, what great and extensive evil the most insignificant bad men may effect, while so little comparative good can be accomplished by the best. But it is to be regretted, that even religion is no sure protection against the intrusion of vanity, that it does not always secure its possessor from overrating his own agency, from fondly calculating on the unknown benefits which, by his projected work, he is preparing for mankind. A pious Welch minister, many years ago, being about to publish a sermon, previously consulted the writer of these pages how many thousand copies he ought to print. He felt not a little shocked at her advising him to reduce his thousands to hundreds, scores she did not dare advise. As she had foreseen, not half a dozen were sold, except a few, charitably taken off his hands by his friends. At her return soon after, from the metropolis, he hastened to her with all the ardour of impatience, and seriously inquired, whether she had observed any material reformation at the court end of the town, since the publication of the discourse.

Among the many unsuspected but salutary checks to the vanity of a pious writer, it will not be the least, that his very popularity may make the intrinsic value of his work questionable; that he may be indebted for its favourable reception, not to its excellencies, but its defects, not to the deep, but to the superficial views he has taken of religion, that it may be more acceptable only because it is less searching; that if he has pleased, it may be owing to his having been more cautious than faithful. If there is reason to suspect that success arises from his having skimmed the surface of truth, when he ought to have penetrated its depths, that he has reconciled the reader to Christianity and to himself by a disingenious discretion, by trimming between God and the world, by concealing truths he ought to have brought forward, or by palliat-

ing those he durst not disavow: popularity thus obtained will afford ground of humiliation rather than of triumph. In avoiding these, and all similar errors, he will also not fail to bear in mind, that He who gave the talents, gave also the right bent to the use of them, and that, therefore, he has no more ground for boasting of the application than of the possession.

When he is called upon by the nature of his subject to expatiate strongly on this vice, or to point out the danger of that error, does he never feel a sort of conscious superiority to certain individuals of his acquaintance, who may be infected with either, and, for a moment, be tempted to sit rather in the seat of the scorner, than in that of the counsellor? On such occasions, there is nothing which he will more carefully watch, than the temper of his own mind. When duty compels him to be severe against any false opinion, or wrong practice, he will be cautious not to mix with his just censure, any feeling of disdain, any sentiment of indignation, against any individual whom he may bear in mind; nor will he indulge the unworthy wonder how such or such a person will be mortified at the exposure of a fault to which he is addicted. Nor will he harbour in his bosom an uncharitable vehemence against those whom the reproof may suit, nor a secret self-complacent certainty, that if *any thing* can do them good, this must do it; that though they hear not Moses and the Prophets, they cannot but listen to his pointed admonitions—that they can never stand out against such persuasions as he has to offer—never resist such arguments as he has prepared for their conviction.

But what is still a more serious danger, has he never been tempted to overlook his own faults while he has been exposed to those of others; and this, though the failing he is condemning, may be peculiarly his own? With just indignation against the offences he is reproving, has he never once forgotten to mingle tender compassion for the offender, remembering, that he himself is sinful dust and ashes; that he also stands in need of infinite mercy, and has been only rescued by that mercy from being on a level with the worst objects of his just disapprobation.

It would, notwithstanding, be the highest degree of unfairness, to prefer a charge of injustice, hypocrisy, or even inconsistency, against an author, because his life in some respects, falls short of the strictness of his writings. It is a disparity almost inseparable from this state of frail mortality. He may have fallen into errors, and yet deserve to have no heavier charge brought against him than he has brought against others. Infirmity of temper, inequality of mind, a heart though fearing to offend God, yet not sufficiently dead to the world;—these are the lingering effects of sin imperfectly subdued, in a heart which yet longs, prays, and labours for a complete deliverance from all its corruptions.

When a pious writer treats on any awful topic, he writes under a solemn conviction of its vast importance; he trembles at the idea of not being entirely faithful, of not being valiant for the truth, of not being honestly explicit, of not declaring the whole counsel of God. His own heart is deeply impressed with the dignity of his subject, and he deprecates the thought of shrinking from the boldest avowal of every truth, or of withholding the most powerful enforcement to the practice of every virtue. He is apprehensive lest, on the one hand, when he assails vice or error, he should appear to indulge a violent or vindictive spirit, and be magisterially lifting his fallible self into the chair of authority; lest his attack on the vice might be construed into uncharitableness to the man. On the other hand, he is fearful lest by being more forbearing he should be less upright; lest if he tried to soften he should deceive; lest, by indulging too much a spirit of conciliation, he should compromise truth for human favour.—Honest though imperfect, sincere though fallible, he endeavours to bring his principles, his faith, and his convictions, into full operation; he warmly declares what he cordially feels, and faithfully testifies what he firmly believes.

But when he comes to act, he is sometimes brought to be too keenly sensible of the very fault in himself, against which he has been cautioning others; deeply does he lament that he feels strong remains in himself of that corruption of which it was not the less his duty to direct his attacks. Some temptation presses him, some infirmity cleaves to him. These unsubdued frailties prove that he is a man, but they do not prove that he is a hypocrite. The truth is, the religious writer is sometimes thought worse than other men, because his book was considered as a pledge that he should be better. It was expected that the faults he described he would avoid; the passions he had blamed he would suppress; the tempers he had exposed he would have subdued. Perhaps it will commonly be found that the reader had expected too much and the writer had done too little.

The writer on religious topics is however the person who of all others ought to watch himself most narrowly. He has given a public pledge of his principles. He has held out a rule, to which, as others will be looking with a critical eye to discover how far his conduct falls short of it, so he should himself constantly bear in mind the elevation of his own standard; and he will be more circumspect from the persuasion, that not only his own character but that of religion itself will suffer by his departure from it. The consciousness of the inferiority of his practice to his principles, if those principles are truly scriptural, will furnish him with new motives to humility. The solemn dread lest this inconsistency should be produced against him at the last day, is a fresh incentive to higher exertions, stirs him up to augmented vigilance, quickens him to more intense prayer. He experiences at once the contradictory feeling of dreading to appear better than he really is, by the high tone of piety in his compositions, or of making others worse by lowering that tone in order to bring his professions nearer to the level of his life. Perhaps the most humiliating moment he can ever experience is, when by an accidental glance at some former work he is reminded how little he himself has profited by the very arguments with which he may have successfully combated some error of the reader; when he feels how

much his own heart is still under the dominion of that wrong temper of which he has forcibly exposed the turpitude to the conviction of others.

There is, however, no personal reason which could ever justify his holding out an inferior standard. If there is any point in which he eminently excels, he has the best of all possible reasons for pressing it upon others—his own experience of its excellence. If there be any in which he unhappily fails, he is clearly justified in recommending it from the humbling sense of his own deficiency in it. Thus he will in either case enforce truth with equal energy, from causes diametrically opposite. Is it not then obvious that as there is no vanity in insisting on a virtue because the writer possesses it, so there is no hypocrisy in recommending a quality because he himself is destitute of it?

But if, through the so frequently alleged imperfection attached to humanity, christian writers do not always attain to the excellence they suggest, let us not therefore infer that their principles are defective, their aims low, or their practical attainments mean. Let us not suspect that it is not the endeavour of their life, as much as the desire of their heart, to maintain a conduct which shall not discredit their profession. Above all, let us be cautious of concluding that they do not believe what they teach, because they have passions like other men; provided we observe them struggling with those passions, and making a progress in their conquest over them, though that progress be impeded by natural infirmity, though it be obstructed by occasional irritation. The triumphant detector of the discordance between the author and his book knows not the secret regrets, hears not the fervent prayers, witnesses not the penitential sorrows, which a deep sense of this disagreement produces in the self-abasing heart. To instance in a familiar case:—In the heat of conversation with the author, he has probably marked an impatient word, a hasty expression, a rash judgment; these he treasures up, and produces against him; but he does not hear, in the writer's nightly review of the errors of that day, his self rebuke for this unsubdued impetuosity, his resolutions against it, the earnest prayer which perhaps at this moment is carrying forward the gradual subjugation of his temper.

Yet his reputation might suffer in another way; for if the critic could hear these humbling confessions of the writers in question, he would be ready to conclude that they were 'Sinners above all the Galileans.' Whereas the truth most probably is, that they are so alive to the perception of the evil of their own hearts, that things which would be slight faults in the estimation of the accuser, to them appear grave offences. Things which they lament as evils of magnitude, would to the less tender conscience be impalpable, imperceptible. For instance,—While the caviller would call even the omission of prayer a venial fault; *they* would call a heartless prayer a sin; where the one would think all was well if the literal performance had not been neglected, the other would be uneasy under the exterior observance, if he felt that the spirit had not accompanied the form.

The reprover might even accuse the serious Christian of absurdity, should he have overheard him humbling himself for something which was obviously a virtue. He was not, however, so preposterously humble, as to make the virtue the ground of his regret—he was abasing himself for some vanity, which like an excrescence had grown out of it, some inattention which like a poison had mixed with it. When a humble man meditates on his vices, and an irreligious man on his virtues, the vices of the one might be sometimes deemed as unsubstantial as the virtues of the other actually are.

The writer of good books, in common with other authors, is exposed to one danger from which other men are exempt, that of being so immediately the object of his own attention. This may lead him to be too full of himself. His intellect is even more constantly before his eyes than the form and face of the beauty are before her's. But if in this exercise he may be tempted to think too well of his understanding, the mischief will be counteracted by the advantage which such a close view may bring to his heart. The faults he reprehends in general, will bring his own faults more forcibly before him, and it will be a humbling consideration which he will not fail to press home on himself, to reflect, that he is better able to penetrate into the recesses of the erring hearts of others, from the sympathies of his own. Repeated and successful pains have been taken by some popular wits,* in whom levity has answered the end of malice, to lower the value of pious instruction, by exposing the discrepancy between the exhortation and the exhorter. They have ingeniously invented cases and situations in which the clergyman is preaching powerfully and efficaciously on the duty of submission to the divine will; immediately after which, they contrive to betray him into a paroxysm of overwhelming impatience at some great domestic calamity of his own. This as it tends to make the infirmity of sincere Christians a matter of triumph, could only have been done with a view to make them ridiculous; a laugh is cheaply though not very honourably raised, and the insignificance or hollowness of religious instruction perhaps indelibly stamped on the mind of the young reader. But supposing the circumstances to have been real, ought the frail affections, ought the conscious infirmity of these good men to have let them to withhold from their audiences the necessity of christian resignation? Such instances of natural feeling in certain stages of a progressive piety, neither prove religion to be powerless, nor its professor deceitful. Was the fervent, but fallible apostle, who in a moment of infirmity denied his master, a hypocrite, when he said, 'though all the world should be offended, yet will not I?'

Yet is this captious spirit an additional reason why the pious writer should guard against excesses in feeling, which, if the reader could witness, he would exultingly reiterate the vulgar but melancholy truism: *How much easier it is to preach than to practice!* How gladly would he have brought the conduct to confront the counsel, and have missed all the benefit of the discourse, by the disclosure of the failing!

* Goldsmith Fielding, &c. &c.

But allowing the worst—granting that the writer is not in all points exemplary; if we resolve never to read a work of instruction because the author had faults, Lord Bacon's inexhaustible mind of intellectual wealth might have still lain unexplored. Luther, the man to whom the protestant world owes more than to any other uninspired being, might remain unread, because he is said to have wanted the meekness of Melancthon. Even the divine instructions conveyed in the book of Ecclesiastes would have been written in vain.

It is not necessary that the writer under consideration should, like the sacred penman, criminate himself. Their ingenuous self-abasement added weight to the truth of their general testimony, and was doubtless directed by the holy Spirit, as well for this purpose, as for the humiliation of the offending historian. But above all it is calculated to show that the renovation of hearts so imperfect was the work of the Spirit of God.

Though the pious writer in these days is not called upon to exercise this self-disparaging egotism, yet let not his silence on this head be attributed to a desire that he may be thought a better man than Moses, who heroically perpetuated the memory of that offence which was an inhibition to his entering the land of promise—nor than David, the recorder of his own sins, the enormity of which could only be exceeded by the intensity of his repentance—nor than saint Paul, who published himself to have been a blasphemer and a persecutor. If the best men among us have, through the preventing grace of God, been preserved from the signal offences of prophets and apostles, they will themselves be the foremost to acknowledge how, beyond all comparison, they are below them, in that devotedness of spirit, that contempt of earthly things, and that annihilation of self, which so eminently characterized those inspired servants of God.

But suppose we were to go farther—even if it could be proved that some individual charge had *not* been altogether unfounded. Even this possible evil in the man, would not invalidate the truths he has been teaching. Balaam, though a bad man, prophesied truly. Erasmus, whose piety is almost as doubtless, as his wit and learning were unquestionable, yet by throwing both into the right scale, was a valuable instrument in effecting the great work in which he was concerned. Erasmus powerfully assisted the reformation, though it is not quite so clear that the reformation essentially benefited Erasmus.

If then the writer advances unanswerable arguments in the cause of truth, if he impressively enforces its practical importance, his character, even if defective, should not invalidate his reasoning. Though we allow that even to the reader it is far more satisfactory when the life illustrates the writing, yet we must never bring the conduct of the man as any infallible test of the truth of this doctrine. Allow this, and the reverse of the proposition will be pleaded against us. Take the opposite case. Do we ever produce certain moral qualities which Hobbes, Bayle, Hume, and other sober sceptics possessed, as arguments for adopting their opinions?—Do we infer as a necessary consequence, that their sentiments are sound, because their lives were not flagitious?

But though it is an awful possibility, that the same work may at once promote God's glory, and prove a danger to the instrument that promotes it—that the opulence of the very mind which is advancing religion, may be used by the owner to his hurt—that he may be so absorbed in it as a business, that he may lose sight of his end—that he may neglect personal, while he is advancing public religion—or be so anxious for the success of his work, that he cannot commit the event to heaven: let us thankfully profit by the truths he teaches: bless God that he has been useful to us; and pray that his errors may not be imputed to him.

Many a sincere Christian will confess that when he is writing in an animated strain in the cause of religion, there are moments in which, from imbecility of mind or infirmity of body, or failure of animal spirits, while he is promoting the spiritual interests of others, he is inwardly lamenting his own deadness to the very things on which he is insisting. He however perseveres; like the army of Gideon, 'faint yet pursuing,' he suffers not the feeling to obstruct the act, till, as a reward for his perseverance, the act brings back the feeling. Were it suspected that some of his most approved pages were written under this declension of zeal, what a clamour would be raised against his inconsistency, when his merit—if we dare use the word merit—consists in overcoming the languor of his spirit, and in acting as if he felt it not. His depression may in fact have been augmented by his humility. He has trembled lest the solemnity with which he has been calling upon others, should not stir up his own feelings; lest the arguments which were intended to alarm the reader, should leave his own heart cold and unaffected.

While it is of the nature of scientific principles to adapt themselves only to one particular bent of mind, and of the inventive powers to address persons of imagination only: it is the character of Christianity, and should be the aim of the Christian writer, to accommodate their instructions to every class of society, to every degree of intellect, to every quality of mind, to every cast of temper. Christianity does not interfere with any particular form of study, any political propensity, any professional engagement, any legitimate pursuit. It claims to incorporate itself with the ideas of every intelligent mind which lies open to receive it; it infuses itself, when not repelled, into the character of every individual, as it originally assimilated itself to that of every government, without sacrificing any thing of its specific quality, without requiring any mind of a peculiar make for its reception.

Without altering its properties by any infusions of his own, a judicious writer will always consider how he may render it most acceptable to the capacity of the general recipient. To exclude reason from religion, he knows is not the way to attract argumentative men to inquire into its truth;—to exclude elegance from its exhibition, is not the probable method to invite

men of taste to speculate on its beauty. If however the writer possess little of the graces which embellish truth, if he cannot adorn it with those charms which, though they add nothing to its lustre, yet attract to its contemplation; still plain sense and unaffected piety may contribute to the production of a work which may prove useful to a large and valuable proportion of readers. But here if genius is not essential, good taste is never to be dispensed with. A sound judgment will be requisite to prevent piety from being repulsive to readers who have been accustomed to view other intellectual subjects exhibited in all the properties of which they are severally susceptible. Let them not see a subject of this transcendent importance, injured by any debasing mixture, disfigured by any coarseness of language, nor degraded by any vulgar associations.

On the other hand, while some object so strenuously against the introduction of the affections into religion, what are we to understand from it, but that in the opinion of the objectors, a man will write the better because he does not feel his subject,—that he will teach religion more safely to others, from not having felt its influence on his own heart,—that he will make a deeper impression by writing from books than from himself, or rather that making an impression at all is a dangerous thing,—that it is of the nature of enthusiasm, proceeding from it, and productive of it!—that therefore it is better that the reader should not be impressed, but only informed.

But the sound and sober Christian takes the best precaution against infusing a fanatical spirit by not possessing it. He cannot communicate the distemper of which he is not sick. He cautiously avoids it on a double ground. He knows that enthusiasm and superstition are not only mischievous in their nature, but that they furnish the profane with a plausible argument against religion itself. He remembers, and applies the observation, that to some pagan poets, especially Lucretius, these errors supplied Atheism with her most powerful arms. But though he allows that enthusiasm is dangerous, he continues to write like one who knows that it is not the exclusive danger of the age; like one who is convinced that frenzy is not the only distemper in our spiritual bills of mortality: like one whose heart is warmed, not by animal pulsation, but by those quickening oracles of truth, which carry in them 'the demonstration of the Spirit and of power;' like one who feels that religion is not a misleading fire, but an animating principle which at once enlarges his views, elevates his aims, and ennobles his character.

But to return to the reader. If we had no higher reason to aim at improvement in piety, one would almost think that the mere feelings of gratitude and good-nature might tempt to show our affection to our pious benefactors, by profiting from their exhortations, their councils, their persuasions. It might almost touch a heart dead to superior considerations, to reflect how many departed worthies have wasted their strength, as to us, in vain. Among the witnesses who will appear against us in the great day of account, *they* will stand the foremost. Let us tremble as we figure to ourselves our unwilling accusers in that band of holy men, who earnestly sought to draw us, not to themselves, but to those treasures of inspiration, of which they were the faithful expositors; to the Prophets and Apostles,—'to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to God the judge of all.'

And is it not a cruel return to refuse those who still meekly wait the effect of their labours upon earth, the honest gratification of seeing that we have derived some little advantage from their exertions? Let us show them that they have not offered up the fervent prayers which doubtless accompanied their unwearied labours to no end. While so many saints are now rejoicing in heaven, in the society of those whom their holy labours were made instrumental in bringing thither; let us not give those who are still zealously devoting their talents to the same glorious purpose upon earth, sad cause to lament the total inefficacy of their endeavours—to regret that they are sent to them who will not hear, or who remain as if they had not heard—to suspect that if we do give them a patient hearing, it is for the sake of their style, their rhetoric, their good taste; but that when their eloquence opposes our corruptions, when their arguments cross our inclinations, when their persuasions trench upon our passions, or their remonstrances interfere with our vanity, we are insensible to the voice of the charmer; or if we forgive their piety for the sake of their talents, we seldom go further than forgiveness.

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CHAP. II.

On Providence.

It is not easy to conceive a more deplorable state of mind, than to live in a disbelief of God's providential government of the world. To be threatened with troubles, and to see no power which can avert them; to be surrounded with sorrows, and discern no hand which can redress them; to labour under oppression or calumny, and believe there is no friend to relieve, and no judge to vindicate us; to live in a world, of which we believe its ruler has abdicated the throne, or delegated the direction to chance; to suspect that he has made over the triumph to injustice, and the victory to impiety; to suppose that we are abandoned to the casualties of nature, and the domination of wickedness; to behold the earth a scene of disorder, with no superintendent to regulate it; to hear the storms beating, and see the tempests spreading desolation around, with no influence to direct, and no wisdom to control them: all this would render human life a burden intolerable to human feeling. Even a heathen, in one of those glimpses of illumination which they seemed occasionally to catch, could say, *it would not be worth while to live in a world which was not governed by Providence.*

But, as soon as we clearly discern the mind which appoints, and the hand which governs, all events, we begin to see our way through

them: as soon as we are brought to recognize God's authority, and to confide in his goodness, we can say to our unruly hearts, what he said to the tempestuous waves, *Peace, be still.* Though all is perplexity, we know who can reduce confusion into order: once assured of the protection of the Supreme Intelligence, we shall possess our souls in patience, and resign our will with submission. As soon as this conviction is fully established, we become persuaded that a being of infinite love would never have placed us in a scene beset with so many trials, and exposed to so many dangers, had he not intended them as necessary materials by which, under his guidance, we are to work out our future happiness;—as so many warnings not to set up our rest here;—as so many incentives to draw us on in pursuit of that better state to which eternal mercy is conducting us through this thorny way.

To keep God habitually in view, as the end of all our aims, and the disposer of all events—to see him in all our comforts, to admire the benignity with which he imparts them—to adore the same substantial, though less obvious mercy, in our afflictions—to acknowledge at once the unwillingness with which he dispenses our trials, and the necessity of our suffering them—to view him in his bounties of creation, with a love which makes every creature pleasant—to regard him in his providential direction with a confidence which makes every hardship supportable—to observe the subserviency of events to his eternal purposes: all this solves difficulties otherwise insuperable, vindicates the divine conduct, composes the intractable passions, settles the wavering faith, and quickens the too reluctant gratitude.

The fabled charioteer, who usurped his father's empire for a day, is not more illustrative of *their* presumption, who, virtually snatching the reins of government from God, would involve the earth in confusion and ruin, than the denial which the ambitious supplicant received to his mad request, is applicable to the goodness of God in refusing to delegate his power to his creatures: *My son, the very tenderness I show in denying so ruinous a petition, is the purest proof that I am indeed thy father.*

Sounds to which we are accustomed, we fancy have a definite sense. But we often fancy it unjustly; for familiarity alone cannot give meaning to what is in itself unintelligible. Thus many words, without any determinate and precise meaning, pass current in common discourse. Some talk of those chimerical beings, nature, fate, chance, and necessity, as positively as if they had a real existence, and of almighty power and direction as if they had none.

In speaking of ordinary events as fortuitous, or as natural, we dispossess Providence of one half of his dominion. We assign to him the credit of great and avowedly supernatural operations, because we know not how else to dispose of them. For instance: We ascribe to him power and wisdom in the creation of the world, while we talk as if we thought the keeping it in order might be effected by an inferior agency. We sometimes speak as if we assigned the government of the world to two distinct beings: whatever is awful only, and out of the common course, we ascribe to God, as revolutions, volcanoes, earthquakes. We think the dial of Ahaz going backward, the sun stationary on Gibeon, marvels worthy of Omnipotence: but when we stop here, it is not virtually saying, that to maintain invariable order, unbroken regularity, perpetual uniformity, and systematic beauty in the heavens and the earth, does not exhibit equally striking proofs of infinite superintendence.

Many seem to ascribe to chance the common circumstances of life, as if they thought it would be an affront to the Almighty to refer them to him; as if it were unbecoming his dignity to order the affairs of beings whom he thought it no derogation of that dignity to create. It looks as if, while we were obliged to him for making us, we would not wish to encumber him with the care of us. But the gracious Father of the universal family thinks it no dishonour to watch over the concerns, to supply the wants, and dispose the lot of creatures who owe their existence to his power, and their redemption to his mercy. He did not create his rational subjects in order to neglect them, or to turn them over to another, a capricious, an imaginary power.

We do not it is true, so much arraign his general providence, as his particular appointments. We will allow the world to be nominally his, if he will allow us our opinion in respect to his management of certain parts of it. Now, that he should not put forth the same specific energy individually to direct as to create, is supposing an anomaly in the character of the all-perfect God.—Whatever was his design in the formation of the world and its inhabitants, the same reason would beyond a doubt, influence him in their superintendence and preservation.—David, in describing the simple grandeur of omnipotent benignity, sets us a beautiful pattern. He does not represent the belief of God's providential care as an effort, but describes our continual sustenance as the necessary unlaboured effect of infinite power and goodness. *He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness;* thus making our blessings rather, as it were, a result than an operation.

And as we are not under the divided control of a greater and a subordinate power, so neither are we, as the Persian mythology teaches, the subjects of two equal beings, each of whom distributes respectively good and evil according to his peculiar character and province. Nor are we the sport of the conflicting atoms of one school, nor of the fatal necessity of another. There is one omnipotent, omniscient, perfect, supreme Intelligence, who disposes of every person and of every thing according to the counsel of his own infinitely holy will. 'The help that is done upon earth, God doth it himself.' The comprehensive mind, enlightened by Christian faith, discovers the same harmony and design in the course of human events, as the philosopher perceives in the movements of the material system.

Without a thorough conviction of this most consolatory doctrine, what can we make of the events which are now passing before our eyes? What can we say to the perplexed state of an

almost desolated world? There is no way of disentangling the confusion but by seeing God in every thing. Not to adore his providence as having some grand scheme which he is carrying on, some remote beneficial end in view, some unrevealed design to accomplish, by means not only inscrutable, but seemingly contradictory, is practical atheism. To contemplate the events which distract the civilized world, the tyranny which tears up order and morality by the roots; to behold the calamities of some, the crimes of others—such blackness gathering over the heads of some countries, such tempests bursting over those of others—these scenes must subvert the faith, must extinguish the hope, of all who do not firmly believe that the same power which 'stilleth the raging of the sea and the noise of the waves,' can in his own good time also still *the madness of the people;* will in his appointed season enable us to say, 'And where is the fury of the oppressor?' He may, and we know not how soon, enable us to ask, 'Where is the man that made the earth to tremble—that did shake kingdoms—that made the world a wilderness that destroyed the cities thereof—that opened not the house of his prisoners?' Yes—disorganized as the state of the world appears to be, let us be assured that it is not turned adrift, that things are not left to go on at random. Though the people are rebellious, the Sovereign has not renounced his dominion over them. The most oppressive and destructive agents are his mysterious ministers: they are carrying on, though unconsciously, his universal plan—a plan, which though complicated is consistent; though apparently disorderly will be found finally harmonious.

In some pieces of mechanism we have observed different artists employed in different branches of the same machinery; in this division of labour, each man performs his allotted portion, in utter ignorance perhaps, not only of the portions assigned to the others, but also of the ultimate application of his own. Busy in executing his single pin, or spring, or wheel, it is no part of his concern to understand the work assigned to others, still less to comprehend the scheme of the master. But though the workman is ignorant how the whole is to be arranged, the machine would have been incomplete without his seemingly inconsiderable contribution. In the mean time, the master unites, by apt junctures and articulations, parts which were not known to be susceptible of connexion; combines the separate divisions without difficulty, because the several workmen have only been individually helping to accomplish the original plan which had previously existed in his inventive mind.

The prescience of God is among his peculiarly incommunicable attributes. Happy is it for us indeed that it *is* as incommunicable, for if any portion of it were imparted to us, how inconceivably would the distress of human life be aggravated! But if we allow his omniscience, we cannot doubt his Providence. He would not foresee contingencies, for which he could not provide. His attributes are in fact so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them. His omniscience foresees, his understanding, which is infinite, arranges, his sovereignty decrees, his omnipotence executes the purposes of his will.—His wisdom may see some things to be best for a while to answer certain temporary purposes, which would not be good for a continuance. When the present appointment shall have answered the end to which it was determined, a new one, to which that was preparatory, takes place. The two arrangements may appear to us not to be of a piece, to be even contradictory; while yet this determination and this succession are perfectly consistent in the mind of a being who sees all things at once, and calls things that are not as though they were God's views of all men and all events throughout all ages, is one clear, distinct, simultaneous view. Infinite knowledge takes in present, past, and future, in one comprehensive survey, pierces through all distance at a glance, and collects all ages into the focus of the existing moment.

Once thoroughly grounded and established in this faith and sense of the divine perfections, we shall never look upon any thing to be so monstrous or so minute, so insignificant or so exhorbitant, as to be out of the precincts and control of eternal Providence. We shall never reduce, if the allusion be forgiven, the powers of omnipotence to a level with that of some Indian rajah who has a territory too unwieldy for his management, or of an emperor of China who has more subjects than one monarch can govern.

We ask why evil rulers are permitted?—We answer, though rather mechanically, our own question, by acknowledging that they are the appointed scourges of divine displeasure. Yet God does not delegate his *authority* to the oppressor, though he employs him as his instrument of correction; he still keeps the reins in his own hand. And besides that an offending world stood in need of the chastisement, these black instruments who are thus allowed to ravage the earth, may be, in the scheme of Providence, unintentionally preparing the elements of moral beauty. When divine displeasure has made barren a fruitful land 'for the wickedness of them that dwell therein,' the ploughshare and the harrow, which are sent to tear up the unproductive soil, know not that they are providing for the hand of the sower, who is following their rude traces in order to scatter the seeds of future riches and fertility.

Or take the conflagration of a town.—They whose houses are burnt, are objects of our tenderest commiseration. The scene, if we beheld it, would alike excite our terror and our pity. But, after we have mourned over the devastation, and seen that despair is fruitless, at length necessity impels to industry; we see a new and fairer order of things arise; the convenience, symmetry, and beauty which spring out of the ashes make us eventually not only cease to regret the deformity and unsightliness to which they have succeeded, but almost reconcile us to the calamity which has led to the improvement.

Often have the earthquake, the hurricane, the bolt of heaven, kindling and throwing far and wide its baleful light on this earthly stage, realized in their ultimate effects this image. And we are reminded of a future general conflagration, 'when the elements shall melt with fervent

heat, and the earth itself shall be burned up,' which is to prove only the signal and the preparatory scene for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Let us, in every stage leading to this final 'restitution of all things,' wait with patience for its sure completion. Let us, in the mean time, give credit to the great Author of the book of Fate for the consistency of its catastrophe!

When we peruse the compositions of a human author, we look for unity and consistency in his whole plan; we expect connexion and relation between its several parts, and an entireness in the general combination. We are not so much delighted with a fine passage incidentally introduced, a short episode, of which we discern at once the rise and the end, and take in all the incidents and beauties at a single glance, as we are with the judgment which discovers itself in the distribution of the whole work, and the skill, not without difficulty discerned, which arranges, connects, and, as it were, links together the several divisions. Yet do we not sometimes presume to insinuate as if the great Author of all created nature cannot reduce the complexity of its parts into one consistent whole? Do we not intimate objections as if there were no concert, no agreement in the works of the Almighty mind? Do not the same persons who can speak in raptures of a perfect poem, a perfect scheme of reasoning, a perfect plan in architecture, yet presume to suspect that the concerns of the universe are carried on with less system, and on a more imperfect design, than the rude sketches of a frail creature, who is crushed before the moth?

But if we go so far as to leave to God the direction of the natural world, because we know not well, after all, to whom else to commit its management, yet we frequently make little scruple to take the government of the moral world into our own hands. If we consent to his ruling matter, we reluctantly allow that he governs mind. We reason as if we suspected that the passions of men lay beyond his controul, and that their vices have overturned his dominion. But we should particularly call to mind what is the daily language of our lips, not only that *His* is 'the kingdom,' but that the 'power' is the source, and 'the glory' the result of his administration. He does not, it is true, by an arbitrary compulsion of men's minds, rob them of that freedom by which they offend him, nor by a force on their liberty, prevent those sins and follies which, if he arbitrarily hindered, he would convert rational beings into mechanical ones; but he turns their sins and follies to such uses, that while by the voluntary commission of them they are bringing down destruction on their own heads, they are not impeding his purposes.

Nor does Providence, in his wide arrangements, exclude the operation of subordinate causes and motives, but allows them to assist the greater, and thereby to work his will; as subalterns in the battle contribute severally their share to the victory, while, like those inferior causes, they are compelled to keep their ranks, and not to aspire to the command. As we have a higher end, we must have a Supreme direction to our aims. Yet a lower end is sometimes made a means to a higher, and assists its object without usurping its place. Some who begin by abstaining from evil, or set about doing good from a principle not entirely pure, are graciously led to the principle by doing or forbearing the action; and are finally landed at the higher point, from beginnings far below those at which *we* might rashly have asserted they could only set out with any hope of success.

Though this may not very frequently occur, yet as it is by means God works, rather than by miracles; and as the world does not overflow with real piety, what a chaos would this earth become, if God did not permit inferior motives to operate to a certain degree for the general good! Many whom the utmost stretch of charity cannot induce us to believe that they are acting from the purest principles, are yet contributing to the comfort and good order of society. Though they are sober only from a regard to their health, yet their temperance affords a good example; though they are prudent from no higher motive than the love of money, yet their frugality keeps them within the same bounds as if they were influenced by a better motive; though they may be liberal only to raise their reputation, yet their liberality feeds the hungry; though they are public-spirited merely from ambition, yet their patriotism, by rousing the spirit of the country, saves it. If such right actions, performed from such low motives, can look for no future retribution;—if, being done without reference to the highest end, they do not advance the eternal interests of the doer, nor the glory of God, they are yet his instruments for promoting the good of others, both by utility and example. On this ground we may be thankful that there is so much refinement, generosity, and politeness among the higher orders of society, while we confess that tear away the action from its motive, sunder their virtue from its legitimate reference, the act and the virtue lose their present character and their ultimate reward.

The means by which an infinitely wise God often promotes the most important plans, are apt illustrations of the blindness and obliquity of man's judgment. May we be allowed to offer an instance or two, in which human wisdom would probably have taken a course, in the appointment of instruments and events, directly opposite to that pursued by infinite wisdom? What earthly judge, if he had been questioned as to means likely to produce one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity to unbelievers, but would have named an agreement between Jews and Christians, as its fullest corroboration? If we ourselves had an important cause depending—for instance, the ascertaining our right to a litigated estate;—If the success of the trial depended on the testimony of the witnesses, and on the authenticity of our titled deeds, whose testimony should we endeavour to obtain; into whose hands should we wish ourselves to be committed? According to all human prudence should we not desire witnesses who had no known hostility to us; should we not object to a jury of avowed enemies; and should we not refuse to lodge our records in the hands of our opponents?

But His wisdom, in whose sight ours is folly,

has seen fit to make one of the most striking proofs of the truth of Christianity depend on the living miracle of the enmity of the Jews; 'to them also were committed the oracles of God,' so that to both their ancient testimony and their present opposition we are to look for the most striking proofs of a religion they hold with perpetual hatred. And now that Christianity is actually made to stand upon such evidence, what test can be more satisfactory? Reason itself owns its validity; for what collusion can now be charged upon the concurrent witnesses of Christianity, when each party in court is decidedly at variance with the other? Who can rationally question the strength of that title which is contained in their genuine archives—that evidence resulting from their hereditary denial of facts, of which they persist to reverence the predictions? Where can we more confidently look for the truth of a religion they detest, than to the verifications conferred on it by their original history, their irreversible antipathy their actual condition, and existing character?

To venture another specimen. If *we* had presumed to point out instruments for the destruction of Jerusalem, we should probably have thought none so appropriate as Constantine; we might have supposed the first christian emperor would have been the fittest avenger of the Redeemer's blood. Omniscience selected for the awful retribution a pagan prince, a virtuous one it is true, but one who seems to have no personal interest in the business, one to whom Jews and Christians, as such, were alike indifferent. While this utter desolation was the obvious accomplishment of a prophecy, which was to be a lasting evidence of the truth of our religion, the choice of the destroyer was one of those 'secret things which belong to God,' and is only to be alleged as a proof that 'his ways are not our ways.'

We will advert to another event, the most important since the incarnation of him whose pure worship it has restored—the reformation. This occurrence is a peculiarly striking instance of our ignorance of the operations of supreme wisdom, and of the means which, to our short sight, seem fit or unfit for the accomplishment of his purposes. If ever the hand of providence was conspicuous as the meredian sun, it was so in this mighty work—it was so in the selection of apparently discordant instruments—it was so, in over-ruling the designs of some, to a purpose opposite to their intention, in making the errors of others contribute to the general end. If this grand scheme had been exposed to *our* review for advice, if *we* had been consulted in its formation and its progress, how should we have criticised both the plan and its conductors? How should we have censured some of the agents as inadequate, condemned others as ill chosen, rejected one as unsuited, another as injurious! One critic would have insisted that the vehemence of Luther would mar any enterprise it might mean to advance; that so impetuous a projector would inevitably obstruct the establishment of a religion of meekness. Another would have pronounced, that among the human faculties, wit was, of all others, the least likely to assist the cause of piety; yet did Erasmus, by his exquisite satires on the ignorance and superstition of the priests, as completely contradict this opinion, as Luther, by his magnanimity and heroic perseverance, triumphantly overturned the other. This inconsiderate, blustering Henry, the human counsellor would have said, will ruin the cause, by uniting his hostility to the reformers, with his inconsistent resistance to the papal power; and yet this cause, his very perverseness contributed to promote. Another censor would have been quite certain that the timid policy and cautious feeling of Charles the Wise would infallibly obstruct those measures which they were actually tending to advance. Who among us, if his opinion had been asked, would not have fixed on the pontiff of Rome and the emperor of the Turks, as the two last human beings to be selected for promoting the reformed religion? Who would have ventured to assert that the money raised by indulgences, through the profligate venality of Leo, for building St. Peter's in his own metropolis, was actually laying the foundation of every protestant church in Britain—in Europe—in the world? Who could have predicted, that the Imperial Mussulman, in banishing learning from his dominions, was preparing, as if by concert, an overwhelming antagonist to the sottish ignorance of the monks? All these things, separately considered, we, in our captious wisdom, should have pronounced calculated to produce effects directly contrary to the actual result; yet these ingredients, which had no natural affinity, amalgamated by the Almighty hand, were made to accomplish one of the most important works that infinite wisdom, working by human means, has ever effected.

CHAP. III.

Practical uses of the doctrine of Providence.

We do not sufficiently make the doctrine of Providence a practical doctrine.—That the present dark dispensations which afflict the earth are indications of Almighty displeasure few dispute; but having admitted the general fact, who almost does not ascribe the cause of offence to others? How few consider themselves as awfully contributing to draw down the visitation! We look with an exclusive eye to the abandoned and the avowedly profligate, and ascribe the whole weight of the divine indignation to their misdeeds. But we forget that when a sudden tempest threatened destruction to the ship going to Tarshish, in which there was only Jonah who feared God, those who inquired into the cause of the storm, found *him* to be the very man. The cause of the present desolating storm, as a pious divine observed of that which darkened his day, may as probably be the offences of professing christians, as the presumptuous sins of the bolder transgressor. This apprehension should set us all on searching our hearts, for we cannot repent of the evil of which we are not conscious. It should put us upon watching against negligence; it should set us upon distrusting a false security, upon examining into the ground of our confidence. No dependence on the goodness of our spiritual condition, no trust in our exactness

in some peculiar duties, no fancied superiority of ourselves, to others, no exemption from gross and palpable disorders, should soothe us into a belief that we have no concern in the visitation. Throwing off their own guilt upon others was the second sin of the first offenders.

Another practical use of the doctrine of Providence is, to enable us to maintain a composed frame of spirit under his ordinary dispensations. If we kept up a sense of God's agency in common as well as in extraordinary occurrences—if we were practically persuaded that nothing happens but by divine appointment, it might still those fluctuations of mind, quiet those uncertainties of temper, conquer that unreasonable exaltation or depression, which arise from our not habitually reflecting that all things are determined in number, or weight, or measure, by infinite love. If we acted under the full conviction that he who first set the world in motion governs every creature in it—that we do not take our place upon that stage in space, or that period in time, which we choose, but where and when *He* pleases: that it is he who 'ordereth the bounds of our habitation, and fixeth our lot in life,' we should not only contemplate with sober awe the strange events of the age in which we may be living, but cheerfully submit to our individual difficulties, as arising from the same predisposition of causes. Our neglecting to cultivate the train of thought may account for those murmurs which arise in our hearts, both for the public calamities of the world, and the private vexations of life.

If we took God into the account, we should feel that, as rational subjects of his moral government, we are bound to submit to it: we should not indulge discontent and resentment at events which we should then allow were either by his appointment or permission, as we now acknowledge in the more extraordinary cases. But how few are there who think themselves obliged to endure without repining, the effects of accident, or the provocation of men? and this is because they see only the proximate cause, and do not perceive that God is the grand efficient. In our difficulties, if the sense of his presence were as strongly impressed upon us as the trial is powerfully felt, it would make the heart strong, and render the temptation feeble. Nor would it only strengthen us under temptation, but sustain us under affliction; we should become both humble by correction, and patient under it; we should be grateful in prosperity, without being elated by it. A deep conviction of God's authority over us and his property in us, would also make us kind to others as an acknowledgment that all is his. The very heathen entertained some sense of his sovereignty; they acknowledged at least their victories to proceed from him, when they dedicated their spoils *to the deliverer*.

If we maintained this constant sense of his providential government, we should be more instant in prayer, we should more fervently supplicate him in our distresses, and more devoutly adore him for his mercies. The recognition of his sovereignty infers the duty of prayer to him, f implicit trust in him, of unqualified submission to him; for the same argument which proves that he should govern, makes it right that we should obey; and the avowal of that obedience is alike consistent with the character of the subject, and the claims of the sovereign. Thus used, there is no consolation to an afflicted world like that which is derived from the position contained in the proclamation of the imperial penitent of Babylon, 'that the most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men;' that he ruleth not by an arbitrary will, but, to borrow the emphatic language of the Apocalypse, by the perfections of THE MIND THAT HATH WISDOM.

But, as we seem virtually to divide the affairs of the world into two portions, we talk as if we did not think certain ordinary trials considerable enough to come from God, nor of course to require that we should meet them with temper. Under these, therefore, we make ourselves what amends we can for the vexation of trials more severe, by indulging fretfulness, secure of impunity. But let us be assured of these two things, if it be a trial at all it comes from God, if it disturb our peace, however trivial in itself, it is not small to us, and therefore claims submission.

It is worth our observation that they who are ready to quarrel with Omnipotence for the infliction of pain and suffering, poverty and distress, seldom arraign him for their intellectual or moral deficiencies. Most men are better satisfied with their allotment of capacity than of health; of virtue than of riches; of skill than of power. We seldom grudgingly compare our mental endowments with those of others who are obviously more highly gifted, while we are sufficiently forward to repine at their superiority in worldly advantages. Though too sensibly alive to the narrower limits in which our fortune is confined, we do not lament our severer restrictions in the article of personal merit. In the latter instance vanity supports as completely as in the former envy disturbs.

Most of the calamities of human life originate with ourselves. Even sickness, shame, pain, and death were not originally the infliction of God. But out of many evils, whether sent us by his immediate hand, or brought on us by our own faults, much eventual good is educed by Him, who by turning our suffering to our benefit, repairs by grace the evils produced by sin. Without being the author of evil, the bare suggestion of which is blasphemy, he converts it to his own glory, by causing the effects of it to promote our good. If the virtuous suffer from the crimes of the wicked, it is because their imperfect goodness stood in need of chastisement. Even the wicked, who are suffering by their own sins, or the sins of each other, are sometimes brought back to God by mutual injuries, the sense of which awakens them to compunction for their own offences. God makes use of the faults even of good men to show them their own insufficiency, to abase them in their own eyes, to cure them of vanity and self-dependence. He makes use of their smaller failings, to set them on the watch against great ones; of their imperfections, to put them on their guard against sins; of their faults of inadvertency, to increase their dread of such as are wilful. This superinduced vigilance teaches them to fear all the resemblances, and to shun all the approaches to

sin. It is a salutary fear, which keeps them from using all the liberty they have; it leads them to avoid not only what is decidedly wrong, but to stop short of what is doubtful, to keep clear of what is suspicious: well knowing the thin partitions which separate danger from destruction. It teaches them to watch the buddings and germinations of evil, to anticipate the pernicious fruit in the opening blossom.

The weakness and inactivity of our faith expose us to continual distrust. When we ourselves are idle, we are disposed to suspect that the Omnipotent is not at work.—That process which we do not see, we are too much inclined to suspect is not going on. From this unhallowed egotism, where we are not the prime movers, we fancy that all stands still. The various parts of the scheme of Providence are sometimes connected by a thread so fine as to elude our dim sight;—but, though it may be so attenuated as to be invisible, it is never broken off. The plan is carrying on, and the work perhaps, about to be accomplished, while we are accusing the Great Artificer, as if he were capable of neglect, or liable to error. But if, after tracing Providence through many a labyrinth, we seem to lose sight of him: if, after having lost our clue, we are tempted to suspect that this operation is suspended, or that his agency has ceased, he is working all the time out of sight—he is proceeding, if the comparison may be allowed, like the fabled Arethusia, whose stream having disappeared in the place to which it had been followed up, is still making its way under ground; though we are not cured of our incredulity, till we again discover him, bursting forth like the same river, which, having pursued its hidden passage through every obstruction, rises once more in all its beauty in another and unexpected place.

But even while we are rebelling against his dispensations, we are taking our hints in the economy of public and private life, from the economy of Providence in the administration of the world. We govern our country by laws emulative of those by which he governs his creatures: we train our children by probationary discipline, as he trains his servants. Penal laws in state, like those of the divine Legislator, indicate no hatred to those to whom they are proclaimed, for every man is at liberty not to break them; they are enacted in the first instance for admonition rather than chastisement, and serve as much for prevention as punishment. The discipline maintained in all well ordered families is intended not only to promote their virtue, but their happiness. The intelligent child perceives his father's motive for restraining him, till the act of obedience having induced the habit, and both having broken in his rebellious will, he loves the parent the more for the restraint; on the other hand, the mismanaged and ruined son learns to despise the father, who has given him a license to which he has discernment enough to perceive he owes the miseries consequent upon his uncurbed appetites.

It is however to be lamented, that this great doctrine of God's universal superintendance is not only madly denied, or inconsistently overlooked by one class of men, but is foolishly perverted, or fanatically abused by another. Without entering upon the wide field of instances, we shall confine our remarks to two that are the most common. First, the fanciful, frivolous, and bold familiarity with which this supreme dictation and government are cited on the most trivial occasions, and adduced in a manner dishonourable to infinite wisdom, and derogatory to supreme goodness. The persons who are guilty of this fault seem not to perceive, that it is not more foolish and presumptuous to deny it altogether than to expect that God's particular Providence will interpose, in order to save their exertions, or excuse their industry. For though Providence directs and assists virtuous endeavours, he never, by superseding them, encourages idleness, or justifies presumption.

The highly censurable use to which some others convert this divine agency, is, when not only the pretence of trusting Providence is made the plea for the indolent desertion of their own duty; but an unwarrantable confidence in providential leadings is adopted to excuse their own imprudence. Great is the temerity, when Providence is virtually reproached for the ill success of our affairs, or pleaded as an apology for our own wilfulness, or as a vindication of our own absurdity in the failure of some foolish plan, or some irrational pursuit. We have no right to depend on a supernatural interposition to help us out of difficulties into which we have been thrown by our misconduct, or under distresses into which we have been plunged by our errors. God, though he knows the prayers which we may offer, and accepts the penitence which we feel, will not use his power to correct our ill-judged labours, any otherwise than by making us smart for their consequences.

The power of God as it is not an idle, so it is not a solitary prerogative. It is indeed an attribute in constant exercise; it is not kept for state, but use; not for display, but exercise; and as it is infinite, one half of the concerns of the universe are not, as we intimated before, suspended, because he is superintending the other half. He is perpetually examining the chronicles of human kind, and inspecting the register of human actions—not like the King of the Palace of Shushan,* because 'he cannot rest,' for Omniscience never slumbers or sleeps—nor like him to repair the wrongs of one man whose services had remained unrequited, but that, 'beholding the evil and the good,' no services may go unnoticed and unrecompensed, from the earliest offspring of pious Abel, to the latest oblation of faith in the end of time.

This view of things, and it is the view which the enlightened Christian takes, tends to correct his anger against second causes, and affords him such an assurance that every occurrence will be over-ruled by everlasting love for his eventual good—inspires him with such holy confidence in the promises of the Gospel, that he acquires a repose of spirit, not merely from compelled submission to authority, but from rational acquiescence in goodness. He feels that his confirmed belief in this universal agency is the only thing that can set his heart at rest, still its

* Ahasuerus—Esther, chap. vi

perturbations, moderate its impatience, soothe its terrors, confirm its faith, preserve its peace, or, when it has suffered a momentary suspension, restore it.

Nor does God exercise his Providence alone, either in signal instances of retribution or in the hidden consolations of the believer; but those secret stings of conscience which goad and lacerate every guilty individual in any criminal pursuit—that lurking discontent which gives the lie to flattery, and mingles the note of discord with the music of acclamation—that unprompted misery of feeling which infuses wormwood into his sweetest pleasure, proceeds from the same providential infliction.

Some men seem to admit a Providence on a scale which expands their ideas, but fancy it an affront to conceive of Him on one which they think contracts them. If they allow that he takes a sweeping view of nations, yet they imply that it would be too minute an exercise of his superintendence to inspect individuals. The truth is, as we intimated before, men are too much disposed to frame their conceptions of God by the limited powers and capacities of human greatness. They observe, that a king who controls the affairs of a vast empire cannot possibly inspect the concerns of every private family, much less of every single subject. This limited capacity they unconsciously, yet irreverently transfer to the King of kings.—But as no concern is so vast as to encumber Omnipotence, so none is too diminutive to escape the eye of Omniscience. There is no argument for a general, but is also an argument for a particular Providence, unless we can prove that the whole is not made up of parts; that generals are not composed of particulars; that nations are not compounded of families; that societies are not formed of individuals; that chains are not composed of links; that sums are not made up of units; that the interests of a community do not grow out of the well-being of its members. The interests of a particular member, indeed, may sometimes appear to suffer from that which promotes the general good, yet he, by whose law the individual may seem to be injured, has means of remuneration or of comfort which may prevent the sufferer from being ultimately a loser. If, as we are assured, upon God's authority, that our tears are treasured up by him, will not their appropriate consolation be also provided?—Though *He whose footsteps are not known*, may act in some instances in a manner incomprehensible to us, yet if we allow that he acts wisely and holily in cases which we do comprehend, we should give him credit in the obscure and impenetrable cases, for he can no more act contrary to his attributes in the one instance than in the other.

Every intelligent being, therefore, should look up to divine Providence, not only as engaged in the government and disposal of states, but as exercised for his individual protection, peace, and comfort;—should look habitually to Him who confers favour without claim, and happiness without merit; to him whose veracity fulfils all the promises which his goodness has made—to Him whose pity commiserates the afflicted, whose bounty supplies the indigent, whose long suffering bears with the rebellious, whose love absolves the guilty, whose mercy in Christ Jesus accepts the penitent. Such is the fulness of that attribute which we sum up in a single word, *the goodness of God*. It is this goodness which influences his other attributes in our favour, attributes which would else necessarily act against creatures at once sinful and impotent. It makes that wisdom which sees our weakness strengthen us, and that power which might overwhelm us, act for our preservation Without this goodness, all his other perfections would be to us as the beauties of his natural creation would be, if the sun were blotted from the firmament—they might indeed exist, but without this illuminating and cherishing principle, as we should neither have seen nor felt them, so to us they could not be said *to be*.

Some Christians seem to view the Almighty as encircled with no attribute but his sovereignty. God, in establishing his moral government, might indeed have acted *solely* by his sovereignty. He might have pleaded no other reason for our allegiance but his absolute dominion. He might have governed arbitrarily, without explaining the nature of his requisitions. He might have reigned over us as a king, without endearing himself to us as a father. He might have exacted fealty, without the offer of remuneration. Instead of this, while he maintained his entire title to our obedience, he mitigates the austerity of the command by the invitations of his kindness, and softens the rigour of authority by the allurement of his promises. In holding out menaces to deter us from disobedience, he balances them with the offered plenitude of our own felicity, and thus instead of terrifying, attracts us to obedience. If he threatens, it is that by intimidating he may be spared the necessity of punishing; if he promises—it is that we may perceive our happiness to be bound up with our obedience. Thus his goodness invites us to a compliance, which his sovereignty might have demanded on the single ground that it was his due. Whereas he seems almost to wave our duty as a claim, as if to afford us the merit of a voluntary obedience; though the very will to obey is his gift, he promises to accept it as if it were our own act. He first inspires the desire and then rewards it. Thus his power, if we may hazard the expression, gives place to his goodness, and he presses us by tenderness almost more than he constrains us by authority. He even condescends to make our happiness no less a motive for our duty than his injunctions; hear his affectionate apostrophe—'Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river!'

It was that his goodness might have the precedency of his Omnipotence that he vouchsafed to give the law in the shape of a covenant. He stooped to enter into a sort of reciproeal engagement with his creatures,—he condescended to stipulate with the work of his hands! But the consummation of his goodness was reserved for his work of Redemption. Here he not only performed the office, but assumed the name of Love; a name with which, notwithstanding all his preceding wonders of Providence and Grace, he was never invested till after the completion

of this last, greatest act:—an act towards his pardoned rebels, not only of indemnity but promotion;—an act which the angels desire to scrutinize, and which man will never fully comprehend till he enters on that beatitude to which it has introduced him.

CHAP. IV

"*Thy will be done.*"

To desire to know the Divine will is the first duty of a being so ignorant as man; to endeavour to obey it is the most indispensable duty of a being at once so corrupt and so dependent. The Holy Scriptures frequently comprise the essence of the Christian temper in some short aphorism, apostrophe, or definition. The essential spirit of the Christian life may be said to be included in this one brief petition of the Christian's prayer, 'THY WILL BE DONE;' just as the distinguishing characteristic of the irreligious may be said to consist in following his own will.

There is a haughty spirit which though it will not complain, does not care to submit. It arrogates to itself the dignity of enduring, without any claim to the meekness of yielding. Its silence is stubbornness, its fortitude is pride; its calmness is apathy without, and discontent within. In such characters, it is not so much the will of God which is the rule of conduct, as the scorn of pusillanimity. Not seldom indeed the mind puts in a claim for a merit to which the nerves could make out a better title. Yet the suffering which arises from acute feelings is so far from deducting from the virtue of resignation, that, when it does not impede the sacrifice, it enhances the value. True resignation is the hardest lesson in the whole school of Christ. It is the oftenest taught and the latest learnt. It is not a task which, when once got over in some particular instance, leaves us master of the subject. The necessity of following up the lesson we have begun, presents itself almost every day in some new shape, occurs under some fresh modification. The submission of yesterday does not exonerate us from the resignation of to-day. The principle, indeed, once thoroughly wrought into the soul, gradually reconciles us to the frequent demand for its exercise, and renders every succesive call more easy.

We read dissertations on this subject, not only with the most entire concurrence of the judgment, but with the most apparent acquiescence of the mind. We write essays upon it in the hour of peace and composure, and fancy that what we have discussed with so much ease and self-complacence, in favour of which we offer so many arguments to convince, and so many motives to persuade, cannot be very difficult to practise. But to convince the understanding and to correct the will is a very different undertaking; and not less difficult when it comes to our own case than it was in the case of those for whom we have been so coolly and dogmatically prescribing. It is not till we practically find how slowly our own arguments produce any effect on ourselves that we cease to marvel at their inefficacy on others. The sick physician tastes with disgust the bitterness of the draught, to the swallowing of which he wondered the patient had felt so much repugnance; and the reader is sometimes convinced by the arguments which fail of their effect on the writer, when he is called, not to discuss, but to act, not to reason, but to suffer. The theory is so just and the duty so obvious, that even bad men assent to it; the exercise so trying that the best men find it more easy to commend the rule than adopt it. But he who has once gotten engraved, not in his memory but in his heart, this divine precept, THY WILL BE DONE, has made a proficiency which will render all subsequent instruction comparatively easy.

Though sacrifices and oblations were offered to God under the law by his own express appointment, yet he peremptorily rejected them by his prophets, when presented as substitutes instead of signs. Will he, under a more perfect dispensation, accept of any observances which are meant to supersede internal dedication—of any offerings unaccompanied by complete desire of acquiescence in his will? 'My son, give me thine heart,' is his brief but imperative command. But before we can be brought to comply with the spirit of this requisition, God must enlighten our understanding that our devotion may be rational, he must rectify our will that it may be voluntary, he must purify our heart that it may be spiritual.

Submission is a duty of such high and holy import that it can only be learnt of the Great Teacher. If it could have been acquired by mere moral institution, the wise sayings of the ancient philosophers would have taught it. But their most elevated standard was low: their strongest motives were the brevity of life, the instability of fortune, the dignity of suffering virtue, things within their narrow sphere of judging; things true indeed as far as they go, but a substratum by no means equal to the superstructure to be built on it. It wanted depth, and strength, and solidity for the purposes of support. It wanted the only true basis, the assurance that God orders all things according to the purposes of his will for our final good; it wanted that only sure ground of faith by which the genuine Christian cheerfully submits in entire dependance on the promises of the gospel.

Nor let us fancy that we are to be languid and inactive recipients of the divine dispensations. Our own souls must be enlarged, our own views must be ennobled, our own spirit must be dilated. An inoperative acquiescence is not all that is required of us: and if we must not slacken our zeal in doing good, so we must not be remiss in opposing evil, on the flimsy ground that God has permitted evil to infest the world. If it be his will to permit sin, it is an opposition to his will when we do not labour to counteract it. This surrender therefore, of our will to that of God, takes in a large sweep of actual duties, as well as the whole compass of passive obedience. It involves doing as well as suffering, activity as well as acquiescence, zeal as well as forbearance. Yet the concise petition daily slips off the tongue without our reflecting on the weight

of the obligation we are imposing on ourselves. We do not consider the extent and consequences of the prayer we are offering, the sacrifices, the trials, the privations it may involve, and the large indefinite obedience to all the known and unknown purposes of infinite wisdom to which we are pledging ourselves.

There is no case in which we more shelter ourselves in generalities. Verbal sacrifices cost little, cost nothing. The familiar habit of repeating the petition almost tempts us to fancy that the duty is as easy as the request is short. We are ready to think that a prayer rounded off in four monosyllables can scarcely involve duties co-extensive with our whole course of being; that, in uttering them, we renounce all right in ourselves, that we acknowledge the universal indefeasible title of *the blessed and only potentate;* that we make over to him the right to do in us, and with us, and by us, whatever he sees good for ourselves, whatever will promote his glory, though by means sometimes as incomprehensible to our understanding, as unacceptable to our will, because we neither know the motive, nor perceive the end. These simple words express an act of faith the most sublime, an act of allegiance the most unqualified; and, while they make a declaration of entire submission to a Sovereign the most absolute, they are, at the same time, a recognition of love to a Father the most beneficent.

We must remember, that in offering this prayer, we may by our own request, be offering to resign what we most dread to lose, to give up what is dear to us as our own soul; we may be calling on our heavenly Father to withhold what we are most anxiously labouring to attain, and to withdraw what we are most sedulously endeavouring to keep. We are solemnly renouncing our property in ourselves, we are distinctly making ourselves over again to Him whose we already are. We specifically entreat him to do with us what he pleases, to mould us to a conformity to his image, without which we shall never be resigned to his will. In short, to dispose of us as his infinite wisdom sees best, however contrary to the scheme which our blindness has laid down as the path to unquestionable happiness.

To render this trying petition easy to us, is one great reason why God by such a variety of providences, afflicts and brings us low. He knows that we want incentives to humility, even more than incitements to virtuous actions. He shows us in many ways, that self-sufficiency and happiness are incompatible, that pride and peace are irreconcilable; that, following our own way, and doing our own will, which we consider to be of the very essence of felicity, is in direct opposition to it.

'Christianity,' says bishop Horsely, 'involves many paradoxes, but no contradictions.' To be able to say with entire surrender of the heart, Thy will be done,' is the true liberty of the children of God, that liberty with which Christ has made them free. It is a liberty, not which delivers us from restraint, but which, freeing us from our subjection to the senses, makes us find no pleasure but in order, no safety but in the obedience of an intelligent being to his rightful Lord. In delivering us from the heavy bondage of sin, it transfers us to the 'easy yoke of Christ,' from the galling slavery of the world to the 'light burden' of him who overcame it.

This liberty in giving a true direction to the affections, gives them amplitude as well as elevation. The more unconstrained the will becomes, the more it fixes on the object; once fixed on the highest, it does not use its liberty for versatility, but for constancy, not for change, but for fidelity, not for wavering, but adherence.

It is, therefore, no less our interest, than our duty, to keep the mind in an habitual posture of submission. 'Adam,' says Dr. Hammond, 'after his expulsion, was a greater slave in the wilderness than he had been in the inclosure.' If the barbarian ambassador came express to the Romans to negotiate from his country for permission to be their servants, declaring, that a voluntary submission even to a foreign power was preferable to a wild and disorderly freedom, well may the Christian triumph in the peace and security to be attained by a complete subjugation to Him who is emphatically called *the God of order.*

A vital faith manifests itself in vital acts. 'Thy will be done,' is eminently a practical petition. The first indication of the gaoler's change of heart was a practical indication. He did not ask, 'Are there few that be saved,' but 'What shall *I* do to be saved?' The first symptom St. Paul gave of his conversion, was a practical symptom: 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' He entered on his new course with a total renunciation of his own will. It seemed to this great Apostle, to be the turning point between infidelity and piety, whether he should follow his own will or the will of God. He did not amuse his curiosity with speculative questions. His own immediate and grand concern engrossed his whole soul. Nor was his question a mere hasty effusion, an interrogative springing out of that mixed feeling of awe and wonder which accompanied his first overwhelming convictions. It became the abiding principle which governed his future life, which made him in labours more abundant. Every successive act of duty, every future sacrifice of ease, sprung from it, was influenced by it. His own will, his ardent, impetuous, fiery will, was not merely subdued, it was extinguished. His powerful mind indeed lost none of its energy, but his proud heart relinquished all its independence.

We allow and adopt the term *devotion* as an indispensable part of religion, because it is supposed to be limited to the act; but *devotedness*, from which it is derived, does not meet with such ready acceptation, because this is a habit, and an habit involves more than an act; it pledges us to consistency, it implies fixedness of character, a general confirmed state of mind, a giving up what we are, and have, and do, to God. Devotedness does not consist in the length of our prayers, nor in the number of our good works, for, though these are the surest evidences of piety, they are not its essence. Devotedness consists in doing and suffering, bearing and forbearing in the way which God prescribes. The most inconsiderable duty performed with alacrity, if it oppose our own incli

nation; the most ordinary trial met with a right spirit, is more acceptable to him than a greater effort of our own devising. We do not commend a servant for his activity, if ever so fervently exercised, in doing whatever gratifies his own fancy; we do not consider his performance as obedience, unless his activity has been exercised in doing what we required of him. Now, how can we insist on his doing what contradicts his own humour, while we allow ourselves to feel repugnance in serving our heavenly Master, when his commands do not exactly fall in with our own inclination?

We must also give God leave, not only to take his own way, but his own time. The appointment of seasons, as well as of events, is his. 'He waits to be gracious.' If he delays, it is because we are not yet brought to that state which fits us for the grant of our request. It is not he who must be brought about, but we ourselves. Or, perhaps, he refuses the thing we ask, in order to give us a better. We implore success in an undertaking, instead of which, he gives us content under the disappointment. We ask for the removal of pain; he gives us patience under it. We desire deliverance from our enemies; he sees that we have not yet turned their enmity to our improvement, and he will bring us to a better temper by further exercise. We desire him to avert some impending trial, instead of averting it, he takes away its bitterness; he mitigates what we believed would be intolerable, by giving us a right temper under it. How, then, can we say he has failed of his promise, if he gives something more truly valuable than we had requested at his hands?

Some virtues are more called out in one condition of life, and some in another. The exercise of certain qualities has its time and place; but an endeavour after conformity to the image of God, which is best attained by submission to his will, is of perpetual obligation. If he does not require all virtues under all circumstances, there is no state or condition in which he does not require that to which our church perpetually calls us, 'an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart.' We may have no time, no capacity, no special call for deeds of notorious usefulness; but whatever be our pursuits, engagements, or abilities, it will intrench on no time, require no specific call, interfere with no duty, to subdue our perverse will. Though the most severe of all duties, it infringes on no other, but will be the more effectually fulfilled by the very difficulties attending on other pursuits and engagements.

We are so fond of having our own will, that it is astonishing we do not oftener employ it for our own good; for our inward peace is augmented in exact proportion as our repugnance to the Divine will diminishes. Were the conquest over the one complete, the enjoyment of the other would be perfect. But the Holy Spirit does not assume his emphatical title, the COMFORTER, till his previous offices have operated on the heart, till he has 'reproved us of sin, of righteousness, of judgment.'

God makes use of methods inconceivable to us, to bring us to the submission which we are more ready to request with our lips, than to desire with our hearts. By an imperceptible operation he is ever at work for our good; he promotes it by objects the most unlikely. He employs means to our shallow views the most improbable to effect his own gracious purposes. In every thing he evinces that his thoughts are not as our thoughts. He overrules the opposition of our enemies, the defection of our friends, the faults of our children—the loss of our fortune as well as the disappointments attending its possession—the unsatisfactoriness of pleasures as well as the privation—the contradiction of our desires—the failure of plans which we thought we had concerted, not only with good judgment but pure intentions. He makes us sensible of our faults by the mischiefs they bring upon us; and acknowledges our blindness by extracting from it consequences diametrically opposite to those which our actions were intended to produce.

Our love to God is stamped with the same imperfection with all our other graces. If we love him at all, it is as it were traditionally, hereditary, professionally; it is a love of form and not of feeling, of education and not of sentiment, of sense and not of faith. It is at best a submission to authority, and not an effusion of voluntary gratitude, a conviction of the understanding, and not a cordiality of the affections. We rather assume we have this grace than actually possess it, we rather take it for granted on unexamined grounds, than cherish it as a principle from which whatever good we have must proceed, and from which, if it does not proceed, the principle does not exist.

Surely, says the oppugners of divine Providence in considering the calamities inflicted on good men, if God loved virtue, he would not oppress the virtuous. Surely Omnipotence may find a way to make his children good, without making them miserable. But have these casuists ever devised a means by which men may be made good without being made humble, or happy, without being made holy, or holy without trials? Unapt scholars indeed we are in learning the lessons taught! But the teacher is not the less perfect because of the imbecility of his children.

If it be the design of Infinite Goodness to disengage us from the world, to detach us from ourselves, and to purify us to himself, the purification by sufferings seems the most obvious method. The same effect could not be any otherwise produced, except by miracles, and God is an economist of his means in grace as well as in nature. He deals out all gifts by measure. His operation in both is progressive. Successive events operate in one case as time and age in the other. As suns and showers so gradually mature the fruits of the earth, that the growth is rather perpetual than perceptible, so God commonly carries on the work of renovation in the heart silently and slowly, by means suitable and simple, though to us imperceptible, and sometimes unintelligible. Were the plans more obvious, and the process ostensible, there would be no room left for the operations of faith, no call for the exercise of patience, no demand for the grace of humility. The road to perfection is tedious and suffering, steep and rugged·

our impatience would leap over all the intervening space which keeps us from it, rather than climb it by slow and painful steps. We would fain be spared the sorrow and shame of our own errors, of all their vexatious obstructions, all their dishonourable impediments. We would be completely good and happy at once without passing through the stages and gradations which lead to goodness and happiness. We require an instantaneous transformation which costs us nothing; the Spirit of God works by a gradual process which costs us much. We would combine his favour with our self-indulgence; we would be spared the trials he has appointed without losing the felicity he has promised. We complain of the severity of the operation, but the operation would not be so severe, if the disease did not lie so deep.

Besides, the afflictions which God appoints, are not seldom sent to save us from those we should bring on ourselves, and which might have added guilt to misery.—He threatens, but it is that he may finally save. If 'punishment is his strange,' it is also his necessary 'works.' Even in the sorest affliction, the loss of those we love, there may be a mercy impenetrable to us. —God has, perhaps, laid up for us in heaven that friend whom he might have lost in eternity, had he been restored to our prayers here. But if the affliction be not improved, it is, indeed unspeakable heavy. If the loss of our friend does not help to detach us from the world, we have the calamity without the indemnification; we are deprived of our treasure without any advantage to ourselves. If the loss of him we loved does not make us more earnest to secure our salvation, we may lose at once our friend and our soul.—To endure the penalty and lose the profit, is to be emphatically miserable.

Sufferings are the only relics of the true cross, and when Divine grace turns them to our spiritual good, they almost perform the miracles which blind superstition ascribes to the false one. God mercifully takes from us what we have not courage to offer him; but if, when he resumes it, he sanctifies the loss; let us not repine. It was his while it was ours. He was the proprietor while we were the possessors.

Though we profess a general readiness to submit to the Divine will, there is nothing in which we are more liable to illusion. Self-love is a subtle casuist. We invent distinctions. We too critically discriminate between afflictions which proceed more immediately from God, and disappointments which come from the world. To the former we acknowledge, in words at least, our willingness to submit. In the latter, though equally his dispensation, we seem to feel justified in refusing to acquiesce. God does not desire us to inflict punishments on ourselves, he only expects us to bear with patience those he inflicts on us, whether they come more immediately from himself or through the medium of his creatures.

Love being the root of obedience, it is no test of that obedience, if we obey God only in things which do not cross our inclinations, while we disobey him in things that are repugnant to them. Not to obey except when it costs us nothing is rather to please ourselves than God, for it is evident we should disobey him in these also if the allurement were equally powerful in these cases as in the others. We may, indeed, plead an apology that the command we resist is of less importance than that with which we comply; but this is a false excuse, for the authority which enjoins the least, is the same with that which commands the greatest; and it is the authority by which we are to submit, as much as to the command.

There is a passage in St. Luke which does not seem to be always brought to bear on this point as fully as it ought: 'unless a man for sake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. This does not seem to be quite identical with the command in another place, that a man should 'sell all that he has,' &c. When the Christian world indeed was in its infancy, the literal requisition in both cases was absolutely necessary. But it appears to be a more liberal interpretation of the command, as 'forsaking,' all that we have, extends to a full and entire consecration of ourselves to God, a dedication without reserve, not of fortune only, but of every desire, every faculty, every inclination, every talent; a resignation of the whole will, a surrender of the whole soul. It is this surrender which alone sanctifies our best actions. It is this pure oblation, this offering of unshared affection, this unmaimed sacrifice, which is alone acceptable to God, through *that full, perfect, and sufficient sacrafice, oblation, and satisfaction* made for the sins of the whole world. Our money he will not accept without our good will, our devotions without our affections, our services without our hearts. Like the prevaricating pair, whose duplicity was punished by instant death, whatever we keep back will annihilate the value of what we bring. It will be nothing if it be not all *

CHAP. V.

On Parable.

It is obvious, that the reason why mankind, in general, are so much delighted with allegory and metaphor, is, because they are so proportioned to our senses, those first inlets of ideas. Ideas gained by the senses quickly pass into the region of the imagination; and from thence, more particularly the illiterate and uninformed, fetch materials for the employment of their reason.

Little reaches the understanding of the mass but through this medium. Their minds are not fitted for the reception of abstract truth. Dry argumentative instruction, therefore, is not proportioned to their capacity; the faculty by which a right conclusion is drawn, is, in them the most defective; they rather feel strongly than judge accurately: and their feelings are awakened by the impression made on their senses.

The connexion of these remarks with the subject of instruction by parable, is obvious. It is the nature of parable to open the doctrine which it professes to conceal. By engaging attention

* Acts, chap. v.

and exciting curiosity, it developes truth with more effect than by a more explicit exposition. By laying hold on the imaginations, parable insinuates itself into the affections, and, by the intercommunication of the faculties, the understanding is made to apprehend the truth which was proposed to the fancy.

There is commonly found sufficient rectitude of judgment in the generality to decide fairly on any point within their reach of mind, if the decision neither opposes their interest nor interferes with their prejudice. If you can separate the truth from any personal concern of their own, their verdict will probably be just: but if their views are clouded by passion, or biassed by selfishness, that man must possess a more than ordinary degree of integrity who decides against himself and in favour of what is right.

In the admirably devised parable of Nathan, David's eager condemnation of the unsuspected offender is a striking instance of the delusion of sin and the blindness of self-love. He who had lived a whole year in the unrepented commission of one of the blackest crimes of the decalogue, and who to secure to himself the object for which he had committed it, perpetrated another almost more heinous, and that with an hypocrisy foreign to his character, could in an instant denounce death on the imaginary offender for a fault comparatively trifling. The vehemence of his resentment even overstepped the limits of his natural justice, in decreeing a punishment disproportioned to the crime, while he remained dead to his own deep delinquency. A pointed parable instantly surprised him into the most bitter self-reproach. A direct accusation might have inflamed him before he was thus prepared; and, in the one case, he might have punished the accuser, by whom, in the other, he was brought to the deepest self-abasement. The prudent prophet did not rashly reproach the king with the crime he wished him to condemn, but placed the fault at such a distance, and in such a proper point of view, that he first procured his impartial judgment, and afterwards his self-condemnation. An important lesson, not only to the offender, but to the reprover.

He 'who knew what was in man,' and who intended his religion, not for a few critics to argue upon, but for a whole world to act upon, frequently adopted the mode of instructing by allegory. Though he sometimes condescended to unveil the hidden sense, by disclosing the moral meaning, in some short, but most significant comment; yet he usually left the application to those whom he meant to benefit by the doctrine. The truth which spoke strongly to their prejudices, by the veil in which it was wrapped, spared the shame while it conveyed the instruction, and they probably found a gratification in the ingenuity of their own solution which contributed to reconcile them to the sharpness of the reproof.

The most unjust and prejudiced of the Jews were, by this wise management frequently drawn in to give an unconscious testimony against themselves; this was especially the case in the instance of the householder and his servants. Had the truth they were led to deduce from this parable, been presented in the offensive form of a direct charge, it would have fired them with inexpressible indignation.

Christians who abound in zeal, but are defective in knowledge and prudence, would do well to remember, that *discretion* made a remarkable, though not disproportionate part of the Redeemer's character; he never invited attack by imprudence, or provoked hostility by intemperate rashness. When argument was not listened to, when persuasion was of no avail, when even all his miracles of mercy were misrepresented, and his divine beneficence thrown away, so that all farther attempts to do good were unavailing, *he withdrew to another place;* there, indeed, to experience the same malignity, there to exercise the same compassion.

The divine Author of our religion gave also the example of teaching not only by parable, but by simple propositions, detached truths, pointed interrogations, positive injunctions, and independent prohibitions, rather than by elaborate and continuous dissertation. He instructed not only by consecutive arguments, but by invitations, and dissuasives adapted to the feelings, and intelligible to the apprehensions of his audience. He drew their attention by popular illusions, delighted it by vivid representations, and fixed it by reference to actual events. He alluded to the Galileans, crushed by the falling tower, which they remembered—to local scenery—the vines of Gethsemane, which they beheld, while he was descanting respectively upon repentance, and upon himself, as the 'true vine.' By these simple, but powerful and suitable methods, he brought their daily habits, and every day ideas, to run in the same channel with their principles and their duties, and made every object with which they were surrounded contribute its contingent to their instruction.

The lower ranks, who most earnestly sought access to his person, could form a tolerable exact judgment on the things he taught, by the aptness of his allusions to what they saw, and felt, and heard. The humble situation he assumed, also, prevented their being intimidated by power, or influenced by authority. It at once made their attendance a voluntary act, and their assent an unbiassed conviction. The questions proposed with a simple desire of instruction, were answered with condescending kindness; those dictated by curiosity or craft, were repelled with wisdom, or answered, not by gratifying importunity, but by grafting on the reply some higher instruction than the inquirer had either proposed or desired. Where a direct answer would, by exciting prejudice, have impeded usefulness, he evaded the particular question by enforcing from it some general truth. On the application of the man whose brother had refused to divide the inheritance with him —in declining to interfere judicially, he gave a great moral lecture of universal use against avarice, while he prudently avoided the subject of particular litigation.

His answer to the entangling question, 'And who is my neighbour?' suggested the instructive illustration of the duty to a neighbour, in that brief, but highly finished apologue of the good Samaritan. The Jews, who would never have owned that a Samaritan was their neigh

bour, were, by this pious management, drawn in to acknowledge, that every man, without regard to country, who was even of a hostile country, if he needed their assistance, was their neighbour. In this slight outline, three characters are sketched with so much spirit and distinctness, that, as Mr. Boyle says of Scripture truths in general, they resemble those portraits, whose eyes, every one who enters the room, fancies are fixed on him.

False zeal, which he generally found associated with pride and hypocrisy, was almost the only vice which extorted from him unmitigated severity: if he sometimes corrected presumption and repelled malicious inquisitiveness, he uniformly encouraged distress to approach, and penitence to address him. The most indirect of his instructions inculcated or encouraged goodness. The most simple of his reasonings were irrefragable without the formality of syllogism; and his brief, but powerful persuasions went straight to the heart, which the most elaborate discussions might have left unmoved.—Every hearer, however illiterate, would at once seize his meaning, except those who found themselves interested in not understanding it; every spectator, 'if they believed not him, would believe his works,' if pride had not blinded their eyes, if prejudice had not barred up their hearts.

Thus, if in the Gospels, the great doctrines of religion are not always conveyed in a didactic form, or linked with logical arrangement, some important truth meets us at every turn, is held out in some brief sentence; some hint is dropped that may awaken, recal, quicken, or revive perpetual attention. The same spirit pervades every part; we are reminded without being fatigued; and, whatever is the point to be pressed, some informing, alarming, or consoling doctrine is extracted from it, or grows out of it.

The Scriptures, however, are so far from setting aside the use of reason, that all their precepts are addressed to it. If they are delivered in a popular manner, and often in independent maxims, or reason, by combining them methodizes the detached passages into a perfect system; so that by a combination, which it is in the power of every intelligent reader to make, a complete rule of practice is collected. The scattered precepts are embodied in examples illustrated by figures, and exemplified by parables.—These always suppose the mind of the hearer to be possessed of a certain degree of common knowledge, without which the proposed instruction would be unintelligible. For, if the Gospel does not address its disciples as if they were philosophers and mathematicians, it always supposes them to possess plain sense and ordinary information; to have acquaintance with human, if not with elevated life. The allusions and imagery with which it abounds would have been superfluous if the hearers had not been previously acquainted with the objects and circumstances to which the image is referred, from which the parallel is drawn, to which the allusion is made.

Our heavenly Father, in his offers of illumination, does not expect we should open our mental eyes to this superinduced light, without opening our understandings to natural and rational information, but expects that we should apply the faculties bestowed, to the objects proposed to them. We put ourselves, therefore, in the fairest way of obtaining his assistance, when we most diligently use all the means and materials he has given us; comparing together his works and his word; not setting up our understanding against his revelation, but, with deep humility, applying the one to enable us to comprehend the other; not extinguishing our faculties, but our pride; not laying our understanding asleep, but casting it at the foot of the cross. We have dwelt on this point the more, from having observed, that some religious persons are apt to speak with contempt of great natural endowments as if they were not the gift of God, but of some inferior power: the prudently pious, on the other hand, while they use them to the end for which they were conferred, keep them in due subordination, and restrict them to their proper office. Abilities are the gift of God, and next to his grace, though with an immense interval, his best gift; but are never so truly estimable as when they are dedicated to promote his glory.

Our heavenly Instructor, still more to accommodate his parables to the capacities of his audience, adopted the broad line of instruction conveyed under a few strong features of general parallel, a few leading points of obvious coincidence, without attending to petty exactnesses or stooping to trivial niceties of correspondence. We are not, therefore, to hunt after minute resemblances, nor to cavil at slight discrepancies. We should rather imitate his example, by confining our illustration to the more important circumstances of likeness instead of raising such as are insignificant into undue distinction. —This critical elaboration, this amplifying mode, which ramifies a general idea into all the minutiæ of parallel, would only serve to divert the attention, and split it into so many divisions, that the main object would be lost sight of.

The author once heard a sermon which had for its text 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' The preacher, a really good man, but wanting this discretion, not contented with a simple application of the figure, instead of a general allusion to the powerfully penetrating and correcting nature of this mineral, instead of observing that salt was used in all the ancient sacrifices, indulged himself in a wide range, chemical and culinary, of all the properties of salt, devoting a separate head to each quality. A long discussion on its antiseptic properties, its solution and neutralization, led to rather a luxurious exhibition of the relishes it communicates to various viands. On the whole, the discourse seemed better adapted for an audience composed of the authors of the Pharmacopœia, or a society of cooks, than for a plain untechnical congregation.

But to return. Who can reflect without admiration on the engaging variety with which the great Teacher labours to impress every important truth? Whenever different aspects of the same doctrine were likely still more forcibly to seize the attention, still more deeply to touch the heart, still more powerfully to awaken the conscience, he does not content himself with a

single allegory. In his awful exhibition of the inestimable value of an immortal soul, he does not coolly describe the repentance of a single sinner as viewed with complacency by the highest order of created intelligences, but as adding 'joy' to bliss already perfected in immortality. He does not limit his instruction to one metaphorical illustration of the delight of the heavenly hosts, but extends it to three, finishing the climax by that most endearing and touching of all moral and allegorical pictures, the restoration of the prodigal to his father's love.

But this triple use of the same species of allegory—each instance rising above the other, in beauty and in force, each adding fresh weight to one momentous point—he most emphatically employs in the last discourse previous to his final suffering; we mean in his sublime illustration of the solemnities of the last day, in three successive parables all tending to impress the same awful truth.

As he well knew every accessible point of the human heart, so there was none which he did not touch. But the grand circumstance which carried his instruction so directly home to the hearts and consciences of men, was, that he not only taught, but 'did all things well.' His doctrines were so digested into his life, his instructions so melted into his practice, that it rendered goodness visible as well as perfect; and these analogies and resemblances were not only admirably, but uniformly correspondent. He did not content himself like those heathen philosophers, to whose affable conduct in society that of the blessed Redeemer has lately been so impiously compared, (though their motives differed, as much as the desire of converting sinners differs from delighting in them,) with exhibiting systems without morals, and a rule without a pattern, but the purity and perfection of his divine character gave light to knowledge, and life to document.

CHAP. VI.

On the parable of the Talents.

Our Lord's parables had been sometimes indicative of existing circumstances; sometimes predictive of events which related to futurity. After having, in his preceding allegories, by practical lessons, encouraged the prepared and exhorted the unprepared, to look for the kingdom of God, he closed his parabolical* instructions by an awful exhibition of their fitness or unfitness for that everlasting kingdom; in which he unfolds what their condition will be, when all mystery, all instruction, all preparation, shall be at an end; when every act of every being shall be laid as bare before the eyes of the whole assembled world, as it was seen in its commission by us, from whom nothing is hid. The last of these three prophetic scenes is indeed not so much a parable as a picture; not so much an allegory as a literal representation: the solemn reality rises above all figure, and could never have been so forcibly conveyed as by this plain, yet most sublime delineation.

* See Matthew xxv.

The conclusion immediately to be drawn from the second of these parables, the Parable of the Talents, is, that we have nothing that is properly our own, nothing that is underived from God. Every talent is a deposit placed in our hands, not for our exclusive benefit, but for the good of others. Whatever we possess which may either be improved to God's glory or perverted to his dishonour, comes within the description of a talent. To use any of our possessions, therefore, as if we had an independent right to the disposal of them, is to usurp the prerogative of the Giver. Many, it is to be feared, will wait till that great disclosing day which will throw a blaze of light on all motives, as well as all actions, before they will be convinced of the fallacy of that popular maxim, that a man may do what he will with his own. He has indeed a full right to his proprietorship with respect to other men, but, with respect to God, he will find he had no exclusive property. Whatever portion of his possessions conscience ought to have turned over from vanity to charity, from sensuality to piety, he may find too late, was not his own, but his who gave it him for other purposes.

God proportions his requisitions to his gifts. The one is regulated by the measure of the other. As duties and obligations are peculiar and personal, we are not to trench on the sphere of others. It is of our own talent, we must render our own account. A capacity, however to know our duty, and to love and serve God, as they are indiscriminately bestowed, so the inquiry into the use made of them will be universal, while the reward or punishment will be individually assigned.

Deficiency and excess are the Scylla and Charybdis between which we seldom steer safely. If our talents are splendid, we are subject to err on the side of display; if mean, totally to suppress their exercise, apologizing for our indolence by our insignificance; but mediocrity of talents is as insufficient an excuse for sloth, as superior genius is for vanity. The true way would be, to exercise the brightest faculties with humility, and the most inconsiderable with fidelity. The faithful and highly gifted servants in the parable, it is apparent, were so far from being lifted into pride, or seduced into negligence, by the greater importance of the trust committed to them, that they considered the largeness of their agency as an augmentation of their responsibility.—*They* did the will of their lord without conditioning or debating. Their slothful associate, instead of doing it, contented himself with arguing about it. He who disputed much, had done nothing: he should have known that Christianity is not a matter of debate, but of obedience.

There is no one doctrine of Holy Scripture either insignificant or merely theoretical. That which the parable teaches, is highly and specially practical. The instruction to be deduced from it, is as extensive as the gifts of God to his creatures, as the obligations of man to his benefactor. It is most especially practical, as it designates this world to be a scene of business,

action, exertion, diligence. It inculcates the high and complicated duty of laying out ourselves for the glory of our Maker, and the exercise of an implicit obedience to his will. God has not given us the command to work, without furnishing us with instruments with which to labour, and suitable materials to work upon. Our talents, such as *riches*, *power*, *influence*, *wisdom*, *learning*, *time*, are those instruments. The wants, helplessness, and ignorance of mankind, are the objects to which these instruments are to be applied. These talents are bestowed in various proportions, as to their value, as well as in different degrees, as to the quantity and number. He who is favoured with more abundant endowments, should mix with his gratitude for the gift, an abiding sense of his own greater accountableness. He who is slenderly furnished, should never plead that the inferiority of his trust is an excuse for his negligence. The conviction that the Great Master will not exact beyond the proportion of his gift, though an encouragement to those whom his providence has placed in a narrow sphere of usefulness, is no discharge from their diligence. Is it reasonable, that he who has less to do, should therefore do nothing? When little is expected from us, not to do that little enhances the crime; and it aggravates the ingratitude, when we convert our master's more moderate demands into a pretence for absolute supineness.

He who is not called upon to relieve the necessities, or to enlighten the ignorance of others, has still a weighty work upon his hands: he has the care of his own soul. If he is deficient in learning, and natural abilities—if he has little credit, and less of fortune, he probably has time; he certainly has the means of religious improvement; so that, in this land of light and knowledge, especially now that universal instruction is happily become a national care, there is hardly such a thing as innocent ignorance. Even of the lowest, of the least, a strict account will be required. To plead ignorance where they might have been taught, indolence because they had little to do, and negligence, because not much was expected, is only treasuring up innumerable reasons for aggravating their condemnation.

It is remarkable that of the several characters exhibited in the parable, the least endowed was the only one punished, his neglect being every way inexcusable. A lasting and awful lesson, that no inferiority can claim exemption from the general law of duty. If the right employment of the gift is an encouragement to the poorly endowed, as being easily exercised and amply rewarded; its abuse is an awakening call to every one. For, it is not fairly deducible from this instance, that if of those whose scale in society is low, whose intellectual powers are mean, or whose fortunes are narrow; if even of such, a strict account will be required, if even in these, mere deficiency was so harshly reprobated, mere nullity was so severely punished—a sentence of most tremendous import must await those who employ rank and opulence to selfish and corrupt ends, or genius to pernicious purposes; the one debasing their own minds by sensuality, or corrupting others by examples of vice and prodigality; and the other devoting abilities so great, with profligacy so notorious, as to appear little less than 'archangel ruined,' and drawing inferior spirits into the destruction in which they have plunged themselves.

But again:—If these several talents, individually conferred, when employed to wrong purposes, or not employed at all, will be rigorously punished: what sentence have they to expect, in whom is centred the splendid confluence of God's gifts? What will be the eternal anathema pronounced on those who possessed aggregately talents, with every one of which, singly enjoyed, they might have rendered the world about them better and happier? To reflect by whom they were bestowed, to what end designed, how they have been used, and what a reckoning awaits them, form a combination of reflections too awful to be dwelt upon. From the anticipation of such complicated woe we turn with terror. The bare idea of a punishment which shall always torment and never destroy, is insupportable. Yet how many believe this without being influenced by the belief! How many, by an unaccountable delusion, refuse to conform their lives to the injunctions of the gospel, while they put their vices under the protection of its promises.

The parable informs us, that it was 'after a long time,' that the Lord required the account; so long, that the wicked think it will never come, and even the good are apt to persuade themselves that it will not come soon. Let not those however who are sitting at ease in their possessions, whether of nature or of fortune, to speak after the manner of men, fancy that the reckoning which is delayed is forgotten. The more protracted the account, the larger will be the sum total, and, of course, the more severe the requsition. All delay, indeed, is an act of mercy; but mercy neglected, or abused, will enhance punishment in proportion as it aggravates guilt.

It is obvious that the servants in the parable had been in the habit of attending to their mercies. They seem never to have been unmindful of the exact value of what had been committed to them, 'Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents.' If we do not frequently enumerate the mercies of God to us, we shall be in danger of losing sight of the Giver, while we are revelling in the gift; of neglecting the application, and forgetting the responsibility. We should recollect that his very employment of us is a high mark of favour; the use he condescends to make of us augments our debt, and whenever he puts it in our way to serve him, he lays on us a fresh obligation, and confers on us an honourable distinction.

Though he that has most, and does most, has but 'a few things,' yet his remuneration shall be immense. It is his fidelity, and not his success; his zeal in improving occasions, and not the number or greatness of the occasions, that will be rewarded. There will be an always infinite disproportion between the work he has done, and the blessing attending it.

The expostulation of the unprofitable servant presents an awful lesson against distrust in God, and fallacious views of his infinitely perfec character. The very motive this false reasoner

produces in his own vindication, is the strongest argument against him. If he '*knew*' that his lord was such a rigorous exacter, that was the very reason why he should not have given in such a negative account. 'I knew thou wast a hard master.' Could a weightier argument have been advanced for a directly different conduct? Common prudence might have taught him that, with such a master, his only security was assiduous industry. The want of love of God was at the root of this, as it is of all sin.

How many listen to the sentence of this unworthy servant! How many allow the equity of this exclusion, and yet how few, comparatively, ask, with the agitated Apostles; 'Lord, is it I?' This simple question, honestly put, and practically followed up, would render all comment vain, all exhortation superfluous. This self-application is the great end of the parable, the great end of Scripture, the great end of preaching, and the only end of hearing.

But do not too many of us, like him we are so ready to condemn, conceal our self-love under the assumption of modesty, and indulge our sloth under the humble pretence that we have no talent to exercise? But let us be assured it is the deadness of our spiritual affections, and not our mean opinion of ourselves, that is the real cause. The service of God is irksome, because his commands interfere with our self-indulgence. Let the lowly Christian possessed of but his single talent, cheer his fainting heart by that beautifully condescending plea, with which the compassionate Saviour vindicated the modest penitent, who had no other way of demonstrating her affection, but by pouring perfumes on his feet—SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD. A tenderness of encouragement, which, if we consider by whom it was uttered, and to whom addressed, must convey consolation to the heart of the most poorly endowed and self-abasing Christian.

In giving in the final account of the use we have made of our talents, we shall not only have to reckon, for the Christian knowledge we really acquired, for the progress we actually made in piety, for the good impressions we received or communicated, but for the higher degrees of all which we might have received or imparted, had we, instead of squandering our talents on inferior objects, carried them to the height of which they were susceptible. Had we acted up to our convictions, had we pushed our advantages to their possibilities, had we regularly pursued what we eagerly engaged in, had our progress kept pace with our resolution, our attainments, with our opportunities, how much more profitable servants we might have been! But satisfied to stop short of great offences, we neglect to impress upon our consciences how large a portion of our reckoning will be of a negative character.

From natural feeling, from inward consciousness, from the notices of reason, the traces of hereditary opinion, and the analogy of things, independently of Revelation, we cannot avoid the belief that we are accountable beings. Our notions of right and wrong, of equity and judgment, our insuppressible forebodings, our fearful anticipations, the suggestions of natural conscience, all unite their several forces to fasten on the mind the belief that we shall be called to a definite account. Our intelligent nature, our rational powers, our voluntary agency, make us suitable subjects of God's moral government. His wisdom, power, omniscience, rectitude and justice render him supremely fit to be our final judge, and the dispenser of our eternal awards. But God, in his infinite goodness, has not, in this most important point, left us to the bare light of unassisted nature; he has not left us to be tossed about without rudder, or compass, on the boundless ocean of harrassing conjecture. He has not abandoned us to the alternation of vain fears and unfounded hopes; to the sickly suggestions of a troubled fancy, the cruel uncertainties of doubt, and the cheerless darkness of ignorance. The expectation of a day of retribution is not the gloomy reverie of the superstitious, nor the wild vision of the enthusiastic. *He who cannot lie* has solemnly assured us, that he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that Man whom he has sent, Christ Jesus.

The coming of this great day, which nature suspected, and reason allowed, Scripture confirms. It will at length arrive. The scrutiny so graphically exhibited by our Lord, will be realized in all its pomp of terrors. The sea shall give up its dead, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead which are in them, and every man shall be judged according to his works. And the dead, small and great shall stand before God, the judgment shall be set, and the books opened, and the dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works.

This universal examination into the human character, this critical dissection of the heart of man, from the first created being to him who shall be caught up alive in the air at Christ's second coming, shall infallibly take place.

Blessed be Almighty forbearance, it is still in the power of every existing child of Adam to lighten to himself his apprehensions of that day. He may do more; he may convert terror into transport, by acting now as if he really believed it would one day come; by acting as he shall then wish he had acted. If 'the terrors of the Lord persuade men,' what effect should his mercy produce; that mercy which has given the universal warning to the whole human race in three consentaneous parables, exhibited with a spirit of truth more resembling historic narrative, than prophetic anticipation! There is not one living being who now reads this page from whom that day is distant; to some it must be very near; to none perhaps nearer, than to her who now tremblingly presumes to raise the warning voice; to her, to all, it is tremendously awful. Let none of us, then, content ourselves with a barren admiration of its solemnities, as if it were an affecting scene of a tragedy, invented to move the passions without rectifying them; to inspire terror, without quickening repentance. Let us not be struck by it as with a wonderful fact in history, which involves the interest of some one country with which we have no particular concern; or of some remote century disconnected with that in which our lot is

cast. It is the personal, the individual, the everlasting concern of every rational being through all the rolls of time, till time shall be no more. It is the final, unalterable decision on the fate of every intelligent, and, therefore, every accountable creature, to whom God has revealed his will; to whom he has sent his Son, to whom he has offered the aid of his Spirit.

No wonder that the universal administration of final justice shall be manifested in the most awful pomp and splendor—no wonder that it will be equally a scene of anguish and of transport; when it will, on the one hand, as much exceed the terrors of guilt, as it will, on the other, transcend the hopes of faith—when the eternal Son of the eternal Father, in the full brightness of his glory, shall be the judge; when the whole assembled universe shall be the subjects of judgment—when not only the deeds of every life, but the thoughts of every heart, shall be brought to light, when, if *we* produce our works, the recording book will produce our motives—when every saint who acted as seeing Him who is invisible, shall not only see but share the glory in which he trusted; when the hypocrite shall behold him whom he believed without trusting, and mocked without deceiving; when the profligate shall witness the reality of what he feared, and the infidel shall feel the certainty of what he denied.

CHAP. VII.

On influence, considered as a Talent.

It is at best a selfish sort of satisfaction, though the poet calls it a delightful one, *to see others tossed about in a storm, while we are sitting in security, rejoicing, not because they are in danger, but because we are safe.* Christianity instructs us to improve on the sentiment. It teaches us to extract not only comfort and gratification from the comparison of our happier lot with that of the less favoured; but in making the comparison, it reminds us to make it with reference to God, by emphatically asking, 'Who is it that maketh us to differ?'

But if we look around, not only on the external but on the moral and mental distinctions among mankind, and consider the ignorance, the miseries, and the vices of others as a ground for our more abundant gratitude; what sort of feeling will be excited in certain persons by a sight and sense of those miseries, those vices, and that ignorance, of which their own influence, or example, or neglect has been the cause? If we see any unhappy whom we might have relieved, any ignorant whom we ought to have instructed, any corrupt whose corruptions we never endeavoured to reform, but whom, perhaps, we have contributed to make what they are; in either of these cases, it is difficult to conceive any state of mind less susceptible of comfort, any circumstance more calculated to excite compunction. These instances may help men to a pretty just criterion by which to judge of their own character, since it is certain *they* never felt any true gratitude for their own mercies, who can look with indifference on either the temporal or spiritual distresses of others. And if no one ever truly mourned for his own sins who can be insensible to the sins of those around him, so no one can be earnest to promote his own salvation, who neglects any fair opening of contributing to the salvation of others.

What an appalling reflection it is, that at the tremendous bar, a being already overwhelmed with the weight of his own offences, may have to sustain the addition of the amazing and unexpected load of all those, of which he has been the cause in others! What an awful contrast will be presented to the assembled universe, when certain commanding characters shall stand forth, burdened not only with their personal guilt, nor even with the sins of their immediate connexions, but in a certain measure with the sins of their age and country; while others, who devoted similar talents and influence to opposite purposes, shall appear gloriously surrounded with happy spirits, of whose felicity they have been the instruments: their shining crowns made brighter by imparted brightness, by goodness which flourished under their auspices, by virtues which were the effect of their patronage, by piety which was the fruit of their example.

Influence is a talent not only of undefinable but of universal extent. Who is there so insignificant as not to have his own circle, greater or smaller, made better or worse, by his society, his conduct, his counsels? That presumptuous but common consolation of a dying bed, *I have done no harm to any one*, is always the fallacious refuge of such as have done little or no good. Man is no such neutral being.

It is not the design of the present considerations to insist so much on the more striking and conspicuous instances of misemployed influence, (for the ordinary state of life does not incessantly call them into action,) as on those overlooked, though not unimportant demands for its exertion, which occur in the every-day transactions of mankind, more especially among the opulent and the powerful.

Rank and fortune confer an influence the most commanding. All objects attract the more notice from being placed on an eminence, and do not excite the less attention, because they may deserve less admiration. In anticipating the scrutiny that will hereafter be made into the manner in which the rich and great have employed their influence, that powerful engine put into their hands for the noblest purposes, may we not venture to wish they had some disinterested friend, less anxious to please than to serve them, who would honestly as occasion might offer, interrogate them in a manner something like the following:—

'Allow me, as a friend to your immortal interests, to ask you a few plain questions. Has your power been uniformly employed in discouraging injustice; in promoting particular as well as general good; in countenancing religious as well as charitable institutions; in protecting the pious, as well as in assisting the indigent? Has your influence been conscientiously exerted in vindicating injured merit; has it been employed in defending insulted worth against the indolence of the unfeeling, the scorn

of the unworthy, the neglect of the unthinking? Has it been exercised in patronizing modest genius, which would, without your fostering hand, have sunk in obscurity?

'Have you, in the recommendations which have been required of you, had an eye to the suitableness of the candidate for the place, rather than to a provision for an unworthy applicant, to the injury of the office? And have you honestly preferred the imperative claims of the institution to the solicitations, or even to the wants, of the individual? Have you never loaded a public, or injured a private establishment, by appointing an unfit agent, because he was a burden on your own hands, or a charge on your own purse? Have you never promoted a servant who had "wasted your goods," and with whom you parted for that very reason, to the superintendance of a charity, or to the management of an office, where you knew he would have a wider sphere, and a more uncontrolled power, of purloining public property, or wasting private bounty, than in that from which your prudence had discharged him?'

To rise a step higher:—'Have you never, if intrusted with a patronage over that peculiarly sacred office, "which any one may well tremble to give or to receive," been governed by a spirit of nepotism in the disposal of it, which you perhaps severely censure under a certain other establishment most obviously corrupt? Have you never been engaged in promoting men, who, from their destitution of principle, are a dishonour to the profession in which you have been raising them, or, by the want of abilities are disqualified for it? Have you never connived at the preferment of the weak or wicked, to the exclusion of others whose virtues and talents eminently fitted them for the situation? Or, have you, rather, strenuously laboured to fix the meritorious in the place they were so qualified to fill, while you supplied the wants of the undeserving or incompetent relative out of your own purse? And have you habitually made a conscience of recommending adequate persons in preference to the unworthy and the unfit, though the latter belonged to your own little senate, or swelled your own large train?

'Have you habitually borne in mind that important, but disregarded, maxim, that what you do by another is done by yourself; and not only carefully avoided oppression in your own person, but, rising superior to that selfish indolence, the bane, the grave of every nobler quality, have you been careful that your agents do not exercise a tyranny which you yourself abhor, but which may be carried on under your name? Your ignorance of such injustice will be of little avail, if, through supineness, you have sanctioned abuses which vigilance might have prevented, or exertion punished.

'Have you unkindly denied access to your presence to the diffident solicitor, who has no other channel to preferment but your favour; and if not able to serve him, have you softened your refusal by feelingly participating in his disappointment, instead of aggravating it by refusing to see and soothe him, when you could do no more? Have you considered that, to listen to wearisome applications, and pertinacious claims, is among the drawbacks of comfort necessarily appended to your station? To examine into interfering pretensions, while it is a duty you owe to the applicant, is a salutary exercise of patience to yourself; it is also the only certain means you possess of distinguishing the meritorious from the importunate.'

We dwell on this part of the subject the more earnestly, because it is to be feared that even the tender-hearted and the benevolent, from the facility of a yielding temper, from weariness of importunity, from a wish to spare their own feelings, as well as from a too natural desire to get rid of trouble, are frequently induced to confer and to refuse favours, not only against their principles and their judgment, but against their will. Yet as no virtue is ever possessed in perfection by him who is destitute of its opposite.—Have you been equally careful, never, for the sake of popularity or the love of ease, to awaken false hopes, and keep alive false expectations in your retainers, though you knew you had no prospect of ever making them good?—thus committing your own honour for the sake of swelling the catalogue of your dependents; and, by insincerity and indecision, feeding them with delusive promises, when a firm negative, by extinguishing hope, might have put them on a more successful pursuit.

Some striking instances of delicate liberality, recorded of a late lamented statesman, have shown, that it is not too much to expect from human nature, that a man should exert his influence for the benefit of another, even though it were to his own disadvantage, and that he should be not only willing, but desirous, not to procure for himself the gratitude of the obliged person, nor to obtain his admiration; but would be contented, that, while he himself afforded all the benefit, an intervening agent should have all the credit. This disinterestedness is among the nicer criteria of a Christian spirit.

While we can with truth assign the most liberal praise to that spirit of charity which pre-eminently distinguishes the present period, we are compelled to lament that justice is not held in equal estimation by some of those who give the law to manners. This considerably diminishes their influence, because it is the quality which, of all others, they most severely require in their dependents, as being that which is most immediately connected with their own interest. And how far from equitable is it, to blame and punish the statuable offence in petty men, whose breach of integrity is unhappily facilitated by continual opportunity, or induced by the pressure of want, while the rigorous exacter of justice is as defective in the practice, as he is strict in the requisition?

The species of injustice alluded to, consists much in that laxity of principle which admits of a scale of expense disproportionate to the fortune: this creates the inevitable necessity of remaining in heavy arrears to those who can ill afford to give long credit: in return, it induces in the creditor the habit, and almost the necessity, of enhancing the price of his commodity. The evil would be little, if the encroachment were only felt by those whose tardy payment renders exorbitance almost pardonable:

but others, who practise the most exact justice, are involved in the penalty, without partaking in the offence: and the correct are taxed for the improbity of the dilatory. This dilapidating habit leads to an indolence in inspecting accounts; and the increasing unwillingness to examine into debts, increases the inability to discharge them; for debts, like sins, become more burdensome in proportion as people neglect to inquire into them.—Perhaps there is no instance of misconduct which tends more directly to diminish influence than the imprudence of contracting debts, and the irregularity and consequent injustice of which it is sometimes unintentionally the cause.

And here, if we might be allowed a remark somewhat foreign to our immediate subject, it may be observed, that the low conception of justice of which we complain has infected not only morals, but religion; or rather, what began in our principle towards God, extends to our practice towards man. It is the attribute of which we make the least scruple to rob the Almighty; for it is a fashionable, though covert, mode of arraigning his justice, when we affect to exalt his character by representing him as too merciful to punish. Justice is not only eminently conspicuous in her own central station, but gives life and light to other attributes. By cutting off superfluous expenses, temperance and sobriety grows out of justice; and, what is subtracted from luxury, is carried over without additional expense, to the account of beneficence.

The Holy Scriptures lay down some precise and indispensable rules for the practice of justice, while they leave great latitude, at least as to the selection of its individual acts, to charity. Justice can be maintained only by this distinct demand and rigid acquiescence, while charity would lose the nature and quality of benevolence, if it were under any such express and definite rules. Charity may choose her object, but those of justice are chosen for her. It was, doubtless, in mercy, that no absolute rule or limitation is made respecting charity, that we might have the gratification of a voluntary delight in its exercise, for our nature is, in this respect, so kindly constituted, that, in minds not peculiarly ill-formed, the call to beneficence is the call to enjoyment.

But to return.—The influence of the great, 'the observed of all observers,' descends into the social walks of life. The pinnacle on which they stand, makes their most trivial actions, and even words, objects of attention and imitation to those beneath them. The consciousness of this should be an additional motive for avoiding, in their ordinary conversation, not only what is corrupt, but whatever savours of levity and imprudence; the vanity of the little world is ready, not from mischief, but self-importance, to convert the thoughtless slips of the great into consequence; their most frivolous remarks are quoted, merely that the quoter may seize the only occasion he could ever find of showing that he has been admitted to their company. This harmless little stratagem holds out a strong motive for those whose condition in life makes them subjects of observation, occasionally to let fall something that may be remembered, not merely because they said it, but because it was worth saying. This remark applies to superiority of talents, to be considered in our next head, still more than of rank.

As the great and noble are sufficiently disposed to look with reverted eye back to their ancestral honours, it were to be wished that they were all as ready, as we are happy to say some of them are, to cast the same careful retrospect to the ancient usages of their illustrious houses. There was a time when family devotion was considered as a kind of natural appendage to high rank, when domestic worship was almost as inseparably connected with the aristocracy as the church with the state. The chapel was as much a part of the splendid establishment as the state-room. When the form of piety was thus kept up, the reality was more likely to exist. Even the appearance was a homage to religion, the very custom was an honourable recognition of Christianity. But, in the way of influence, it must have been of high importance; the domestics would have their sense of duty kept alive, and would with more alacrity serve those who they saw served God. It was a bond of political, as well as of moral union; it was the only occasion on which 'the rich and poor meet together.' There is something of a coalescing property in social worship. In acknowledging their common dependance on their common master, this equality of half an hour would be likely to promote subordination through the rest of the day. Take it in an inferior point of view, it was a useful discipline, it was a family muster-roll, a sort of domestic parade, which regularly brought the privates before their commanding officers, and maintained order as well as detected absence. It was also calculated to promote the interests of the superiors, by periodically reminding their dependants of their duty to God, which necessarily involves every human obligation.

We come now to speak, though cursorily, of another deposit of talent, not less extensive in its immediate effects and far more important in its consequences; the influence of Genius and Learning. As the influence of well-directed talents is too obvious to require animadversion, we shall confine our brief remarks to their contrary direction.—If we could suppose the man whose talents had, by pernicious principles, been diverted from their right channel, to have, at the close of life, that clear view of his own character, and the misapplication of his mental powers, which will be presented to him when he opens his eyes on eternity, we should witness as complete a contrast with his present feelings as any two opposite descriptions of character could exhibit.

Of all the various sentences to be awarded at the dread tribunal, can imagination figure one more severe than will be pronounced against the polluted and polluting wit: the noblest faculties turned into arms against him who gave them, the eloquence which would scarcely have disparaged the tongue of angels, converted to the rhetoric of hell? The mischief of a corrupt book is indefinite, both in extent and duration.—When the personal example of the writer has done its worst, and has only ruined his

friends and neighbours, the operation of an unprincipled work may be just beginning.—It is a sin, the commission of which carries in it more of the character of its infernal inspirer than any other. It is a crime not prompted by appetite, kindled by passion, or provoked by temptation: but a gratuitous, voluntary, cold blooded enormity, the offspring of intellectual wickedness, the child of spiritual depravity; the deepest sin without the slightest excuse. Sins of surprise have infirmity to plead, but, in this frigid villany, the badness of the motive keeps pace with the turpitude of the act. The *intention* is to offend God, the *project* is to ruin man; the *aim* is to poison the temporal peace, the *design* is to murder the everlasting hope of all who come in contact with it.

But the exclusive application of talents to subjects perfectly unexceptionable, and right and valuable, as far as they go, is sometimes an occasion in which we might mingle regret with admiration. We view with reverence the profound scholar, a man, so far from having lost any time in trifling, whose very amusements are labours, and whose relaxation is intensity of thought, and sedulity of study. By unremitting diligence, he has been daily adding fresh stores to his ponderous mass of erudition, or periodically presenting new tomes to the literary world, in return for those he has rifled. But, put the case, that such a man has never so much as conceived the thought of lending to religion his weight of character, or the influence of his reputation, by devoting some little interval to a moral or religious speculation; has never once entertained the idea of occasionally directing his treasures of learning, into any channel which leads to the country where he and his volumes together, the durable register of his life, are soon about to land,—who can forbear, in the contemplation of such a possible character, regretting that his too moderate ambition should be satisfied with the applause of an age or an island, without once exercising his talents on some topic which might have included the concerns of his whole species, which might have embraced the interests of both worlds? Who can forbear lamenting, that he has risen so high without reflecting that, in a moral sense, 'one step higher would set him highest;' that he should have been contented with the idolatrous worship of some pagan sage as editor or annotator; and, for that humble meed, to relinquish the duty of glorifying his Maker, by instructing his fellow-creatures; as if that were a less splendid object, an inferior concern to be turned over to inferior abilities, and to which inferior abilities, were adequate?

If the awful apprehension of a future account could, at the close of life, lead even the illustrious Grotius, who had with equal ability cultivated both secular and sacred studies, to wish that he could change characters with a poor pious peasant, who used to spend most of his time in reading the Bible at his gate, what may finally be the wish of those who, having quitted a far less useful life without any such contrite confession, are brought to *witness* at once the retribution assigned to the conscientious use of one solitary talent, and to *feel* that awarded to their own vast but abused allotment? That awakening parable of the Divine Teacher which presents so terrible a view of the 'great gulf' which irrevocably separated to other neighbours, whose respective lots in worldly circumstances resembled the distinctions of intellect in the preceding instance—that 'gulf' which eternally divided the holy beggar from the opulent sensualist—is equally applicable to the present case. If any thing could deepen or widen a barrier already hopelessly impassable, might it not be the substitution of ill-applied abilities for misemployed riches?*

An affecting thought involuntarily forces itself upon us, on the departure of distinguished genius. All those shining talents which had hitherto too exclusively filled our minds, sink at once in our estimation, because we know they are now nothing to their possessor but as they were used, worse than nothing if they were not used wisely.—In the court where he now stands for trial, neither the cogent argument nor the pointed wit can secure his acquittal; happy if they appear not strong evidences against it. The qualities of his heart, which, perhaps, dazzled by those of his head, we had not taken into the account—his errors having been lost in his brightness—now come forward as the others recede. Our feelings are solely occupied with what may be now available to him to whom we have owed pleasure or information. That fame which we lately thought so solid a good, seems now a painted cloud melting into air—that proud FOR EVER for which he wrote, seems dwindled to a point—that visionary immortality which he had assigned as his meed, compared with the eternity on which he has entered, is become less than the shadow to the substance, less than the halo to the sun.

This idea strikes the mind with peculiar force upon the recent decease of two writers of uncommon reach of thought, profound research, and unbounded philological learning. Had these two eminent men been possessed of inferior minds, or a more dubious fame, their death would have sounded the signal of silence, no less to the moralist than to the satirist, as to the gross sensuality and corrupt principles of the one, the avowed atheism and profligate political doctrines of the other. As it is, we cannot but refer to them, though with feelings of pungent regret, and only under a strong sense of the atonement which such examples owe to the world for the mischief they do it, as a melancholy illustration of some of the preceding remarks. It is to be feared that the unmixed commendation of their talents and erudition, without the gentlest censure of their principles and practices, with which some of our journals abounded on the loss of these able but unhappy men, might tend to impress the ardent youthful student with an over-valuation of genius, unsanctified by Christian principles, of erudition undignified by virtuous conduct.

Far, very far, from my heart be the ungenerous thought of treating departed eminence with disrespect, but in analyzing striking characters, is it not a duty to separate 'the

* Let no one apply this to the great statesman of Holland.

precious from the vile,' lest unqualified admiration, where there is such large room for censure, should, while profusely embalming the dead, allure the ingenuous living to an imitation as unlimited as the panegyric was undistinguishing ?*

CHAP. VIII.

On time, considered as a Talent.

If we already begin to feel what a large portion of life we have improvidently squandered—what days and nights have been suffered to waste themselves, if not criminally, yet inconsiderately : if not loaded with evil, yet destitute of good—how much time has been consumed in worthless employments, frivolous amusements, listless indolence, idle reading, and vain imaginations—if things already begin to appear wrong, which we once thought at least harmless, though not perhaps useful—what appearance will they assume in that inevitable hour when all things will be seen in their true light, and appreciated according to their intrinsic value ? We shall then feel in its full force how often we neglected what we knew to be our duty, shunned what we were aware was our interest, and declined what we yet believed would add to our happiness ; while, with perverted energy, we eagerly pursued what we had reason to think was contrary to our interest, duty, and happiness. But excuses satisfy us now, to which we shall not then give the hearing for a moment. The thin disguise which the illusion of the senses now casts over vanity, sloth, and error, will then be as little efficient as consolatory.

He who carefully governs his mind will conscientiously regulate his time. To him who thus accurately distributes it, who appropriates the hour to its due employment, life will never seem tedious, yet counted by this moral arithmetic it will be really long. If we compute our time as critically as our other possessions ; if we assign its proportions to its duties, though the divisions will then be so fully occupied that they will never drag, yet the aggregate sum will be found sufficiently long for all the purposes to which life is destined.

It is not a little absurd that they who most wish to abolish time would be the least willing to abridge life. But is it not unreasonable to endeavour to annihilate the parcels of which life is composed, and at the same time to have a dread of shrinking the stock ? They who most pathetically lament the want of time, are either persons who plunge themselves into unnecessary concerns, or those who manage them ill, or those who do nothing. The first create the deficiency they deplore ; the second do not so much want time as arrangement ; the last, like brute animals laden with gold, groan under the weight of a treasure of which they make no use, and do not know the value.

They will never make a right use of time who turn it over to chance, who live without any definite scheme for its employment, or any fixed object for its end. Such desultory beings will be carried away by every trifle that strikes the senses, or any whim that seizes the imagination. They who live without any ultimate point in view, can have no regular process in the steps which lead to it.

But though in order to prevent confusion, to animate torpor, and tame irregularity, it is always a duty to form a plan ; occasions will arise when it may be a higher duty to break it. Both ourselves and our plans must ever be kept subject to the will of a higher power. That is an ill-regulated mind which wears life away without any settled scheme of action : that is a little mind which makes itself a slave to any preconceived rule, when a more imperative duty may arise to demand its infraction. Providence may call us to some work during the day which we did not foresee in the morning. Even a good design must be relinquished to make way for a better, nor must we sacrifice a useful to a favourite project, nor must we scruple to renounce our inclinations at the call of duty or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful doer as well as a 'cheerful giver.'

In our use of time we frequently practise a delusion which cheats us of no inconsiderable portion of its actual enjoyment. The *now* escapes us while we are settling future points not only of business, of ease, or of pleasure, but of benevolence, of generosity, of piety. These imaginary points to which we impatiently stretch forward in idea, we fix at successive but distant intervals, endeavouring by the rapid march of a hurrying imagination to annihilate the intervening spaces. One great evil of reckoning too absolutely on marked periods which may never arrive, is, that, by this absorption of the mind, we neglect present duties in the anticipation of events not only remote but uncertain. Even if the anticipated period does arrive, it is not always applied to the purpose to which it was pledged ; and the event which was to feel the full weight of our interference and commanding influence, when it has taken place, sinks into the undistinguished mass of time and circumstances. The point which we once thought, if it ever could be attained, would supply abundant matter, not only for present duty or pleasure, but for delightful retrospection, loses itself, as we mingle with it, in the common heap of forgotten things ; and as we recede from it, merges in the dim obscure of faded recollections. Having arrived at the era, instead of seizing on that *present* so impatiently desired while it was *future*, we again send our imaginations out to fresh distances in search of fresh deceits. While we are pushing it on to objects still more remote, the large uncalculated spaces of comfort and peace, or of languor and discontent, which fill the chasm, and which we scarcely think worth taking into the account, make up far the greater part of life.

All this would be only foolish, and would hardly deserve a harsher name, if these large uncultivated wastes, these barren interstices, these neglected subdivisions, had not all of

* To prevent any mistaken application of these remarks it may be proper to avow that Professor Porson and Mr. Horne Tooke are the persons to whom they allude.

them imperious demands of their own—if they were not to be as rigorously accounted for, as the vivid spots and shining prospects which promise so much and produce so little.

Let us not then compute time by particular periods or signal events. Let us not content ourselves with putting our festal days only into the calendar, but remember that from the hour when reason begins to operate, to the hour in which it shall be extinguished, every particle of time is valuable; that no day can be insignificant, when every day is to be accounted for; that each one possesses weight and importance, because of each the retribution is to be received. In the prospect therefore of our coming time, let us not make great leaps from the expectation to the occurrence; but bearing in mind that small concerns make up the larger share of life, let us aim to execute well those which lie more immediately before us. For the instant occasion we have life and time in hand, for that which is prospective, we may no longer be in possession of either: and it is an argument of no small cogency, that he who devotes time to its best purposes, secures eternity for its best enjoyments.

But we are guilty of the strange inconsistency of being most prodigal of what we best love, and of throwing away what we most fear to lose, that time of which life is made up. If God does not give us a short time, we can contrive to make it short by this wretched husbandry. It is not so much indigence of time as a prodigality in the waste of it, that prevents life from answering all the ends for which it is given. Few things make us so independent of the world as the prudent disposition of this precious article. It delivers people from hanging on the charity of others to emancipate them from the slavery of their own company. We should not only be careful not to waste our own time, but that others do not rob us of it.—The distinction of crime between 'stealing our purse' and 'stealing our good name' has been beautifully contrasted. That the purse is 'trash' is a sentiment echoed by many who yet set no small value on the trash so liberally condemned; while the waster of his own, or the pilferer of another's time, escapes a censure which he ought more heavily to incur. It is a felony for which no repentance can make restitution, the commodity being not only invaluable but irrecoverable.

Considerable evil, with respect to the economy of time, arises from an error which infects some minds of a superior cast—a notion that contempt of order and custom are indications of genius, that great minds cannot be tied to times, nor enslaved by seasons. They value themselves on being systematic only in their disdain of method, on being regular in nothing but irregularity; with them accident gives the law to action. They pride themselves in not despatching business but postponing it, and this in order to show with what ability they can retrieve time to which they are always in arrears. From this vanity of intimating that they can execute in hours what costs slower souls days or weeks, the most pressing business is deferred to some indefinite period, and duties thus postponed are not seldom omitted.

The same confidence in his own powers which leads a young man of genius to believe he can catch knowledge by intuition, see every thing at a glance, and comprehend every thing in a moment, tempts him to put off that moment. But if such wonders are really to be achieved without the old ingredients, time and study, what might he not expect would be accomplished with their assistance. Those who are now marvels would then be miracles! The too common consequence of this impatience of application, is to affect to despise whatever knowledge requires time to attain, and to consider whatever demands industry to acquire, as not worth acquiring.

Nor is this error monopolized by talents. We have known some, who, having no other evidence of genius to produce, never failed to be unpunctual. It is a wonder that the more intellectual, seeing their province thus invaded by dunces, do not become regular through mere contempt of their imitators, and abandon the abuse of time to those who know not how to spend it wisely.

Christianity is a social principle. He who has discovered the use of time, and consequently the value of eternity, cannot but be solicitous for the spiritual good of his fellow-creatures. The one, indeed, is indicative of the other. But this good, like every other, is not without its dangers. We cannot essentially benefit people without associating with them, without rendering ourselves agreeable to them. But in so doing we should ever recollect that we may seek to please till we forget to serve them, we may soften strong truths to render them more palatable till we come gradually less to recommend *them*, than ourselves. In the spirit of friendly accommodation we may insensibly lower the standard of religion, with a view to make ourselves more agreeable, and may deceive in order to conciliate.

Or we may fall into another error. We may begin at the wrong end. We may censure the wrong practice without any reference to the principle, or we may suit our counsels, not to the wants, but to the taste, of our friend. In our endeavours to promote the good of others, we should be careful to find out the points in which they are most deficient. If their error be ignorance of Scripture, if worldliness, if prejudice, if a general disinclination to seriousness, if a blind respect for religion, joined to an unacquaintedness with its doctrines; in each case, a very different mode of conduct will be requisite. In each, in all, we should, indeed, with the utmost fairness, lay open the whole scheme of Christianity, neither concealing its difficulties, its humbling requisitions, nor the self-denials it imposes. But at the same time, if we suspect any one truth to be particularly revolting to them, it will be more prudent to approach this truth gradually through others, from which they are less averse, than, by forcing its introduction at the outset, shut up the way to farther progress. Every doctrine should be unfolded gradually, judiciously, temperately, not insisting on any points that are not clearly scriptural, nor on any that admit of doubtful disputation, nor on many points at a time; and, above all, on none unseasonably, or unceasingly.

This habit of turning time to account, by endeavouring to be useful to others, will, if conducted with mildness, and exercised with Christian humility, be eminently beneficial to ourselves. It will set us on a closer examination of the truths we suggest; and in contending with blindness and self-sufficiency, we shall find a wholesome exercise for our own patience and moderation. It may remind us, that we were once, perhaps in the same state. Above all, it will put us on a more strict watchfulness over our own hearts and lives, lest we should be adopting one set of principles for our conversation, and another for our conduct. It will induce the necessity of a more exact consistency, as they, to whom we are counsellors, will not be backward, if we furnish them with the least ground, to be our censurers.

And here I would affectionately suggest to my numerous amiable young friends, the benefit to be derived to their own minds from turning a certain portion of their time to the personal instruction of the poor, for which so wide a field is just now providentially opened. In communicating the elements of religious knowledge—in numberless repetitions of the same plain truths—in being obliged to begin again the simple document which they fancied they had long ago impressed—in the humbling necessity of lowering their ideas, and debasing their language, in order to make themselves intelligible—in the forbearance which dulness of intellect, perverseness of temper, and ingratitude demand, they may gain some proficiency themselves, even where their success with others is least encouraging.

But to whatever account we turn our time with respect to others, the first object of its right employment is with ourselves; and this not only in discharging those exercises of piety and virtue, which are too obvious and too generally acknowledged, to require to be specified; but, in attending to the secret dispositions of the mind, in order to ascertain its real character. We do not mean to imply that we can judge of its state by the thoughts which are necessarily suggested by any actual business, or any pressing object, such thoughts being the proper demand of the occasion, and not any certain indication of our abiding state and habitual temper.—But by watching the nature and tendency of our spontaneous thoughts, we may, in a great measure, determine on the character of our minds; their voluntary thoughts and unprompted feelings, being the streams which indicate the fountain whence they flow.—The heart is that perennial spring; for, whether grace or nature supply the current, the fountain is inexhaustible. In either case, the more abundantly it flows, the more constantly its waste is fed by fresh supplies; expense, instead of exhausting, augments the stream, whether the source from earth supply worldly thoughts, or that from above such as are heavenly. Thoughts determine on the character: *as the man thinketh so is he.*

What a scene will open upon us, when, from our eternal state, we shall look back on the use we have made of time! What a revolution will be wrought in our opinions! What a contrast will be exhibited, when we shall take a clear retrospect of all we have done, and all we ought to have done! And shall we, then, put off the inspection to an uncertain period, to a period when we can neither repent to any purpose for what was wrong, nor begin to do what we shall then perceive would have been right? Let these frequent meditations on death, lead us to reflect what the feelings of a dying bed will be. Let us think now what will then be the review of riches mis-spent, of talents neglected or perverted, of influence abused, of learning misapplied, of time misemployed! To entertain serious thoughts of death now, is the most likely method for rectifying tempers, for conquering propensities, for establishing principles, for confirming habits, of which we shall then feel the consequences; for relinquishing enterprises and pursuits, for the success of which we may then be as much afflicted, as we should now be at their defeat.

He who cannot find time to consult his Bible, will find, one day, that he has time to be sick; he who has no time to pray, must find time to die. He who can find no time to reflect, is most likely to find time to sin; he who cannot find time for repentance, will find an eternity in which repentance will be of no avail. Let us, then, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, seriously reflect, under what law we came into the world: 'it is appointed for all men once to *die*, and, after death, the JUDGMENT.' Is it not obvious, then, that the design of life is to prepare for judgment; and that, in proportion as we employ time well, we make immortality happy?

CHAP. IX.

On Charity.

In that general use of the talents, suggested in the parable, there is also a particular vocation on the exercise of which, every man must equitably determine. Each is particularly called upon to acquit himself of that more immediate duty, for the practice of which, God has given special endowments and opportunity. Our Maker requires the specific exercise of the specific talent. The nature of the gift points out the nature of the requisition. The use of endowment is a peculiar debt, a marked obligation. This is not a gift confounded with the mass of his gifts, but one by which God designs to be, by that individual, more remarkably glorified.

But *charity* is a virtue of all times and all places. It is not so much an independent grace in itself, as an energy, which gives the last touch and highest finish to every other, and resolves them all into one common principle. It is called 'the very bond of perfectness,' not only because it unites us to God, our ultimate perfection, but because it ties all the other virtues together, and refers them thus concatenated, to Him, their common source and centre.

St. Peter having given a pressing exhortation to many exalted duties, finishes by ascribing to charity this emphatical superiority; '*Above all things*, have fervent charity.' It is, indeed, the prolific principle of all duty: a confluence of

every thing that is lovely and amiable: the fountain from which all excellences flow, the stream in which they all meet. It is not subject to the ebb and flow of passion or partiality —it is true christian sympathy. It is tender without weakness; it does not arise from that constitutional softness which may be rather infirmity than virtue. It is the affection of the Gospel; a love derived from the Spirit of Christ, and reciprocally communicated among his genuine followers.

Charity comprehends an indefinitely wide sphere, both in feeling and doing. According to the arrangement of St. Paul, in his beautiful personification of this grace,* she may be said to embrace almost the whole scheme of religious, personal, and social duty. 'Patient and kind,' she does not wait to be solicited to acts of benignity, she seizes the occasion—she does more, she watches for it. She 'endures' evils, but inflicts none; she does not select her trials, but 'bears all things.' Though 'she believes all things,' yet she exercises her hope without relinquishing her prudence; sometimes, where conviction forbids her thinking favourably, even then it does not prevent 'her hoping all things.' She subdues 'vaunting,' conquers the swellings of insolence, and the intractableness of pride. Not only 'she envieth not,' not only she disallows the injustice of desiring what is another's, but by a noble disdain of selfishness, she even 'seeketh not her own.' Her disinterestedness stirs her up to the perpetual rooting out that principle wrought by nature into the constitution of the soul. So far from thinking it a proof of spirit to resent injuries, she is not 'easily provoked' by them. She smooths the fierceness of the irrascible, and corrects the acrimony of the evil-tempered. She not only does not perpetrate, but 'she thinketh no evil.' She has found a shorter way of becoming rich than avarice ever invented, for charity makes another's goods her own by a simple process; without dispossessing the proprietor, she rejoices so much in another's prosperity that it becomes hers, because it is his.

Here we see that the Apostle places charity not only before all the virtues which he thus gracefully marshals, before qualities the most moral, gifts the most spiritual, attainments the most intellectual, but he actually degrades these last in the comparison; he does not barely lower their value, he annihilates it. Without this principle of life, this soul of duty, this essence of goodness, they are not only little, they are nothing. Without charity, possessions, talents, exertions are all fruitless. They are of no value in the sight of God: they are of no efficacy to our salvation. Charity alone sanctifies our offerings, recommends our prayers, and makes our very praises acceptable.

'And though nothing is formally efficacious but the blood and merits of Christ, yet charity, as a divine grace, and one that will never cease, shows that our interest in him, and union with him, are real and genuine.

But to descend to the particulars of charity, and apply the different branches of it to the common purposes of life.—Whenever we are promoting the good of mankind, either by assisting public institutions, or relieving individuals, we are obviously helping on the cause of charity; and, when we cannot effectively assist the work, we may exercise the principle; we may pray for the happiness which we cannot confer, and rejoice in every addition to the general good towards which we cannot contribute. On the other hand, the purse may sometimes be open where the heart is shut. And it is perhaps a more rare and a higher virtue to exercise forbearance towards the faults and to put a candid construction on the actions of others, than to supply their wants, or promote their temporal interests. But whether candour in judging or liberality in giving, be the virtue in exercise, by the adoption of each as a law, and the practice of both on the ground of conformity to the Divine will, we shall acquire such a habit of exercising the kind affections, that what was adopted as a principle will be established into a pleasure; what was a force upon nature, will almost grow into a part of it; obligation will become choice, law impulse, duty necessity; the energy will become so powerful, that the heart will involuntarily spring to the performance; indolence, selfishness, trouble, inconvenience, will vanish under the vigorous operation of a habit whose motive is genuine Christianity.

One Christian grace is never exercised at the expense of another, nor is it perfect, unless it promotes that other. This charity enjoys abstinently that she may give liberally. While she restrains every wrong inclination, she stimulates us to such as are right. She is never a solitary quality, but is inseparably linked with truth and equity. She leads us perpetually to examine our means, dispositions, and opportunities, and to exert their combined force for the promotion of the greatest possible good. She teaches us to contribute to the comfort of others as well as to their necessities. She converts small kindnesses into great ones, by doing them with reference to God; for it is not so much the worth, as the temper, which will render them acceptable to Him.

We must not judge of our charity by single acts and particular instances, for they are not always good men who do good things, but by our general tendencies and propensities. We must strive after an uniformity in our charity—examine whether it be equable, steady, voluntary, and not a charity of times, and seasons, and humours. If we are as unkind and illiberal in one instance, as we are profuse in another, when the demand is equal, and we have both the choice and the means, whatever we may be, we are not charitable.

Though charity, as we have already observed, is a quality of universal application, and by no means limited within the narrow bounds of alms-giving, yet, not to allow a due, that is, a high rank and station to those works of benevolence, to which our Redeemer gives so conspicuous a place in his exhibition of the scrutiny at the general judgment, would be mistaking the genius of Christianity, would be departing from the practice and the principles of its Founder; it would be forgetting the high dig-

* First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xiii.

nity he conferred on this grace, when he declared that he should consider the smallest work of love done to the least of his followers for his sake as done to himself.

This pecuniary charity is not to be limited to our particular connexions—must not be confined to unfounded attachments, to party-favourites. It must be governed by the law of justice. We must not do a little good to one which may involve a greater injury to another: yet though we should keep our heart always open, and our feelings alive to the general benefit, still, as our power must be inevitably contracted, whatever right others may have to our beneficence, local circumstances, natural expectations, and pressing necessity, confer the more immediate claim. The *most* immediate is that of 'the household of faith.'

From hence it appears, that in inquiring into the duties of charity, we must overlook the use to be made of riches, one of the talents implied in the parable. The application of money, whether 'kept by its owners to their hurt,' or squandered to their destruction, will equally be made the subject of final investigation. Lord Bacon's remark, that 'riches, when kept in a heap, are corrupt like a dunghill, but when spread abroad, diffuse beauty and fertility,' has been more admired than acted upon. All the fine sentences that have been pelted at the head of covetousness have probably never reformed one miser; nor have the most pointed aphorisms, not divinely directed, ever taught the luxurious the true use of money. Happily the age in which we live is so generally disposed to acts of beneficence, that there never was a period which less imposed the necessity to press the duty, to enforce the practice, or to point out the objects. A thousand new channels are opened, yet the old ones are not dried up; the streams flow in abundance, as if fed by a perennial fountain.

Let not any one, however, intrench himself in the supposed security of surrounding goodness. Let not any take comfort that he lives in an age of charity, if he himself is not charitable. We are not benevolent by contact or infection, or by breathing an atmosphere of charity. Yet who has not heard persons exultingly boast of this noble characteristic of the age, who are by no means remarkable for contributing their own contingent towards establishing its character? Probably many a man gloried in the valour of his country, and exulted in the pride of being an Englishman, after the battles of Trafalgar and Salamanca, who, had he been sent into the action would have been shot for cowardice.

Who has not seen the ready eye discharge its kindly showers at a tale of woe, and the frugal sentimentalist comfort himself that his tears had paid more cheaply the debt of benevolence, for which his purse had been solicited. The Author, many years ago, made one in a party of friends: an expected guest, who was rather late, at length came in; she was in great agitation, having been detained on the road by a dreadful fire in the neighbourhood. The poor family, who were gone to bed, had been with difficulty awakened. The mother had escaped by throwing herself from a two pair of stairs window into the street. She then recollected, that in her extreme terror, she had left her child behind in bed. To the astonishment of all present, she rushed back through the flames and to the general joy, soon appeared with the child alive in her arms. While she was expressing her gratitude, the light of the lamps fell on its face, and she perceived, to her inexpressible horror, that she had saved the child of another woman—her own had perished. It may be imagined what were the feelings of the company. A subscription was instantly begun. Almost every one had liberally contributed, when a nobleman, who could have bought the whole party, turning to the writer of these pages, said, 'Madam, I will give you,' every expecting eye was turned to the peer, knowing him to be unused to the giving mood, the person addressed joyfully held out her hand, but drew it back on his coolly saying, 'I will give you this affecting incident for the subject of your next tragedy.' Some will read this passage who were present on the occasion.

But since neither the logic nor the rhetoric of the writer, were she so happy as to possess either, is likely to make the 'churl liberal,' or to stir up the vain or the voluptuous to a beneficence which shall bear any fair proportion to the costly maintenance of their luxury or their vanity, the slight observations which follow shall be addressed to the bountiful giver, a character, blessed be God as common as it is amiable. 'To the act it is unnecessary to excite him; to the motive he cannot too carefully look. This is the more requisite, as, in an age in which more excellent charity sermons are annually preached than ever were delivered since the establishment of Christianity—that which alone, of all the religions in the world, ever made charitable foundations a part of its institution—we now and then meet with one which seems to invert the principle, and to put the point for the base. It is with diffidence we put the question, dreading to be suspected of indulging a spirit of censure where we would wish to offer unqualified commendation; but do we not now and then hear assigned to almsgiving, nay assigned to the individual contribution for which the well intentioned preacher is eloquently pleading, a merit so vast, that it would seem to supply the absence of all other merits; a merit which would almost induce one to believe that a more than ordinary contribution to the plate would prove a golden key, to stand in *his* stead, who 'has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers?'

To explain my meaning by an example:—In the temple of *Him* who gave his Son to die, to atone for the sins of the world, I once heard, and from no mean authority, Charity called *the atoning virtue of the age.* To have termed it the prevailing, the distinguishing, the most amiable characteristic of the age, had been right and true. But when I found it thus gravely proposed as an expiation for sin, I was ready to imagine that I heard the exclamation of St. Paul to his Galatians—'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you unto the grace of Christ unto another Gospel.'

We must readily not only allow for, but ad

mire, the ardour of an animated preacher, who, feeling his heart expand with his subject, finds it as much his delight as his duty to impart to every bosom the tender and compassionate sympathies with which his own overflows; and it is with reluctance we have presumed to intimate the restraints, which christian piety should impose on itself in not overstating even a christian duty.

We have no right to determine on the proportions and possibility of any man's charity, but on the principle we may determine; there must be an exhaustless spring in the heart, even where the Christian's means will not admit of a perpetual current. Love is in fact that motive principle, without which neither faith, nor mysteries, nor martyrdom, no nor even the addition of the second guinea to the plate, where only one had been intended, nor giving all our goods to the poor, will profit any thing. Where this vital spirit is wanting, the most ample bounty will not reach its end; where it exists, 'the cup of cold water,' shall be accepted. Without this animating principle, though the bounty may obtain applause, may influence others, may do good, and promote good, yet it may unhappily fall short of promoting the spiritual interests of the giver. He who has promised to render to every man according to his deeds, knows the principle of the deed, and has never promised to recompense any which has no reference to himself.

To neglect works of charity, not to be largely liberal in the performance of them according to our ability, is an infallible evidence that our professions of piety mean nothing. On the other hand, to depend upon them as what is to bear us out in our claims for heaven, before the tribunal of God, is to offend our Maker and deceive our own souls. We would be the very last to undervalue, or to discourage charity, but is it discouraging it to place it on its true ground; to assert that we may build an hospital without charity, as we may endow a church without piety, if we consider the one as an expiation for sin, or the other as a substitution for holiness?

Some are ingenious in contriving, by a strange self-delusion, to swell the amount of their charity, by tacking to it extraneous items of a totally distinct character. The Author was formerly acquainted with a lady of rank, who though her benevolence was suspected to bear no proportion to the splendour of her establishment, was yet rather too apt to make her bounties a subject of conversation. After enumerating the various instances of her beneficence she often concluded by saying, 'notwithstanding my large family I give all this in charity *besides paying the poor rates*;' thus converting a compulsory act, to which all are equally subject, into a voluntary bounty.

Our corruptions are so liable to infect even our 'holy things,' that we should be vigilant in this best exercise of the best affections of the heart—affections which God, when he graciously converted a duty into a delight, gave us, in order, by a pleasurable feeling, to stir us up to compassion. We should be careful that the great enemy may not be plotting our injury, even when we are performing actions the most hostile to his interests.

As there is not a more lovely virtue in the whole Christian code, so there is not one which more imperatively demands our attention to the spirit with which we exercise it, and the temper with which we bear the disappointment sometimes attending our best designed bounties. Though charity is too frequently thrown away on those who receive it, it is never lost on the benefactor if 'he who gives, does it with simplicity.'—When the bountiful giver cannot find pleasure, he may always extract good. He may reap no small advantage himself from that liberality which has failed to confer any. He may gain benefit from the disappointment he experiences in the unworthiness of the object. When the project he had anxiously formed for doing good to another is defeated by perverseness, or requited by ingratitude, it not only does not check the spring of bounty in the real Christian, but it calls new virtues into action. The exercise of patience, an improvement in forbearance and forgiveness, a stronger conviction that we must not make the worthiness of the object the sole measure of our bounty, are well worth the money we have spent on the undeserving. Perhaps too the reiterated instances how little good the best man is able to do in this world, may serve to wean him from it, and be an additional inducement for looking forward to a better.

But it is much easier to relieve our neighbour's wants, than to bear with his errors; the one gratifies our natural feelings, while the other offends them; the most difficult as well as the most sublime branch of charity, therefore, is the forgiveness of injuries, is the love of our enemies. It is a love humbly aiming to resemble his, who sends his rain on the just and on the unjust; a love not inspired by partiality, nor extorted by merit. It is following the example, while we obey the precept of Christ, when we 'do good to them that hate us.' It is a charity which bursts with a generous disdain the narrow bounds of attachment and even of desert, levels every fence which selfish prudence would erect between itself and its enemies; it is a love with respect to the objects, though with a boundless disproportion as to the measure, resembling God's love to us; it aims to be universal in kind, though it is low in the degree.

A very able divine* has insisted that it is to this part of the character of the Almighty that our Saviour limits the injunction, 'Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' It is, indeed, one of the principal instances in which finite creatures can by imitation approximate to the character of God; most of his attributes rather requiring us to adore, than leaving it possible for us to imitate them. For though all the attributes of God afford the most exalted idea of complete perfection, yet the injunction to attain his image is strikingly applied in the New Testament to this particular part of the divine character. The Apostle applies our being 'followers of God, as dear children,' afterwards to this individual instance, 'forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you,' adding, 'and walk in love as

* See bishop Sherlock's sermon on the text, 'Be ye perfect,' &c. &c.

Christ also loved us.' 'So that,' says the bishop, 'his exhortation to follow God stands inclosed on both sides with the precepts of love and charity, as if he intended to secure it from being applied to any thing else.' St. Luke, who gives us an abridgement of the same sermon on the mount, from which the passage is taken, also suggests the practice of love and forgiveness from the example of the Almighty, 'who is kind to the unthankful and the evil. After having delivered the same beatitude, he corroborates the interpretation with an injunction, by saying, not be *perfect*, but 'be merciful as your Father also is merciful.'

Our Saviour impressed a solemn emphasis on the command to forgive the offences of others, when he implicated it with God's forgiveness of us. It is to be feared, that many who would think it an act of disobedience to omit the daily repetition of the divine prayer, of which this request forms so striking a clause, do not lay to heart the daily duty of supplicating for that frame of spirit which the petition involves. Can there be a more awful consideration, than that we put the grand request on which our eternal happiness depends, on this issue, when we inseparably associate our own hope of pardon, with the required and reasonable condition of pardoning others? Should we not be conscientiously cautious, how we put up this petition, when we reflect, that we offer it to the great Searcher of hearts, who, while he listens to the request, can exactly determine on the integrity which accompanies it? The divine Author of the prayer seems to hold out a sort of test of the spirit of our obedience, when he proposes this difficult duty, as a trial of our general conformity to his commands. It seems selected by infinite wisdom as a kind of pledge of our submission to his will in all other points: our interest is confederate with our duty in the practice of this high and peculiarly Christian grace. The requisition suggests at once the most absolute obligation, and the most powerful motive.

This forgiveness seems not only to be one of the grand distinctions between the religion of the heathen and the Christian world, but to form a considerable difference between the duties inculcated in the Old and the New Testament. In the former, indeed, there were not only indications and suggestions of this rule, but some exemplifications of its actual performance. It is remarkable, that when David, whose energy of character, or rather mysterious inspiration as a prophet, led him to be so vehement in his denunciations of vengeance on persons of professed enmity against God, and against himself as the anointed of God, yet exhibited eminent instances of placability in his conduct towards his own personal enemies, especially in the case of Saul. But, perhaps, the duty, after all, was not so fully made out, so clearly defined, so positively enjoined, nor was the frame of mind so evidently seen in 'them of old time.' We have many instances under that dispensation, of saints and prophets laying down their lives for their religion, but it was reserved for the first New Testament martyr, when expiring under a shower of stones from his enemies, to say, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. The reason is obvious. It being expected, that our notions and practices should be adapted to the revelation under which we live, this sublime species of charity should necessarily rise in proportion to the clearness and dignity of that dispensation. It is congruous, therefore, that our forgiveness of injuries should be exercised in far higher perfection under the Gospel, the professed object of which was to make a full and perfect revelation of the pardon of sin by the blood of a Redeemer. And we can only be said to have a conformity to his image, in proportion as we practice this grace. Let us, however, remember, to borrow the thought of an eminent divine, 'that our forgiving others will not alone procure forgiveness for ourselves, while our not forgiving others is a plain proof, that we ourselves are not forgiven.'

CHAP. X.

On Prejudice.

THERE is not a more curious subject of speculation, than to observe the vanity of colours with which opinion tinges truth: the bias which prejudice lends to facts, when it cannot deny them; the perversion it gives to the motive, when it cannot invalidate the circumstance; the warp and twist it gives to actions, which it dares not openly condemn; the disingenuousness into which it slides, even though it does not intend to maintain a falsehood; the bright rays with which it gilds, perhaps unconsciously, its own side of a question; the dark cloud by which it casts that of an adversary into the shade.

Prejudice, if not altogether invincible, is perhaps the most difficult of all errors to be eradicated from the human mind. By disguising itself under the respectable name of firmness, it is of infinitely slower extirpation than actual vice. For vice, though persisted in through the perverseness of the will, never sets itself up for virtue; a vicious man knows what is right, though his appetites deter him from following it; but a prejudice, being perhaps more frequently a fault of the judgment than of the heart, is sometimes persisted in upon principle. No man will defend a sin as such, but even good men defend a prejudice, though every one else sees that it is producing all the effects of a sin, promoting hatred, souring the temper, and exciting evils passions.

Yet, though it may incidentally be attached to a good man, there are few errors more calculated to estrange the heart from vital religion, because there are none under which men rest so satisfied. Under the practice of any immorality they are uneasy, and that uneasiness may lead to a cure; for the light of natural conscience is sufficiently strong to show, that sin and peace cannot dwell together. But prejudice effectually keeps a man from inquiring after truth, because he conceives that he is in full possession of it, and that he is following it up in the very error which keeps him so wide of it. Or if, with the Roman governor, he ask, 'what is truth?' like

him, he turns away for fear of an answer. The strongest light cannot penetrate eyes that are closed against it; while to the humble, who desire illumination, God gives not only the object, but the faculty of discerning it.

As it is mental, rather than moral prejudice, which is the present subject of consideration, we shall say little of those prejudices of which the passions and appetites are the cause. Interest and sensuality see the objects which absorb them through their own dense medium, while the vision of either is probably clear enough in judging of the objects of the other's passion; the blindness being partial, and confined, like the lunacy of some disordered patients, to the single object to which the disease has a reference. Even probity itself is not of sufficient force to guide our conduct; we see men of sound integrity and of good judgment on subjects where prejudice does not intervene, acting, where it does below the standard of ordinary men, governed by a name, carried away by a sound. It makes lovers of truth unjust, and converts wisdom into fatuity. It must, therefore, be an enlightened probity, or we may be injuring our fellow creatures, when we persuade ourselves we are doing God service. Paul does not appear to have been a profligate, but to have been correct, zealous, and moral, and to have earned a high reputation among his own narrow and prejudiced sect. His error was in his judgment. The error of Peter was in his affections. A sudden touch of self-love in this vacillating but warm hearted disciple, made him dread to share in his master's disgrace. But in this case, a single penetrating glance melted his very soul, brought him back to contrition, repentance, and love. To cure the prejudices of Paul a miracle was necessary.

While the powerful arguments of our Lord put even the Sadducees, the infidels of the day, 'to silence,' they produce no such effect on the professing Pharisees; instead of rejoicing to hear their great doctrine of the resurrection so fully vindicated, they redoubled their prejudices against him, at the very moment in which he had obtained such a triumph in their cause. The first thing they endeavoured, was to seek to entangle, by their casuistry, him who had just defeated the common enemy.

But, let us judge even the prejudiced without prejudice. Prejudice, to a certain degree, is not so much the fault of the individual, as of our common nature. And that sober tincture of it, which is inseparable from habits and attachments, is a fair and honest prepossession:—for instance, who ever reprobated, as a censurable prejudice, that generous feeling,

> For which our country is a name so dear?

But, after all, prejudice of some kind or other, is a natural inborn error, attached to that blindness, which is an incurable part of our constitution.

Disagreement of opinion, therefore, if it be an evil inseparable from our present state of being ought not to excite antipathy; complete unanimity of heart and sentiment being reserved as a part of the happiness of that more perfect state, where the effulgence of truth will dissipate all the error and misapprehension which cloud our judgment here.

People commonly intend to judge fairly: and, when they fail, it is as often an error of the understanding as of the heart. They form their opinion of some particular subject from what they see of it. But though they see only a part, they frequently form their opinion of that which remains unseen, more peremptorily than those who see the whole; for a large and clear view by affording a justness of conception, commonly induces humility. Perhaps, on their ignorance of those very parts of a question which they do not see, they form their decision on the whole; while the unseen points are precisely those which only could enable them to determine fairly on the general proposition.

We should not, however, very severely censure any for the mere opinion they form, this being a matter of the judgment rather than of the will; the true object of censure is their conduct under this false impression; in acting as hostilely as if their opinion was founded on the best ascertained facts. If we are all more or less prejudiced, it does not follow, that the conscientious act upon the feelings which the prejudice has excited. The harsh and the intolerant, indeed, let loose upon their adversaries all the bad passions which this disposition to prejudge opinions has stirred up; while the mild spirit in which Christianity governs, will conduct itself with the same general kindness as if no diversity of opinion subsisted. Though all prepossession arises from some cloudiness in the mind, it is a fair trial of the Christian temper, when the man who suffers by it, continues to exercise the same tolerant and indulgent spirit towards the prejudiced party, as if there were a mutual concurrence of sentiment. If he have no other ground of objection to the person from whom he differs, there is something of a large and liberal spirit in acting with him, and speaking of him, on other occasions, as if the matter in debate did not exist.

How endless and intricate are the misleadings of political prejudice! It is as detailed and minute in its operations, as it is broad and extensive in its compass. Will not the circumstance of voting on the same side often stand instead of the best qualities, in recommending one man to the good opinion of another? With this unfounded partiality is naturally connected a dislike to better men, on the mere ground of their taking the opposite side; for party, which takes such a large permission to think and act for itself, takes care never to allow to others the liberty which it so broadly and uniformly assumes.

He who drinks deep into the spirit of party, minutely pencils all the shades of misrepresentation; his prejudice blackening, his partiality whitening; the one deforming what is fair, the other beautifying what is foul; the one defacing temples, the other garnishing sepulchres. Providence, in the mean time, working its own way by these perverse instruments; the worst designers being sometimes surprised into doing more good than they intended, by a wish to anticipate the good projected by the opposite party, and so to throw an odium upon them, for not

having been able to effect the same, though they had perhaps planned it, and though adverse circumstances alone had interrupted the scheme, or the want of a suitable occasion had delayed its accomplishment. Thus good is effected, the public is benefited, all are pleased. The conscientious rejoice that it is done at any rate; the prejudiced, that their party have the credit of doing it.

There are among the exhaustless manœuvres of a party-champion, if I may so speak, gestures and signs of disapprobation, which are of equal efficacy with language itself. There are also artifices in writing, that resemble intonation and accent, in a skilful speaker, which, by a turn of the voice, or a clause in a parenthesis, throw in a shade of distinction, lend an emphasis which makes mystery intelligible, and helps out the apprehension of the reader. There is such a thing as an intellectual-shrug of the shoulders, a mental shake of the head, an implication that has more meaning than an assertion, a hint which can effectually detract from the commendation which prudence has extorted, and which serves to awaken suspicion more than a direct charge. Whatever is omitted, is sure to be more than supplied; whatever is dexterously left open by the writer, never fails to be over-charged by the reader, who always values himself on his ingenuity in filling up an hiatus. There is a way of setting out with general praise, in order to make the meditated charge more effectual. A practised reader will see through the artful circumlocutory preface, which is gradually preparing to introduce the little, though effectually disparaging particle *but*. These artifices raise up the ghost of some unknown evil in the character to be injured, and excite, at the same time, the idea of prudence and moderation in the censure. It is a mysterious giving out, and assumed regret at being compelled to speak, a hypocritical conscientiousness, a reluctance of communication which, after it has told much more than all it knows, tenderly affects to have kept back the worst.

One evil which commonly arises from the perusal of a work of a systematic opposition, whether the object be public or private, is, that it has a tendency to bias the more liberal reader, who took it up in the most impartial state of mind, with as undue a prejudice in favor of the party attacked, as the assailant laboured to establish in favour of his own; so that, if any injustice be excited, it is on the contrary side to that which the author intended. Generally speaking, however, people do not sit down with a pure design to read impartially any thing, which, from the title of the work, or the name of the author, they foresee or suspect is likely to contradict their creed, whether previously adopted from conviction or prepossession.

But, to confine our observations to the prejudices which embitter common life:—when we fancy we have been injured by some unfounded evil report, let us avoid considering the character of the reporter, or our own supposed injury, under the immediate impression of the intelligence, but try to divert our thoughts to some other subject, till our heated spirits have time to cool We shall otherwise, too probably, feel and utter many things which exceed the bounds of strict justice. When the resentment has, in some measure subsided, let us endeavour to collect and to retain only the simple and exact truth; what the enemy really said, and not what he suspected he might say. Let us retrench all that is imaginary, all that is merely suspicion; let us cut off all the aggravations of conjecture, all the inventions of passion, all the additions of revenge, all that belongs to unsubstantiated report;—when these due retrenchments are made, we shall often see that the injury is not so great. It is no wonder if the object we saw through a mist was enlarged; a clear medium reduces it to its natural size.

But supposing the worst to be true; religion, operating on observation, will at length teach us to set these metaphysical evils, these afflictions of the imagination, this anguish of wounded pride or irritated self-love, over against the real, deep, substantial miseries of body and mind, under which thousands of our fellow-creatures, nay many of our friends, are at the moment sinking; and we shall blush at our own irritability; we shall bless God for the lightness of our own lot; we shall even be thankful for that evil which exists only in the opinion, or the report of a fallible creature, and which makes no part of our real self.

But, above all, let us never revenge the injury by opposing *our* injustice to that by which we suffer, by acting against our opponents with the same spirit with which we accuse them of acting against us. 'Retaliation, which is the justice of a vulgar mind, is of the very essence of an unchristian spirit. Where this is indulged, all the virtues of the adversary are rooted out by our resentment, and it is well, if we do not plant vices in their room. Or if we do not invent faults for them, are we not too much disposed to take comfort in those they have: to cherish unkind reports of them, to give them a welcome hearing and a wide circulation? Nay, self-estimation and rooted prejudice may lead us entirely to mistake the character of him we call our enemy. A man is not necessarily wicked because he does not admire us. He may dislike some of our notions without hating our persons; or, after all, his prejudices may not be entirely ill-founded: and if we will examine ourselves on the ground of his charge in some particular instance, we may find, that we have been wrong in a way which we might not have discovered without him. If his detection of our error lead us to correct it, we should not reckon that man among our worst enemies: or, if we should happen to be right, there is a great advantage in being assisted by the mode of attack, to know how to collect materials for our defence.

We must also learn sometimes to endure censure for things right in themselves, and, under existing circumstances, necessary, which yet may not appear right to others, because it may not be prudent to disclose those secret springs of action, which, if revealed, would convince others that we have not acted wrong. Instead of spending our spirits in invective, or spoiling our temper by hatred; instead of liking our faults the better, or adhering to them the more, because pointed out by those we dislike; would

it not be wiser to inquire, if our opinions may not be prejudices, as well as theirs? For it does not inevitably follow, that even the dislike of bad men is any certain proof of our goodness; though our natural propensity to think our own conduct and opinions right, disposes us to think them more right in proportion to the opposition which is made to either. We are blind to our own singularities, even though those singularities may be errors; and a spirit of resentment or resistance makes that blindness often more obstinate. On the other hand; may we not be too much disposed to think our censurers, whom we call wicked, more wicked than they are; or, though there may be errors in their conduct, this does not take from them the capacity of judging ours. Even though their hearts are wrong, their judgment, as far as relates to others, may not be totally perverted. It is no infallible proof of their bad judgment, that they think meanly of ours.

But allowing that their judgment is as incorrect as their practice, and that their dislike proceeds from the 'strong antipathy of bad to good, yet we may turn this dislike to profit. That hostility to religion, of which the Scripture so frequently speaks, is not intended to give the Christian a high notion of his own piety, but to encourage him against the fear and dejection which that hostility might create. If he meet with opposition, he must not fly for refuge to his own goodness, as contrasted with the faults of his opponent; nor must he be depressed, 'as if some strange thing had happened to him;' much less must he convert the opposition he meets with, into an evidence, that he is in all instances right. In the consolations which the Gospel holds out to the sufferer for righteousness' sake, it was intended to inspire him with courage, not vanity; with confidence in God, not in himself. He must not, therefore, so much value himself because he has enemies, as suspect that he may have enemies, because he has deserved them. Or perhaps, their is something wrong in us which we have not yet discovered, for which God permits us to have enemies. This suspicion may serve to render us circumspect, and quicken our endeavours to remove the ground of their censure. This, even if it do not reconcile them to us, will still make us gainers by their enmity; so that, in any case, the Apostle's interrogation, 'And who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?' loses nothing of its force.

Who can forbear to lament, when he sees such a litigious spirit pervades superior minds, such airy nothings conjured into difficulties, sufficient to clog the wheels of the noblest undertakings; an effect resulting merely from the partiality with which even wise men sometimes cleave to their own prepossessions, added to a reluctance to examine what may possibly be wrong on their own side, or right on the other?

It would be comparatively a small evil, if prejudices were only fostered on occasions in which religion has no concern. If we could hope to see such a general proficiency in true piety, that, where the sentiments of men concurred on all essential points, each side would sacrifice something on points that were indifferent, it would be a sort of realization of the communion of saints. But if it be called an act of Omnipotence to 'make men of one mind in a *house*,' what would it be to make them of one mind in a town or a kingdom? If we could witness a cordial agreement between those who profess to have the interests of the same religion at heart, such a concurrence in the wish to promote its great practical objects, as would render them willing to concede their own theories, or their own judgment, in things that do not affect any of the vitals of religion, with such noble materials worked up into action, what a glorious world might this become! This combination of Christian feeling would extinguish all unkind debate, 'all malice, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking. This peace-offering would oblige no one to renounce his principles; yet, by the extinction of petty differences, by such a confederacy of honest hearts and candid spirits uniting for some great public object, this wilderness would almost be converted into the garden of God. Nor would an inferior portion of the benefit be derived to the minds of those by whom, for a cause of general importance, the inconsiderable sacrifice was made; so far from it, it would be hard to say which made up the largest aggregate of good, the private exercise of individual virtue, or the promotion of the general end. But, alas! do we not sometimes see Christians more forward in attacking and exposing each other, than in buckling on their arms to make war on the common enemy? Are they not more ready to wage that war against a pious brother, who does not view some one opinion exactly in the same light with themselves, though equally zealous in the promotion of general truth, than against those who have no religion at all? What a church triumphant would our's be in one sense, though still militant in another, if there was a union of real Christians joining in one firm band to assail the strong holds of vice and immorality, instead of laying open each other's errors and mistakes, and thus exposing the great cause itself to the derison of the unbeliever.

We cannot dispute ourselves into heaven, but we may lose our way thither, while we are litigating unimportant topics—things which a man may not be much the better if he hold, and which if he hold them unrighteously, he might be better if he held them not. The enemies of religion cannot injure it so much as its own divisions about itself.

He who is zealously running after a favourite opinion, is in danger, in order to establish his point, of losing his moderation by the way, and over-stepping truth at the end: and, what is worse, of converting the sober defence of his own system into a hostile attack of that of another; for a hot disputant seldom wages defensive war. The point under discussion so heats his temper, as to make him lose sight of its real importance. Every consideration gives way in support of that opinion which has now the predominance in his mind. And this opinion is not seldom contended for with an eagerness proportioned to its real want of solidity; since great and important objects are seen by their

own light, and require not the false fire of pride or passion to blazon their worth. Often does the hot controvertist assert that to be of the very essence of religion, which is but a mere adjunct; and often he seems to wonder how men can bestow so much time and thought on any other topic, while his grand concern is under consideration.

It is because these rooted and unexamined prejudices involve human affairs in so much perplexity, that the rectification of our judgment is one of the most important objects of our concern. The opinion which others entertain of us, though it may hurt our fortune or our fame, yet it cannot injure our more essential interests. Their judgment of us can neither wound our conscience nor shake our integrity. The false judgment we form of *them* may do both, especially if we act upon the opinion we have formed, if we speak injuriously of those of whom we think unkindly; if, by following a blind prejudice or precipitate judgment, we decide upon their characters, without possessing those grounds for determining which we insist are indispensable in the opinion they form of us. Jealousy, resentment, envy, often darken our perception, and are secretly operating on our minds, while we persuade others, and too probably ourselves, that we are promoting the interests of truth and justice, in exposing the faults, or counteracting the schemes of another.

Controversies will be for ever carried on, though converts are not made: for I do not remember, that of any of the ancient sects of philosophers, any went over to their opponents. Among the professors of the old school divinity, it does not appear that the disciples ever changed their master, that the advocates of the *angelical* Doctor ever adopted the cause of the *irrefragable*;* and it is evident that the followers of Jansenius and Loyala died with the same mutual hostility in which they had lived.

As truth, however, will be assaulted, it must be defended. Controversial discussions, therefore, are not only harmless, but useful, provided truth be the inspiring motive, and charity the medium of conducting them. Truth is frequently beaten out by conflicting blows, when it might have contracted rust and impurity by lying quiet uninquired into and unassailed. We are in danger of growing negligent about a truth which is never attacked, or of surrounding it with our own fancies, and appending to it our own excrescences; while the assailant teaches even the friendly examiner to clear the principal of all foreign mixtures, and, by giving it more purity, to give it wider circulation.

But, as we before observed, a thorough partisan in religion, as well as in politics, seldom takes up a book of controversy with an unbiassed mind. He has a pre-determination which seldom gives way to argument. He does not see, that the supporter of his own cause may be maintaining it in a wrong temper; that, while he is fighting for orthodoxy, he may be aiming his side blows at a personal antagonist, or giving the death's wound to charity. He does not perceive, that he may be injuring the interests of practical religion, while he is labouring to promote such as are doctrinal, that he may be inflaming the temper, while he is informing the understanding. Yet a controversy is sometimes so managed, that, though truth may be vindicated, the minds of plain Christians may be little informed. Such readers do not understand the logician's terms, which, though they may have the effect of silencing the opponent, do but little towards enlightening the mind or strengthening the faith. Controversies, therefore, in religion or politics often do little good, in comparison of the labour they cost, and the evil tempers they excite. They are seldom read by those to whom, if temperately conducted, they might be of the most service—the unprejudiced. The perusal is commonly confined to two classes, friends and enemies. Now the friends and enemies of a writer form but a small proportion of the world of readers. Of these, the one flies to his book to get his prepossessions strengthened, the other to get his antipathies confirmed. The partisan was pre-determined that no argument should shake him, the adversary sat down with the same liberal resolution. Nay, the probability is, that he will declare his former opinion is more immoveably settled by the very reasons the opposer has suggested, so that he feels he is furnished with fresh arms by the antagonist himself.

But though neutrality is not a state of mind to be desired, moderation is. Even these polemical Christians, if each would look calmly and kindly on the other, might discover in his opponent a striking likeness of his own features, if not an entire similarity of complexion: a likeness sufficient to prove that they are both of the same family; all children of one common Father, though they do not carry the exact resemblance in some minutenesses in which parity is not necessary to prove affinity. The general family-likeness should, however, operate as an inducement to treat each other with brotherly kindness, even if they were not assured, which they all profess to be, that the common Father will be the common Judge.

* Scotus, Aquinas, and the other school divines, were distinguished by these and similar epithets.

CHAP. XI.

Particular Prejudices.

It is no inconsiderable part of our duty in our necessary connexions with that motely mass of characters of which mankind is composed, to conquer certain prejudices which are too apt to arise, especially in persons of fastidious temper and delicate taste, against those, who, though essentially valuable in their general character, have something about them which is positively disagreeable; or who do not fall in with some of our ideas, or whose manners are not congenial to our feeling. To wait before we love our fellow creatures, till their character be perfect, is to wait till we meet in heaven; and not to serve them till the feeling be reciprocal, is to act on the religion of the publican, and not of the Christian. We should love people for what we see in them of the image of their Maker

though it be marred and disfigured. That piety which makes them amiable in His sight, should prevent their being disgusting in ours. If we consulted our principles more, and our taste less, it would cure us of this sharp inquest into their infirmities.

Yet on the other hand, if religious but coarsely-mannered persons, however safe they may be as to their own state, could be aware how much injury their want of delicacy and prudence is doing to the minds of the polished and discriminating—who, though they may admire Christianity in the abstract, do not love it so cordially as to bear with the grossness of some of its professors; nor understand it so intimately, as to distinguish what is genuine from what is extrinsic—If they could conceive what mischief they do to religion, by the associations which they teach the refined to combine with it, so as to lead them inseparably to connect piety with vulgarity, they would endeavour to correct their own taste, from the virtuous fear of shocking that of others. They should remember, that many a thing is the cause of evil which yet is no excuse for it; that many a truth is brought into discredit by the disagreeableness which may be appended to it, and which, though utterly foreign, is made to belong to it.

In addition to the infirmities which, from the fault of nature, or the errors of education, are not perhaps so easily avoided, there are others which are purely voluntary.—Certain religionists there are who torment themselves with a chimera till they become the victims of the prejudice of their own creation. There is a querulous strain of pious vanity, in which, with a most unamiable egotism, they delight to indulge. It is a sort of traditionary lamentation of evils, which, having once been the lot of Christianity in the most awful extreme, are assumed to be still, in no inconsiderable degree attached to its followers. Surrounded with all the conveniences of life, and faring comfortably, if not sumptuously, every day, they yet complain of persecution, as if Christianity still subjected its followers to the sufferings of those primitive disciples, 'of whom the world was not worthy.' But let them compare the dreadful catalogue of torments enumerated by the Apostle to the Hebrews—enumerated the more feelingly, as he had experienced in all their extremity the sufferings he describes;—let them compare these with their own petty trials, of which, the worst they have ever felt or feared, is that 'of mockings:' '*cruel*, mockings,' perhaps, as to the temper of the reviler, but innoxious to the imaginary sufferer. The glorious profession of the saints of old brought on them bonds and imprisonments by order of the government. Ours is sanctioned by the ruling powers. '*They* were destitute, afflicted, tormented;' our distresses are seldom caused by our piety, but frequently by our want of it. *They* were denied the exercise of their religion, we are protected in ours. *They* were obliged to meet clandestinely at undue hours in incommodious places. With us, provision is made for public worship, and attendance on it encouraged and commanded.

Let none of us, then, proudly or peevishly complain, as if our abundant piety was either forbidden, discouraged, or under-rated. Private prejudice, and individual hatred, are indeed sufficiently alive, but the blows they aim fall hurtless as the feebly-lifted lance of Priam. If, then, we allow ourselves to murmur at our own disadvantages, will it not look as if we inwardly lamented that we are so very good to so little purpose; as if we repined at not being rewarded by universal applause for the superabundance of our piety? May we not, by our complaints, lead the world to suspect that our goodness was practised as a bait for that applause, and that, having missed it, we feel as if we had laboured in vain?

But, from the prejudices which one class of Christians are too ready to indulge against another, we turn to those of a different character; to the philosophical man of the world, who is prepossessed not so much against any particular class of Christians, as against Christianity itself. These unhappy prejudices are often laid in by an education in which no one thing has been neglected except religion. The intellect has been enlarged by the grandeur, and polished by the splendour, of pagan literature, which took early possession of the yet vacant mind, and still maintains its ascendancy with that power and energy which naturally belong to first and therefore, deep impressions. The subsequent character continues to feel the effect of the excessive admiration early excited by some favourite authors, by whom the more impetuous passions and generous vices are exalted into virtues, while the spurious virtues are elevated into perfections little short of divine, and the whole adorned with whatever can captivate the fancy and enchant the taste; with beautiful imagery, ingenious fiction, and noble poetry. Who, indeed, does not feel divided between admiration at their writings, and regret, that the writers were not providentially favoured with divine illumination? Their brightness, like that of ebony, is a fine polish on a dark substance.

Here the indignant man of letters, if any such should condescend to cast an eye on these pages, will exclaim, Are scholars, then, necessarily irreligious? God forbid! far from me be such a vulgar insinuation—far from me such a preposterous charge; not only against a multitude of eminent lay-christians, but against the whole of that large and venerable body, whose life and labours are dedicated to religion, all of whom are, or ought to be, learned.

But it is nevertheless true, reason on it as we may, that, in the state of excitement above described, every youth of taste and spirit, who has not been early grounded in Christian principles, must necessarily afterwards first open the volume of Inspiration, and find it destitute of all that false but dazzling lustre with which the page of ancient learning is decorated.

And what must considerably add to the prejudice which may reasonably be expected to be thus excited, is, that they find the great object of one religion has been to pull down all the trophies of false glory which the other had so successfully reared. The dignity of human nature, of which they have read and felt so much, is laid prostrate in the dust. Man is stripped

of his usurped attributes, robbed of his independent grandeur. A new system, of what appear to him mean-spirited and sneaking virtues—charity, simplicity, devotion, forbearance, humility, self-denial, forgiveness of injuries—is set up in direct opposition to those more ostensible qualities which are so much more flattering to the natural human heart.

Those obstacles to religious progress are removed, when, in early institution, the defective principles of the one school are not only pointed out and guarded against, but are even, as is frequently the case, converted into salutary lessons, by being placed in just contrast with the other, and are made at once to vindicate the scheme, and to exalt the principles of Christianity.

But he into whose character these principles have not been infused, is too likely to set up on the stock of his own underived powers. The cardinal vice of an irreligious reasoner will naturally be that pride which sets him on considering the Gospel as a narrower of human understanding, a debaser of the soaring spirit of intellectual man, a fetter on the expatiating fancy, a clog on the aspiring mind. This opinion, which he rather adopts by hearsay or tradition than by studying the sacred volume, continues to keep him ignorant of its contents. He is satisfied with knowing Christianity, only in the state in which it is presented to him in certain passages, torn from their proper position, disjoined with malignant ingenuity, and distorted by perverted comment, from that connexion which would have solved every difficulty and annihilated the triumphant cavil. Or if, under this influence, he takes a superficial glance at Christianity, he sees a religion, which though it prohibits no legitimate greatness, yet a religion whose object is not to make man, according to the estimation of this world, great. His secret prejudices, too, may be augmented by the revolting doctrine, that he is not able to do any thing right of himself. He is to do the work, and to give the glory to another. After having followed with rapture the conqueror of Carthage hanging up his victorious laurels in the capitol, he will feel indignant to be taught, that the Christian conqueror, instead of glorying in his triumphant crown, 'casts it before the throne.'

He had observed in pagan lore, abstract truth prepared for the philosophers, pageants, feasts, and ceremonies for the people. This distinction of rank and intellect flattered human pride. In Christianity he finds one rule, and that a plain rule: one faith, and that an humbling faith; one scheme of duties, irrespective of station or talents: while, in the other, the systems of the learned, and the superstitions of the vulgar, were as distinct as any two religions, and as inefficacious as none.

But, after all, it is not the idolatry exhibited in the Greek and Roman writers that perhaps can overthrow his faith, though their licentiousness may affect his morals. The hardest blow to his principles will be given by the modern champions of unbelief; by writers against whom the young are not on their guard, because, without Christianity, they slide in under the general title of Christians, disseminating contraband wares under false colours. The wound inflicted by the baptized infidel is more profound than that of the polytheist, whose absurdities render his aim comparatively innoxious. The preposterous systems of a false religion are harmless, compared with objections raised, misrepresentations sent forth, and sarcasms insinuated against the true one.

But if the enthusiastic votary of those systems go no farther than to establish philosophy as his standard, and taste as his guide, when he is brought to think—not that philosophy and taste are to be abandoned, for Christianity requires no such sacrifice—but that they are to be admired subordinately, the misfortune is, that the second half of life is sometimes spent in imperfectly counteracting the principles imbibed in the first half. It is not easy to get rid of the prepossession in favour of a morality untinctured with religion; of 'that love of fame which the pure spirit doth raise,' but which it is the office of the renewed spirit to lower—of the admiration exhausted on splendid, but vicious characters—of the idolatry cherished for unprincipled heroes—of the partiality felt for all the powerful rivals which genius has raised up to religion—of all the sins that poetry has canonized—all the sophistry that praise has sanctified—all the pernicious elegancies of the gay—all the hollow reasonings of the grave.

In this state of neutrality between religion and unbelief, happy is it for the faltering novice if he be not fatally offended, that Christianity admits people who are not elegant-minded, who are not intellectual, to the same present advantages, to the same future hope, with the profound thinker, and logical reasoner. And, even after the most successful struggles in this new science, it will still be found, and the discovery is humiliating, that the religious attainments of the unlearned are often more rapid, because less obstructed, than those of 'the wise and the disputer of this world.' It requires at least a smattering of wit and knowledge to be sceptical, while the plain Christian, who brings no ingenuity into his religion, is little liable to the doubts of the superficial caviller, who seeks to be 'wise above what is written.' For if the endowments of the unlearned are smaller, they are all carried to one point. They have no other pursuit to divide or divert their attention; they have fewer illusions of the imagination to repel; they bring no opposing system to the Christian scheme; they bring no prejudices against revelation, which holds out a promise of reversionary happiness to those who are destitute of present enjoyments; and Christianity will generally be more easily believed by those whose more immediate interest it is to think it true. They have no interfering projects to perplex them; no contradictory knowledge to unlearn, their uninfluenced minds are open to impressions, and good impressions are presented to them. They have less pride to subdue, and no prepossessions to extinguish. They have no compromise to make with Christianity, no images of deities, which the philosopher like the emperor Tiberius, wishes to set up in the same temple with Christ; no adverse tenets which they wish to incorporate with his religion, no ambition to convert it into a better thing than he made it We

nave seen how much philosophy early impeded the reception of pure Christianity in some of the wisest and most virtuous pagan converts. Origen and Tertullian did not receive the truth from heaven with the same simplicity as the fishermen of Galilee.

To prove that this is no flight of enthusiastic fancy, let us recollect with what an extraordinary elevation and expansion of soul the Author of our religion bore his divine testimony to this truth: 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' He then, instead of accounting for it by natural means, resolves the mystery into the good pleasure of God—'*Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*'

Even the vulgarity which, as we have already observed, mixes with, and debases the religion of the man of inferior attainments; the incorrect idiom in which he expresses his feelings and sentiments; the coarse images and mean associations which eclipse the divine light, do not extinguish it: they rather, in some measure, prove its intrinsic brightness by its shining through so dense a medium. When the man of refinement sees, as he cannot but see, what amelioration Christianity confers on the character of the uneducated; how it improves his habits; raises his language; what a change it effects in his practice; what a degree of illumination it gives to his dark understanding; what consolation it conveys to his heart; how it lightens the burdens of his condition, and cheers the sorrows of his life—he will, if he be candid, acknowledge, that there must needs be a powerful efficacy in that religion which can do more for the ignorant and illiterate, than philosophy has ever done for the great and the learned. And is it not an unanswerable evidence of the truth of Christianity and the power of grace, when we see men far surpassing all others in every kind of knowledge, themselves so far surpassed in religious knowledge by persons absolutely destitute of all other.

But if these weak and humble disciples afford a convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity; if even these low recipients exhibit a striking exemplification of its excellence, yet we must confess they cannot exhibit an equally sublime idea of christian perfection, they cannot adduce the same striking evidences in its vindication, they cannot adorn its doctrines with the same powerful arguments as highly educated Christians. Habituated to inquiry and reflection, these are capable of forming more just views of the character and attributes of God, more enlarged conceptions of his moral government. They have also the advantage of drawing on their secular funds to augment their spiritual riches. They are conversant with authors contemporary with the inspired writers. Acquaintance with ancient manners and oriental usages also gives great advantage to the lettered readers of Scripture, and, by enabling them to throw new light on passages which time had rendered obscure, adds fresh strength and double confirmation, to a faith which was before 'barred up with ribs of iron.'*

Scripture also affords a larger range of contemplation to those enlightened minds who study human nature at the same time, or who have previously studied it; because it was upon his own knowledge of the human character that the Saviour of the world so strikingly accommodated his religion to the wants and the relief of that being for whose salvation it was intended.

The better educated, also, will better discern, because it demands a higher exercise of the rational powers, that passages of a similar sound have not seldom a dissimilar meaning; and that it is not the word, but the ideas, which constitute the resemblance. The want of this discernment has led many well disposed, but ill informed persons, into mistakes.

Again:—Many detached texts are meant as a brief statement of a general truth, and intended to lead the reader into such trains of reflection as shall 'exercise unto godliness,' instead of exhibiting a full delineation and giving the whole face and figure, every side and aspect of the subject. Scripture frequently proposes some important topic in a popular manner, without making out its full deductions, or its series of consequences. Now, for the fuller understanding these heads, and turning them to their due improvement, the advantage lies entirely on the side of the thinking and the reasoning reader. It must be confessed, however, that the humble, though illiterate Christian, is able to attain all the practical benefits of these suggestions. He compares Scripture with Scripture, he substitutes no opinions of his own for those he there meets with, he never attempts to improve upon Christianity, he never wishes to make the Bible a better thing than he finds it. By diligent application, and serious prayer, his understanding enlarges with his piety. Above all, he does the 'will of God;' and, therefore, 'knows of the doctrine that it is of God.'

It must be confessed also, on the other hand, that the professed scholar, by converting Scripture learning into theses of discussion, is in some danger of making his knowledge more critical than practical. The same reason which is meant to enlighten, may be employed to explain away his faith; and his learning which adorns is capable also of being turned to discredit it.

We must, however, admit, that when our supposed man of high education becomes essentially pious, his piety will be of a higher strain. It is more pure, more perfect, more exempt from erroneous mixtures, more clear of debasing association, more entirely free from disgusting cant and offensive phraseology; less likely to run into imprudence, error, and excess; less in

* The paltry cavil on the impossibility that the penitent woman could anoint the feet of Jesus as he sat at meat, could only mislead such readers as were unacquainted with the recumbent posture in which the ancients took their meals. The triumphant sneer at the paralytic, who was let down from the housetop, through the tiling with his couch, could only shake the faith of those who are ignorant of the manner in which the houses of eastern countries were roofed.—Whether infidel writers took advantage of the supposed ignorance or their readers, or whether their ridicule of these imputed absurdities of Scripture arose from their own ignorance we will not determine. Instances might be multiplied without number of this ignorance, or of this disingenuousness.

danger of the gloominess of superstition on one hand, and the wildness of fanaticism on the other. Having the use of a better judgment in the choice, he is not in the same danger of being misled by ignorant instructors; he is not liable to be drawn away by a vanity so difficult to restrain in the uneducated religious man; a vanity so frequently excited when he sees his own superiority, in this great point, to his worse informed neighbours. From this vanity, and this want of the restraint of that modesty imposed by superior education, the man of low condition often appears more religious than he is, because, being disposed to be proud of his piety, he is forward to talk of it. While the higher bred frequently appear less pious than they really are, from the good taste and delicacy which commonly accompany a cultivated mind. There is also another reason why they exhibit it less, they are aware that, in their own society, the exhibition would bring them no great credit.

If unlettered Christians labour under some disadvantages, we repeat it, they yet afford an internal evidence of the truth of Christianity, and an evidence of no small value. They show that it is the same principle which, when rightly received, pervades alike all hearts; a principle which makes its direct way to understandings impervious to the shafts of wit, and insensible to the deductions of reasoning—to minds sunk in low pursuits, indurated by vulgar habits. It is a striking proof of its being the same principle, that such seemingly disqualified persons possess as clear views of its nature, at least of its broad and saving truths, as the man of genius and the scholar; destitute as they are of all his advantages, wanting perhaps his natural perspicacity, unused to his habits of inquiry, incapable of that spirit of disquisition which he brings from his other subjects to the investigation of this. No one, if he examine impartially, can fail to be struck with this grand characteristic of the truth of Christianity—not only, that in all degrees of capacity and education in the same country, but that in different countries, in those where taste and learning are carried to the highest perfection, and in dark and ignorant nations, where not only the sun of science has never dawned, but where literature has never softened, nor philosophy enlarged the mind, where no glimpse of religion can be caught by a reflex light, as is the case in polished and Christian countries—yet wherever Christianity has made its way, and pierced through the native obscurity, there the genuine spirit, and the great essential fruits of the gospel, will be found just the same; the same impression is made by the same principle; the same results spring from the same cause, and the disciples of Christ, whether it be the converted Greenlander or the Academical believer, are recognised in all their distinguishing features, are identified in all the leading points. Such a concurrence in sentiment, feeling, and practice, such a union in faith, hope, and charity, amongst persons dissimilar in all other respects, unlike in all other qualities, unequal in all other requisites; minds never made to be akin by nature thus allied by grace, bearing the same stamp of resemblance in spirit as their possessors bear in the common properties of body: all this is a convincing proof that there must be something divine in a principle which can assimilate such contrarieties—which can re-unite those in one common centre who differ in all other distinctions to produce identity in the leading point. Does not all this prove it indeed to be the work of God, a work which requires not previous accomplishments or preparatory research, but only a willing mind, an unprejudiced spirit, and an humble heart? Does it not prove, that where the essence, and the spirit of Christianity really reside, it will produce the one grand effect, *a new heart and a new life.*

CHAP. XII.

Further causes of Prejudice.

It is a singular fact that the infidel and the fanatic sometime meet at the same point of error—that reason has little to do with religion. The enthusiast we are hopeless of convincing by argument, because he is commonly ignorant; but the lettered sceptic may be better taught even by his pagan masters. Plutarch, after a large discussion whether brutes had any reason, determines in the negative from this consideration, *because they had no knowledge or feeling of a Deity.* The great Roman orator expresses the same idea when he asserts, *that a capacity for religion was the distinguishing mark of rationality, and that this capacity is the most unequivocal sign of reason.*

Yet sound reason and Christian piety are sometimes represented as if they were belligerent powers, as if *Orders in Council* had been issued to cut off all commerce between them, as if they were better calculated eternally to meet sword in hand, than in the conciliatory way of treaty and negociation; as if every victory of the one, must necessarily be obtained at the expense of the other's defeat. But is it not an affront to the Giver of every good gift to represent his highest natural and his supernatural endowments as infallibly hostile to each other? It is evident that when reason and religion act in concert, they strengthen each other's hands. But when they injudiciously act in opposition, perverted reason starves the ardour of piety, or ill-judging piety hands over reason to obloquy and scorn. In every case, the ill-understood jealousy of each injures the interests of both.

The truth is, sound and sober Christianity is so far from discountenancing the use of reason, that she invites its co-operation, knowing that it possesses powerful arms to defend her cause, to defend her against the encroachments of error, the absurdities of fanaticism, the inroads of superstition, the assaults of infidelity. But while she treats it not as a rival but an ally, Christianity, strong in Almighty strength, maintains her own imperial power unfringed. While she courts the friendship of her confederate, she allows not her own uncontrolled superiority to be usurped. She assigns to reason its specific office, and makes it know and keep its proper limits. The old law, indeed, being a

formula of ceremonies, and a digest of ordinances for one particular people, left not so full an exercise for the use of reason. Descending to the most minute particulars, and being expanded into the most detailed directions, it left little for the disciple but to read the rule and follow it. But the New Testament being, as we have elsewhere observed, rather a system of principles, than a mere didactic table of small as well as great duties, leaves much more to the exercise of reason, and furnishes a much larger field for the understanding to develop, to compare, to separate, to combine. The whole plan of duty is, indeed, most clearly and distinctly laid open; but every uniting particle, every intermediate step, every concatenating link, is not traced out with amplitude and fulness.

The more instructed Christian will perceive that some expressions are merely figurative; some are directions for persons under one circumstance, and some for those under another. The Gospel requires, indeed, as implicit submission from the Christian, as the law required from the Jew; but while it proposes truths, all of which equally demand his obedience, some of them require more especially the use of his reflection, and the exercise of his sagacity. We allude not to the great 'mysteries of godliness,' but to duties which are of individual application.

If we were to pursue prejudice through all its infinite variety, we should never have done with the inexhaustible subject. Observation presents to us followers of truth of a very different cast, though their uniform object be the same. These persons, while they sometimes seek her temple by different paths, are yet oftener kept wide of each other by words than by things. Whatever, indeed, be the separating principle, prejudice is always carried to its greatest height by the impatience of the too fiery on the one hand, and the contempt of the too frigid on the other. But both, as we observed, maintain their distance more by certain leading terms by which each is found to be discriminated, and by an intolerance in each, to the terms adopted by the other, than by any radical distinction which might fairly keep them asunder. Now we do not wish them to relinquish the use of their peculiar terms, because these terms either do, or should designate to their minds the most important characters of religion. The Christian should neither shrink from his own strong hold, nor treat with repulsive disdain, him who appears earnest in his approaches towards it, though he has not as yet, through some prejudice of education, sought it in a direct way. There are many terms, such as *faith* and *grace*, and others which might be mentioned, which subject the more advanced Christian to the imputation of enthusiasm and the charge of cant. These, however, are words which are the signs of things on which his eternal hopes depend, and he uses them, even though he may sometimes do it unseasonably, yet not as the Shibboleth of a profession, but because there are no others exactly equivalent to their respective meanings. In fact, if he did not use them when occasion calls, he would be deserting his colours, and be making a compromise, to the ruin of his conscience.

But let him not in return fall too heavily on what are, to his ear, the obnoxious terms of his adversary. Let him not be so forward to consider the terms *virtue* and *rectitude* as implying heresies that must be hewed down without mercy; as substantives which must never find a place in the Christian vocabulary. They are not only very innocent but very excellent words, if he who utters them only means to express by virtue those good works which are the fruits of a right faith, and by rectitude that unbending principle of equity and justice which designates the confirmed Christian. The abuse of these terms may, indeed, make the more pious adversary a little afraid of using them, as the unnecessary multiplication of ordinary cases in which the more scriptural terms are pressed into the service, may make the less advanced Christian unreasonably shy of obtruding them.

But why must we villify in others what we are cautious of using ourselves, in order to magnify what we chuse to adopt? We should rather be glad that those who somewhat differ from us, come so near as they do; that they are more religious than we expected; that if they are in error, they are not in hostility; or if seemingly averse, it is more to the too indiscriminate and light use of the opponent's terms, than to the sober reception of the truths they convey. Let us be glad even at the worst, to see opposition mitigated, differences brought into a narrower compass. Let us not encounter as leaders of hostile armies, but try what can be done by negotiation, though never of course by concession in essentials. If the terms virtue and rectitude are used to the exclusion of faith and grace, or as substitutes for them, it may afford an opening for the pious advocate to show the difference between the principle and its consequence, the root and its produce. He should charitably remember that it is one thing for an honest inquirer to come short of truth, and another for a petulent caviller to wander wide of it. It is one thing to err through mistake or timidity, and another to offend through wilfulness and presumption. If the inquirer be of the former class, only deficient, and not malignant, he may be brought to feel his deficiency, and is often in a very improveable state. It would therefore be well to let him see that you think him right as far as he goes, but that he does not go the whole length. If he professes 'to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,' this is no small step: yet he may still require to be convinced that it is 'by the grace of God teaching him.' Here the two ideas expressed by your term of grace, and his of virtue, are brought into united action, with this difference, or if you please with this agreement, that your's being the cause, and his the effect, the Christian character attains its consummation between you. You must, however, endeavour to convince him, that though the greater includes the less, the reverse cannot be true; that faith and grace in the Christian sense involve virtue and rectitude, but virtue and rectitude in the philosophical sense desire to be excused from any connexion with faith and grace. But the offence taken at terms creates hostility at the outset, blocks up the avenues to each other's

heart, and leads men to be so filled with the things in which they differ, as to keep them in the dark as to the things in which they agree.

The more strict disputant will perhaps continue to insist that no such terms as virtue and rectitude are to be found in any Evangelist. Granted. Neither do we find there some other solemn words expressive of the most awful verities of our religion. The holy *Trinity* and the *satisfaction* made by the death of Christ, are not, I believe, in any part of the New Testament expressed by these terms, which were first used some ages after in the Byzantine church. But can it be said that the things themselves are not to be found there? They are not only conspicuous in every part of the Gospel, but make up the sum and substance of what it teaches.

While each disputant then contends for his own phrases, let not the one suspect that grace and faith are the watch words of enthusiasm; nor the other conclude that infidelity skulks behind virtue, and pagan pride behind rectitude. St. Paul expressly exhorts his converts to 'add to their faith virtue,' and if the inverted injunction was never given, it was not because faith was unnecessary where virtue previously existed, but because virtue, Christian virtue, never could have existed at all without previous faith. In enjoining virtue, the Apostle, upon his own uniform principle, supposes the Christian to be already in possession of faith; this he ever considers the essential substance, virtue the inseparable appendage. Thus the divine preacher on the Mount, in his prohibition of an hypocritical outside, does not say, Give alms, fast, pray; he concluded that his followers were already in the practice of those duties, and on this conviction grounded his cautionary exhortation *when* thou doest alms, *when* thou prayest, *when* thou fastest. He taught them to avoid all ostentation in duties, to which he alluded as already established. Be it observed—by the Saviour himself no attribute is so constantly enjoined or commanded as faith. His previous question to those who resorted to him to be cured, was not if they had *virtue* but *faith*; but never let it be forgotten, that as soon as the cure was performed, the man of faith was enjoined, as the surest evidence of his virtue, *to sin no more.*

CHAP. XIII.

Humility the only true greatness.

Humility is one of those qualities of which Christianity requires the perpetual practical exercise. It does not insist that we should be feeding or instructing others—that we should be every moment engaged in acts of benevolence to our fellow creatures, or of mortification to ourselves: but, whether we teach or are taught, whether communicate our good things to others, or are dependant on others for the communication to ourselves, humility is required as the invariable, the indispensable, the habitual grace, in the life of a Christian. Pride being the radical distemper of the natural man; the business, the duty, the blessedness of the spiritual man is to be freed from it.

However valuable high intellectual attainments have been found in the vindication of religion, however beneficially talents and learning have been exerted in adducing the evidences and augmenting the illustration of divine truth, yet for the most striking exemplification of genuine piety, 'To this man will I look, saith the Lord, who is of an humble spirit.' Christianity gives a new form to the virtues, by recasting them in this mould. Humility may be said to operate on the human character like the sculptor, who, in chiseling out the statue, accomplishes his object, not by laying on, but by pairing off, not by making extraneous additions, but by retrenching superfluities; till every part of the redundant material is cleared away. The reduction which true religion effects, of swelling passions, irregular thoughts, and encumbering desires, produces at length on the human mind some assimilation to the divine image—that model by which it works—as the human resemblance is gradually, and at length successfully wrought in the marble.

Christianity, though equally favourable to the loftiest as to the lowest condition of life, was not intended to make man great, but to make him contented to be little. Though no enemy to the possession and cultivation of the highest mental powers, but affording, on the contrary, the noblest objects for their investigation, and the richest materials for their exercise; yet she rests not her truth on their discussion, nor depends for making her way to the heart on their reasonings. While the cheering approbation of an humble faith is an encouragement repeatedly held out in the Gospel, there, is not one commendation of talent, except for its application—not the least notice of rank or riches, except to intimate their danger—not any mention of the wisdom of this world, except to pronounce its condemnation.

Humility stands at the head of the beatitudes, and incorporated with them all. And the gracious injunction, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' is a plain intimation, that our Redeemer particularly intended that portion of his own divine character for the most immediate object, not of our admiration only, but of our imitation.—It is the temper which of all others he most frequently commends, most uniformly enjoins, and which his own pure and holy life most invariably exhibits. If we look into the Old Testament, we see that God, after having described himself as 'the high and holy One which inhabiteth eternity,' by a transition the most unexpected, and a condescension the most inconceivable, immediately subjoins, that 'He dwelleth with the contrite and the humble; and this from a motive inexpressibly gracious, 'to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.'

Is it not incredible, that after these repeated declarations and examples of the Almighty Father, and of the Eternal Son, pride should still be thought a mark of greatness, an ebullition of

spirit, and that humility should be so little understood to be the true moral dignity of Christians? While in the religion which they profess, there is no excellence to which it is not preliminary, and of which it is not the crown; nor are other virtues genuine but as they are accompanied with this grace, and performed in this spirit. No quality has acquired its perfection, till it is clarified and refined by being steeped in humility.

It is indeed essential to the very reception of Christianity, for, without this principle, we shall be disposed to cavil at divine revelation, to reject, at least, every truth revolting to human pride; we shall require other ground for the belief in God than his revealed word, other evidence of his veracity than the internal conviction of our spiritual wants, and the suitableness of that remedy which the Gospel presents to us. This principle, therefore, is indispensable; without it, we shall be little inclined cordially to receive Christianity as a light, or to obey it as a rule. Without it we shall not discover the evil of our own hearts; and without this discovery, we shall by no means value the grace of the Holy Spirit; we shall exercise no habitual dependance on the promised assistance, nor seek for a support of which we do not feel the want.

But humility, by leading us to form a just estimate of ourselves, teaches us to discern the narrowness of our capacities. It reminds us, that there are many things even in the works of God's natural creation far above our comprehension; that from the ignorance and blindness of our minds we make frequent mistakes, and form a very erroneous judgment about things comparatively obvious and intelligible. This temper will bring us to credit with fuller cordiality the testimony which God in his word gives of himself, and cure us of the vanity of rejecting it, on the mere ground that we cannot comprehend it. It will deliver us from the desire of being—'wise above what is written,' and is the sole antidote to the perils of that promise of unhallowed knowledge, with which the grand seducer tempted his first credulous victim.

It is not till humility has practically made known to us how slowly religion produces its effects on ourselves, that we cease to marvel at its feeble influence and slow-paced efficacy on those around us. As a consequence, this principle leads the humble Christian to be severe in judging himself, and disposes him to be candid in judging others. When he compares himself with worse men, it furnishes a motive, not for vanity, but gratitude; when with better for additional self-abasement.

St. Paul seems to have been fully aware of the lagging movement which even Christians make towards the complete attainment of this heavenly temper. In his address to the Colossians, after having expressed his firm hope of their sincere conversion, in that they had 'put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,' he yet finds it expedient to exhort them; and, for this very reason, 'to put on,' together with other christian qualities which he enumerates, 'humbleness of mind.'

He might have pressed this duty under the supposition of two cases, and, in either, the injunction would be just. As they had made a public profession of Christianity, he intimates, that there was no surer way of evincing that their profession was sincere, and their conversion radical, than by this unequivocal mark, the cultivation of an humble spirit. Or, on the other hand, however deeply rooted they might be in faith and piety, he might feel it necessary to remind them, that they should not consider themselves as having attained a perfection which left no room for improvement. So far was this deep proficient in divine wisdom from thinking that all was done when the convert had entered on his new course, he enjoins them, ever after this effectual change, that they should, as a consequence as well as a proof, *therefore*, 'put on' this christian grace; and produces their conversion as a motive, '*because* you are already renewed.' He does not recommend any specific act, so much as a general disposition of 'mind,' implying, according to his uniform practice, that growth was necessary to life, and progress to perfection.

The doctrines of Christianity, and the discourses of its divine Author, are rather pointed against certain radical evil principles, than extended to their lesser ramifications. When the powerful artillery of the Gospel was more especially levelled against the strong holds of pride, it included in the attack all the minor offences resulting from it; implying, that if the citadel be conquered, the intimidated forces in the outworks will make but a feeble resistance.

Even the worldly and the careless, who are perhaps too inattentive to perceive that humility is the predominating feature in the truly religious character, as well as the most amiable and engaging part of it, yet pay it a sort of involuntary homage in adopting its outward appearance. Many among the more elegant classes of society, who cannot be brought to adopt the principle, assume the form, as the most unequivocal mark of their superior condition. But while the well-bred exhibit the polished exterior of humility in *manner*, they are called, as Christians, to cultivate the inward and spiritual grace. In spite of the laws against egotism which the code of good breeding has issued, a nearer intimacy sometimes discloses the self-satisfaction which politeness had thinly veiled. While we are prone to carry our virtues in our memory, we cannot be always on our guard against producing them in our conversation. Such virtues, for the most part popular ones, caught our taste perhaps from the applause with which they were received, or the eloquence with which they were set forth in our presence: and as we acquired them in public, and by hearing and reading, we shall be contented to exercise them in profession and talk. Many, and very many of these qualities may be grafted on the old stock, and look green and flourishing, whilst they 'have no root in themselves;' but genuine humility springs out of a root deeply fixed in the soil of a renewed heart, and takes its first ground on the full conviction of our apostacy from God.

As we make a proficiency in this humbling knowledge of ourselves, our confidence in our own virtues proportionably diminishes. The de

light we once received in the contemplation is first abated by self-distrust, and finally abolished by self-acquaintance.—Then we begin to profit by the deep sense of our own weakness, and to send forth the genuine fruits of a strength and a virtue derived from higher sources. And thus, the sound conviction of our own frailty, though purchased at the expense of a great error, may prove, if we might venture to say it, of more real benefit to our own mind, than the performance of a splendid action, if of that action all the use we had made had been to repose added confidence in our own strength, or to entertain higher notions of our own goodness.

Yet, while we ought to be deeply humbled at every fresh detection of evil in our hearts, to be discouraged at the discovery from proceeding in our Christian course is so far from being an effect of humility, that it is rather the result of pride. The traveller who meets with a fall, does not recover his ground by lying still and lamenting, but by rising and pursuing his journey. Joined with this faulty despondency, or still more frequently preceding it, is to be traced the operation of a blind and morbid pride. Particularly, if the intimation of the fault we have committed comes from others, the heart is found to rise at the bare suggestion that we are not perfect. We had perhaps been guilty of a hundred faults before, of which, as others took no notice, they made little impression on ourselves. We commit a smaller error, which draws the eyes of the world upon us, and we are not only dejected but almost hopeless. The eye of God was equally witness to our preceding faults, yet from their being secret, they produced little compunction, while that which is obvious to human inspection produces sorrow on the mere ground of producing shame. Perhaps we were permitted to fall into this more notorious error that we might be brought to advert to those of which we had been so little sensible; and though the depression consequent upon this fault is rather the consciousness of mortified pride, than of pious contrition, yet God may make use of it to awaken us to a feeling of our general corruptions, to warn us not to depend on ourselves, and to put us on our guard against 'secret faults,' as well as against open and 'presumptuous sins.'

Even a good man is not entirely exempt from the danger of occasional elation of spirit; even a good man does not always judge himself so rigorously as he ought; yet, though he makes too many partial allowances, is too much disposed to softenings and abatements, to apologies and deductions, still he is, on the whole, suspicious of himself, distrustful of his own rectitude, on his guard against habitual aberrations from humility. Though tremblingly alive to kindness, his sincerity makes him almost ready to regret commendation, because his enlightened conscience tells him, that if the panegyrist knew him as he knows himself, it would have been bestowed with much abatement; and he is little elated with the praise which is produced by ignorance and mistake.—Though he has fewer faults than some others, yet, as he must know more of himself than he can know of them, his humility will teach him to bear patiently even the censure he does not deserve, conscious how much he does deserve for faults which the censurer cannot know.

There is, however, no humility in an excessive depreciation of ourselves. We are not commanded to take a false estimate of our own character, though a low would be too frequently a just one. While the great Apostle St. Peter was contented to call himself *the servant of Jesus Christ*, his self-constituted successors, by an hyperbole of self-abasement, have denominated themselves *servants of the servants of God*. And yet they have not, it is to be feared, *always* surpassed the disciple they profess to follow, in the display of this apostolic grace.

Nor is the appearance of this quality any infallible proof of its existence. Nothing is more common than to hear affability to the poor produced as an undoubted evidence of the humility of the affluent. The act, indeed, is always amiable, whatever be the motive; but still the expression is equivocal. Does it not sometimes too much resemble that septennial exhibition of humility which calls forth so much smiling condescension from the powerful, while it conveys 'an hour's importance to the poor man's heart?' The one enjoys the brief, but keen delight, of reviling his superiors with impunity, with the better gratification of conferring favours instead of receiving them; the other, like Dryden's Achitophel, 'bowing popularly low,' wins by his courtesy, that favour, which he would not perhaps have obtained by his merit. But the curtain soon closes on the personated scene:—the next day, both fall back into their natural character and condition. The periodical condescension at once reinstates itself into seven year's dignity, while the *independent elector* cheerfully resumes his place in his *dependent* class, till the next Saturnalia again invite to the reciprocal exchange of character.

Where the difference of condition is obviously great, nothing is lost, and something may be gained by familiarity: the condescension is so apparent, that though it properly excites both admiration and gratitude in the indigent, it does not infallibly prove the lowliness of the superior. The impassable gulf which separates the two conditions, the immoveable fences which establish that distance, preserve the poor from encroachment, and the rich from derogation: no swellings of heart arise against the acknowledged dependant, no dread of emulation against the avowed inferior. Even arrogance itself is gratified at seeing its train augmented by so amiable a thing as its own kindness. Notice is richly repaid by panegyric, and condescension finds it has only stooped to rise.—If we give pleasure in order to be paid with praise, we had better be less liberal that we might be less exacting. The discreetly proud are aware, that arrogant manners bar up men's hearts against them; their very pride, therefore, preserves them from insolence; the determined object being to gain hearts, and their good sense telling them that a haughty demeanor is not the way to gain them, they know how to make the exterior affable in proportion as the mind is high; for the ingenuity of pride has taught it, that popularity is only to be obtained by concealing the most offensive part of itself. Thus it can retain its

nature and gratify its spirit, without the arrogant display by which vulgar pride disgusts, and, by disgusting, loses its aim.

The true test is, how the same person feels, and how he conducts himself, towards him whose claims come in competition with his own—who treads on his heels in his pretensions, or surpasses him in his success—who is held up as his rival in genius, in reputation, in fortune, in display—who runs the race with him and outstrips him. More severe will be the test, when the competitor is 'his own familiar friend,' who was his equal, perhaps his inferior, in the contest for academical honours, but is now a more fortunate candidate for the prizes which the world distributes, or his decided conqueror on the professional Arena.

His humility is put to the trial, when he hears another extolled for the very quality on which he most values himself—commended for something in which he would, if he dared, monopolize commendation—it is tried when he sees that a man of merit has prospered in an enterprise in which *he* has failed, or when he is called upon for the magnanimity to acknowledge one who, though below him in general character, is still his superior in this particular respect—it is, when, in some individual instance, this competitor has promoted the public good by a means which *he* had declared to be totally inapplicable to the end.

The true Christian will be humble in proportion to the splendor of his endowments. Humility does not require him to stupify or disavow his understanding, and thus disqualify or indispose him for great active duties. If he possesses talents, he is not unconscious of them, but, instead of exulting in the possession, he is abased that he has not turned them to better account, he is habitually thinking how he can most essentially serve God with his own gift. Sensible that he owes every thing to his divine Benefactor, he feels that he has not made him the return to which he was bound, and that his gratitude bears little proportion to his mercies; so that the very review of his abilities and possessions, which inflates the hearts of others, only deepens his humility, only fills his mind with a fuller sense of his own defect of love and thankfulness. Every distinction, instead of intoxicating him, only augments his sense of dependence, magnifies his weight of obligation, increases his feeling of accountableness. His humility has a double excitement: he receives every blessing as the gift of God though the merits of his Son; it is increased by the reflection, that such is his unworthiness, he dares not even supplicate the mercy of his Creator but through the intercession of a Mediator: 'where is boasting then? it is excluded.'—Not only on account of any good he may have, but also on account of evils from which he has been preserved, he acknowledges himself indebted to divine assistance; so that his escapes and deliverances, as well as his virtues and successes, are subjects of gratitude rather than of self-exultation.

It will not be departing from the present object, if we contrast the quality under consideration with its opposite. While humility is never at variance with itself, pride is a very inconsistent principle. It knows not only how to assume the garb of the attribute to which it is opposed, but even descends to be abject, which humility never is. Consider it on one side, nothing is so self-supported; survey it on the other, you will perceive that nothing is so dependent, so full of claims, so exacting, so incapable of subsisting on itself. It is made up of extrinsic appendages; it leads a life of mendicity; it stoops to beg the alms of other men's good opinion for its daily bread. It is true, the happiness of a proud man, if he have rank, arises from an idea of his own importance; but still, to feed and maintain this greedy self-importance, he must look around him. His pleasures are derived, not so much from his personal enjoyments as from his superiority to others; not so much from what he possesses, as from the respect his possessions inspire. As he cannot entirely support his feelings of greatness by what he finds in himself; he supplies the deficiency by looking backward to his ancestors, and downward upon his train.—With all his self-consequence, he is reduced to borrow his dignity from the merits of the one, and the numbers of the other. By thus multiplying himself, he feels not only individually, but numerically, great. These foreign aids and adjuncts help him to enlarge the space he fills in his own imagination, and he is meanly contented to be admired for what is, in effect, no part of himself.—This sentiment is, however, by no means limited to rank or riches.

If the penury of pride drives it to seek its aliment in the praise of others, it is chiefly because we want their good opinion to confirm us in that which we have of ourselves. When we secretly indulge in reckoning up the testimonies we have collected to our worth, it is because we like to bring as many witnesses as we can muster, that we may have their approving verdict in additional proof that our judgment was right. In fact, we think better of ourselves in proportion as we contrive to make more people think well of us. But, however large the circle which 'high imaginations' draw round the individual self in the centre, we can really occupy no more than our allotted space; we may indeed change our position, but, in shifting it, we fill no more than we filled already, for by the removal we lose as much as we gain.

It is an humbling truth, that the most powerful talents are not seldom accompanied with vehement passions, that a brilliant imagination is too frequently associated with ungoverned appetites. Neither human reason, nor motives merely moral, are commonly found to keep these impetuous usurpers in order; the strength of men's passions tempting them to violate the rules which the strength of their judgment has laid down.—Nature cannot operate without its own sphere. What is natural in the intellect, will not, of itself, govern what is natural in the appetite. If the lower part of our nature is subdued, it is not without the holy Spirit assisting the higher. Wit, especially has such a tendency to lead astray the mind which it embellishes, that it is a striking evidence of the efficacy of grace, when men, whose shining talents make virtue lovely in the eyes of others, reject themselves 'high thoughts engendering pride' when

they, on whose lips the attention of others hangs with delight, can, themselves, by this divinely infused principle, 'bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.'

There is no quality so ready to suspect, and so prompt to accuse, as that which we are considering; there is no fault which a proud man so readily charges upon others as pride; especially if the person accused possess those distinctions and accomplishments, the possession of which would make the accuser proud. Men full of themselves, are disposed to fancy others deficient in attention to them; and as it never occurs to them why those attentions are withheld, they have no other way of accounting for the neglect, but to charge the neglector with being envious of their qualities, or vain of his own. With that deep humility, which is the ground-work of his profession, the Christian alone attains to real dignity of character. If we reckon those men great who rise high, and make a distinguished figure in the world, how much higher is his claim to greatness who looks down on what the others glory in; who views with indifference the things to which the world accounts it greatness to aspire, and the consummation of greatness to attain.

The proud man, by not cordially falling in with the Christian scheme—which, if he thoroughly adopted, would shrink to nothing these bloated fancies—contracts, in effect, the duration of his existence, and reduces to almost nothing the sphere in which his boasted dignity is to be exercised. The theatre on which he is satisfied to act, is limited to the narrow stage of this world; and even on this vanishing scene, how far are the generality from being considerable actors! Pride, therefore, is something worse than fatuity, for whether the stake be high or low, it is sure to play a losing game. It is difficult to say which lot will be most terrible; his, who, having performed an obscure and painful part in this short drama, and having neglected to seek that kingdom promised to the poor in spirit, closes his life and hopes together; or his, who, having had a conspicuous part assigned him here, submits, when the curtain drops, not merely to be nothing: but oh! how much worse than nothing! Absorbed in the illusions and decorations of this shifting spectacle, or intoxicated with the plaudits of the spectators, the interminable scenes which lie beyond the grave, though, perhaps, not absolutely disbelieved, have been totally neglected to be taken into his brief reckoning.

Now, if pride were really a generous principle, if its tumour were indeed greatness, surely the soul which entertains it would exert its energies on a grand scale! If ambition were indeed a noble sentiment, would it not be pointed to the noblest objects; would it not be directed to the sublimest end? Would not the mind which is filled with it, achieve a loftier flight? Would it stoop to be cooped up within the scanty precincts of a perishing world? True ambition would raise its votary above the petty projects which every accident may overturn, and every breath destroy; which a few months *may*, and a few years *must*, terminate. It would set him upon reflecting, that all the elevation of intellect, all the depth of erudition, all the superiority of rank, all the distinction of riches is only held by the attenuated thread that attaches him to this world—a world which is itself 'hung upon nothing.' True ambition would instruct him, that he is not really great who is not great for eternity—that to know the height and depth, the length and breadth, of the knowledge of God, and of his eternal love in Christ Jesus, is the consummation of all knowledge, the top of all greatness, the substance of all riches, the sum of all wisdom; that the only object sufficiently capacious to satisfy the grasping desires, to fill the hungering soul of man, is that immortality which is brought to light by the Gospel. That state which has God for its portion, and eternity for its duration, is alone commensurate to the grandeur of a soul redeemed by the blood of Christ. This holy ambition would show him, that there is a littleness in whatever has boundaries—a penury in every thing of which we can count the value—an insignificance in all of which we perceive the end.

Let it, then, ever be considered as a destitution of true greatness, practically to blot out eternity from its plan. As a consequence, let that be truly designated 'the wisdom from above,' which makes eternity the grand feature in the aspect of our existence. And this ambition, be it remembered, is the exclusive property of the humble Christian. *His* desires are illimitable—*he* disdains the scanty bounds of time—*he* leaps the narrow confines of space. He it is who monopolizes ambition. *His* aims soar a bolder flight—*his* aspirations are sustained on a stronger pinion—*his* views extend to an immeasurable distance—*his* hopes rest in an interminable duration.

Yet if his felicity does not, like that of secular ambition, depend on popular breath, still it subsists on dependence. It subsists upon a trust which never disappoints—upon a mercy which is never exhausted—upon a promise which never deceives—upon the strength of an arm which 'scattereth the proud in the imagination of their hearts'—on a benignity which 'exalteth the meek and humble'—on a liberality, which, in opposition to worldly generosity, 'fills the hungry alone with good things,' and which, contrary to human vanity, sends only 'the rich empty away.'

Humility is an attribute of such antipathy to the original constitution of our nature, that no principle can possibly produce it in its full extent, and bring it to its complete maturity, but that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No spirit short of this can enable us to submit our understanding, to subdue our will, to resign our independence, to renounce ourselves.

This principle not only teaches us to bow to the authority and yield to the providence of God, but inculcates the still harder lesson of submitting to be saved in the only way He has appointed—a way which lays pride in the dust. If even, in the true servants of God, this submission is sometimes interrupted—if we too naturally recede from it—if we too reluctantly return to it, it is still owing to the remains of pride, the master sin; a sin too slowly discarded even from the renewed nature. This partial

conquest of the stubborn will, this imperfect resignation, this impeded obedience, even in the real Christian, is an abiding proof that we want farther humbling, a mortifying evidence that our hearts are not yet completely brought under the dominion of our principles.

CHAP. XIV.

On Retirement.

An old French wit says, that 'ambition itself might teach us to love retirement, as there is nothing which so much hates to have companions.' Cowley corrects this sentiment with one equally lively and more sound, that 'ambition, indeed, detests to have company on either side, but delights above all things in a train behind, and ushers before.' To seek therefore a retreat till we have got rid of this ambition, to fly to retirement as a scene of pleasure or improvement, till the love of the world is eradicated from the heart, or at least till this eradication is its predominant desire, will only conduct the discontented mind to a long train of fresh disappointments, in addition to that series of vexations of which it has so constantly complained in the world.

The amiable writer already referred to, who has as much unaffected elegance and good sense in his prose works, as false taste and unnatural wit in his poetry, seems not to be quite accurate when he insists in favour of his beloved solitude that 'a minister of state has not so much business in public as a wise man has in private; the one,' says he, 'has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other has all the works of God and nature under his consideration. But surely there is a manifest difference between our having great works under our consideration, and having them under our control. He assigns, indeed, high motives for the purposes of retreat, but he does not seem to assign the highest. Should he not have added in conjunction with the objects he enumerates, what should be the leading object of the retirement of the good man, the study of his own heart, as well as of inanimate nature; of the world, as well as of the works of God?

He who has spent his life in the study of mankind, till he is weary both of the study and of its object, will, with a justly framed mind, be well prepared for retirement. He will delight in it as an occasion for cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with his Maker and with himself. He will seek it not merely as the well-earned reward of a life of labour, but as a scene, which, while it advances his present comfort, furnishes him with better means of preparing for a better life. We often hear of the necessity of being qualified for the world; and this is the grand object in the education of our children, overlooking the difficult duty of qualifying them for retirement. But if part of the immense pains which are taken to fit them for the company of others, were employed in fitting them for their own company, in teaching them the duties of solitude as well as of society, this earth would be a happier place than it is; a training suitable to a world of such brief duration, would be a better preparatory study for a world which will have no end.

Leisure with dignity is a classic phrase which carries to the taste and to the heart the mingled ideas of repose, elegance, and literature. It is, indeed, an honourable state of enjoyment. It has been sung by the poet, and extolled by the philosopher. Its delights have been echoed by those who seek it, and by those that shun it; by those who desire its possession, and by those who are satisfied with its praise; by those who found their fondness on a happy experience, and by those who had rather admire than enjoy it.

Tumult, indeed, is to be avoided as a great impediment to that interior peace, without which outward stillness is of little value. But let us bear in mind that it is more easy to escape from the tumult of the world than of the passions. Before, therefore, we expect immunity from care in our projected retreat, let us inquire what is our object in retiring. We may deceive ourselves in this pursuit as we have done in others. We may fancy we are retiring from motives of religion, when we are only seeking a more agreeable mode of life. Or we may be flying, from duty, when we fancy we are flying from temptation. We may flatter ourselves we are seeking the means of piety, when we are only running away from the perplexities of our situation; from trials which make, perhaps a part of our duty. To dislike these is natural; to desire to escape from them is innocent, generally laudable. Only let us not persuade ourselves that we are influenced by one motive when we are acting from another. The design may be even good, but let us not deceive ourselves with the idea of its being better than it is. Let us not boast that we are making a sacrifice to duty, when we are consulting, however innocently, our own ease or convenience. In retreating into the country for peace of mind, the temper you would find you must carry thither. Those who retire on no other principle but to escape trouble without turning their leisure to the benefits it is calculated to impart, are happy only on the low condition of being useless. If we retire upon the motive of 'Soul take thine ease,' though neither covetousness nor sensuality be the prompting principle, if our object be a slothful indulgence, a retirement which does not involve benefit to others, as well as improvement to ourselves, we fail of the great purpose for which we came into the world, for which we withdrew from it.

But while we advert to the highest object as the best, we are far from insinuating that the taste, especially so right a taste, may not be indulged from motives of an inferior nature; far from thinking that we are not justified in preferring a tranquil to a bustling scene, and adopting a more rational, even if it be not a more religious plan of life. There is something almost like virtue in the good taste which prefers it; only, that as in intellectuals, good taste must have its substratum in good sense, so in morals it should have its substratum in principle. But if any one thinks that merely by retiring from

the world, he shall get rid of his own evil tempers, solitude is the worst choice he could make. It may indeed, through the grace of God, be made eventually beneficial; for though his interior burthen, so far from being lightened, will be more oppressively felt, yet its very oppressiveness, by leading him to look into the cause, may lead to its removal; he may be drawn to religion to get rid of himself, as he was driven to retirement to get rid of his cares.

No second causes act but by the direction of the first. The visible works of God, though so admirably calculated to stir up devotion in the heart, have not commonly, especially when habit makes them familiar, been found to produce this effect. Some of the school divines made a just distinction, when they compared inanimate and intelligent beings, in reference to the supreme Creator, by saying that the one only exhibit the foosteps of God, while the other represent his face.

It was worthy of the munificence of omnipotent Bounty, not only to spread the earth with a rich profusion of whatever is necessary and pleasant to animate life, but with whatever might invite to contemplative and intellectual life; not only to sustain but to gratify; not only to nourish but to improve: by endless variety, awakening curiosity, and by curiosity exciting research. The country is favourable to the study of natural history; furnishing both the leisure and the materials. It sets the mind upon thinking, that if the objects of God's creation are so wonderful, *Himself how wondrous then!*

The mind, indeed, which is looking out for good, finds 'sermons in stones, and good in every thing.' To minds of an opposite make, use destroys the effect, even if novelty had produced it. Little habituated to reflection, they soon learn to behold a grove of oaks with no higher feeling than a street of shops, and are as little soothed with the murmurs of a rivulet, as with the clatter of hackney coaches. Where sloth predominates in the character, we are disposed to consider the retreat from which we had promised ourselves so much advantage, as furnishing a refuge for idleness rather than a place for reflection. If vanity and vivacity predominate, we shall value the loveliest scenery we have been embellishing, rather as means to attract company and commendation, that as a help to assist our better thoughts, and lift our hearts to holy aspirations.

Though piety is no local thing, yet it has locality. That being is but a bad authority whom Milton makes proudly to exclaim, 'The mind is its own place,' and the Stoics carried their haughty mental independence too far, in asserting that local circumstances made no difference in the condition of man. Retirement is assuredly favourable to the advancement of the best ends of our being. There the soul has freer means of examining into its own state, and its dependence upon God. It has more unobstructed leisure for enjoying with its Maker,

Communion sweet, communion large and high,

It has ampler means for reiterating the consecration of its powers and faculties to him who gave them, than it could easily find in those broken snatches and uncertain intervals which busier scenes afforded. But then we must be brought into a state and condition to reap benefit from retreat. The paralytic might as reasonably expect to remove his disease by changing his position, as the discontented to allay the unruly motions of a distempered mind merely by retiring into the country.

A great statesman, whom many of us remember, after having long filled a high official situation with honour and ability, began at length impatiently to look forward to the happy period when he should be exonerated from the toils of office. He pathetically lamented the incessant interruptions which distracted him, even in the intervals of public business. He repeatedly expressed to a friend of the author, how ardently he longed to be discharged from the oppressive weight of his situation, and to consecrate his remaining days to repose and literature. At length one of those revolutions in party, which so many desire, and by which so few are satisfied, transferred him to the scene of his wishes. He flew to his rural seat, but he soon found that the sources to which he had so long looked, failed in their power of conferring the promised enjoyment; his ample park yielded him no gratification but what it had yielded him in town, without the present drawback; there he had partaken of his venison without the incumbrance of its solitude. His Hamadryads, having no despatches to present, and no votes to offer, soon grew insipid. The stillness of retreat became insupportable; and he frankly declared to the friend above alluded to, that such was to him the blank of life, that the only relief he ever felt was to hear a rap at the door. Though he had before gladly snatched the little leisure of a hurried life for reading, yet when life became all leisure, books had lost their power to interest. Study could not fill a mind long kept on the stretch by great concerns in which he himself had been a prime mover. The history of other times could not animate a spirit habitually quickened by a strong personal interest in actual events.—There is a quality in our nature strongly indicative that we were formed for active and useful purposes. These, though of a calmer kind, may be still pursued in retirement under the influence of the only principle powerful enough to fill the heart which fancies itself emptied of the world. Religion is that motive yet quieting principle, which alone delivers a man from perturbation in the world, and inanity in retirement; without it, he will in the one case be hurried into impetuosity, or in the other be sunk into stagnation. But religion long neglected 'will not come when you do call for it.' Perhaps the noble person did not call.

It is an obvious improvement in the taste and virtue of the present day, that so many of our dictators retire, not to the *turf*, but to the *plough;* that they make an honourable and pleasant exchange of the cares and vexations of political life for the tranquil and useful pursuits of agriculture. Such pursuits yield comparative repose, and produce positive good. Besides this, the modern Cincinnatus will have the gratifica-

tion of finding how much he has gained by the change in his choice of instruments, for he will see that 'all sheep and oxen, yea and all beasts of the field,' are far less perverse, faithless and intractable than the indocile human agents whom he has been so long labouring to break in, and bring under the yoke.

But whatever he may have gained in these respects, if the philosophical and political agriculturist do not make it part of his arrangement, as we hope he does, that the cultivation of personal piety shall divide his time and his thoughts with the cultivation of his paternal acres, he will not find his own passions more tractable, his own appetites more subdued, his own tempers better regulated, because the theatre in which they are exercised is changed from contentious senates to blooming meadows. There is no power in the loveliest scenery to give that character to the mind on which its peace depends. It is true his innocent occupations will divert ambition, but it requires a more powerful operation to cure it. Ambition is an intermittent: it may, indeed, be cooled, but without piety it will be cooled as the patient in an ague is cooled 'in the well day between the two fits,' he will be looking back on the fever he has escaped, and forward to that which he is anticipating. There is but one tonic powerful enough to prevent the return of the paroxysm. He will find the perusal of the Bible not less compatible than that of the Georgics with this interesting occupation. While he is actually enjoying the lovely living images under which the inspired writers represent the most delightful truths of religion, he may realize the analogies intellectually, he may be, indeed, conducted 'to green pastures' and led beside 'the still waters of comfort' in the highest sense of those beautiful metaphors.

What a blessing is it to mankind, when they, whose large domains confer on them such extensive local influence, give their views a wider range, and take in an ampler compass of beneficial patronage; when they crown their exertions for the public good by the pious education of their young dependants, by promoting the growth of Christianity as assiduously as the breed of sheep; by extending the improvement of the soil to the moral cultivation of those whom Providence, having committed to their protection for that very purpose, will require at their hands.

With the deepest gratitude to God, let it be observed how many of these great persons, with a spirit more honourable to them than their coronets or any earthly distinctions, have stood forward as the avowed patrons of the noble Institution for dispersing the Bible into all countries, after having transfused it into every dialect of every language. When we consider the object, and view the rapidity, and trace the success, are we not almost tempted to fancy that we see the Angel in the Revelation flying in the midst of heaven, carrying 'the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell in the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.'*

* May an old and attached member of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge be allowed to offer her opinion (though irrelevant to the subject of this chapter,) upon the complete establishment of the argument in favour of the Bible Society, from its not injuring its venerable predecessor? It is now obvious that the benefits of the new institution are effected without detriment to the old, from its having excited fresh friends to its cause, and raised additional funds for its support. Reasoning indeed from analogy, would the benefactor, whose means were competent to both, refuse his patronage to the Middlesex Hospital, because he was already a subscriber to St. George's? When he saw that other contributors neither withdrew nor diminished, but especially when he saw that they augmented their bounty to the elder establishment, would he not bid God speed to the younger? Would he not rejoice that a new source was opened for healing *more* diseases, for relieving *more* wants? In the distribution of the Bible, are not both institutions streams issuing from the same fountain of love, both flowing into the same ocean of good? If we may be allowed the application, 'they are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit;' 'they are differences of administration, but it is the same God that worketh all in all.'

It is indeed a spectacle to warm the coldest and to soften the hardest heart, to behold men of the first rank and talents, statesmen who have never met but to oppose each other, orators who have never spoken but to differ, each strenuous in what is presumed he believes right, renouncing every interfering interest, sacrificing every jarring opinion, forgetting all in which they differed, and thinking only on that in which they agree; each *reconciled to his brother and leaving his gift at the altar*, offering up every resentment at the foot of the Cross! There might be two opinions how men should be governed, there can be but one—whether they should be saved.

We ought not to doubt that a portion of that generous zeal with which they disseminate the word of life to others, will be exerted in increasing their own personal acquaintance with it. To dispense the grand instrument of salvation to others, forgetful of our own interest in it, is one of the few instances in which disinterestedness would be criminal: while here to participate in the blessing we bestow, is one of the rare occasions in which self-love is truly honourable. May we, without offence, without the remotest idea of any thing personal, hazard the observation that it is possible to be made the instrument, not only of temporal, but eternal, good to others, without reaping ourselves any advantage from the good we communicate?

It might have supplied a thesis for disputation among the whimsical subtleties of the old school divines, which was the more blameable extreme, to possess the Bible ourselves without imparting the blessing to others, or to communicate it to them without using it ourselves. Unfortunately however, the cause for casuistry was cut short, by their refusing the Bible altogether to the laity.

It is with reluctance we turn from subjects of grateful panegyric to those presented to us by the same class of society for animadversion. With regret we take leave of scenes enriched and dignified by the beneficial presence and exertions of their lords, for the dreary prospect of deserted mansions and abdicated homes. To not a few of the rich and the great, their magnificent houses are rather a cumbrous appendage to grandeur, places to which strangers resort to admire the splendour of the proprietors, and the portraits of their ancestors, than what Provi-

dence intended, a rich additional ingredient in their own overflowing cup of blessings. Their seats are possessed without being enjoyed. They appear, indeed, to combine the advantages of retreat with those of opulence. But it is only appearance. Do not too many of their owners strive to dispossess the scene of every attribute appended to it: Do they not chiefly derive what little they know of the charms of the country from the descriptions of the poet—of the diversities of landscape from the painters of the opera scenes—of the delights of retirement from the moralist, the philosopher, and, more frequently, the novelist? They contrive to transfer to their rural abodes every thing of the metropolis, every moveable appendage of rural beauty. Like the imperial Roman glutton, who never tasted fish but at the farthercst possible distance from the sea, they enjoy the lovely products of the conservatory, glowing with every hue, and breathing every fragrance, any where but where they grow. The most exquisite flowers yield little delight till transported to the town residence. There they exhale their sweets amid smoky lamps, and waste them on a fetid atmosphere; exhausting their beauties in the transient festivity of a single night, instead of reserving them to decorate retreat, and add one attraction more to the charms of home and the pleasures of retirement.

With these personages, the principal change from town to country consists in the difference between a park and a square. They bring to one the same tastes, the same amusements, and the same inversion of hours which they adopted in the other. They lose the true enjoyment of both, by contriving that neither town nor country shall preserve any distinct character of its own. To some, indeed, the splendid inheritance is considered as little more than a commodious inn in which to repose in their incessant migration from the capital to the watering-place, and from the chalybeate to the sea; without having the too valid plea of attending the sick, or being sick themselves.

But if we compare the domestic scenes from which they are hurrying, with the places to which they are resorting, we are inclined to pity them on the score of taste, as much as on the loss of enjoyment. A stranger to our manners who had heard of the self-denial our religion enjoins, when he compared what they had quitted with what they are flying to, would naturally compliment them on the noble sacrifice which he would conclude they had made to duty. He would admire the zeal which prompted the abandonment of such pure for such turbid pleasures: he would admire the elevation of mind which could submit to such unimposed penance. When he followed them from the splendid mansion to the close and incommodious residence, in which a crowded season sometimes immures the possessors of palaces; when he saw them renounce their blooming gardens, their stately woods, 'trees worthy of paradise,' for unshaded walks or artificial awnings; their bowers and temples for the unsheltered beach, open to all the rage of the dog star; the dry, smooth-shaven green, for sinking sands rivalling the soil of Arabia, or burning gravel, which might emulate queen Emma's ploughshares, would he not exclaim in rapture, surely these heroic ladies submit to such privations, encounter such hardships, make such renunciations from motives of the most sublime self-denial! Doubtless they crowd to these joyless abodes, because they could find at home no distress to be relieved, no innocence to be protected, no wrongs to be redressed, no ignorance to be instructed. Now, would he exultingly add, I have some practical experience of the sacrifices of which disinterested piety is capable. The good they must be doing here is indeed a noble recompence for the pleasure they are giving up.

Unimportant as this gradual revolution in our habits may be thought, there are few things which have more contributed to lower the tone both of society and solitude, than this multiplied and ever multiplying scenes of intermediate and subordinate dissipation. When the opulent divided the year between the town and country residence—the larger portion always assigned to the latter—being stationary in each, as they occupied a post of more obvious responsibility, they were more likely to fulfill their duties, than in these parentheses between both. For these places, to persons who only seek them as scenes of diversion and not as recruits to health, are considered as furnishing a sort of suspension from duty as well as an exoneration from care: the chief value of the pleasures they afford consisting in their not being *home-made*.

We have little natural relish for serious things, It is one great aim of religion to cure this natural malady. It is the great end of dissipated pleasures to inflame it. These pleasures forcibly address themselves to the senses, and thus not only lower the taste, but nearly efface the very idea of spiritual things. They gradually persuade their votaries, that nothing but what they receive through *their* medium is real. Where the allusions of sense are allowed to make their full impression, the pleasures of religion appear merely visionary; faint shadows at first, and afterwards unexisting things.

If religion makes out certain pleasures to be dangerous, these pleasures revenge themselves in their turn by representing religion to be dull. They are adopted under the specious notion of being a relief from more severe employments; whereas others less poignant would answer the end better, and exhaust the spirit less. If the effect of certain diversions only serves to render our return to sober duties more reluctant, and the duties themselves insipid, if not irksome—if we return to them as to that which, though we do not love, we dare not omit, it is a question even in the article of enjoyment, whether we do not lose more than we gain by any recreation which has the effect of rendering that disgusting which might otherwise have been delightful.

But it is never too late for a change of system, provided that change is not only *intended*, but *adopted*. We would respectfully invite those who have been slaves to custom, courageously to break their chain. Let them earnestly solicit the aid which is from above on their own honest exertions. Let them tear themselves from the fascinating objects which have hitherto detained them from making acquaintance with their own

hearts. It is but to submit heroically to a little dulness at first, which habit will convert into pleasure, to encounter temptation with a resistance which will soon be rewarded with victory. They will be sensible of one surprising revolution; from the period when they begin to inure themselves to their own company, they will insensibly dislike it less; not so much for the goodness they will find in themselves, as from discovering what a fund of interesting employment, of which they had been so long in search, their own hearts can furnish.

As the scrutiny becomes deeper, the improvement will become greater, till they will grow not so much to endure retirement as to rejoice in it, not so much to subsist without dissipation as to soar above it. If they are not so much diverted, they will be less discomposed. If there are fewer vanities to amuse, there will be fewer disorders to repair; there will be no longer that struggle between indulgence and regret, between enjoyment and repentance, between idleness and conscience, which distracts many amiable, but unfixed minds, who feel the right which they have not courage to pursue. There will be fewer of those inequalities which cost more pain in filling up than they afforded pleasure in creating. In their habits there will be regularity without monotony. There will be a uniform beauty in the even tissue of life; the web, though not so much spangled, will be more of a piece; if it be less glittering in patches, the design will be more elegant; if the colours are less glaring, they will wear better; their soberness will secure their permanence; if they are not gaudy when new, they will be fresh to the end.

CHAP. XV.

Dangers and advantages of retirement.

If some prefer retirement as an emancipation from troublesome duties rather than as a scene of improvement, others choose it as a deliverance from restraint, and as the surest mode of indulging their inclinations by a life of freedom; not a freedom from the dangers of the world, but of following their own will. While we continue in the active world, while our idleness is animated with bustle, decorated with splendor, and diversified with variety, we cheer our erroneous course with the promise of some day escaping from it; but when we sit down in our retreat, unprovided with the well chosen materials of which true enjoyment is alone compounded, or without proposing to dedicate our retirement to the obtaining them, we are almost in a more hopeless condition than when we lived without reflection in the world. We were then looking forward to the privacy we now enjoy, as to a scene of mental profit. We had in prospect a point which, if ever attained, would be to us the beginning of a new life, a post from which we should start in a nobler race. But the point is attained, and the end is neglected. We are set down in our ultimate position.

But retirement, from which we promised ourselves so much, has produced no change, except from the idleness of tumult to that of ennui in one sex, and from levity to apathy in the other. The active life which we had promised to turn into contemplative life is no improvement, if a gay frivolity is only transformed into a dull vacuity. In the world we were not truly active if we did little good; in retirement we are not contemplative, if contemplation is not exercised to the best purposes. It is in vain that we retire from great affairs, if our hearts are stuffed with such as are insignificant. There is less hope of a change in the mind, because there is no probability of a change in the circumstances with which this projected moral alteration used to be connected. Where the outset was froth, and the end is feculence, there may be a difference, but there is no improvement. We shall find in retirement, under new modifications, the same passions, tempers, and weaknesses, which we had proposed to leave behind us, without the same pretence of wanting time to watch against them. If we settle down in petty systematic trifling, it is not the size of the concern, but the spirit in which it is pursued, that makes the difference. The scandal of a village, the intrigues of a little provincial town may be entered into with as much warmth, and as little profit, as the more imposing follies of the metropolis.

Retirement, therefore, though so favourable to virtue, is not without its dangers. Taste, and, of course, conversation, is liable to degenerate. Intellect is not kept in exercise. We are too apt to give to insignificant topics an undue importance; to become arbitrary; to impose our opinions as laws; to contract, with a narrowness of thinking, an impatience of opposition. Yet, while we grow peremptory in our decisions, we are, at the same time, liable to individual influence; whereas, in the world, the injurious influence of one counsellor is soon counteracted by that of another; and if, from the collision of opposite sentiments, we do not strike out truth, we experience, at least, the benefit of contradiction. If those with whom we associate are of an inferior education and cast of manners, we shall insensibly lower our standard, thinking it sufficiently high, if it be above theirs, till we imperceptibly sink to their level. The author saw very early in life, an illustration of these remarks, in a person who had figured in the ranks of literature. He was a scholar and a poet. Disappointed in his ambitious views of rising in the church, a profession for which he was little calculated, he took refuge in a country parsonage. Here he affected to make his fate his choice. On Sundays he shot over the heads of the inferior part of his audience, without touching the hearts of the better informed; and, during the week, paid himself for the world's neglect, by railing at it. He grew to dislike polished society for which he had been well qualified. He spent his mornings in writing elegies on the contempt of the world, or odes on the delights of retirement, and his evenings in the lowest sensuality with the most vulgar and illiterate of his neighbours.

Another danger is that of aspiring to become the sun of our little system, since the love of popularity is not exclusively attached to public

situations. In the world, indeed, if there be not a real, there must at least be a spurious merit to procure it, whereas, when there are no competitors, it is easy to be popular; to be admired by the uncultivated, and flattered by the dependent, may be the attainment of the most moderately gifted. Let us not, therefore, judge of ourselves by acclamations, which would equally follow the worthless, if they filled the same situation. If we do not remember to distinguish between our merit and our place, we shall receive the homage, not as a debt of gratitude or a bait for bounty, but as a tribute to excellence. From being accustomed to flattery, we shall exact it as a right; from not being opposed, we shall learn not to endure opposition.

Besides the danger of contracting supercilious habits if surrounded with inferiors, there is also that of indulging a censorious spirit on comparing our own habits with those of persons who live in the world, and of overrating our own exemption from practices, to which, from indolence, we have no inducement, and, from circumstances, no opportunity. When we compare our hearts and lives with those of whom we now little, let us not forget to compare also, with others, our situations and temptations. The comparative estimates we make in our own favour are frequently fallacious, always dangerous. Many who live in the world have a mortified spirit, while others may bring to a cloister hearts overflowing with the love of that world from which it is easier to turn our faces than to withdraw our affections.

Secluded persons are sometimes less careful to turn to profit small parcels of time, which, when put together, make no inconsiderable fund. Reckoning that they have an indefinite stock upon hand, they neglect to devote each portion to its definite purpose. The largeness of their treasure makes them negligent of small, but incessant, expenses. For instance; instead of light reading being used as a relief from severer studies, and better employments, it is too frequently resorted to as the principal expedient for getting over the tediousness of solitude; people slide into the indulgence to such an excess, that it becomes no longer the relaxation, but the business. The better studies, which were only to be relieved, are superseded; they become dull and irksome; what was once pleasure is converted into a dry duty, and the duty is become a task. From this plenitude of leisure there is also a danger of falling into general remissness. Business which may be done at any time, is, for that very reason, not done at all. The belief that we shall have opportunities enough to repair an omission, causes omissions to be multiplied.

From the *dangers* of retirement, we come now to the more pleasant topic of its *advantages*. The retired man cannot even pretend that his character must of necessity be melted down in the general mass, or cast into the general mould. He, at least, may think for himself, may form his own plans, keep his own hours, and, with little intermission, pursue his own projects. He is less enslaved to the despotism of custom, less driven about by the absurd fluctuations of fashion. His engagements and their execution depend more immediately on himself, his understanding is left unfettered, and he has less pretence for screening himself under the necessity of falling in with the popular habits when they militate against convenience and common sense.

Many of the duties of retirement are more fixed and certain, more regular in their recurrence, and obvious as to their necessity. As they are less interrupted, the neglect of them is less excusable. In the world, events and engagements succeed each other with such rapidity and pleasure, that the imagination has hardly time or incitement to exercise itself. Where all is interruption or occupation, fancy has little leisure to operate. But if, in retirement, where this faculty finds full leisure both for exercise and for chastisement; if the undisciplined mind is left entirely to its mercy, the guilt will be enhanced, and the benefit lost; it will be ever foraging for prey, and, like other marauders, instead of stopping to select, will pick up all the plunder that falls in its way, and bring in a multitude of vain thoughts to feed upon, as an indemnification for the realities of which it is deprived. The well-regulated mind, in the stated seasons devoted to the closet, should therefore severely discipline this vagrant faculty. They who do not make a good use of *these* seasons of retirement, will not be likely to make a good use of the rest. The hour of prayer or meditation is a consecration of the hours employed in the business, whether of society or solitude. In those hours we may lay in a stock of grace, which, if faithfully improved, will shed its odour on every portion of the day.

If general society contributes more to smooth the asperities of manner, to polish roughnesses, and file off sharpnesses, retirement furnishes better means for cultivating that piety which is the only genuine softener of the temper. Without this corrective, even the manners may grow austere, and the language harsh. But while the benevolent affections are kept in exercise, and the kindly offices of humanity in operation, there will be little danger that the mind will become rough and angular from the want of perpetual collision with polished bodies. The exercise of beneficence, too, in the country is accompanied with more satisfaction, as the good done is less equivocal. In great cities, and especially in the metropolis, some charitable persons chiefly content themselves with promoting public subscriptions, and superintending public charities, for want of knowing the actual degree of individual distress or the truth of private representation. Here all the advantage lies on the side of the country resident. The characters, as well as wants, of the poor, are specifically known, and certainly the immediate vicinity of the opulent has the more natural, though not the sole claim to their bounty.

Retirement is calculated to cure the great infirmity, I had almost said the mortal disease, of not being able to be alone; it is adapted to relieve the wretched necessity of perpetually hanging on others for amusement; it delivers us from the habit of depending, not only for our solace, but almost for our existence on foreign aid, and extricates us from the bondage of submitting to any sort of society in order to get rid

of ourselves. It is very useful sometimes thus to make experiments on our own minds, to strip ourselves of helps and supports, to cut off whatever is extrinsic, and, as it were, to be reduced to ourselves. We should thus learn to do without persons and things, even while we have them, that we may not feel the privation too strongly when they are not to be had. These self-denials constitute the true legitimate self-love, as the multiplying of indulgences is the surest way to mortification.

Those to whom change is remedy, and novelty gratification, though the change be for the worse, and the novelty be a loss, are the first to bewail the disappointment which every one else foresaw. We hear those complain most that they can get no quiet, whose want of it arises from the irruptions of their own passions. Peace is no local circumstance. It does not depend on the situation of the house, but of the heart. True quiet is only to be found in the extirpation of evil tempers, in the victory over unruly appetites; it is found not merely in the absence of temptation, but in the dominion of religion. It arises from the cultivation of that principle, which alone can effectually smooth down the swellings of pride, still the restlessness of envy, and calm the turbulence of impure desires. It depends on the submission of the will, on that peace of God which passeth all understanding, on the grace of Christ, on the consolations of the Spirit.—With these blessings, which are promised to all who seek them, we may find tranquillity in Cheapside; without them we may live a life of tumult on the Eddystone.

Those who are more conversant with poetic than pious composition; who have fed their fancy with the soothing dreams of pastoral bards; who figure to themselves a state of pure felicity among the guileless beings with whom a fond imagination peoples the scene of rural life, expect when they retire into the country, to meet with a new race of mortals, pure as the fabled inhabitants of the golden age—spotless beings, who were not included in the primeval curse, creatures who have not only escaped the contamination of the world, but the original infection of sin, that sin, which they allow may be caught by contact, but which they do not know is a home-born, home-bred disease. It is indeed a most engaging vision, to associate indivisibly with the lovely scenes of nature the lovelier form of purity: but, alas! 'such scenes were never!' The groves and lawns of the country no more make men necessarily virtuous, than the brick and mortar of the church make them necessarily pious. The enthusiast of nature, while he enjoys even to rapture her unpolluted charms, must not, however, expect to find in retirement that unsullied innocence which the disappointed Cowley looked for in his retreat at Chertsey; which, after his woeful failure there, he continued to persuade himself he should find in America; which his own Claudian vainly believed might be obtained by his interesting *Old man of Verona*, on escaping from that city; which even the patriarch Lot found not, in escaping from a worse city than Verona.

Perhaps the vivid imagination of Cowley, in his eager longings for America, like that of some more recent enthusiasts, might have been kindled by the alluring appellation of the *New* World. This seducing epithet might convey to his impressible mind the idea of something young and original, and uncontaminate; something that might excite the notion, not of a new found, but new created world, fresh and fair and faultless.—But even the disjunction of continents, which was then believed, produces no such distinction in the human character; the native evil pursues the man

> Far as th' equator thrice to the utmost pole.

All experience, all history, especially that history which is supremely the record of truth, rouses us from the bewitching dream, and subverts the fair idea. It was in a garden, a garden too, 'chosen by the Sovereign Planter' that the first sin, the prolific seed of all subsequent offences, was committed. It was in a retirement more profound than any we can conceive, for it was in a world of which we know only of four inhabitants, and those of rural occupations, that the first dreadful breach of relative duties was made; that the first murder, and that of the dearest connexion, was perpetrated. And though the treason of Gethsemane was, in the divine counsels, overruled to repair the defection of Eden, yet to show how little local circumstances influence action, and govern principle, a garden was the scene where that treason was accomplished.

God would not have provided so ill for the welfare of his creatures, who, from the constitution of their nature, could not have subsisted but in communities if seclusion had been necessary to salvation. That it is the most favourable scene for the production of virtue and the promotion of piety we have fully admitted. In the world temptations meet us at every corner. In retirement, it is we who make the advances. He who had tried the extremes of public and private life, who had been a shepherd and a king, and who knew the dangers of both conditions, has given no exclusive instructions to the cottage or the throne. He gives a general exhortation to 'commune with our own hearts, and be still;' an injunction equally applicable to the sceptre and the crook; and, in his own case, he says, 'I have poured out my heart by myself;' but neither is the injunction or the example limited to the world or to retirement, for such pious practices equally belong to both. Yet it must be confessed he dwells on pastoral scenes and rural images with a fondness of which no traces are to be found in his allusion to courts and cities.

But whether we are in public or retired life, our inattention to the reason why we were sent into our present state, is one grand cause of the miseries we endure in it. In the world, as we before observed, we are more governed by our senses; in solitude, by our imagination. Both have a tendency to mislead us. The latter tells us we were not sent into this state to suffer, but to enjoy; and the senses revolt at the sufferings which the imagination had not taught us to expect. To think of exempting ourselves from pain, instead of expecting it and preparing for it, is the common error of those who

overlook or mistake the end of their being. In the hope of this exemption, we fly to one resource after another, thinking, that the ease which has hitherto eluded us, is not attained only because we have not sought it in the right way; that *all* expedients have not yet been tried; that *all* resources are not yet exhausted. Thus we take fresh comfort from the persuasion, that if we have missed of happiness, it is not because happiness is not the proper state of mortal man, nor the prohibited condition of his being, but because we have erred in our pursuit, and shall still find it in the scheme we are next about to adopt.

A bad judgment contributes to our infelicity almost as much as bad dispositions. It is by these false estimates of life, that life is made unhappy. It is from expecting from any state more than it has to bestow, that so little is enjoyed in any. He who is discontented in retirement had perhaps previously amused his vacant hours in collecting all the possibilities of happiness; but had generally caught and fixed her most alluring image in that projected retirement for which his worldly indulgences were every day more disqualifying him.

Far be it from me to aim at inspiring disgust at human life, or any despair of the real happiness which is attainable in it. This attainment is a simple process: to contract our desires, that they may be always fewer than our wants; not to expect from this life more than God meant we should find in it; neither to be governed by sense or fancy, but by the unerring word and will of God; to think constantly that the happiness of a Christian will always be more in hope than in possession; to remember that though deep and bitter sufferings are incident to our frame and state, yet the heaviest and the worst are those which man inflicts on man, or his own passions on himself; that we are only truly and irremediably unhappy when we fasten our desires on objects unsuitable or unattainable—objects neither commensurate to our higher nature, nor adapted to our future hope.

CHAP. XVI.

An inquiry why some good sort of people are not better.

There is a class of pleasing and amiable persons whom it would be difficult not to love, and unjust not to respect; but of whom, though candour obliges us to entertain a favourable hope, yet we are compelled to say, that their general conduct is rather blameless than excellent; their practice rather unoffending than exemplary; that their character rather exhibits a capacity for higher attainments, than any demonstration that such attainments are actually made.

These are the people who, from their sobriety of deportment and orderly habits, we should be naturally led to expect would make a great proficiency in religion. They are seldom hurried into irregularities; discretion is their cardinal virtue; they are frequently quoted as patterns of decorum; the finger of reproach can seldom be pointed at their conduct; that of ridicule, never.—They are not seldom kind and humane, feeling and charitable; they fill many relative duties in a manner which might put to the blush, not a few, from whose higher profession better things might have been expected.

'You have sketched a perfect character,' methinks I hear some angry reader exclaim. What more does society demand? What more would the most correct man require in his son or his wife, his sister or his daughter?

We are indeed most ready to allow, that few, comparatively, go so far; we grant that the world would be a much less disorderly and vexatious scene than it is, if the greater number reached these heights which we yet presume to consider as inadequate to the requisitions of the Gospel, as insufficient to answer the claims of Christianity. Would it not be a very melancholy consideration, if this most encouraging circumstance, of their being *not far* from the kingdom of God, should ever—which Heaven avert!—prove a possible reason for their not entering into it; if their being *almost* Christians, should be the very preventing cause of their becoming *altogether* such?

Their education has been governed rather by proprieties than principles. They have learned to disapprove of hardly any thing in the way of pleasure for its own sake, but highly to reprobate the extremes to which disorderly people carry it. They censure a thing not so much for being wrong in itself, as for being immoderate in the degree.—They condemn all the improper practices against which the world sets its face, but have not very distinct ideas of the right and the wrong in any thing which it tolerates.—Religion, which has made a part of their early instruction, took its turn with the usual accomplishments, though subordinately with respect to the earnestness with which it was inculcated, and with about the same proportion of the time allotted to it, as minutes bears to hours. It was taught as a needful thing, but not as the *one* thing needful. Religion, however, continues to maintain its appropriate place in their reading, and, to a certain degree, to be adopted into their practice, bearing nearly the same proportion to other objects as it did when they were initiated into its elements. They were bred in its forms, and in its forms they persist to live, if the term *live* can be properly applied to any thing which is destitute of the characters and properties of life. They live, it is true, but it is as the vegetable world lives in the winter's frost, which does not indeed kill it, but benumbs its powers, and suspends its vitality.

They make a conscience of reading the Scriptures, but sometimes interpret them too much in their own favour, intead of judging of the duties they inculcate by such properties and results as they promise to produce. In making it their study, they neglect to make it their standard.

They deceive themselves on many points by taking their measures from rules that are not legitimate. One makes his own taste and inclination his measure of practice, another the example of an accredited friend: almost all

plead the dread of singularity, the vanity of opposing your judgment to that of the world, and the absurdity of setting up a standard which you know to be unattainable. If you censure the thoughtlessness of the dissipated, they censure it too; lamenting that there should ever be an abuse of things so innocent and lawful. If you represent the beauty of piety, they approve of every kind of excellence in the abstract, but when you appeal to particular instances, refer them to actual exemplifications, they intimate, that, in respect to whatever exceeds their own measure, it carries in it somewhat of assumption and pretence; or else they insinuate, that however proper the thing may be in the person alluded to, *their* situation admits of an exemption; that what may be justifiable in others differently situated, would be objectionable under *their* circumstances.—Thus we involve ourselves in the flimsy web of a delusive sophistry till the error becomes destructive before it is discerned.

Excess of every kind is what they carefully avoid; and excess in religion as much as in any other thing. Under this head they expunge zeal from their catalogue of virtues. The establishment of a correct character is their first object, and the good opinion of the world the instruments by which they establish it. This keeps their views low; though it costs as much pains and precaution to keep up a high reputation on worldly grounds as it would to cultivate the principle itself, whose results would, in some respects, be nearly the same as what they are labouring to attain. To *be* the thing would be a shorter cut to comfort, than by incessant study and effort to keep up its appearance.

Propriety and order, virtues in themselves, obtain for them the reputation of still higher virtues; all that appears is so amiable, that the world readily gives them credit for qualities which are supposed to lie behind, and are only prevented by diffidence from appearing. They carry on with each other an intercourse of reciprocal, but measured flattery; this serves to promote kindness to each other, and esteem for themselves. Self-complacency is rather kept out of sight by the delicacy of good breeding, than subdued by religious conviction. They are rather governed by certain of the more sober worldly maxims, than by the strictness of Christian discipline. Though they fear sin, and avoid it, yet it is to be suspected they most carefully avoid those faults which are most disreputable, and that its impropriety has its full share in their abhorrence, with its turpitude.

As to religion, they rather respect, than love it. They seem to intimate, that there is something of irreverence in any familiarity with the subject, and place it at an awful distance, as a thing whose mysterious grandeur would be diminished by a too near approach. Another reason why they consider religion rather as an object of veneration than affection, is because they erroneously conceive it to be an enemy to innocent pleasure.

If they are not perfectly good Christians, it is not because they are good Jews, for they do not 'talk of the words' which were commanded under that dispensation, *when they sit in their house, and when they walk by the way, and when they lie down, and when they rise up.* Religion engages their regard somewhat in the way in which the laws of the land engage it, as some thing sacred, from being established by custom and precedent; as a valuable institution for the preservation of the public good; but it does not interest their feelings; they do not consider it so much a thing of individual concern, as of general protection. Of its establishment by authority they think more highly, than of its business with their own hearts, of its influence in maintaining general order, than of its efficacy in promoting in themselves peace and joy. In short, they carve out an image of religion not altogether unorthodox, but which, like the uninformed statue of the enamoured artist, though a beautiful figure, is without life, or power, or motion.

The more obvious duties being discharged, they are a little inclined to think, that too considerable a portion of their time and talents are left at their own disposal. Large intervals of leisure are rather assumed to be a necessary repose and refreshment from right employments and benevolent actions, and as purchased by their performance, than as having any specific application of their own. In short things which they call indifferent, make up too large a portion of their scheme of life, and in their distribution of time.

The class we are considering are apt to be very severe in their censures of those who have lost their reputation, while they are rather too charitable to those who only deserve to lose it. This excessive valuation of externals is not likely to be accompanied with great candour in judging the discredited and the unfortunate. Errors which we ourselves have had no temptation to commit, we are too much disposed to think out of the reach of pardon: and, while we justly commend innocence, we give too little credit to repentance.

The misfortune is, they do not so much as suspect that there is any higher state of being, any degree of spiritual life, beyond what they have attained. They consider religion rather as a scheme of rules, than a motive principle, as a stationary point, than a perpetual progress. They consider its observances rather as an end, than a means. It is not so much natural presumption which roots them where they are, for, in ordinary cases, they are perhaps diffident and modest; it is not always conceit which prevents their minds from shooting upwards: it is the low notion they entertain of the genius of Christianity; it is the inadequateness of their views with its requirements; it is their unacquaintedness with the spirit of that religion which they profess honestly, but understand indistinctly. This ignorance makes them rest satisfied with a state which did not satisfy the great apostle. While *they* think they have made a progress sufficient to justify them in believing they have 'already attained,' *his* vast attainments served only to prevent his looking back on them, served only to stimulate him to press forward towards the mark. Some good sort of people, on the contrary, act as if they were afraid of being different from what they are, or of being surprised into becoming better than they intended.

Among the many causes which concur to keep them at a sort of determined distance from serious piety, a not uncommon one is, their happening to hear of the injudicious exhibition of religion in one or more of its high but eccentric professors: these they affect to believe, are fair specimens of the so much vaunted religious world. Instead of inquiring what is the true scriptural view of Christianity, that they may make nearer approaches to it, they are far more anxiously concerned to recede, as far as possible, from persons who falsely profess to be its best representatives. They conclude, and, in some instances, but too justly, that the profession of these people has not transformed their hearts, but their connections: that they have adopted a party rather than a principle, embraced a cloud for a goddess, and an opinion instead of a rule of conduct; and they observe that they are unjust in their enmities to other classes, in proportion to the violence of their attachment to their own. It is no wonder if, with their partial view of the subject, they should be deterred, when they see these persons act as much below their system, as they themselves not seldom live above their own.

But they do not act thus on other occasions. If they meet with an incompetent but blustering lawyer, or an unskilful but presumptuous physician, instead of calumniating the two learned faculties, instead of resolving to have no more to do with either, they avoid the offending individuals, and look out for sounder practitioners. Hence, indeed, it is to be remarked by the way, there arises a new and powerful motive, why all who make a high profession of religion should not only be eminently careful to exhibit an even and consistent practice, but should studiously avoid in their conversation all offensive phrases, and repulsive expressions; why they should not be perpetually intimating, as if *preaching the Gospel* was a party-business, and a business entirely confined to their own party.

Worldly observers, of the better sort, cannot sometimes but perceive in the same class of religionists, less forbearance in their temper, less patience, less moderation and kindness, than they themselves evince; they also remark in some of them, though it is doubtless done with a view not to subtract from their charities, less generosity and largeness of heart than they see in many of their own class; a petty strictness in their dealings, not quite of a piece with the liberality, I had almost said, with the honesty, of Christianity. Unhappily, they are kept on their guard in the unnecessary dread of being righteous overmuch, by the very peculiarities which, in these persons, indicate a defect rather than a redundancy. These indications, however, which they conceive to be the distinctive marks of the whole tribe, make them stand aloof from Christians of the sounder class, in whom they might have seen, on a nearer approach, a fair and lovely exhibition of the principle by which they are governed.

Another preventing cause of improvement is, their associating familiarly with persons of less worth than themselves. This is injurious in two ways;—These sober followers of pleasure sanction its thoughtless devotee by the influence of their respectable character, and give weight to those who would otherwise have none, while, at the same time, they cannot but feel their own decided superiority to those with whom their complaisance unites them; and when they compare themselves with characters so defective, they are in danger of resting still more satisfied with their own moderate, though higher, standard. But, to be conscious of being better than those who are bad, is no very solid ground either of comfort or credit.

There is another co-operating cause which keeps down the growth of piety. They are conversant with various classes of writers on different subjects, who do not indeed go farther in their disregard of religion than to let it alone; if they avowedly attacked it, the persons in question would take the alarm, and avoid the perusal of works obviously pregnant with evil. These writers do not always oppose it, but they have nothing to do with it; they virtually say, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Christianity. We are far from meaning that religion ought to be, or that it can, with propriety, be obtruded into subjects of a totally distinct nature. Yet, if its subtle and pervading principle were mixed up with the other ingredients in the mind of the author, the penetrating spirit would occasionally break through, not in matter, but in essence. Where this feeling exists in the heart, a ray of light will sometimes fall unconsciously on subjects which have no immediate connexion with it. In a cloudy day, though you do not see the body of the sun, you know, from the light it emits, that it is in its proper station.

But the writers to whom we allude, take other ground; they set out with other views; their ethics have another cast. There is a pretty strong implication, especially in compositions of some of our modish itinerants, how good men may be independent of religion. In writers of a sounder cast, though also with these amusement be the professed object, with whatever flowers they strew the path, they entice you into no morasses; you always feel there is a bottom. You go on as much entertained as if you were misled. The pleasure of an uncorrupted mind is not diminished by feeling himself safe, nor is it interrupted while he is gratifying his fancy, by being obliged to watch that no trap is laid for his principles.

To explain, by one or two instances:—Clarendon's and Burnet's histories of their own times no more profess to be religious works, than the histories of Hume or Smollet. They were written by men of different political parties, of different professional engagements. Yet, though treating on subjects which naturally excluded any formal descants on religion, there is a predominating tendency which discloses the principles of both; which affords a pledge of their general principles; which makes the reader feel himself safe, because it assures him he is in the hands of a christian historian.

Again;—In travelling to the Hebrides with Johnson, it is no small thing to find, that we can be delighted without being in danger. The tourist, without stepping out of his way to hunt for moral remark, or religious suggestion, never

forgets that he is a Christian moralist; though in quest of mere amusement, we find our minds enriched with some just sentiment, fortified with some sound principle.

But, in the modish school, the traveller presents his benevolent man, the novelist his perfect character, the moralist his philosopher, the poet his hero, with principles, if not always elaborately in opposition to, yet thoroughly unconnected with, the Christian scheme. It is rather a silent counter-working of its necessity than an overt attack on its truth, for this strong measure is now less resorted to, as more repulsive and less successful. Neglect answers the end better than opposition. The longer any thing is kept out of sight, the less irksome its absence becomes, till from feeling it not necessary, we proceed to think it not real. The traces of right principle grow faint in the mind, when perpetually hid by interposing objects. The misfortune is, these works make up the larger part of the study of many readers, who do not so much desire to get rid of a stricter scheme, as to lose the perception that they have it not, and the remembrance that, perhaps, they once had it.

CHAP. XVII.

The inquiry, why some good sort of people are not better, continued.

There is one prominent cause which assists in preventing the persons considered in the preceding chapter from making any material proficiency; and it is the very cause, which, if it had been rightly directed, would probably, in such minds have led to a contrary end—their choice of *religious* reading; it is, confining their pious studies exclusively and systematically to that low standard of divinity, which has cramped the growth of many well-disposed persons. The beginning of the last century first presented us with this lax theology; which, though it has still its advocates and followers, they are, we trust, daily declining in numbers and in credit. The excess to which this deteriorated Christianity has been carried in a recent academical exhibition of '*Christian Liberty*,' and especially in a late series of theological '*Hints*,' by a professor of the law, has, it is to be hoped, produced a good effect. When an evil has touched its ultimate point, may we not presume, that the practice may make a gradual retrocession to sound principle? In these, and similar writers, no one but sees that the road to heaven is made far more smooth and easy than the Scriptures have made it; so smooth as to invite many and advance none; so easy that not only, as in the old code, those who run may read, but those who sleep may conquer.

But what still renders this meagre divinity unfortunately too acceptable, is, that it teaches a complacency in our own goodness, that goodness, the acquisition of which is rendered easy, because it falls in so readily with our natural corruptions. The truth is, we require less to be excited to the practice of some insulated virtues which these authors do not neglect to recommend, than to the abasing of that pride which they rather foster than correct When we hear so much of the dignity of human nature, we secretly exult in our participation of that dignity; we take to ourselves a full share of that stock of excellence lavishly attributed to our species, and are ready to exclaim, *and I, too, am a man!* These writers make their way to the affections by a plausibility of manner which veils the shallowness of their reasoning. But the great engine of success, as we have already observed, is the prudent accommodation of the reasoning to the natural propensities of the heart, and the flattering the very evils, the existence of which they yet deny. The reader welcomes the doctrines which put him in good humour with himself; he cordially credits the prophesier of smooth things, and is pleased in proportion as he is not alarmed. That which does not go to the root of the evil—evil which cannot be cured without being disturbed—that which does not irritate the patient, by laying open the peccant part, will be naturally acceptable.

These writers are too much disposed to address their readers as if they were already religious; as requiring, indeed, to be reminded, but not as requiring to be alarmed; as expecting commendation for what they are, rather than admonition as to what they ought to be. They take for granted, what in some cases requires proof, that all are Christians, not in profession, but in reality; and the same uniform class of instructions, or rather of gratuitous positions, is directed to the whole mass, without any individual searchings of the heart, without any distinct address, any discriminating application to that variety of classes of which society is compounded. To the profligate, liver or the more decent sensualist; to the sceptical moralist, or the careless believer; to all, perhaps, if we might except that most hatred heretic, the fanatical over-believer, is the one soothing panegyric, or the one frigid admonition, addressed. We do not pretend to say that virtue is not recommended, but as Seneca and Antoninus had recommended it before, so they had done it better, less vaguely, and more pointedly. Many of the virtues, by the practice of which the readers are taught that salvation is to be obtained, they cannot but feel to be their own virtues; this, while it sets their apprehensions at rest, naturally fills them with complacency in their actual character, instead of kindling an ardent desire after higher attainments.—Vices, from which they must be conscious they are exempt, and which they have as little excitement as occasion to practice, are properly censured: but the evil dispositions of the heart, which if insisted on and pointedly laid open, would set them upon examining their own, are passed over, or lightly treated, or softened down into natural weakness, pardonable imperfection, or accidental infirmity. The heart is not considered as the perennial fountain of all actual offence and error.

A theology which depresses the standard, which overlooks the motives, which dilutes the

doctrines, softens the precepts, lowers the sanctions, and mutilates the scheme of Christianity; which merges it in undefined generalities, which makes it consist in a system of morals which might be interwoven into almost any religion—for there are few systems of religion which profess to teach immorality; a theology which neither makes Jesus Christ the foundation, nor the Holy Spirit the efficient agent, nor inward renovation a leading principle, nor humility a distinguishing characteristic; which insists on a good heart, but demands not a renewed heart; which inserts virtues into the stock of the old nature, but insists on the necessity of a changed nature;—such a theology is not that which the costly apparatus of Christianity was designed to present to us. If it teaches that we have virtues to attain and imperfections to be cured, it insinuates that the one may be attained by our own strength, and the other cured without divine assistance. Our faults, if we have any, are to be surmounted by our reason, and our virtues to be improved from a regard to our comfort and the advancement of our credit; for the satisfaction they afford, and the reputation they procure us. The good man of these writers, like the good man of the ancient Stoics, is so full of virtue as to leave no room for repentance, so faultless that humility would be affectation. Like them they seem almost to diminish the distance between their Maker and themselves, by exalting the man and lowering the Deity.

The persons in question frequently read the Scriptures, and we are ready to wonder that in reading them they do not perceive their disagreement with the authors to whom we allude. There, all the doctrines overlooked by them, are pressed in every page; but whether they read without remarking the difference, or whether, though in the use (as we hope) of daily prayer, they neglect to implore that divine Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, to direct the truths they contained to their hearts; they do not seem to enter into the grand peculiarities of the Gospel; nor into the personal interests they have in the doctrines it inculcates, and the precepts it enforces. How many read the account of the fall of Adam, as an historical fact, of which they never entertained a doubt, yet without feeling any more individual concern in it, than in the fall of Babylon; without being sensible of any corresponding contamination in their own hearts. When told of the self-denying doctrines which Christianity includes, they triumphantly produce passages, not only from Solomon and St. Paul, but from the Saviour himself, which completely contradict such gloomy assertions, *that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;* that *Christ's commands are not grievous;* that *his yoke is easy*, with a multitude of the same animating strain. But they produce them, not so much because they are indeed most delightful truths, as because they are supposed to annul such less engaging texts as are descriptive of *the strait gate*, and *the narrow way*, and *the few who enter them;* of the difficulty with which the rich, that is, those who trust in riches, shall attain to heaven; that *taking up the cross* is an indispensable qualification for the followers of him who suffered on it, with an endless multitude of similar passages.

Now the truth is, there is not the slightest disagreement between these two classes of texts. The unqualified peace, joy, and comfort, expressed in the former, represent what religion is in herself, describe her native excellence, her genuine beauty, her original perfection. Whereas the difficulties attached to the second class arise necessarily from the depravity of the will, that alienation from God and goodness, which renders that irksome which is in itself delightful. To him who knows, because he feels, that natural reluctance of the heart to the requisitions of a religion calculated to produce these happy effects, there is a perfect congruity between the passions thus set in opposition. Though both are true, each is consistent with the other; but their truth and consistency strike not those who reject or adopt what best suits their creed or their convenience.

They know, indeed, that they must give a nominal assent to the doctrine of divine assistance, because it is said to be a doctrine of that Scripture which they believe; but they assent to it with implicitness, rather than conviction, and if they do allow the intervention of the Holy Spirit, they attach an undue value to human agency. If they say, they are far from excluding heavenly aid, their assent somewhat resembles that of the Welch captain, who, when Henry the Fifth, after the battle of Agincourt, ascribed exclusively the victory to God, coolly replied, 'indeed he did us great good.'

But many of the writers to whom we have adverted, and by whom the persons in question are influenced, seem to make their reverence for the Scriptures a ground for disallowing the agency of the Spirit; as if there were not the most perfect agreement between an appeal to the one and a belief in the other. The Spirit of God leads us to no new instructor, but only points us to his word, teaching us to discern it more clearly and to receive it more affectionately. That would be, indeed, an illusion, not an illumination, which would direct us to derive our instruction from any other fountain than the oracles of truth.

These persons are striking instances how dexterously we contrive to turn the scale in our own favour, by balancing some lesser fault to which we are not inclined, against some strongly besetting wrong propensity. We seldom soften down any precept that is not pointed at our particular temptation. All the other laws we allow to be not only good and holy, but just, for they only affect other people. The young man in the Gospel had no objection to those commandments which were suggested to him as the rule of duty; for he was chaste and honest, neither a disobedient son nor a murderer, neither addicted to idolatry nor profaneness; but the command to dispossess himself of his fortune for charitable purposes cut deep, for he was not only rich but avaricious. It is thus we prevaricate with duty. We would warp the precept to our passions, instead of bending our inclinations to the duty. We lament the harshness of the command, when we should be lamenting the perversity of the will.

A ow standard of religion flatters our vanity, 's easily acted up to, does not wound our self-love, is practicable without sacrifices, and respectable without self-denial. It allows the implantation of virtues without irradicating vices; recommends right actions without expelling wrong principles, and grafts fair appearances upon unresisted corruptions.

This low tone of religion is rendered still more acceptable, from being sprinkled with frequent vituperations of that species of Christianity now derided by a term which was once considered as its specific character. This term, what with the too monopolizing adoption of it by one description of persons, and the contemptuous implication conveyed in the use of it by another, we almost fear to use lest we should be conjuring up the spirit of fanaticism in the minds of the latter class, or vindicating its exclusive adoption in the language of the former. The assumption of names on the one hand, and, if I may venture so vulgar a phrase, calling names on the other, have been of infinite disservice to religion. Such is the new meaning now assigned to old terms, that we doubt if the application of the epithet in question would not excite a sneer, if not a suspicion, against the character of Isaiah himself, were we to name him by his ancient denomination *the Evangelical prophet.* This laconic term includes a diatribe in a word. It is established into a sweeping term of derision of all serious Christians, and its compass is stretched to such an extent, as to involve within it every shade and shape of real or fictitious piety, from the elevated but sound and sober Christian, to the wildest and most absurd fanatic; its large inclosure takes in all, from the most honourable heights of erudition to the most contemptible depths of ignorance. Every man who is serious, and every man who is silly, every man who is holy, and every man who is mad, is included in this comprehensive epithet. We see perpetually that solidity, sublimity, and depth, are not found a protection against the magic mischief of this portentous appellation.

It gratifies us to be assured that our own tone is sufficiently high, and that, whatever is higher, is erroneous, or superfluous, or hypocritical or ridiculous. This it is which attaches many a reader to the opposite style of writing, and in proportion as it attaches him, by reconciling him more to himself, animates him more fiercely against those who make higher requisitions of faith and holiness, those who strip off the mask from actions unfounded in principle, who exact self-abasement, who insist on the necessity of good works, not as a meritorious ground of salvation, but as an evidence of obedience to God, and of conformity to Christ.

Most sincerely do we believe, that there is nothing which the better sort of this class dread more than hypocrisy. But do they not sometimes dread the imputation almost as much as the thing? And is it not to be feared that, with the dread of this odious vice being imputed to them, is a little connected the suspicion of its existence in all who go farther than themselves? Are they not too ready to accuse of want of sincerity or of soberness, every one who rises above their own level? Is not every degree of warmth in their pious affections, every expression of zeal in their conversation, every indication of strictness in their practice, construed into an implication, that so much as this zeal and strictness exceed their own, there is in them just so much error as that excess involves?

By the class of writers to which they are attached, the pious affections are branded as the stigma of enthusiasm. But a religion which is all brain, and no heart, is not the religion of the Gospel. The spirit there exhibited is as far removed from philosophical apathy, as from the intemperate language of passion. There are minds so constituted, and hearts so touched, that they cannot meditate on the incarnation of the Son of God, his voluntary descent from the glory which he had with his Father from all eternity, his dying for us men and for our salvation—with the same unmoved temper with which they acknowledge the truth of any other fact. A grateful feeling, excited by these causes, is as different from a fanatical fervor as it is from a languid acknowledgment. It is not energy, however, which is reprobated, so much as the cause of its excitement. Should the zealous Christian change the object of his admiration, should he express the same animated feeling for Socrates, which the other had expressed for his Saviour, his enthusiasm would be ascribed to his good taste, and the object would be allowed to justify the rapture.

But, is not objecting to earnestness in religion to strike out the catalogue of virtues that quality which so eminently distinguished the scripture worthies? Is it not denying that 'spirit of power and of love' which it is worth observing, the Apostle makes the associate of 'a sound mind,' to deny that Christianity ought to make an impression on the heart, and if on the heart on the feelings? These fastidious critics place, what they call the abstract truths of religion, on the same footing with abstract truths in science; they allow only the same intellectual conviction of truth, the same cool assent, in the one case, which is given to a demonstration in the other. But would not he be thought a defective orator at the bar, or in the senate, who should plead as if he did not know that men had feelings to be touched as well as understandings to be convinced; who considered the affections as the only portion of character to which he must be careful not to advert, in addressing beings who are feeling as well as intelligent? Shall a fervent rhetoric be admired in one orator, when pleading for the freedom of men, and reprobated in another, when pleading for their salvation? Shall we be enraptured with the eloquent advocate for the Agrarian law, and disgusted with the strenuous advocate for the everlasting Gospel? Shall not one man be allowed the same earnestness in combating unbelief, which has immortalized another in execrating Verres?

It must, assuredly, be maintained, that there is such a sober mode of exhibiting truth, as may show that the sacred messenger has no delight in declaring that part of his message which yet it is his duty to deliver; which, while it cannot fail to call forth every feeling of interest for the souls of men, at the same time demands the utmost tenderness, as treating of their dangers

Tenderness, it is true, must not alter truth, nor conceal menaces, which make an awful part of it. Yet a difference may be sometimes inferred by the manner of delivering them.—Who has not heard a holy man, who, feeling himself bound to declare the whole counsel of God, has denounced his solemn judgments with a subdued voice, and an almost hesitating accent; speaking as one who felt that he was acquitting himself of a painful but bounden duty;—while another of a coarser make, and a less mortified spirit, proclaims the commanded threat in all the thunders of Sinai; seeming, by his tone and gesture, to rejoice that it has fallen to his lot to alarm, and not to console? The one 'persuades men' because he knows 'the terrors of the Lord;' the other seems to have his own gratification in terrifying. The one evidently rejoices in being the ambassador of reconciliation, the other appears, but is not, we are assured, really, glad to bear the mandate of condemnation.

But, to return to writers in the extreme of the other class. Vague essays on general and undefined morality, which we here venture to represent as their fault, are very different from distinct discourses or treatises on the several virtues; these latter flow from the study, and teach the improvement of the human heart. But to produce their effect, they must produce their commission. The proclamation must always have the broad seal of Christianity appended to it. It is indeed not only unnecessary, but impossible and imprudent, that in every discourse the whole scheme of Christian doctrine should be laid open. An attempt to do this has frequently produced confusion, by crowding in more materials than the space will contain; and thus leaving the stamp of no one truth distinct upon the mind. We mean no more, than that the general impression made, should be, that the moral quality under discussion should appear to be explicitly derived from the school of Christ, and the reader not be left to exercise his ingenuity in conjecturing, till the closing sentence informs him, to what system of religion it belongs.

It is also perfectly proper to cut the circle of the virtues into segments, provided it be shown how they are connected with each other, and how the whole fall within the circumference of that divine religion which is their proper centre. It were also to be wished, that there were no undue and hyperbolical exaltation of the virtue under consideration, which often makes a part stand for the whole. This exclusive praise of the quality inculcated, is, to Christianity, what it would be to general geography, if, in order to give an idea of our world, a map of a single country should be exhibited without coast or boundary. It differs from the Christian exhibition of moral virtues, as this insulated map would differ from a chart of the same country when delineated on the globe; there you see not only the country itself correctly displayed, but you perceive by what sea it is bordered, on what land it touches, into what other country some points of this cut deep, and how narrow are the bounds which separate it from some hostile neighbour; you see, also, its dependance on every thing about it, and its relative situation on the earth.

If we might be allowed another illustration, we would observe, that, to expect to give a just idea of Christianity by any quality, as detached from the whole, would be to resemble a certain Athenian, who having a palace to sell, took out a single brick from the wall, and produced it a the auction as a specimen of the edifice.

Nor, as we humbly conceive, is it a superfluous care, so to contrive, as that, when it is right to expose any vice to reprobation, the reader who is exempt from it may not too much plume himself upon the exemption.—A venerable clergyman once assured the author, that he had never done so much mischief as by the best sermon he had ever preached. It was against the sin of drunkenness. It happened to be an offence to which none of his auditors happened to be addicted.—After it was over, some of them expressed no small triumph at their own secure state, from a consciousness of being free from the vice which had been so well exposed, and, as if the exercise of no virtue but the one opposite to the sin in question had been necessary, they went home exulting in their own superior goodness.

The writers to whom we have been referring, triumphantly distinguish themselves by the appellation of *practical*, in studied opposition to those who are professedly doctrinal. Let it, however, be observed, that, maintaining a due respect for the conscientious of both classes, we only presume to allude, in our animadversions, to those of either side, who carry their specific characteristics into an extreme in which each excludes its opposite. But far more deficient are the practical discussions of the one, if they want the solid weight and metal of the Gospel to make them sterling, than the doctrinal dissertations of the other; which, however, ought never to want the intelligible superscription of practical remark to render them current.—Yet is there not sometimes a misnomer in the former appellation? Can that writing be called truly practical which does not attempt greatly to raise the tone of conduct, which does not press practice home on the conscience as flowing from the highest principle, and directed to the noblest end; which is not urged on that ground of argument that is the most cogent, not inferred from that motive which is the most irresistible, nor impressed by that authority, best calculated to secure obedience? The nature of the action commonly participates in the nature of the motive. Practice is not likely to rise higher than the spring which set it a-going.

At the same time, it is but fair to confess, that much of that species of composition which assumes a more spiritual character, is sometimes lamentably deficient in this good requisite. It begins not seldom, by laying a good and solid foundation; but when we lift our eyes to look upon the structure which we expected to see raised upon it, we find it negligently run up, if not totally omitted. Practice seems to be considered as a thing of course, not necessary to be insisted on, much less to have its path clearly chalked out. The use to be made of the doctrine which has been delivered, is turned over to the piety or ingenuity of the reader, without any specific direction, or personal application.

Too much is left for him to supply, which, perhaps, implicitly leaning on his guide, he will not supply, or which, from want of knowledge, he cannot.

Far be it from our intention, however, in thus venturing with real diffidence to compare the faulty extremes in both cases, to assimilate at all their nature or their tendency :—the extreme of adherence to doctrine frequently springing from the deepest sense of the infinite importance of that doctrine, and accompanied with a pious willingness to spend and be spent, in its propagation. The extreme of adherence to what is called mere morality, is too often the lamentable effect of ignorance of doctrine, and of an interest neither felt, nor possessed, nor desired in doctrinal blessings.

With this guard distinctly kept in view, we venture, with all humility, to repeat, that there is an extreme on both sides : the one may be abstractedly considered as all propositions, the other as all conclusions. The one fails of effect by not depending on just premises ; in the other, well established premises produce inferior good, because the conclusions are not sufficiently brought to bear on the actual demands of life. The one, while he powerfully shows the reader that he is a sinner, limits both his proof and his instruction to one or two prominent doctrines; he names, indeed, with unwearied iteration, that only name by which we can be saved, faithfully dwells on the efficacy of the divine remedy, but without clearly pointing out its application to practical purposes. The other presumes his readers to be so wise, as to be able to supply their own deficiencies, or so good, as to stand in little need of supernatural assistance. Is it not mocking human helplessness, to tell men they must be holy, good, and just, without directing them to the principle from whence 'all holy thoughts, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed'—to direct the stream of action, and keep out of sight the spring from which it must flow—to expect they will renounce sin if they do not renounce self—to send them vagrant in search of some stray virtue, without showing them where to apply for direction to find it ?

The combination of the opposite but indispensable requisites is most happily exemplified in all our best divines, living and dead; and, blessed be God, very numerous in the catalogue in both instances. They have, with a large and liberal construction, followed that most perfect exemplification of this union, which is so generally exhibited in Scripture, more particularly in that express model, the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians. There, every thing that is excellent in practice is made to proceed from Him 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' There, every act has its inspiring motive, every virtue its radical principal; falsehood is not only prohibited to the converts, but the prohibition is accounted for, '*because* ye have put on the new man.' The obedience of wives, the affection of husbands, the submission of children, all is to be done 'in the name of the Lord Jesus.'—Servants are enjoined to fidelity as 'fearing God.' 'Mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering,' are recommended, *because* the converts 'are the elect of God.' Every inhibition of every wrong practice has its reference to Christ, every act of goodness its legitimate principle. Contentions are forbidden forgiveness is enjoined, on the same high ground—the example of 'Him in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.—This is *practical preaching*—This is *evangelical preaching*.

CHAP. XVIII.

Thoughts respectfully suggested to good sort of people.

In perusing the foregoing chapter, it may be, as it has been, with unweared repetition, objected, that it is equally preposterous and unjust, to hold out a standard of religion and morals so high, as to defeat, in the reader, all hope of attaining it. It may be urged, that it would be more prudent, as well as more useful, to propose a more moderate standard, and to suggest a more temperate measure, which would not, as in the present case, by discouraging, render attainment hopeless. For an answer, we must send them to the Redeemer's own mouth, to the excision of the right hand, the plucking out the right eye. This it will be justly insisted, is not a command, but a metaphor. Granted.—We know we are not commanded to lop off our limbs, but our corruptions. But, would He who is not only true, but THE TRUTH, adopt a stong metaphor to express a feeble obligation ? Is any tone, then, may we not ask, too high, if not higher than that uniformly employed in the Bible ? What do we mean, when we say, that we receive the Gospel as a rule of faith and practice, if, having made the declaration, we instantly go, and, without scruple, lower the rule, and depress the practice ?

High and low are indefinite terms : their just use depends on the greatness or littleness of the objects to which they refer. When we consider, that the object in question is eternal life, should the standard which God has made the measure of our attaining to it, be so depressed as to prevent that attainment ? Do not the Apostles and their Master, the Saints and the King of Saints, every where suggest a rule, not only of excellence, but perfection ; a rule to the adoption of which no hopelessness of attainment is to prevent our stretching forward ?

Scripture does, indeed, every where represent us as incompetent without divine assistance. But does it not every where point out where our strength lies ; where it is to be sought ; how it is to be obtained ? It not only shows where our wants may be supplied, but our failures pardoned. Does any one doctrine, any one precept, of the Gospel, deal in emollients, prescribe palliatives, suggest petty reliefs, point out inferior remedies, speak of any medicine, but such as is proportioned to the depth of the disease ?

Yet it is not uncommon for those whose views have been low, and whose practice, con

sequently, has not been high, to combine with this mediocrity of character the most exalted expectation of future recompence: to couple a comparatively low faith and conduct with those lofty promises which the New Testament holds out to the most exalted Christian. Many in the day of health and activity would have considered taking up the cross,' 'living to him who died for them,' &c. &c. as figurative expressions, lively images, not exacting much practical obedience; nay, would have considered the proposal of bringing them into action as downright enthusiasm; yet who has not heard these persons, in a dangerous sickness, repeat with entire self-application the glorious and hard-earned exultation of him, who, after unrivalled sufferings and unparalleled services, after having been 'in deaths oft,' after having been even favoured with a glimpse of heaven, exclaims, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,' and then go on with the most delusive complacency, to apply to themselves the sublime apostrophe with which this fine exclamation is wound up—'henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory,' &c. &c.: and it has passed into an accredited phrase, when one of this sort of Christians speaks of the death of another in the same class, to observe, with an air of triumph, that *he is gone to his reward.* We must confess, that when we hear this assurance so applied, we charitably incline to hope it is not so bad with them as the expression implies; because, if heaven is thus assigned as a payment of work done, one cannot help trembling at a reward apportioned to such worth. For these contractors for heaven, who bring their merit as their purchase-money, and intend to be saved at their own expense, do not always take care to be provided with a very exorbitant sum, though they expect so large a return in exchange for it; while those who, placing no dependence on their works, never dare to draw upon heaven for the payment, will often be found to have a much larger stock upon hand, ready to produce as an evidence, though they renounce them as a claim. In both cases, is it not better to transfer them and ourselves from merit to mercy, as a more humble and less hazardous ground of dependance?

Far be from me the uncharitable presumption, that these sanguine persons are destitute of principle, or void of right intentions. Doubtless, in many instances, they persevere in error for no reason, but because they believe it to be truth. There is even much that is right in them; but are they not too easily satisfied with a low measure of that right, without examining accurately the quality of the practice, merely because it is not disreputable?

Our knowledge of religion and sound morals must inevitably arise, in a good measure, from the knowledge of ourselves. Now, the kind of reading of which we have complained, is so far from improving that knowledge, that it keeps it out of our sight, by representing us to ourselves as other creatures than we really are. The most ingenious abstract reasoning on man will not show him what sort of being he is, if he be not taught to know it within himself. He must seek it in the depths of his own mind, and compare what he finds there with the unerring law of God. The facts he might deduce, and the experiments he might make from the study of both in conjunction, would teach him either to confirm or correct his theory; his experience, if it did not establish, would overturn his speculations, and he would begin to build on new ground.

May we not be allowed with all tenderness and respect, not with the arrogance of any superiority, but such as is the inevitable fruit of long observation, to suggest a few of the many remedies against the evils we have been regretting? The true preliminary to vital religion is to feel and acknowledge our lapsed humanity. There is no entrance into the temple of Christianity but through this lowly vestibule. All the dissertations of the most profound philosophers on the reasonableness and beauty of our religion, on its excellence and superiority, are but a fruitless exercise of ingenuity and eloquence, if they exclude this fundamental truth. The ablest writer, if he does not feel this conviction in his own heart, will never carry it to yours. But if you have once got over this hard and humbling introduction, the same divine guide who has given this initiatory opening, will, to the patient and persevering inquirer, perfect the work he has so happily begun.—While he who turns over the page of his own virtues, and ransacks the catalogue of his good actions, will find that, under the pretence of seeking consolation, he is evading instruction; he is only heaping up materials for building confidence in himself—'by that sin fell the angels'—and may be in little less danger than the flagitious offender. Our Lord has decided on this momentous question, by his preference of the self-abasing penitent who had nothing to ask but mercy, to him who had nothing to request but praise; of the lowly confessor of his offences to the pompous recounter of his virtues; whose prayer, if self-panegyric deserves that name, plainly declares that he already possessed so much, that there was nothing left for him to ask. Our Saviour took this occasion to let us see, that he is better pleased when we show him our wants, than our merits.

As you do not live in the practice or the allowance of vices, which make it your interest to wish that Christianity may be false, and as you believe its external evidences, endeavour to gain also an internal conviction that it is true. Examine also into the principle of your best actions. Even some who have made a more considerable proficiency, are too apt to defer examining into the motive, till they have concluded the act which the motive should have determined; they then, as it were, make up the motive to the act, and bring about the accordance in a way to quiet their own minds. Perhaps interest is acting on an opinion which we fancied that wisdom had suggested. If it succeed, we compliment ourselves on the event; if it fail, we applaud ourselves on the assigned, because we are not quite sure of the real motive.

The way to make a progress in piety and peace, is not to be too tender of our present feelings; is nobly to make some sacrifice of immediate ease, for the sake of acquiring future happiness. Desire not opiates, seek not anodynes,

when your internal constitution requires stimulants. Cease to conceive of religion as a stationary thing; be assured, that to be available, it must be progressive. Read the Scriptures, not as a form, but as God's great appointed means, of infusing into your heart that life-giving principle which is the spring of all right practice. Cultivate every virtue, but rest not in any. Do every thing to deserve the esteem of men, but make not that esteem your governing principle. Value not most those qualities which are the most popular. Correct your worldly wisdom with 'the wisdom which is from above.' Bear in your recollection, that to minds of a soft and yielding cast, the world is a more formidable enemy than those two other rival tempters which the New Testament commonly associates with it, and which would not, generally, have made a third in such corrupt company, if its dangers had not borne some proportion to theirs. It is the more necessary to press this point, as the mischiefs of the world are felt without being suspected. The other two spiritual enemies seize on the more corrupt; but the better disposed are the unconscious victims of the world, which frequently betrays its votary into the hands of its two confederates. People are inclined to be pleased with themselves when the world flatters them; they make the world their supreme arbiter; they are unwilling to appeal from so lenient a judge; and being satisfied with themselves, when its verdict is in their favour, the applause of others too often, by confirming their own, supercedes an inquiry into their real state.

The unconfirmed Christian should attend to his conduct just in those points which, though dishonest, are not dishonourable; points in which, though religion will be against him, the approbation of the world will bear him out. He would not do a disreputable thing, but should a temptation arise where his reputation is safe, there his trial commences, there he must guard himself with augmented vigilance.

The more enlightened the conscience becomes, the more we shall discover the unspeakable holiness of God. But our perceptions being cleared, and our spiritual discernment rendered more acute, this must not lead us to fancy that we are worse than when we thought so well of ourselves. We are not worse, because the growing light of divine truth reveals faults unobserved before to our view, or enlarges those we thought insignificant. Light does not create impurities, it only discloses them. Moreover, this efficient spirit does not illuminate without correcting; it is not only given for reproof, but amendment; not only for amendment, but consolation. Our unhappiness does not consist in that contrition which grows out of our new acquaintance with our own hearts. The true misery consisted in the blindness, presumption, and self-sufficiency, which our ignorance of ourselves generated. Our true felicity begins in our being brought, however severe be the means, to renounce our self-confidence, and cast ourselves entirely upon God.

It will be a good test of the improving state of a person of the above description, when he can patiently, though not at first pleasantly, persevere in the perusal of works which do not flatter his security; nay, to persevere the more earnestly, because the perusal discovers his own character to himself. When once he is brought to endure these salutary probings, he will soon be brought to court the hand that probes. He will begin to disrelish the vapid civility with which the superficial examiner treats human nature. Nay, he may now safely meditate on the *dignity* of man, which, in his former state, so far misled him. He will find that, in another sense, the doctrine is true. Man was indeed originally a dignified creature, for he was made in the image of the perfect God. Even now, though his will is depraved, yet he has noble intellectual faculties which give some notion of what he was. His heart is alienated, but his understanding approves the rectitude which his will rejects. He has still recoverable powers; he is still capable, when divine truth shall have made its full impression on his soul, of that renovation which shall restore him to the dignity he has lost, reinstate him in the favour he has forfeited, and raise him infinitely higher than the elevation from which he has fallen.

To those who attempt to relieve his temporary distress, by directing his eyes to his own virtues, and to the approbation those virtues are certain to obtain from heaven, he will reply with the illustrious sufferer of old, 'Miserable comforters are ye all!' Slight remedies will no longer satisfy him. The more deep his views become, the less he will be disposed to claim his share in the compliments lavished on the natural human character.

But, oh! what unspeakable consolation will the humble believer derive from the appellation by which the divine Spirit is designated—The Comforter. There is something sublimely merciful in a dispensation of which the term is so delightfully expressive of the thing.—We read in the Scriptures of *grieving* the Holy Spirit; but when we consider him under this most soothing character, is there not something of peculiar and heinous ingratitude in *grieving the Comforter.*

To endeavour to obtain a more lively belief in the existence, and earnestly to implore the aid of this quickening Spirit, would be a great means of improving the character. That the doctrine of spiritual influence is a practical doctrine, is clearly deducible from the command, arising out of the conviction, that the truth was already received—'If ye *live* in the Spirit, *walk* in the Spirit.' Observe that we press you only on your own principles: we recommend you only to act upon the creed you avow. If we suggest to your adoption any thing further than the Bible enjoins, we are guilty of fanaticism, and you should be on your guard against it. We venture not to say what name is due to those who would depress your views greatly below either.

In perusing the Scriptures, might you not commune with your own heart in something like the following language: 'The book is not a work of fancy. I do not, therefore, read it for amusement, but instruction; but am I seriously proposing to read it like one who has a deep interest in its contents? Is it my sincere inten-

tion to convert the knowledge I am about to acquire into any practical application to my own case? Is it my earnest wish to improve the state of my own heart by comparing it with what I allow to be the only perfect rule of faith and practice? Do I only read to get over my morning's task, the omission of which would make me uneasy, merely to fasten a series of facts on my memory? or do I really desire to make the great truths of the incarnation of the Son of God, of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of a living faith, a sound repentance, an entire conviction that, of myself I can do nothing; not merely a speculative system to be recognized at church, but to be transfused into the life? Do I adopt religion as an hereditary, national profession, necessary to my credit, or as a thing in which I have a momentous personal interest? Do I propose to apply what I read to the pulling down those high imaginations, and that false security of which my Bible shows me the danger, and which its doctrines are calculated to subdue? Do I labour after the attainment of those heavenly dispositions, the exhibition of which I have been admiring? Have these vivid declarations of the unsatisfactoriness of the world at all cooled my ardour for its enjoyments? Shall I read here this holy contempt for the littleness of its pursuits, this display of its fallacies and deceits, and yet return this very evening to the participation of diversions, the exposure of whose emptiness I have been approving? Shall I extol the writer who strips off its painted mask from the world, and yet acts as if the morning lecture had brought no such discovery? Nay, perhaps, it may be one of my subjects of conversation to recommend a book, of whose little efficacy in my own case I am giving a practical example.

Do I not periodically pray, 'Make me to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting,' and yet am I not as shy of the society of those who are distinguished for more than common sanctity, as if it carried contamination with it? And does not the very term convey to my mind a discreditable idea, compounded of fanaticism and hypocrisy?

After all, I may have been wrong. If respectability were security, the young ruler in the Gospel had been in no danger, for his attainments were above the ordinary standard, and his credit was probably high. It is time to come to something like certainty; to inquire, whether I do cordially believe what I should be ashamed not to profess; whether my religion lives in my memory or my heart, on my lips or in my life, in my profession or my practice? It is time to examine, whether I have much more distinct evidences of divine truth than those who do not acknowledge the Gospel to be a revelation from heaven; to inquire, why, if my understanding be somewhat more enlightened, such illumination is not more perceptible on my heart? Why the fruits of the Spirit,' so far from 'abounding' in me, scarcely appear, if those fruits are indeed 'love, peace, and joy in believing?'

Let not the fear of labour, or the dread of pain, prevent you from endeavouring to obtain a clear view of your state. Let not a pusillanimous apprehension of reproach or ridicule prevent your following up your convictions. There is not any thing that is unreasonable, much less any thing that is impossible, required: no degree of zeal, or measure of earnestness, but what you see every day exerted in a worse cause. Take your measure from the world, not in *what* you shall pursue, but in the energy with which you shall urge the pursuit. Only devote to religion as much time as the worldly devote to dissipation; only set your affections on Heaven as intensely as theirs are set upon earth, and all will be well: or take your measure from your former self; take at least as much pains to secure your eternal interests as you have formerly taken to acquire a language or an art. Read the word of inspiration with the same assiduity with which you have studied a favourite classic; strive with as much energy to acquire a thorough insight into the corruptions of your heart, and the remedy proposed for their cure, as you have exerted in studying the principles of your profession, or the mysteries of your calling. Inspect your consciences as accurately as your expences, be as frugal of your time as of your fortune, and as careful of your soul as of your credit. Be neither terrified by terms, nor governed by them.

In reading those heart-searching writers, whose principles are drawn from the source of all truth, and who are only to be trusted as they are analagous to it, be not offended with some strong expressions. They expressed forcibly what they felt powerfully. The revolting term of *sinner*, which has, perhaps, made you throw aside the book, as thinking it addressed only to the perpetrators of great crimes, as fitter language for the prisons and the hulks, than for the polished and the pleasing, is addressed to every one, however profound his knowledge, however decent his life, however amiable his manners, who lives without habitual reference to God Be more than honest, be courageous; boldly apply it to yourself. Though your character is unstained with any disgraceful vice, though you regularly fulfil many relative duties, yet if you are destitute of the prime duty, the love of God in Christ Jesus, you stand in need of such a forcible address as we have been supposing. The discovery will be no dishonour. The dishonour consists in not feeling your state, in not struggling against it; in not applying with humble fervour for assistance to the Fountain of grace and mercy.

Take comfort that you have great advantages over many others. You have few bad habits to retract; you have no scandalous vices to combat; you have already with certain persons acquired a degree of influence by your good qualities; with others, you have acquired it by your very defects, and, as you are not suspected of enthusiasm, your usefulness will not be impeded by having that suspicion to repel. You will continue to do, in many respects the same things which you did before. The exterior of your life may be in many points nearly the same. But, even the same actions will be done in another spirit and to another end. Religion will not convert you into misanthropes, insensible to all the dear affections which make life pleasant. It does not wish to send you with the

hermits of old to the deserts of Thebais, it only wishes you to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in your own families, and among your own connexions. Not one of the proper forms and harmless habits of polished society will be impaired, they will be rather improved by this mutation of the mind. Christian humility will be aiding all the best purposes of good breeding, while it will furnish a higher principle for its exercise. You may express this change in your character by what name you please, so that the change be but effected.—It is not what you are called, but what you are, which will make the specific distinction between the character you adopt, and that which you have quitted. You read the Bible now, but between reading it mechanically and spiritually, there is as much difference as betwcen pouring a fluid on the ground and distilling it. The one 'cannot be gathered up, afterwards; from the other, we extract drop by drop, a precious and powerful essence.

Search, then, diligently, the word of eternal life, enriched and ennobled as it is with the chain and the accomplishment of its prophecies, with the splendor of its miracles; with the attestation of its martyrs, the consistency of its doctrines; the importance of its facts; the plenitude of its precepts; the treasury of its promises; the irradiations of the Spirit; the abundance of its consolations; the peace it bestows; the blessedness it announces; the proportion of its parts; the symmetry of the whole,—altogether presenting such a fund of instruction to the mind, of light to the path, of document to the conduct, of satisfaction to the heart, as demonstrably prove it to be the instrument of God for the salvation of man.

CHAP. XIX.

On Habits.

Habits are those powers of the mind which arise from a collection or rather a successive course of ordinary actions. As they are formed by a concatenation of those actions, so they may be weakened by frequent and allowed interruptions; and if many contiguous links are wilfully broken, the habits themselves are in danger of being totally demolished.

If we may be allowed to change the metaphor, we would observe that good habits produce a sound healthy constitution of mind; they are tonics which gradually, but infallibly, invigorate the intellectual man.—A silent course of habits is a part of our character or rather conduct, which in a great measure depends on industry and application; on self denial and watchfulness, on diligence in establishing right pursuits, and vigilance in checking such as are pernicious. Habit being an engine put into our hands for the noblest and most beneficial purposes; and being one, which, having the free command of our own faculties, we have a power to use and direct—a power, indeed, derived from God as all our other possessions are—yet having this power, it rests with ourselves whether we shall improve it by a vigorous exertion in a right bent, or whether we shall turn it against our Maker, and direct the course of our conduct to the offending, instead of pleasing God.

Habits are not so frequently formed by vehement incidental efforts on a few great occasions, as by a calm and steady perseverance in the ordinary course of duty. If this were uniformly followed up, we should be spared that occasional violence to our feelings, that agitating resistance, which, by wasting the spirits, leads more feeble minds to dread the recurrence, of the same necessity which induces a painful feeling, the consequence of negligence, even where there is real rectitude of heart; while the regular adoption of right habits, indented by repetition, establishes such a tranquillity of spirit, as contributes to promote happiness no less than virtue. The mind, like the body, gains robustness and activity by the habitual exercise of its powers. Occasional right actions may be capricc may be vanity, may be impulse, but hardly deserve the name of virtue, till they proceed from a principle which habit has moulded into a frame; then the right principle which first set them at work continues to keep them at it, and finally becomes so prevalent, that there is a kind of spontaneity in the act, which keeps up the energy, without constant sensible reference to the spring which first set it in motion. Good habits and good dispositions ripened by repetition into virtue, and sanctified by prayer into holiness. If we allow that vicious habits persisted in, lay us more and more open to the dominion of our spiritual adversary, can we doubt that virtuous habits acquire proportional strength from the superinduced aid of the Spirit of God?

The more uniform is our conformity to the rules of virtue and purity, the less we may require to be reminded of the particular influence of the motive. We need not, nor indeed can we, recur every moment to the exact source of the action; its flowing from an habitual sense of duty will generally explain the ground on which it is performed. If the heart is kept awake and alive in a cheerful obedience to God, the immediate motive of the immediate act is not likely to be a bad one. Many actions, indeed, require to be deliberated on, and whatever requires deliberation before we do it, demands scrutiny why we do it. This will lead to such an inquest into our motive as, if there be any want of sincerity in it, will tend to its detection.

Notwithstanding what has been urged above as to the exercise of constant assiduity in preference to mere occasional exertion, we would be understood to offer this counsel rather to the proficient than to the novice. As the beginnings are always difficult, especially to ardent spirits, such spirits would do well, particularly at their entrance on a more correct course, to select for themselves some single task of painful exertion, which, by bringing their mental vigour into full play, shall afford them so sensible an evidence of the conquest they have obtained, as will more than repay the labour of the conflict. A friend of the Author was so fully aware of the importance of thus taming an impatient temper, that she imposed upon herself the habit of beginning

even any ordinary undertaking with the most difficult part of it, instead of following the usual method of proceeding from the lower to the higher. If a language was to be learnt, she began with a very difficult author. If a scheme of economy was to be improved, she relinquished at once some prominent indulgence; if a vanity was to be cut off, she fixed on some strong act of self-denial which should appear a little disreputable to others, while it somewhat mortified herself. These incipient trials once got over, she had a large reward in finding all lesser ones in the same class comparatively light. The main victory was gained in the onset, the subsequent skirmishes cost little.

If it be said that the effort is too violent, the change too sudden, we apprehend the assertion is a mistake. When we have worked up ourselves, or rather are worked up by a superior agency to a strong measure, it becomes a point of honour, as well as of duty, to persist; we are ashamed of stopping and especially of retreating, though we have no witness but God and our own hearts. Having once persevered, the victory is the reward. A slower change, though desirable, has less stimulus, less animation, is less sensibly marked; we cannot recur, as in the other case, to the hour of conquest, nor have we so clear a consciousness of having obtained it.

But the conquest we have won we must maintain. The fruits of the initiatory victory may be lost, if vigilance does not guard that which valour subdued. If the relinquishment of evil habits is so difficult, it is not less necessary to be watchful, lest we should insensibly slide into the negligence of such as are good. What we neglect, we gradually forget. This guard against declension is the more requisite, as the human mind is so limited, that one object quickly expels another. A new idea takes possession as soon as its predecessor is driven out; and the very traces of former habits are effaced, not suddenly, but progressively; no two successive ideas being, perhaps, very dissimilar, while the last in the train will be of a character quite different, not from that which immediately preceded, but from that which first began to draw us off from the right habits; the impression continues to grow fainter, till that which at first was weakened, is at length obliterated.

If we do not establish the habit of the great statesman of Holland, to do only one thing at a time, we shall do nothing well; the whole of our understanding, however highly we may rate it, is not too much to give to any subject which is of sufficient importance to require an investigation at all; certainly is not great enough to afford being split into as many parts, as we may choose to take subjects simultaneously in hand. If we allow the different topics which require deliberation to break in on each other; if a second is admitted to a conference, before we had dismissed the first, as neither will be distinctly considered, so neither is likely to obtain a just decision. These desultory pursuits obstruct the establishment of correct habits.

But it requires the firm union of a sound principle with an impartial judgment to ascertain that the habit is really good, or the mischief will be great in proportion to the pertinacity. For who can conceive a more miserable state, than for a man to be goaded on by a long perseverance in habits, which both his conscience and his understanding condemn? Even if upon conviction he renounces them, he has a long time to spend in backing, with the mortification at last, to find himself only where he ought to have been at setting out.

Without insisting on the difficulty of totally subduing long-indulged habits of any gross vice, such as intemperance; we may remark, that it requires a long and painful process—and this even after a man is convinced of its turpitude, after he discovers evident marks of improvement—to conquer the habits of any fault, which, though not so scandalous in the eyes of the world, may be equally inconsistent with real piety.—Take the love of money for instance. How reluctantly, if at all, is covetousness extirpated from the heart, where it has long been rooted! The imperfect convert has a conviction on his mind, nay he has a feeling in his heart, that there is no such thing as being a Christian without liberality. This he adopts, in common with other just sentiments, and speaks of it as a necessary evidence of sincerity. He has got the whole christian theory by heart, and such parts of it as do not trench upon this long-indulged corruption, he more or less brings into action. But in this tender point, though the profession is cheap, the practice is costly. An occasion is brought home to him, of exercising the grace he has been commending. He acknowledges its force, he does more; he feels it. If taken at the moment, something considerable might be done; but if any delay intervenc, that delay is fatal; for from feeling, he begins to calculate. Now there is a cooling property in calculation, which freezes the warm current that sensibility had set in motion. The old habit is too powerful for the young convert, yet he flatters himself that he has at once exercised charity and discretion. He takes comfort both from the liberal feeling which had resolved to give the money, and the prudence which had saved it, laying to his heart the flattering unction, that he has only spared it for some more pressing demand, which, when it occurs, will again set him on feeling, and calculating, and saving.

Some well-meaning persons unintentionally confirm this kind of error. They are so zealous on the subject of sudden conversion, that they are too ready to pronounce, from certain warm expressions, that this change has taken place in their acquaintance, while evident symptoms of an unchanged nature continue to disfigure the character. They do not always wait till an alteration in the habits has given that best evidence of an interior alteration. They dwell so exclusively on miraculous changes, that they leave little to do for the convert, but to consider himself as an inactive recipient of grace; not as one who is to exhibit, by the change in his life, that mutation, which the divine Spirit has produced on his heart. This too common error appears to arise, not only from enthusiasm, but partly from want of insight into the human character, of which habits are the ground-work, and in which right habits are not less the effect of

grace for being gradually produced. We cannot, indeed, purify ourselves, any more than we can convert ourselves, it being equally the work of the Holy Spirit to infuse purity, as well as the other graces, into the heart; but it rests with us to exercise this grace, to reduce this purity to a habit, else the Scriptures would not have been so abundant in injunctions to this duty.

'We must hate sin,' says bishop Jeremy Taylor, 'in all its dimensions, in all its distances, and in every angle of its reception.' St. Paul felt this scrupulousness of Christian delicacy to such an extent, that, in intimating the commission of certain enormities to the church of Ephesus, he charged that *they should not be so much as named among them.* This great master in the science of human nature, a knowledge perfected by grace, was aware that the very mention of some sins might be a temptation to commit them; he would not have the mind intimate with the expression, nor the tongue familiar with the sound. He who knew all the minuter entrances, as well as the broader avenues to the corrupt heart of man, knew how much safer it is to avoid than to combat, how much easier the retreat than victory. He was aware, that purity of heart and thought, could alone produce purity of life and conduct.

From the unhappy want of this early habit of restraint, many, who are become sincerely pious, find it very difficult to extricate their minds from certain associations established by former habits. Corrupt books and evil communications have at once left a sense of abhorrence on their hearts, with an indelible impression on their memory. They find it almost impossible to get rid of sallies of imagination, which, though they once admired as wit, they now consider as little less than blasphemy. The will rejects them; but they cling to the recollection with fatal pertinacity. Vices, not only of the conduct, but of the imagination, long indulged, leave a train of almost inextinguishable corruptions behind them. These are evils of which even the reformed heart does not easily get clear. He who repents suddenly, will too often be purified slowly. A corrupt practice may be abolished, but a soiled imagination is not easily cleansed.

We repeat, that these rooted habits, even after the act has been long hated and discontinued, may persist in tormenting him who has long repented of the sin, so as to keep him to the last in a painful and distressing doubt as to his real state; but if this doubt continue to make him more vigilant, and to keep alive his humility, the uneasiness it causes may be more salutary than a greater confidence of his own condition. Many have complained, after years of sincere reformation, that they did not possess that peace and consolation which religion promises; not suspecting, that their long adherence to wrong habits may naturally darken their views and cloud their enjoyments. Surely the man whose mind has abandoned itself for years to improper indulgences has little right to complain, if bitterness accompany his repentance, if dejection break in on his peace. Surely he has little right to murmur, if those consolations are refused to him, which, in the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, are sometimes withheld from good men, who have never been guilty of his irregularities in conduct, who have never indulged his disorders of heart and mind. When we see holy men, to whom this cheerful confidence is sometimes denied, or from whom, in the agonies of dissolving nature, it is withdrawn, shall they whose case we have been considering, complain, if their's are not all halcyon days, if their closing hour is rather contrite than triumphant? But this, if it be not a state of joy, may be equally a state of safety.

The duty of keeping up this sense of purity is of great extent. One of the many uses of prayer is, that, by the habit of breathing out our inmost thoughts of God, the sense of his being, the consciousness of his presence, the idea that his pure eye is immediately upon us, imparts a temporary purity to the soul, which it vainly aims to maintain in an equal degree in its intercourse with mankind. The beatitude of the promised vision of God is more immediately annexed to this grace; and it is elsewhere said, 'that every one who hath this hope, purifieth himself, as He is pure.' The holy felicity of the creature is thus made to depend on its assimilation with the Creator. There is a beautiful intimation of the purity of God in the order of construction in the prayer taught by our Saviour. We pray that *his name may be hallowed*, that is, that our hearts, and the hearts of all men, may honour his holy name; may be deeply impressed with a sense of his purity and holiness, before we proceed to the subsequent petitions. We thus invest our minds with this preparatory sentiment in order to sanctify what we are about to implore. In addition to the necessity of stated prayer for the promotion of purity, it may be observed, that if, by habitual devotion, we bend our thoughts into that course, they will in time almost voluntarily pursue it. The good effect of prayer will, on our return to society, be much increased by the practice of occasionally darting up to heaven, a short ejaculation, a laudatory sentence, or some brief spontaneous effusion. This will assist to stir up the flame which was kindled by the morning sacrifice, and preserve it from total extinction before that of the evening is offered up. We may learn from the profane practice of some, that an ejaculation takes as little time, and obtrudes less on notice, than an oath or an exclamation. It implores in as few words, the same divine power for a blessing, whom the other obtests for destruction.

One great benefit of science is allowed to be derived from its habituating the mind to shake off its dependance upon sense. Devout meditation, in like manner, accustoms it not to fly for support to sensible and material things, but to rest in such as are intellectual and spiritual. By a general neglect of serious thinking, virtue is sometimes withered and decayed; in minds where it is not torn up by the roots, there remains in them that vital sap which may still, upon habitual cultivation, not only vegetate, but produce fruit.

One great obstacle to habitual meditation must not be passed over. It is the pernicious custom of submitting to the uncontrolled dominion of a roving imagination. This prolific faculty produces such a constant budding of

images, fancies, visions, conjectures, and conceits, that she can subsist plentifully on her own independent stock. She is perpetually wandering from the point to which she promised to confine herself when she set out; is ever roaming from the spot to which her powerless possessor had threatened to pin her down. We retire with a resolution to reflect: Reason has no sooner marshalled her forces, than this undisciplined run-away escapes from duty, one straggler after another joins the enemy, or brings home some foreign impertinence. While we meant to indulge only a harmless reflection, we are brought under subjection to a whole series of reveries of different characters and opposite descriptions. Fresh trains obliterate our first speculations, till the spirit sinks into a sort of deliquium. We have nothing for it, but resolutely to resist the enfeebling despot. Let us stir up some counteracting force: let us fly to some active employment which shall break the charm, and dissolve the pleasant thraldom. No matter what, so it be innocent and opposite. We shall not cure ourselves by the sturdiest resolution not to do this thing which is complained of, unless we compel ourselves to do something else. Courageous exertion is the only conqueror of irresolution: vigorous action the only supplanter of idle speculation.

Habits are not arbitrary systems and predetermined schemes. They are not always laid down deliberately as plans to be pursued, but steal upon us insensibly; insinuate themselves into a train of successive repetitions, till we find ourselves in bondage to them, before we are aware they have gotten any fast hold over us. But if rooted bad habits are of such difficult extirpation, that, as we have already observed, they not only destroy the peace of him who continues them, but embitter the very penitence of him who has forsaken them, there is a class of beings in whom they are not yet inveterate. If I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels, never could they be employed to a more important purpose, than in representing to my youthful readers the blessedness of avoiding such habits now, as may take a whole life to unlearn.

O you to whom opening life is fresh, and gay, and tempting! you who have yet your path to choose, whose hearts are ingenuous, and whose manners amiable, in whom, if wrong propensities discover themselves, yet evil habits are not substantially formed—could you be made sensible, at a less costly price than your own experience, that though through the mercy of God, the long-erring heart may hereafter be brought to abhor its own sin, yet the once initiated mind can never be made to unknow its knowledge, nor to unthink its thoughts; can never be brought to separate those combinations which it once too fondly cherished:—how much future regret, how much incurable sorrow might you spare yourselves! If you would but reflect that though in respect of the past, you may become inwardly penitent, you cannot become as you now are, outwardly innocent, and that no repentance can restore your present happy ignorance of practised evil,—you would then keep clear of a bondage from which you perceive the older and the wiser do not, because they cannot, commonly emancipate themselves.

But, supposing a young man is so happy as to escape the grosser corruptions, yet, if he have a turn to wit and ridicule, he should be singularly on his guard against the false credit which ludicrous associations will obtain for him in certain societies. An indelicate but pointed jest, a combination of some light thought with some scriptural expression, a parody which makes a serious thing ridiculous, or a sober one absurd,—these are instruments by no means harmless, not only to him who handles them, but also in the hands of subalterns and copyists, who having, perhaps, no faculty but memory and seldom using memory but for mischief, retain with joy, and circulate from vanity, what was at first uttered with mere random thoughtlessness. Profane dunces are the busy echoes of the loose wit of others. With little talent for original mischief, but devoting that little to the worst purposes, they pick up a kind of literary livelihood on the stray sarcasms and fugitive bon mots of others, and are maintained on what the witty throw away. If even in the first instance there were nothing wrong in the thing itself, there is mischief in the connexion. Whatever serves to append a light thought to a serious one, is unsafe: both have, by frequent citation, been so accustomed to appear together, that when, in a better frame of mind, the good one is called up, the corrupt associate never fails to present itself unbidden, and, like Pharaoh's blasted corn, devours the wholesome ear.

'Man,' says one of the most sagacious observers of man, Dr. Paley, 'is a bundle of habits.' The more we attend to them, the more distinctly we shall perceive those which are right, and the more dexterity we shall acquire in establishing them. In setting out in our moral course, we can make little progress, unless we suffer ourselves to be governed by certain rules; but when the rules are once worked into habits, they in a manner govern us. We lose the sense of that restraining power, which was at first unpleasant though self-imposed. To illustrate this by an instance;—The accomplished orator is not fettered by recurring to the laws of the grammarian, nor the canons of the dialectician, though it was by being habitually trained in their respective schools, that he acquired both his accuracy and argument. Yet, while he is speaking, it never occurs to him, that there are such things in the world as grammar or logic. The rules are become habits, they have answered their end, and are dismissed.

If we cousider the force of habit on amusements: stated diversions enslave us more by the custom of making us feel the want of them, than by any positive pleasure they afford. By being incessantly pursued, they diminish in their power of delighting; yet such is the plastic power of habit and such the yielding substance of our minds, that they become arbitrary wants, absolute articles, not of luxury, but necessity. Strange! that what is enjoyed without pleasure cannot be discontinued without pain! The very hour when, the place where, the sight of those with whom they have been partaken, present associations which we feel a kind of difficulty

and uneasiness in separating. We are partly cheated into this imaginary necessity, by seeing the eagerness with which others pursue them. Yet if it were not an artificial necessity, a want not arising from the constitution of our nature, those would be unhappy who are deprived of them, or rather, who never enjoyed them. There is a respectable society of Christians among us who carry the restriction of diversions to the widest extent. Yet among the number of amiable, virtuous, and well instructed young Quakers, whom I have known, I have always found them as cheerful and as happy as other people. Their cheerfulness was perhaps more intellectual than mirthful; but their happiness never appeared to be impeded by complaints at the privation of pleasures to which habit had not enslaved them—a habit which, when carried too far, destroys the very end of pleasure, that of invigorating the mind by relaxing it.

It is a proof that the Apostle considered conversion in general a gradual transformation, when he spoke of the renewing of the inward man *day by day;* this seems to intimate that good habits, under the influence of the Spirit of God, are continually advancing the growth of the Christian, and conducting him to that maturity which is his consummation and reward. The grace of repentance, like every other, must be established by habit. Repentance is not completed by a single act, it must be incorporated into our mind, till it become a fixed state, arising from a continual sense of our need of it.—*Forgive us our trespasses* would never have been enjoined as a daily petition, if daily repentance had not been necessary for daily sins. The grand work of repentance, indeed, accompanies the change of heart; but that which is purified will not, in this state of imperfection necessarily remain pure.—While we are liable to sin, we must be habitually penitent.

A man may give evidence of his possessing many amiable qualities, without our being able to say, therefore, he is a good man. His virtues may be constitutional, their motives may be worldly. But when he exhibits clear and convincing evidence, that he has subdued all his inveterate bad habits, weeded out rooted evil propensities; when the miser is grown largely liberal, the passionate become meek, the calumniator charitable, the malignant kind; when every bad habit is not only eradicated, but succeeded by its opposite quality, we would conclude that such a change could only be effected by power from on high, we would not scruple to call that man religious. But, above all, there must be a change wrought in the secret course of our thoughts; without this interior improvement, the abandonment of any wrong practice is no proof of an effectual alteration. This, indeed, we cannot make a rule by which to judge others, but it is an infallible one by which to judge ourselves. Certain faults are the effects of certain temptations, rather than of that common depravity natural to all. But a general rectification of thought, a sensible revolution in the secret desires and imaginations of the heart, is perhaps the least equivocal of all the changes effected in us. This is no merely the cure of a particular disease, but the infusion of a sound principle of life and health, the general feeling of a renovated nature, the evidence of a new state of constitution.

Candid Christians, however, who know experimentally the power of habit, who are aware of the remainders of evil in the best men, will not rashly pronounce that he, who, while he is struggling with some long cherished corruption falls into an occasional abberation from the path he is endeavouring to follow, is therefore not religious.

If our bad habits have arisen from dangerous associations, we must dissolve the intercourse, if we would obviate the danger. Good impressions may have been made on the heart, yet the indulged thought, and especially the allowed sight of that object which once melted down our better resolutions, may melt them again. If we would conquer an invading enemy, we must not only fight him in the field, but cut off his provisions. It may be difficult, but nothing should repel the effort but what is impossible. Now in this there is no impossibility, because the thing not being placed out of our reach, there needs only the concurrence of the will. If we humour this wayward will, it is at our peril. What we persist in indulging, we shall every day find more difficult to restrain. Perhaps on our not resisting the very next temptation, will depend the future colour of our life—the very possibility of future resistance. That which is now in our power, may, by repeated rejection, be judicially placed beyond it. Infirmity of purpose produces perpetual relapses Temptation strengthens as resistance weakens We create, by criminal indulgences, an imbecility in the will, and then plead the weakness, not which we found, but made.—Half measures produce more pain and no success. They are compounded of desire and regret, of appetite and fear, of indulgence and remorse. While we are balancing, conditioning, temporizing, negotiating with conscience, we might be singing Te Deum for the victory.

What force we take from the will by every repetition, we give to the habit. A faint endeavour ends in a sure defeat. Temptation becoming more importunate, if its incursions are not resisted, if its attacks are not repelled, the habit will get final possession of the mind; encouragement will invite repetition; where it has been once entertained, it will find a ready way; where it has been received with familiarity, expulsion will soon become difficult, and afterwards impossible. The Holy Spirit, whose aid perhaps we have faintly invoked, and firmly rejected, is withdrawn. But if we are sincere in the invocation, we shall be firm in the resistance; if we are fervent in the resolution, we shall be triumphant in the conflict.

What we have insisted on is the more important, because all progressive goodness consists in habits; and virtuous habits, begun and carried on here with increasing improvement and multiplied energies, are susceptible of eternal proficiency. When we are assured that the effect of habits will not cease with life, but be carried into eternity, it gives such an enlarge

ment to the ideas, such an expansion to the soul, that it seems as if every hour were lost in which we are not beginning or improving some virtuous habit.

As we were originally made in the image of God, so shall we, by the renovation of our minds, of which our improved habits is the best test, be restored, in an enlargement of our moral powers, to a nearer resemblance of Him. Were it not that there is a participation, in all rational minds, of the same qualities in kind, though infinitely different in degree, the perfections of God would not so repeatedly be held out in Scripture as objects of our imitation. It would have been absurd to have said, 'as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.' 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' would not have been a reasonable command, unless holiness and purity had been one common moral quality of the nature, though unspeakably distant in the proportion between that perfect Being from whom whatever is good is derived, and the imperfect creature who derives it. Surely it is not too much to say, that though we can only attain that low measure, of which our weak and sinful nature is capable, yet still to aim at imitating those perfections, is a desire natural to the renewed heart: and it may be considered as a symptom that no such renovation has taken place, when no such desire is felt.

How could we attempt to trace the perfections of the divine nature, if he had not stamped on our mind some idea of those perfections? We may bring these notions practically home to our own bosoms, possessing, as we do, not only natural ideas of the divine rectitude, but having these notions highly rectified, and confirmed by the Scripture representation of God; if, instead of adopting abstract reason for a rule of judging, which is often too unsubstantial for our grasp, we set ourselves to consider what such a perfect Being is likely to approve, or condemn, in human conduct, and then, comparing not only our deductions, but our practice, with the Gospel, adopt or reject what that approves or condemns.

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CHAP. XX.

On the inconsistency of Christians with Christianity.

We have, in three former chapters,* ventured to address a class of Christians whose lives are decorous, and whose manners are amiable; but who, from the want of having imbibed the vital spirit of Christianity, and having, therefore, formed their principles on imperfect models, seem to have fallen short of that excellence of which their characters are susceptible.

We presume now to address a very different class; persons acknowledging, indeed, the great truths of Christianity, but living either in the neglect of the principles they profess, or in practical opposition to the theory they maintain; yielding to the tyranny of passion or of pleasure, governed by the appetite or the caprice of the moment, and going on in a careless inattention to the duties inculcated by an authority they recognize. The lives of the persons previously considered are commonly better than their profession, the lives of those now under contemplation are worse. These seem to have more faults, the other more prejudices. The others are satisfied to be stationary; these are not aware that they are retrograde. The former are in a far better state; but there is hope that the latter may find out that they are in a bad one. The one rest in their performances, with little doubt of their safety; the other, with a blind security, rest in the promises, without putting themselves in the way to profit by them.

If the whole indivisible scheme of Christianity could be split into two portions, and either half were left to the option of these classes; those formerly noticed would adopt the commandments from an assurance of being saved by their obeying them; these under present consideration, would choose the creed, from a notion that its mere adoption would go near to exonerate them from personal obedience. The others intend to earn heaven by their defective works: these, overlooking the necessity of holiness, flatter themselves, when they think at all, with the cheap salvation of a mental assent. We all desire to be finally saved. There is but one opinion about the end; we only differ about the means. Many fly to the merits of the Redeemer to obtain happiness for themselves hereafter, who do not desire his Spirit to govern their lives now, though he has so repeatedly declared, that he will not save us without renovating us. To suppose that we shall possess hereafter what we do not desire here, that we shall complete then, what we do not think of beginning now, is among the inconsistencies of many who pass muster under the generick title of Christians.

The contest between heaven and earth seems to be reduced to one point, *which* shall possess the heart of man. The bent of our affections decides on the object of our pursuit. When they are rightly turned by his powerful hand, God has the predominance. It is the grand design of his word, of his Spirit, of all his dispensations, whether providential or spiritual, to restore us to himself, to recover the heart which sin has estranged from him. Where these instruments fail, the original bias governs, and the world has the entire possession.

Prospective prudence is esteemed a mark of wisdom by the world, and he who professed the wisdom which is from above, observes that 'the prudent man foreseeth.' Here the Bible and the world appear at first sight to be in strict accordance; but they differ materially, both as to the distance and the object of the forecast. How prudent do we reckon that man who denies himself present expenses, and waives present enjoyments, that he may more effectually secure to himself future fortune! We observe that his discreet self-denial will be amply rewarded by the increasing means of after indulgence. But if this very man were to extend his views still further, and look for the remuneration of his abstinence, not to a future day, but to a future life, he would not with his worldly friends, advance his character for wisdom. While he looks

* An inquiry why some good sort of people are not better.

to a distant point of time he is commended, but he forfeits the commendation, if he overlooks all time, and defers the fruition of his hope, till time shall be no more.

It is indeed this partial looking forward, this fixing the eye on some point of aggrandizement, or wealth, or some other distinction, which obstructs our view of the final prospect; or it is the excess of immediate gratification, the delights of sense, the blandishments of the world, which prevent us even from thinking of it. While the sensualist incloses himself in a narrow circle, beyond which his eye does not penetrate, the Christian, like the mariner, steers his course not by his sight but his compass. In any imminent distress, indeed, men almost naturally fly to their Maker. It is rather an impulse than a principle. Yet it is in prosperity, that we most need his assistance. Success, which is perhaps more eminently the hour of peril, is more rarely the hour of prayer. There is an intoxication attending on prosperous fortune, especially, while it is new, which diverts the spirits from communication with the Father of spirits. The slackening of devotion under success seems to imply a conviction that, prosperity being a gift of God, our prayers have been heard; we have obtained his blessing, and, having the end of our prayers granted, we insensibly lessen our endeavours to please Him whom our success induces us to believe that we have already pleased. Thus, having made things even, men seem to set out on a new career; they plan new indulgences, additional projects of splendour, or of gratification; they assiduously multiply those pleasant instances of obedience which the poet has flatteringly told us we give when we 'enjoy.' But the object of enjoyment is not seldom the instrument of destruction. Anacreon was choked by a grape-stone.

But, if prayer to the Fountain of all Good *is* occasionally offered up by the negligent Christian, it is not likely to be heard, because it is not his own prayer. We do not mean, because it is the composition of another; that, as it does not lessen its value, does not obstruct its acceptance. If the feelings go along with the petitions, they will be heard; if the affections are bound up with the words, they will be accepted. It is not because they are forms, but because the little interest taken in them, renders them mere forms. It is not because they are pre-composed, but because they are used with constraint—are repetitions, not effusions. It is using them without that condition of mind, without that cordial voluntary approach to the divine presence, to which is annexed the gracious promise of being in *no-wise* cast out; of that state of mind which David suggested when he said, 'My heart (not my lips) hath talked of Thee:' when, in answer to the command, 'Seek ye my face,' warm and instant from the heart he fervently replied, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'

If it be objected, that we can no more pray up to scriptural expressions than we can live up to scriptural injunctions, does not the one, equally with the other, indicate the high aspiring nature of religion? Does it not remind us, that our aims must be always more lofty than the possibility of our attainments; that if the one be hitherto low and earthly, the other must be high and heavenly; bounded by no limits, restrained by no measures, but improving with our moral improvement, strengthening with our spiritual strength?

You do not deny that 'the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation,' because it is asserted by an authority you respect. But to whom is it such a power? You reply from your memory, 'To all them that believe.' But of what use is a belief that is obviously uninfluential? You are unconsciously falling into the very error of the fanatic whom you so justly condemn. Like him you value yourself upon your full assent to the truth of Christianity. You go beyond him, for you profess to have reason as well as faith on your side. But is not that an irrational faith which professes to believe, that a principle is productive of salvation, and yet to rest contented while you are not governed by that principle? You bring your reason and your will into the ordinary transactions of life; the one impels and the other guides, in almost all concerns except that one grand concern, where the impulse and the guidance are incomparably the most important. You allow, indeed, in a general way, that the thoughts and pursuits of religion are the most worthy of attention, and then act as if you held no such opinion, made no such avowal.

It is a wonderful instance of the union of justice and mercy in God, that in the very act of making sin the marked object of his displeasure, he makes the penitent offender the chosen object of his compassion. But revelation will afford no shelter to those who screen themselves under its promises, while they live in opposition to its laws; to those who desire to retain their vices, without relinquishing their hopes; who take refuge in the very mercy they are abusing; who think they exalt the efficacy of grace, by believing it will cancel, not only all the sins they have committed, but all they intend to commit. The truth is, if they really believe God, it is only when he promises. But shall he not also be believed when he threatens, or shall we desire him to abrogate half his word, that while we are violating one part, the other may confirm our security? Is not this subterfuge as much an abdication of common sense, as a contempt of divine justice?

Unhallowed passions too frequently enlist both wit and argument into their service, the one laughs at their excesses, the other reasons them away. Wit is no longer employed in her rightful office, to decorate virtue, but to ridicule her. Reason is no longer called in to control appetite, but to plead for it. Indulgence confirms its dominion. As the empire of sense is fortified, that of reason declines. Even God is audaciously, though, perhaps, gayly arraigned, for having made corrupt inclinations natural, and then punishing their indulgence; as if he had not given reason to restrain, as if he had not bestowed religion to control them.

It is not an uncommon practice to assent to the truth of Scripture, and even to approve and recommend it, without *really* believing it; for the test of belief is to make it the rule of judg-

ing ourselves, and endeavouring to act as if we expected to be judged by it. The christian doctrines will always produce christian affections and dispositions in the mind, in the proportion in which they are understood, in the degree in which they are cordially embraced. The temper and conduct of the Christian is a faithful reflection of the doctrines of Christianity; and the improvement of his life is the only evidence of his having received its truths into his heart.

Of all the ingredients of which our intellectual and spiritual character is compounded, that is the most doubtful, the most unfixed, and the most easily shaken, which is in reality the basis of all our other principles, as well as the foundation of all our future hopes—we mean faith. It is the want of this living root which accounts for all the deformities in the mind, all the anomalies in the character of man. Disguise it as we will—and we confine not the charge to the profligate, or even to the negligent—it is unpractical belief which so sadly depresses our moral standard.

Yet the negligent in practice are not seldom confident in the profession of their faith. As they are not often troubled with any doubt of themselves, of course they institute no very deep inquiry whether they do sincerely believe the promises of Christianity. But, however frivolous *they* may deem the scrutiny, it was once thought to be a matter worthy of a serious inquiry among Christians, whether their hopes were well-founded. Better men than many who now reckon themselves good, entertained doubts of their own state, and could not rest till they came to something like decision on this momentous question. Is then that sober inquiry, which was in them the truest mark of prudence, now to be treated as a needless scrupulosity, if not as an evidence of an unsound mind? Are the doctrines of the Gospel on which they bestowed so much thought and labour unworthy of yours? Is that which was to them so serious a concern as to demand a combination of their best faculties and their most fervent endeavours, become so easy as to be comprehended at a glance, and adopted in a moment? Are the difficulties, which cost them so much reflection, prayer, and self-denial, miraculously removed, and made smooth for you? Are things so altered, that while they worked out their salvation with fear and trembling, you are secure of an easy, indolent, almost unsolicited salvation? Are corrupt human nature and the requisitions of the Gospel now so suddenly accommodated to each other? Are sin and safety grown so congruous? Is it become so natural to fallen creatures to be reconciled to God and goodness, without that long and serious process which was once thought so indispensable to its accomplishment? Is that superinduced principle which the most acute nation in the world accounted 'foolishness,' and the most perverse people a stumbling-block,' become to you so easy of apprehension, so accessible to your reach, so facilitated to your corruptions, so certain of attainment, as to supersede the labour of examination, as to be acquired without the trouble of pursuit? If to *you* the end is made sure, with the utter ignorance of the way, and a general neglect of the means; if *you* find that path clear which they found intricate; if *you* obtain, without seeking, that assurance, by the bare promise of which they were supported; if all this be really your happy case, it must have been achieved by some power which has not been before revealed, by some miracle which neither the Old or the New Testament has either recorded or predicted.

You would do well then, besides looking back to the oracles of truth, to inquire of your authorized instructors, if there has been any change effected in the requirements of Christianity, any deductions made in its demands, any facilities introduced into its scheme, any revelation by which the old impediments have been removed, and a shorter cut to heaven cleared out? Consult some real Christians of your acquaintance; inquire if *they*, despising and forsaking the good old way, found repentance, pardon, holiness, victory over the world, and acceptance with God, so slight, so rapid, yet so certain a thing? Ask if they became Christians by chance or by inheritance, if they were 'renewed in the spirit of their minds, by the mere form of baptism? Inquire if their entrance into a religious life cost them no sacrifice, if their attainments were accidental, if they maintained the ground once gained without effort, if they improved it without prayer, if they were established in it without divine assistance?

The truth is, the persons in question either do not think the defect of faith a fundamental error, or they suppose they believe when they do not. When this last is the case, they rest satisfied in their mistake; for people do not seek to extricate themselves from a doubt in which they do not feel entangled. It is, however, practical unbelief which quenches the vital flame of virtue.

Unbelief is not, as you are too ready to suppose, merely one among the many evils of the heart, but it is the root and principle of them all. That faith is the foundation of virtue is implied to have been clearly understood by the Apostle when he speaks of 'the *obedience* of faith.'

How hotly do we resent it, if *our* veracity is suspected! How indignantly do our hearts rise, if our fellow-creatures do not believe our word on occasions the most trivial! Yet we do not tremble at the idea of not believing the word of Omnipotence: yet do his promises excite no ardent desires in our hearts after the blessings they reveal.—And could this possibly be the case, if we confidently credited the truth of the promises?

If men only suspect there is some new road which may lead to fame or fortune, or any desirable acquisition, how sedulous are they in their inquiries after it, how anxious to ascertain its probability, how zealous to turn the information to their profit! But when *this* grand concern is in question, so far from investigating, they take it for granted, they assume, not only that the thing is true, but that their interest in it is safe. It scarcely costs them a thought, they are seldom embarrassed with a doubt. So far from reflecting how the difficulties which lie in the way may be removed, they do not inquire whether they exist, much less what they are,

and with those who would point them out, they evade the subject to save the trouble.—We need look no further for the solution of our indifference than that we do not earnestly desire the promised felicity, because of our practical incredulity.

If an intelligent Chinese had been made acquainted with the high privileges and sublime hopes of a Christian—what advantages he possesses here, and what prospects he has in reversion, not contingent, but certain, provided he turned his advantages to the securing of his prospects; what promises had been made him from an authority he allowed, and by a veracity he trusted;—what a glorious people would he expect to find in a society of such highly privileged beings!—Would he not look for cordial obedience to *his* laws in whose will they daily express a complete acquiescence?—for unbounded love and charity among creatures who periodically confessed that their own sins could not be forgiven, if they forgave not the sins of others?—for a gratitude among creatures who recognized one common redemption, which should bear some little proportion to his love by whom such an astonishing redemption had been wrought? Would he not conclude that nothing could be wanting to their happiness but an entrance on that immortality for which they must be so well prepared—nothing wanting to their perfection, but the visible presence of Him whom they acknowledge to be its source and centre?—and that in the mean time they were living the life of saints preparatory to their commencing that of angels?

But when, on a personal intercourse, he observed that the lives of so many beings, the essence of whose religion is love, was a scene of strife and emulation—that this community of Christians which he thought like the city of Jerusalem, was at unity with itself, had rather be at unity with any thing than with each other—split into parties and torn asunder by conflicting interests!—when he saw that the professors of a religion, founded in humility and self-denial, could be proud without reproach, and voluptuous without discredit; when he saw, in so many other respects, the inconceivable distance between our lives and our patterns, our hopes and our aims, would he not believe the whole had been a misrepresentation?—Would he not rejoice, like a true patriot, to find that there was less difference between the inhabitants of Pekin and London than between the professor of Christianity and the Gospel from which he took his rule?—Would not this be his natural inference, either that Christianity is not true, or that its avowed disciples do not believe it? When he compared their actual indulgences with their exalted expectances, would he not believe that their religion was founded on a proclamation for present enjoyment, and not on a promise of future blessedness? In any event, would he conceive that eternal glory was to be obtained without an effort, I had almost said without a wish?

CHAP. XXI.

Expostulation with the inconsistent Christian.

The most valuable truths, though known, are useless, if not applied. Though men were acquainted with the magnetic power of the loadstone before the Christian era, it remained an object of idle admiration, till within a very few centuries. The practical use of the needle being at length found out, its application to its true end gave mankind access to unknown regions, and opened to them a new world. If such were the application of religious knowledge to its proper end, it would, indeed, open to us a world, in which, not only one but every adventurer, might be rewarded, not with discovery merely, but with possession.

To this unseen world God has shown us the way by his word, has smoothed that way by his grace, has promised us the direction of his Spirit; has given us free access by his Son, revealing him to us at once, as our propitiation and our pattern. Shall we not, then, thankfully embrace this propitiation, and keep this pattern before our eyes? And though our nearest approaches will be infinitely distant, let us come as near to it as we can, and let us frequently try, by the only true touchstone, whether we have more receded or approached. If we find our deflection has been greater since the last examination, let the discovery put us upon praying more fervently, watching more vigilantly, and labouring more earnestly. If we have gained any ground, let us try to secure our advantages by pushing our progress. What a low standard, and yet it was a high one in his estimation, did he propose, who said to his friend, 'If thou art not Socrates, yet live as one who would be glad to be Socrates!' To what an elevated pitch were *his* views raised, who, disdaining an inferior model, said, 'Be ye like minded with Christ!'

Every degree of goodness is only a ray from the central perfections of God. There is no shadow of right in any of his creatures but is indicative of his immeasurable goodness. The human virtues had originally a stronger resemblance to, and more intimate correspondence with, the Being from which they emanated, but by man's apostacy, the analogy was not only impaired, but nearly lost. Yet a sufficient knowledge of what is good, an ample power of judging, remains to us, to convince us, that religion is a very reasonable principle, that it is addressed to our understandings as well as to our affections. God, by the revelation of himself and his purposes, does not destroy, but strengthen, our natural notions of rectitude, our rational ideas of justice, our native feelings of truth and equity. The Scripture account of the moral perfections of God, and of the manner in which he will judge the world, is consonant to those notions which he has implanted in us. Christianity exalts, clears and purifies the light of reason, ennoble and elevates the dictates of natural conscience, but does not contradict them—does not subvert our ideas of justice, nor overturn our innate sense of right and wrong. Our nature, though full of perverseness in the will, is not so preposterous in her judgment as to believe that a revelation from God would ever teach a law in direct opposition to natural justice; that the illumination of the Gospel was meant to extinguish 'the candle of the Lord' set up in every human bosom. God would be inconsistent with him-

self, if he gave us the light of reason dim indeed, but still a light, and then gave us a revelation, not to clear that dimness not to enlighten that comparative darkness, but to oppose, eclipse, extinguish it.

To this capacity of judging, to this power of determining, and to your profession of faith, we venture to appeal. We are not arguing with you as with persons who deny the truth of Christianity, but addressing you as avowed believers, who neglect the application of that truth which the infidel denies. We do not propose any disallowed scheme, we do not offer any rejected doctrine, any disputed opinions; we do not invite your submission to any authority which you do not acknowledge. We suggest nothing but what your understandings assent to, nothing but what you profess to believe. Yet these truths you vitally disavow, this authority you actually renounce, this creed you practically subvert, if they do not furnish the ground of your conduct. You acknowledge all the verities of the Bible, but your lives are unaltered. Your hearts are impressible by all the tender human affections; awake to all 'the charities of father, son, and brother;'—Why are they untouched, just where they ought to be most sensible, languid where they should be vigorous, dead where they should show most vital energy?

There is in this conduct a double incongruity. The persons in question not only forbear to exhibit in their own lives those admirable effects which Christianity is so calculated to produce, but they do not like to see them produced to any great extent in others. They are not backward in branding those who exhibit, in their fair proportions, the practical effects of the doctrines they themselves profess to admire, with the suspicion of hypocrisy, or the reproach of extravagance. In the common course of affairs, nothing is more censured than *inconsistency*. In religion it is quite otherwise. It is thought criminal to make no religious profession; yet, to act consistently with that profession, to make the practice square with the principle, in short, to live as we believe, exposes a person to be suspected of a deficiency of sense, or of sincerity; subject him to a doubt, either of the integrity of his heart, or the sanity of his mind.

Christianity lays down plain rules for the conduct of those who profess it. The Bible is in the hands of this class of professors; but when a portion of it has been carelessly perused, it is considered as having done its office. It is laid down, and the reader, instead of applying to his conduct the law he has been studying, immediately applies to the law of custom, of fashionable acquaintance, of caprice, of appetite, for that rule which, in conversation he would acknowledge, was only to be found in the book he had been reading. In matters of faith, an indefinite assent is yielded; he only desires to be excused from the consequences they involve. He would indeed, like to cavil at some points, but an unexamined approbation costs less trouble; so he believes in the gross, occasionally, however, indulging a little levity to show his wit, and a few doubts to show his discrimination.

We do not act thus on other occasions. The arts we learn we turn to the purpose for which we learned them. The science we acquire we apply. The study of geometry is made applicable to practical purposes. The knowledge of mechanics is not studied for its own sake, but for the benefit of those, to whom the application brings so many conveniences. The fairest hand-writing would be of little value, if the use did not follow the acquisition. Yet if religion is not only of more allowed importance, but of more universal application, than all human knowledge put together, why is it not, like that, brought to bear on the purposes for which it was sent, the rectification of the heart and life? If we acknowledge the Bible to be the only unerring road-book to that land to which we are travelling, why, after consulting it in the closet, do we forget it on the journey, not only neglecting the direction it affords but pursuing contrary paths of our own devising.

It is a spectacle to excite the tenderest commisseration when we observe the excellent gifts of God to some of his most favoured creatures —when we see the brightest natural faculties improved by high cultivation, together with that degree of acquaintance with religion, which not only expels infidelity, but leads to a certain vague adoption of the christian creed—when we see men, not only rich in mental endowments, but possessed of hearts glowing with generosity and kindness—when we see such beings as much absorbed in the pursuits of time and sense, as dead to the highest ends of their being, limiting their plans to the present life as completely as if they did not believe in that immortality which yet makes part of their system;—to see them overlooking the excellences which may be attained in this state preparatory to their perfection in a better;—unobservant of that deep basis which God has laid in our very nature for the condition of future blessedness—forgetting how he has not only graciously put us in the way to attain it, but has exhorted, but has invited us, only to *consent*, only to *submit* to be eternally happy! When we hear the Saviour of sinners condescending to express this tender regret at their reluctance, 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.'—Who can, without sorrow, contemplate such a discrepancy between the practice and the destination, the pursuits and the interests, the low desires and the high possibilities, the unspeakable offers and the incorrigible blindness?

But in our lapsed humanity, sense, in opposition to faith, is too frequently the dictator. If we see through a glass, and that darkly, it is because the medium is clouded by the breath of sensuality. Appetite is the arbitrary power which renders every appeal to reason and religion fruitless. The pleasures of the present life have matter and substance, and we act as if those of heaven were dreams and visions. Self-love errs only in mistaking its objects, in putting the brief discipline which we are called to exercise here on a level with eternal suffering; it mistakes in fastening itself on the lower part of our nature, and forgetting that our souls are ourselves.

But surely God did not give his creatures such improvable powers, such strong notices of

himself, without some farther end and design than can be perfected in this brief state of being! He never would have given us a nature capable of knowing and loving him here, if it were not part of his scheme that our knowledge and love of him should be perfected in eternity. We are not the creatures of casualty. We did not come into this world by chance, or by mistake, for any uncertain end, or any undetermined purpose, but for a purpose of which we should never lose sight, for an end to which we should have a constant reference; that we might bring glory to God now, and be received by his grace to glory everlasting.

For though all the contributions of all the creatures in existence can add nothing to his inherent glory, yet he has condescended to declare that he will be glorified by us.—Instead of which, what misshapen ideas do not many form of God! How do they deface the plan of Providence! Were that commodious creed true, that mercy is his exclusive attribute, how safely might we sin on; the profligate would be as secure of pardon and acceptance as the penitent, the profane as the pious, the voluptuous as the self-denying, the sceptic as the believer, the lovers of pleasure as the lovers of God.

Instead of endeavouring 'to be conformed to the image of God,' according to his express command, do not too many thus form a god after their own image, by thinking him such a one as themselves? Do they not almost slide into the practice of the Epicureans, who having made a scheme of ease, indolence, and indulgence, for their conduct, prudently invented gods accommodated to their own taste and habits? In them there was consistency. It was making their faith of a piece with their practice, when they made their deities as careless, as sensual, and as pleasure-loving as themselves. But surely under a pure dispensation, to form a false and unworthy estimate of the character of the Supreme Governor of the universe, is scarcely less criminal than to deny his existence. Where is the difference between divesting him of his being, and of his perfections?

Our Saviour and his Apostle, in their classification of sins, frequently bring together such as appear to us to have a wide disparity. 'Emulation' is classed with 'strife,' 'variances' with 'idolatry,' 'revelling' with 'murder.' Those 'who mind earthly things' are coupled with those 'whose end is destruction.' In enumerating the offences which shall make his second coming so tremendously awful, Christ ranks the being 'overcharged with the cares of this life' —cares which we are apt to call prudence and industry—with sins, of which Christian industry and prudence would think with abhorrence.

If the apology we make is, that we are governed by example, if we plead the necessity of acting as others, especially as our acquaintance act, we intrench ourselves in excuses which have no analogy with our conduct on other occasions. We are never so disinterested as to think of being sick, or poor, or miserable for company. We never generously plead the necessity of involving ourselves in debt, because our friends are so involved—of being ruined, because those whom we love are ruined. Shall sympathy, civility, imitation, and a social spirit, then, be pleaded only on occasion of mischiefs that are irrevocable, reserved for errors that are irretrievable, for practices, the consequences of which will be irremediable?

It is a low degree in the scale of goodness with which they are contented, who congratulate themselves that they are not worse than others, and a death-blow to the noble ambition of piety when they are contented not to be better. If, indeed, they think they are perfectly happy now, they need look no farther. But before they answer this important question, are you happy? let them interrogate their own heart. If they ask it fairly, it will answer honestly, *I am not happy.* Happiness is incompatible with the state of their minds, with the nature of their pursuits. The very fondness for variety proceeds from an internal sense of indigence. They are satiated without being satisfied.—The ever-renewed and ever-frustrated attempts of the fabled daughters of Danaus, whose labour, a pagan poet tells us, *was infinite, and their punishment eternal*, is the disappointing life and lot of these mistaken votaries of worldly enjoyment. The prophet annexes to somewhat of the same discouraging pursuit, an awful explanatory reason, when he represents the error of those who 'hew out broken cisterns which hold no water,' to have originated in their 'forsaking the fountain of living waters.'

But even the most careless livers have not lost the natural sense of the moral quality of actions. They can reason upon them; they understand the rules they violate; they retain the perception of excellence; they preserve the feeling of kindness; they had rather be the objects of regard than dislike, if it could be acquired at a cheaper rate, than that of forming their conduct by the principles they approve. *They wish they were better*, while they make no effort towards being other than they are. Their very wish for amendment is so cold, so careless, and so slight, that it wants all the characters of repentance, all the energies of resolution, all the sincerity of reformation. While we sometimes hear from these persons, in addition to this wish, a general declaration, that *they hope they shall mend*, we seldom see any step taken in consequence of this profession; on the contrary, they are quieted for the time; they take a sort of heartless comfort in this better taste; they flatter themselves it is a proof they love virtue, though they neglect it. But they do not act thus in what truly interests them. If there is a scheme of amusement in view, the time is accurately settled, the party nicely adjusted, their punctuality is exact, there is neither delay nor excuse. It is only on matters of everlasting interest that they beg leave to postpone, what they would not be thought to reject. Among all the countless generations of frail and fallen humanity, incomparably the most numerous community, is the sect of *Postponers*. If, as some old divine quaintly observes, 'hell is paved with good intentions,' may we not say, that the postponers, of which multitudes are found in all ages, and in all churches, are the class that has contributed the greatest number

of squares to the tesselated pavement. It is not an inconsistency common to every member of this sect, to wish that the portion of his life which is gone by had been spent in virtue, while this wish is too feeble to stimulate his future days to those pursuits in which he laments the past were not spent?

You do not act thus inconsistently by any necessity of nature; depraved as the will is, in common with our other faculties, it does not necessarily rob you of the power of determining; it does not take from you the ability of imploring the strength you want. To choose the good, and to refuse the evil, is yet left to your option. Why do the Scriptures make such repeated and solemn appeals to the will, if its agency were so utterly involuntary? On this will there is no irresistible compulsion. On the supposition that this were not the case, all human laws would be unreasonable, all courts of judicature not only unjust but preposterous; all legal executions absurd as well as inhuman; for would it not be barbarous to punish crimes which the perpetrator was not left at liberty to avoid? In this case Ravaillac would have been guiltless, and Bellingham excusable.

Nor is it your reason which dissuades you from religion. If you would consult its sound and sober dictates, it would point to religion as naturally as the eye points to the object it would investigate, as the needle to its attracting point. It is not your reason but your corruptions which turn away your heart from religion, because it tells you that something is to be done in opposition to their sway, something to be opposed contrary to their nature, something to be renounced congenial with their gratification.

It is a fatal mistake to expect to get rid of an evil by trying to become insensible to it. To divert the attention in order to stupify the conscience, is almost imitating the malefactor about to be executed, who swallows cordials, which, if they allay his terrors, do so only by deadening his sensibility. Take, then, a distinct view of your state, and of your prospects. Deliberation is valuable, were it only on this ground, that while you are deliberating, there is an intermission of passion, there is an interval of appetite: as these intermit, better feelings have time to rally, better thoughts to come forward, better principles to struggle for operation.

If with hearts naturally inclined to evil (as what heart is not?) and in a world abounding with temptation, you have strayed widely from the strait path, you are not compelled to pursue it. We need continue in sin no longer than we love it. Close not then your heart against that grace which is offered to all; it will perfect the work it has once begun, if we do not wilfully oppose its operations. Let us not therefore lay *all* the blame on our natural conceptions as if we were compelled to sink under them. They will, indeed, continue to impede our progress, but unless aided by our inclinations, they will not finally obstruct it. But wilfully to sin on, and yet expect pardon through the merits of our Redeemer, looks like an impious plot to blind the eyes of Omniscience, and to tie the hands of Omnipotence. We shall always have this infallible criterion by which to judge of our state; we may be assured that our sins are not forgiven, if they are not mortified. We need not pry into our destination in the inscrutable decrees of the Almighty, but in our own rectified affections, our own subdued will. Let us never remit our diligence by any persuasion of our security, nor slacken our obedience by any fond conceit that our names are written in heaven.

But alas! the soul is full of the body, the intellect is steeped in sense. The spiritual life is immersed in the animal. Reason and appetite instead of keeping their distinct natures, are in many instances so mixed and incorporated, that it is not always easy to decompose and reduce them to their separate principles. It is in want of cordial sincerity which prevents truth from being sought, and where she is not sought, she will not be found. Internal purity of heart, and sanctity of spirit, afford a fairer exhibition of religion, than the most subtle dogmas, and the most zealous debates.

If we seek peace in God, we shall never fail of finding it; if we look for it in the world, it is to look for a clear stream from a polluted source. We have a spirit within us that will occasionally, though unbidden, remind us of our high original, 'from what height fallen.' How widely have we wandered in search of the good we have lost! We have sought for it in the tumults of ambition, in the pleasures of voluptuousness, in the misleadings of flattery, in our own high imaginations, in the self-gratulations of pride, in the secret indulgence of that vanity, which, probably, it has been one part of our pride not to cure but to conceal. Let us begin to seek for it where alone it is to be found, where alone God has promised it—in the 'way' which he has opened, in the 'truth' which he has revealed, and in the 'life' which he has quickened.

Do not, then, any longer make religion an incidental item in your scheme of life. Do not turn over the consideration of it to chance; make it a part of your daily plan; take it up as a set business; give it an allotted portion in the distribution of your daily concerns, while you admit it as the pervading principle of them all. You carry on no other transaction casually; you do not conduct your profession or manage your estate by fits and starts. You do not expect your secular business will go on well without minding it. You set about it intently; you transact it with a fixed design; you consider it as a definite object. You would not be satisfied with it, if it brought you no return, still less would you be satisfied not to know whether it brought any return or not. Yet you are contented as to this great business of life, though you perceive no evidence of its progress. You see no absurdity in a religious profession which leaves you as indigent as it found you. Does it not look as if your sincerity, in one case, did not keep pace with your earnestness in the other; as if your religion was a shadow, and your secular concerns were the only reality?

Begin then to be distinct in your purposes, explicit in your designs, sincere in your pursuits. You profess to read the Scriptures occasionally; if the perusal has hitherto produced no sensible effect, this is only an additional motive for making the incidental practice habitual. Do not inter

mit it under pretence that it has produced no benefit. It is a great thing to keep within the use of God's appointed means. If you had not some pleasure in even a casual perusal, you would avoid it altogether. The blessing which has been so long delayed perhaps has not been cordially requested; when earnestly desired it will not be finally withheld. Light precedes warmth in the daily course of nature. Begin then to consider that knowledge not turned to profit will be a grand article at the final reckoning. How many thousands have not even made the progress which you have made; have not attained that literal acquaintance with the Bible which you have attained. *They* are utterly, perhaps irreclaimably, ignorant. *You* have laid in, at least in your understanding, a certain though perhaps slender stock of materials, on which the divine light only waits to shine till you petition for it; that light which, if you will open your eyes to receive it, will shine more and more unto the perfect day. God has assured you in his word that he '*waits* to be gracious.' The compassionate father in the parable moved more eagerly to embrace his son, than the returning prodigal to meet the parent. He scarcely waited for his protestations; the pardon prevented the confession; he condescended to rejoice even in his *acceptance* of forgiveness.

It is not a new scheme which is promised to you; it is not an imaginary project, an untried device. There is nothing unreasonable in the hope held out; no elevation in piety but what with the offered aid is attainable; nothing but what multitudes have attained; not merely prophets and saints and holy men, but persons whose cases were as unpromising as yours; men labouring under the same corruptions; disturbed by the same passions, assailed by the same trials, drawn aside by the same temptations, exposed to the same dangerous world; long led astray by its customs, long enslaved by its maxims. The same grace which rescued them is offered to you. The same Spirit which struggled with their hearts is, perhaps, while you are reading these feeble lines, striving with yours. Resist not the impulse. Complete the assimilation. Let not the resemblance be more imperfect in its fairer features than in its more deformed. Imitate their noble resolution. Recollect the glorious promise made, 'to him that overcometh.' The same power which delivered them waits to deliver you. The ten thousand times ten thousand who now stand before the throne, were not innocent, but penitent—not guiltless men, but redeemed sinners. The same God waits to be gracious. The same Saviour intercedes. The same Spirit invites. The same heaven is open. Plead that gracious nature, implore that divine intercessor, invoke that blessed Spirit. Say not it is too late. Early and late are relative, not positive terms. While the door is yet open there is no hour of marked exclusion. So may an inheritance among the saints in light still be yours.

CHAP. XXII.

Reflections of an inconsistent Christian after a serious perusal of the Bible.

I PROFESS to believe that Christianity is true Its promises are high; but what have been its profits? It is time to inquire into its truth and its advantages. It never, indeed, pledged itself to confer honours or emoluments; but it engaged to bestow benefits of another kind. If the Christian is deceived in these, he has nothing to console him. Now what am I the better for Christianity? It speaks of changing the heart from darkness to light. What illumination has my mind experienced from it?—But here a doubt begins to arise. Am I indeed a Christian? What claims have I to the character?

Is there any material difference, whether I depend on heaven as a thing of course, to those who have been baptized, though they possess no corresponding temper and conduct; or whether I never reflect that there is a heaven, or whether I absolutely disbelieve that there is any such place? Is the distinction so decisive between speculative unbelief, practical infidelity, and total negligence, as that either of them can afford an assurance of eternal happiness in preference to the other? Yet while the thought of heaven never enters my mind, should I not hotly resent it as an injury, if any one disputed my title to it? Should I not treat him who advised me to a more serious life, as an enemy, and him who suspected I required it, as a calumniator? Is it not, however, worth the inquiry, whether my confidence of obtaining it is well founded: and whether any danger arises from my ignorance or unfitness?

If the scriptures be authentic—if, as I have always professed to believe, they indicate a state of eternal happiness, together with the means of attaining to it—then surely not to direct my thoughts to that state, not to apply my attention to those means, is to neglect the state and the things, for which I was sent into the world. Providence, doubtless, intended that every species of being should reach the perfection for which it was created. Shall his only rational creature be the only one that falls short of the end for which he was made? the only one who refuses to reach the top of his nature, who refuses to comply with his original destination?

If I were quite certain that I was not created for such a great and noble end as Christianity has revealed, I should then be justified in acting as a being would naturally act, who has no higher guide than sense, no nobler incentive than appetite, no larger scope than time, no ampler range than this world. And though I might then regret that my powers and faculties, my capacities and desires, were formed for so low a purpose, and their exercise limited to so brief a space, yet it would not, in that case, be acting inconsistently, to turn my fugitive possessions, and my contracted span, to the best account of present enjoyment.

But if I have indeed, as I profess to have, any faith however low, any hope however feeble, any prospect however faint, is it rational to act in such open opposition to my profession? Is it right or reasonable, to believe and to neglect, to avow and to disregard, to profess and to oppose, the same thing? Do I raise my character for that understanding on which I value myself, if, while a confession of a faith which has been

adopted by the wisest men in different ages, my temper is not, like theirs, subdued to it, my life is not, like theirs, governed by it.

I think this world more certain than the next, because I have the evidence of my senses to its reality; and because its enjoyments are present, visible, tangible. But the same being who gave my senses, gives also reason and faith; and do not these afford to the sincere inquirer other evidence of no less power? Even in many natural things, we receive the evidence of reason as confidently as the testimony of sense. Our reason informs us, that the things we see could not have been produced without a cause which we do not see: we might as well say they have no being, as that they had no cause—and yet the cause lies as completely out of our reach as the things of another world. The unseen things, then, may be as satisfactorily proved by other arguments, as the things we know are proved by our senses. But the highest evidence of things not seen is faith. Even this principle we admit in worldly things, but reject in spiritual. We should know very little of this earth, if we knew only what we have seen. Now we believe that a multitude of things exists which we never saw, and which few comparatively have seen. This is the evidence of faith in the testimony of the relater.

I see persons in the ordinary affairs of life act upon the mere report of authentic information; conduct concerns analogous to those whose success is made known to them by impartial evidence, and act confidently on the relation of credible witnesses; and they would be thought perverse and unreasonable, were not their conduct influenced by such competent testimony. Is it, then, only in the momentous concern of religion, where these appropriate evidences are allowed to be incontestible, where the revelation from heaven, where the attestation of undeniable witnesses, has established the truth in the minds of inquiring men beyond a doubt?—Is it only where the testimony is more unquestionable, and the object the most transcendantly important, that neglect is pardonable, that delay is prudent, that indifference is safe?

It is time to arrive at some decision on a question which, if it be any thing, is every thing; which, if it be indeed founded in infallible truth, involves consequences so vast, effects so lasting, that all the other concerns of the whole world shrink into nothing, when weighed against my individual concern in this single business.

That thinking mind which enables me to frame these reflections, that sentient spirit which suggests these apprehensions, those irrepressible feelings which drive out my thoughts, and force my speculations beyond the present scene, prove that I have something within me which was made for immortality. If, then, I am convinced of these truths, can I any longer hesitate to devote my best thoughts to my highest good, my chiefest care to my nearest concern, my most intense solicitude to my everlasting interests?

Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief! Convert my dead faith into an operative principle! Let my sluggish will be quickened, let my reluctant desires give some signs of life. Let it be an evidence of the real existence of my faith, that it is not inert.

We talk of the glory of heaven as coolly, and hear of it with as much indifference, as if it were the unalienable birth-right of every nominal Christian, and that our security left no room for our solicitude. But I now find, on examining it more closely, that the Bible speaks of a thing which Christians of my class neglect to take into the account; a *fitness* for that glory, a spirit prepared for that state, which God has prepared for them that love him. It not only promises them heaven, but quickens their desires after it, qualifies them for the enjoyment of it. Now, can I conscientiously declare that I possess, that I have endeavoured to possess, those desires, without which heaven is unattainable; those dispositions, without which, if it could be attained, it would not be a place of happiness? Is it, then, probable, arguing upon merely rational grounds, that God will receive me to his presence there, if I continue to live without him in the world? Will he accept me when I come to die, alienated from him in heart and thought as I have lived?

After all, uncertainty is no comfortable state. It is safer to seek a satisfactory solution to my doubts by serious inquiry; to seek tranquillity to my heart by earnest prayer. It is better to implore the promised aid, to strengthen my vacillating mind, even though I renounce a little present ease, a little temporary pleasure. If, indeed, avoiding to think of the evil would remove it, if averting my eyes from the danger would annihilate it, all would be well. But if, on the contrary, fearing it now, may avert it for ever, common sense, reasonable self-love, mere human prudence, compel me to make the computation of the relative value of time and eternity. I may, indeed, as I have frequently done, postpone my purpose to some future time. But then I am not so skilled in the doctrine of chances as to be quite certain that time may ever arrive. He that intends to reform to-morrow does not repent to-day. When delay is danger, is it not foolish to delay? Where it may be destruction, is it not something worse than folly? I will arise, and go to my Father, &c. &c. &c.

CHAP. XXIII.

The Christian in the World

'THE only doctrinal truth,' says bishop Sanderson, 'which Solomon insisted on, when he took the whole world for his large but barren text, was, that all is vanity.'—This was not the verdict of a hermit railing from his cell at pleasures untasted, or at grandeur unenjoyed. Among the sons of men, not one had sought with more unremitted diligence, or had wider avenues to the search, for whatever good either skill or power could extract out of the world, than Solomon. No one could judge of the sweets which can be drawn from this grand Alembic with higher natural abilities, or with deeper experimental wisdom. He did not descant on the

vanity of the world so eloquently till he had considered it accurately, and examined it practically. He was not contented, like a learned theorist to collect his notions from philosophy, or history, or hearsay; he well knew what he said, 'and whereof he affirmed.' All upon which he so pathetically preached he had seen with his eyes, heard with his ears, and, in his widely roving search, had experienced in his own disappointed mind, and felt in his own aching heart. He goes on to prove, by an induction of particulars, the grand truth propounded in his thesis, the *vanity of the world*. He shows in a regular series of experiments, how he had ransacked its treasures, exhausted its enjoyments, and even to satiety revelled in its honours, riches, and delights. He had been an intellectual as well as sensual voluptuary, and had emptied the resources of knowledge as well as of pleasure. Then reverting in the close of his discourse to the point from which he had set out, he again pronounces, that all is vanity.

'The conclusion of the whole matter' which he draws from this melancholy argument, as finely exhibited as pensively conceived, is a solemn injunction to others to remember, what it is to be feared the preacher himself had sometimes forgotten, that the whole duty of man is to fear God, and keep his commandments: winding up his fine peroration with a motive in which every child of Adam is equally, is awfully concerned, '*because* God shall bring every work into judgment.'

May not every real Christian, while his heart is touched with the affecting truth of the text, be admonished by this solemn valedictory declaration? May he not learn the lesson inculcated at less expense than it was acquired by this great practical master of the science of wisdom? If another sovereign was told there was no royal way to geometry, the King of Israel has opened a royal way to a more divine philosophy. By the benefit to be derived from contemplating this illustrious instance of 'how little are the great,' the Christian may set out where Solomon ended. He may be convinced of the vanity of the world at a price far cheaper than Solomon paid for it, by a way far safer than his own experience. He may convert the experiment made by the royal Preacher to his own personal account. He may find in the doctrines of the Gospel a confirmation of its truth, in its precepts a counteraction to its perils, in its promises a consolation for its disappointments.

In this world, such as Solomon has vividly painted it, the Christian is to live—is to live, through divine assistance, untainted by its maxims, uncontaminated by its practices. Man being obviously designed by his Creator for social life, and society being evidently his proper place and condition, it seems to be his duty not so much to consider what degree of possible perfection he might have attained in that state of seclusion to which he was never destined, as how he may usefully fill his allotted sphere in the world for which he was made; how he may conscientiously discharge the duties to which he is plainly called by providential ordination. To think how he may acquit himself well in his actual state and condition, is clearly more profitable than to waste his time and spirits, in devising the best speculative scheme of life, to the adoption of which there is little probability of his ever being appointed.

We were not sent into this world with orders to make ourselves miserable, but with abilities, and directions, and helps, to search out the best possibilities of happiness which remain to beings, fallen from that state of moral and mental rectitude in which man was created; to make the best of the ruins of that perfect world whose beauty he had marred, and whose capacity of confering felicity he had fatally impaired. Human life, therefore, abounding as it does in blessings and mercies, is not the blissful vision which youthful fancy images, or poetry feigns, or romance exhibits. It is in a considerable measure compounded of painful and dull realities, and not a splendid tissue of grand events or brilliant exploits; it is to some an almost unvaried state of penury, to many a series of cares and troubles, to all, a state of probation. But the primeval punishment, the sentence of labour, like the other inflictions of Him who in judgment remembers mercy, is transformed into a blessing. And whether we consider the manual industry of the poor, or the intellectual exertions of the superior classes, we shall find that diligent occupation, if not criminally perverted from its end, is at once the instrument of virtue and the secret of happiness. Man cannot be safely trusted with a life of leisure.

As the character about to be briefly considered is presumed to be a real Christian, it would be superfluous, for two reasons, to insist that his vocation in the world must be lawful. It is not to be supposed that a religious man will ever engage in an employment that is illicit; and it is almost equally beyond supposition, that persons who are actually so engaged, will cast their eyes on a book whose tendency is serious.

But the most unexceptionable profession is not exempt from dangers. It requires strict watchfulness, not only to conduct the most useful undertaking in a right spirit, and with a constant eye to Him, to whom every intelligent being is accountable; it requires not only constant vigilance against the allurements of avarice and the baits of ambition, but it requires caution against the unsuspected mischiefs of embarking so widely, or plunging so deeply in any temporal concern, as almost necessarily to deteriorate the character. He embarks too widely, and plunges too deeply, however honourable be the undertaking, if it absorb the whole man—if it so crowd his mind with interfering schemes, and complicated projects, as to leave no time and no thought, and gradually no inclination for that reference which should be the ultimate end of all human designs.

It can never be too often repeated, however writers tire with saying, and readers with hearing it, that it is scarcely more necessary to address serious suggestions to men sunk in gross pursuits, than to that large, important, and valuable class, whose danger lies in the very credit, and dignity, and usefulness of their engagements. A thousand dissertations have been written, and yet the theme is not exhausted, on

hat hackneyed but neglected truth, that *we are undone by lawful things*, by excess in things right in themselves, and which only become wrong by being inordinately pursued—pursued to the neglect of things more essential; when what is even laudable is exclusively sought, to the forgetfulness of what is indispensable. Things may not only be comparatively, but positively, good, and yet not be 'things which accompany salvation.' They may not only be intended to be instrumental, but actually be so, both in advancing the prosperity, and in restraining the disorders of this world, and so far be highly valuable, and yet the act may be substituted for that principle which should be its inspiring motive. The fault, however, is not in the thing, but in the mind, when useful actions are not done with a reference to the highest end. Of this reference a Christian will aim never to lose sight. He will, before he engage in the concerns of the day, prepare his mind by fervent devotion; not only imploring direction in the common course of action, and the expected occurrences of the day, but strength to meet those unknown occasions and unsuspected events, which, in human life, and especially in a life of business, so frequently occur. Without this panoply, he will not venture to engage with the world; but the armour which he put on in solitude, he will not lay aside in the field of battle; it was for that warfare he had buckled it on.

As the lawyer has his compendium of cases and precedents, the legislator his statutes, the soldier his book of tactics, and every other professor his *vade mecum* to consult in difficulties, the Christian to whichever of the professions he may belong, will take his morning lecture from a more infallible directory, comprehending not only cases and precedents, but abounding also with those seminal principles which contain the essence of all actual duty from which all practical excellence is deducible. The spirit of laws differ from all legal institutes, some of which, from that imperfection inseparable from the best human things, have been found unintelligible, some impracticable, and some have become obsolete. The divine law is subject to no such disadvantages. It is perfect in its nature, intelligible in its construction, and eternal in its obligation.

This sacred institute he will consult, not occasionally, but daily. Unreminded of general duty, unfurnished with some leading hint for the particular demand, he will not venture to rush into the bustle, trial, and temptation of the day. Of this aid he will possess himself with more ease, and less loss of time, as he will not have to ransack a multiplicity of folios for a detached case, or an individual intricacy; for, though he may not find in the Bible specific instances, yet he will discover in every page some governing truth, some rule of universal application, the spirit of which may be brought to bear on almost every circumstance; some principle suited to every purpose, and competent to the solution of every moral difficulty. Scripture does not, indeed, pretend to include technical or professional peculiarities, but it exhibits the temper and the conduct which may be made applicable to the special concerns of every man whatever be his occupation. He will find in it the right direction to the right pursuit, the straight road to the proper end; the duty of a pure intention; and the prohibition of false measures to attain even a laudable object. No hurry or engagement will ever make him lose sight of that sacred aphorism so pointedly addressed to men of business, 'He that maketh haste to be rich shall hardly be innocent.' The cautionary texts he admired in his closet, he will not treasure up as classical mottos to amuse his fancy, or embellish his discourse, but will adopt as rules of conduct, and bring them into every worldly transaction, whether commercial, forensic, medical, military, or whatever else be his professed object. He will not adjust his scale of duty by the false standard of the world, nor by any measure of his own devising; he has but one standard of judging, but one measure of conduct—the infallible word of God. This rule he will take as he finds it, he will use as he is commanded; he will not bend it to his own convenience, he will not accommodate it to his own views, his own passions, his own emolument, his own reputation.

Here it may be asked, Why is not Scripture more explicit in description, more minute in detail? We find our self-love perpetually furnishing subterfuges for evading duties, and multiplying exceptions to rules. God, who knows all hearts, and foresaw their captiousness, might, it may be said, have guarded against it by more enlarged instructions. The holy Spirit, however, did not see fit to descend to such minutiæ, but, having given the principle, left man to the exercise of his reason, in the application of the general law to his particular case; for if he is left to the use of his judgment, it is not that he may pervert truth, but apply it. His understanding and rectitude are perpetually called into joint exercise, for that which is immediately the duty of one man, another may not be called to perform.

Not to distress the mind, therefore, with unnecessary scruples, nor to perplex it by a multiplicity of circumstances, some things are left indefinite. An incumbered body of institutes would have been too vast and complicated for general use; that time would be taken up in selecting them, which is better employed in acting upon them. Even were every particular of every duty, in all its bearings, circumstantially ramified, it would not so much direct the conduct, as furnish new pretences for neglecting it. Then, as now, it would be seen rather that the will is perverse, than the understanding unsatisfied. More amplification would not have lessoned objections. Those who complain now, that the rule is not explicit, would complain then, that it was tedious. A fuller exposition would neither have cleared doubts nor prevented disputes. It would then have been charged with redundancy, as it is now with defectiveness.

If the world carries contamination to the heart, it carries also to the right-minded a preservative; as the viper's blood is said to be an antidote for its bite. The living world is to such persons an improving exemplification of

the moral lessons of history. If we apply to our own improvement the recorded excellences or errors of which we read; if we are struck with the successes or defeats of ambition; the pursuits or disappointments of vanity; the sordid accumulations of avarice, or the wasting ravages of prodigality; if we are moved with instances of vice and virtue in men of whom we know nothing but what the historian is pleased to tell us, and of whom he perhaps knew not much more; if we read with interest of the violence of parties, of which both the leaders and the followers have been long laid in the dust; if we are affected, as every intelligent mind cannot but be affected, with these pictures of things, now much benefit may a well-directed mind derive from seeing them realized: from seeing the old scenes acted over again by living performers; from living himself among the *dramatis personæ* as one of the actors; from taking a personal interest in a repetition of things which he condemned or applauded when only coldly presented to his understanding, and at which his principles revolted or rejoiced, even in the dead letter of narrative. He now sees the same sentiments embodied, the same passions brought into action, similar opinions operating upon actual conduct.

If he is deeply touched when history presents to his view the errors of high and heroic minds, when it exhibits the abberrations of superior genius, how much more lively will be his regret, when he sees, among his own aequaintance, the ardour of a noble and ingenuous mind exclusively consumed on objects, which might indeed be accounted great, if this world were all, but which never gives any practical intimation that there is another. But how much more pungent will be his sorrow, when he observes lofty and sagacious spirits neglecting to make the most even of this brief state of being; —when he sees men who might have made the world a better thing than they found it, had they employed their superior powers of intellect in studying how they might please God, by promoting the best interests of his creatures; when he sees such understandings clouded by intemperance, such minds absorbed in studying the qualities of a race horse, or calculating the chances of a gaming table!

In another and a more estimable class of characters, he is struck with mingled admiration and concern, in observing what good and resembling imitations of religion are made by honour, sense, and spirit; how respectably moral honesty, kindness, and generosity may, to superficial observers, personate Christianity, may even execute the act of piety with an utter destitution of the principle. He sees in certain minds some masterly strokes of natural beauty, which at once dignify and embellish them, so as, on some occasions, to tempt him to forget that they are not religious. But these brilliant qualities are not infused into the entire character, the excellence is limited to a few shining points, and the hollows are proportioned to the heights. Rich in some splendid virtue, there is no uniformity in the principle; there is perhaps some allowed sin in the practice; while in the character of the real Christian, though there may be much infirmity, there is a desire of consistency—there is no deliberate transgression—there is even no unrepented error.

These living lessons the pious observer will turn to account. The impression thus made on his heart, from actual observation, will sink deeper, and be more durable, than the instruction to be obtained by a mere intellectual view of mankind, from information collected from writers, who are obliged to pick up facts, not from having witnessed them, but as they find them in preceding writers; men who know little of the causes of which they describe the effects, or the motives of the actions they record. History paints men, acute observation anatomizes them.

If he regret that his necessary duties in the world trench on the time he would gladly devote to religious pursuits, let him take comfort that these regrets, if sincere, are an earnest of his safety. The very corruptions to which he is witness, will experimentally convince him of the truth of a doctrine which is no where more completely learned than in the bustle of life. The perception of this evil in others, makes him watch against similar tendencies within; tendencies which only the grace daily invoked by him prevents from breaking out into action. This deep conviction of man's corruption, instead of imparing his benevolence, will improve it. It will teach him not to expect too much from so imperfect a being, as well as to bear with the errors which his belief of the doctrine had led him to expect. This, together with his intercourse with the world will cure him of that mistake so common to persons who have not lived in it, that of expecting no faults in those which a fond imagination, on a first acquaintance, had led them to believe perfect, and who, on the inevitable discovery, become too strongly disgusted with errors and imperfections, on which they ought to have reckoned. He will never use his full conviction of the truth of which we have been speaking to the purposes of unworthy distrust, or base suspicion. On the contrary, though he will exercise his discernment in the knowledge of men, and his discretion as to the confidence to be placed in them, he will not be ever on the look out to detect, much less to expose their errors. Though he, 'loves not the world' in the Scripture sense of the term, he loves the individuals of whom it is composed, with the affection of sympathy. He will put a large and liberal construction on their actions, but he will not stretch that latitude to the vindication of any thing that is corrupt in principle, or criminal in conduct. Nor will he be always on the defensive in his intercourse with them: he will not act with the narrow selfishness of the sordid trader, who is jealous of every man with whom he has business to transact, on no higher ground than lest he should lose money by him; while he tolerates in his character every vice which will not interfere with his pecuniary transactions.

It is his aim to reconcile that charity which believeth all things with that discrimination of character which shows us, not only so many who are bad, but so much imperfection, we may

say, so much evil, in the comparatively good. To love and serve those in whom we at the same time perceive no little moral defect, is turning our spiritual discernment to a practical account. This principle, while it serves to preserve us from an undue admiration of others, will teach us to suspect these, or other defects, in ourselves.

The Christian in the world, anxious to improve his scanty leisure, will rescue from mere diversion those hours which cannot prudently be subtracted from business. To a man thus circumstanced, the Sunday is felt to be indeed a blessing; to him it is emphatically 'delight.' Instead of appropriating it as a day of premeditated conviviality, he converts it into a stated season of enjoyment of another kind. He hardly needs the injunction to 'remember' to keep it holy, though he is not unmindful, that, of the ten commandments, it is the only one prefaced with that admonition. He considers the observance as almost more his privilege than his duty. The expectation of its return cheers him under the perplexities of the week. He anticipates it as a rest here, and as a foretaste of eternal rest. He enlarges his pious exercises with the more satisfaction, as he is clearly assured that he is not on this day in danger of trenching on his professional duties; and, from this reflection his heart more warmly expands in gratitude to Him whose day it more immediately is. He feels that, if it were barely a season ordained by some public act, a royal proclamation enjoining it as a necessary interval between the labours which close one week, and those which began another, a contrivance of ease, a measure of political prudence or personal tenderness to prevent the bodily machine and the overlaboured mind from wearing out, he would be grateful for its institution: but to him the day comes fraught with benefits and blessings of a still higher kind. It is an appointment of God; *that* entitles it to his reverence; it is an institution of spiritual mercy; it is the stated season for recruiting his mental vigour; for inspecting his accounts with his Maker; for taking a more exact survey of the state of his heart; for examining into his faults; for enumerating his mercies; for laying in, by prayer, fresh stores of faith and holiness; for repairing what both may have lost in the turmoil of the week. His heated passions have leisure to cool; his hurried mind to regain its tranquil tone; his whole internal state to be regulated; his mistakes to be reviewed; his temper to be new set; his piety to be braced up to the pitch from which it may have been sunk in the atmosphere he had been breathing. The pious man of business relishes his family society and fireside enjoyments with a keenness not often felt by others. If 'the harp, and the tabret, and the tabret, and the viol,' are not always heard in his feasts, he does what those who listen to them do not always remember to do, for he considers the works of the Lord, and regards the operations of his hands.' It is not enough for the devoted Christian that his life is dedicated to him who gave it, his spirit is, as it were, exhaled in his service.*

* It is to be regretted, that the members of a learned and honourable profession, and which has produced so many exemplary characters, should appoint their consultations on Sundays. It is urged in excuse, that they cannot clash with any public courts or sittings on that day. The leading men, by this custom, force some of those whose practice is less established into a breach of their duty, against which their consciences perhaps revolt. Might not one of these two sacrifices obviate the necessity which is pleaded in its vindication? Might they not either reject such a superfluity of business as induces it—or, if that be too much to expect, might they not subtract the time from their social and convivial hours?

CHAP. XXIV.

Difficulties and advantages of the Christian in the world.

There are two things of which a wise man will be scrupulously careful, his conscience and his credit. Happily they are almost inseparable concomitants; they are commonly kept or lost together; the same things which wound the one, usually gives a blow to the other: yet, it must be confessed, that conscience and a mere worldly credit are not, in all instances, allowed to subsist together. God and our hearts—we speak of hearts which are looked into and examined—always condemn us for the same things—things perhaps, for which we do not suffer in the opinion of the world: the world, in return, not seldom condemns us for actions, for which we have the approbation of God and our consciences. Is it right to put the verdict of such opposite judges on an equality, nay to abide by that which will be less than nothing when *his* sentence, whose favour is eternal life, shall be finally pronounced?

Between a wounded conscience and a wounded credit there is the same difference as between a crime and a calamity. Of two inevitable evils, religion instructs us to submit to that which is inferior and involuntary. As much as reputation exceeds every worldly good, so much, and far more, is conscience to be consulted before credit—if credit that can be called, which is derived from the acclamations of a mob, whether composed of 'the great vulgar or the small.'

Yet are we not perpetually seeing, that to secure this worthless fame, peace and conscience are sacrificed? For to what but a miserably false estimate of the relative value of these two blessings; what but the preference of character to duty—in support, too, of a rotten part of it—is it, that the wretched system of duelling not only maintains its ground, but is increasing with a frightful rapidity? If we have, perhaps, never heard of a truly religious man engaged in a duel,† it is not that, with all his caution, he is not liable to provocations and insults, as well as other men; nor that he has no quick sense of injuries, no spirit to repel attacks, and no courage to defend himself. He who bears insults is made of like passions with him who revenges them; his pride longs to break out if it dared; for even a good man, as the prelate quoted in the last chapter observes, 'has more to do with this one viper, than with all his other corruptions.'

† Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the first of our deistical writers, and the last hero of our ancient chivalry, with that fantastic combination of devotion and gallantry which characterized the profession of knighthood, tells us in the memoirs of his own life, that he strictly maintained the religious observance of the Sabbath, except when called out to fight a duel for a point of honour which he seemed to have thought a paramount duty.

But, among other causes, his safety lies in this, that he has always endeavoured to keep clear of those initiatory offences which lead to this catastrophe; it is because he has been habitually governed by principles of a directly contrary tendency, and has not the lesson of forbearance to learn, when he is called upon to practise it: because he has not indulged himself in those habits, and as little as may be in those societies which lay a man open to the consequences of which ungoverned appetites are the source: because he has always considered pride and passion as the possible seeds of murder; an impure glance as the first approach to that crime which is the ordinary source of duelling—the combined violation of these two commandments, being as closely connected, in practice, as is their position in the Decalogue. It is observable, that while the shifts and stratagems to which a man is commonly driven by illicit connexions, so often lead to duelling, yet that the charge of that crime itself, or of any other equally atrocious, far more rarely provokes a challenge, than the charge of the lie, to which the crime has compelled him to resort. Can there be a more striking instance of the false estimate of character and virtue, than that the offence is not made to consist in the falsehood itself, but in the accusation of it.

The man of mere worldly principles keeps himself in the broad way, which, should events occur, and temptations arise to irritate him, may at any time lead to such a termination. His habits of life, his choice of associates, his systematic resolution to revenge every insult, makes his common path a path of danger. His pride is always ready primed; he carries the inflammable matter in his habit, and the first spark may cause an explosion; while the man of principle, in addition to all the other guards before enumerated, wants, indeed, but this single consideration to deter him from the spirit of duelling; that it is the act of all others which stands in the most determined opposition to the law of God, and the spirit of the Gospel; that it is a studied, deliberate, premeditated subversion of one of the most imperious duties of Christianity, by making it infamous to forgive injuries.

And even if a man be more correct in his habits, still if the maxims of the world, and not those of Christianity, govern him, he loses sight of the great principles which would restrain excesses in temper, as well as in conduct. He first loses sight of these, perhaps by negligence in private devotion, possibly by a careless attendance on public worship. Thus freeing himself from these observances, he loses sight of the obligations of religion, and losing this strongest 'muzzle of restraint,' it is the less wonder that a small provocation tempts him to offer bloody sacrifices to that fantastic but cruel idol, worldly honour. It is the less wonder that a neglected, even where there is not a perverted principle, should end in the murder of a friend, and the destruction of his own soul; for of a merely convivial friendship, a duel is no very uncommon termination.

But to return.—In the ordinary pursuits of life, the good man differs but little from others, in the keenness with which he embarks in enterprise, or in the diligence with which he prosecutes it; but he carries it on in another spirit; he is not less solicitous in the pursuit, but there is less perturbation in his solicitude; he makes no undue sacrifices to attain his object He seeks the divine blessing, not that he may slacken his own exertions, but that he may be directed in them, supported under them. Sanguine, perhaps, by nature, he yet takes into the account the probabilities of disappointment: this, when it occurs, he bears as one, who, though careful of the motive and mode of his conduct, had put the affair into the hands of the Master of events. His failure does not discourage him from fresh exertions, when occasions equally right present themselves. He is grateful for success, but not intoxicated by it. Under defeat he is resigned, but not desponding. He measures the intrinsic value of an object by asking his own mind, though he thinks so highly of its importance now, what he shall probably think of it when his ardour is cooled, and especially, what he shall think of it when all things shall be brought into judgment. This question settled, either moderates or augments the interest he takes in it.

Knowing that whatever he proposes in the way of public good, is liable to be suspected of imprudence, or mistaken zeal, he turns this exposure to suspicion to his own advantage. It leads him to examine his project more accurately to spy out its weak side, if it have any; and to anticipate, by the operations of a well exercised judgment, the objections which his opponents are likely to make. Foreseeing the points which may create opposition, he guards against it, either by altering his plan, if defective, or preparing to defend it, if sound. One of his great difficulties, and yet it is his only security will be his custom of referring all matters in debate, 'to the law and to the testimony.' This will lead him constantly to oppose principles to expediency. Of this incommodious integrity, he must abide the censure and the consequences. He will have no share in the crooked arts and intrigues by which some men rise so fast, and become so popular. He will detest craft almost as much as fraud, and the pitiful shifts of a narrow policy, as much as he will love the light and open path of truth and honesty.—He doth not slacken in his undeviating strictness, though he is aware, that this is the quality which peculiarly exposes him to misrepresentation. Exertion, struggle, conflict, these are the trials for which he prepares himself. Thankful for tranquillity when it can be honestly obtained, enjoying repose when he has fairly earned it; he yet knows that this is not the world in which they are to be looked for with any certainty, or enjoyed with any continuance; and this conviction of its instability and fluctuation is one of the many arguments with which he seeks to arm himself against the fear of death.

The unequal distribution of the good things of this life, the inferior success of men of more virtue, higher talent, and a better outset, than others of his acquaintance, whose beginning was low, and whose deserts equivocal, remind him that prosperity is no sure test of merit, and that the favour of heaven is not to be estimated by

success. God, he recollects, has made no special promise of prosperity to his children. When given, it is to be esteemed no certain mark of his approbation; when withdrawn, it is often in mercy; when withheld, it is because God has higher designs for his less prosperous servants. As to himself, the events of every day teach him, that he had expected more from human life than it had to bestow, and that his disappointments arise not less from his own sanguine temper, than from the deceits of that world which it had overrated.

The world, especially, we may here remark, the commercial world, particularly in these awful times, is calculated to teach forbearance far more than sequestred life, because men often suffer so severely in their fortune and credit by the errors or misfortunes of others. If the good man suffer by his own fault, he will find a fresh motive for humility; if by the fault of another, for patience; if more directly from the hand of God, for submission. Whatever be the fluctuations of his fortune, his faith will gain stability, for he will discern an invisible hand directing all events for his ultimate good. If he is placed in a state of peculiar agitation, God intends to lead him by it to seek his rest where only it can be found. If in a state of singular difficulty, it is to show him his own weakness, and his immediate dependance on him, who gives strength to the weak. This principle admitted, will furnish new motives to watchfulness and prayer, without any diminution of activity or spirit.

His observations on the gradual process, by which the love of money monopolizes the hearts of others, teach him to guard his own against its encroachments. He sees that the first designs of men are commonly moderate. Few take in at one view all the length they go afterwards. They look not beyond a certain eminence. On this they fix as the summit of their desires. But what appeared high at a distance sinks when approached; is nothing when attained;—'Alps rise on Alps;'—a further distance presents a further height; this, they are sure, will bound their desires: this attained, they are resolved to retire and dedicate their lives and their riches to the end for which, they persuade themselves, they have been toiling. But, with the acquisition, the desire increases; wants grow out of riches. The moderate man is become insatiable. The principle thrives with the attainment of its object. Though hope is exchanged for possession, yet the restless principle continues to work, and will work on, unless a higher principle, by which he is every day less likely and less desirous to be governed, should arise to check it.

Society being composed of intelligent human beings, the wise man knows that something may be generally learned from it, relative to the human character; that some benefit may be reaped, even if little positive good appear in it; and more does sometimes appear, than we are willing to put to profit. Lessons may be extracted from the very faults of men; from the vehemence of their passions, the mistakes of their judgment, the blindness of their prejudice.

The Holy Scriptures frequently make the anxious diligence of men, in the pursuit of worldly advantages, a lesson which a better man would do well to improve upon in his higher pursuits. He may find in *their* industry a standard, though not a model: the wisdom he learns from this generation, he will convert to the purposes of the children of light. The world's wise man is ever on the watch for advancing his projects. If he contract an acquaintance of importance, his first thought is, how he may make the most of him; the Christian is equally careful to turn the acquisition of a pious friend to his own account, but with a higher view.

The mind, on the watch for improvement, will improve by the very errors of others.—Virtue, our divine Master has taught us, may take some profitable lessons from vice. The activity of the fraudful steward may stimulate the negligent Christian. From the perseverance of the malignant in their patient prosecution of revenge, he may learn fortitude under discouragements, and resolution under difficulties. Injuries may teach him the value of justice, may set him upon investigating its principle, and guarding against its violation. The wiliness of the designing may keep his understanding on the alert, and confirm the prudence it has excited. Temptations from without strengthen his powers of resistance; his own faults show him his own weakness, as it is foreign aggression which forms heroes, and domestic opposition which makes statesmen.

His thirst for human applause will be abated, when he observes in those around him, the unexpected attainment of popularity so soon followed by its unmerited loss. When he beholds the rapid transfer of power, it will more than whole tomes of philosophy, show him that 'favour is deceitful.' He will moderate his desires of great riches, when he sees by what sacrifices they are sometimes obtained, and to what temptations the possession leads. He will be less likely to repine that others are reaching the summit of ambition, whether they achieve it by talents which he does not possess, or attain it by steps which he would not choose to climb, or maintain it by concessions which he would not care to make. The pangs of party with which he sees some of his friends convulsed, and the turbulent anxiety with which they watch the prognostics of its rise and fall, keep him sober without making him indifferent. He preserves his temper with his attachments, and his integrity with his preferences, because he is habitually watching how he may serve the state, and not how, by increasing her perplexities, he may advance himself.

The use he thus makes of the world will not carry him to the length of entangling himself in its snares. Though he maintains a necessary intercourse with men of opposite character, he will not push that intercourse further than occasion requires. He will transact business with them with frankness and civility, but he will not follow them to any objectionable lengths. He is aware, that though a wise man will never choose an infected atmosphere, yet 'He who fixes our lot in life' will protect him in it in the way of duty, and will furnish an antidote to the contagion. A courageous piety doubles its caution when exposed to an impure air, but a pru

dent piety will never voluntarily plunge into it. It will never forget, that if the corruptions of the world are so dangerous, they are rendered so by those of our own hearts, since we carry about us a constitution disposed to infection. The true Christian will make a conscience of letting it appear, that he differs in very important points from many of those with whom business or society brings them into contact; lest, by the facility and kindness of his general behaviour, they should be led into an error as to his principles. For worldly men, having been accustomed to connect narrowness, reserve, and gloom, with serious piety, they might infer from his pleasant deportment and frank address, that his principles were as lax as his manners are disengaged.

He will, therefore, be careful, not unnecessarily to alienate them by any thing forbidding in his exterior; he will cheerfully fall in with any plan of theirs consistent with his own principles; and more especially, should it be any plan of benevolence and general utility, and one more promising than his own, he will never feel backward to promote it, through the mean fear of transferring the popularity of the measure to another. Yet he acts, nevertheless, as knowing there is no humility in a man's taking a false measure of his own understanding, and therefore does not give us his independence of mind, when the superiority of the scheme of the other does not carry conviction to his judgment. He will first clear his motive, and, next, his prudence in the measure, and then be as prompt in action as those who rush into it without deliberation or principle.

He keeps his ultimate end in view, even in the most ordinary concerns, and on occasions which to others may not seem likely to promote it. He knows that good breeding will give currency to good sense; that good sense adds credit to virtue, and even helps to strip religion of its tendency to displease.—By his exactness in performing the common duties of life more accurately than other men, he may lead them to look from the action up to the principle which produced it; and when they see the advantages arising from such carefulness of conduct, they may be induced to examine into the reasons; and from inquiring to adopting is not always a remote step. He may thus lead them into an insensible imitation, without the vain idea of presenting himself as a model; for he wishes them to admire, not him, but the source from which he draws both what he believes and what he is.

While he suggests hints for their benefit, he is willing they should think the suggestion their own; that they owe it to reflection, and not to instruction. Like the great Athenian philosopher, he does not so much aim to teach wisdom to others as to put them in the way of finding it out for themselves. His piety does not lessen his urbanity, even towards those, who are obviously deficient in some points, which he deems of high importance. If they are useful members of the great body of society, he is the first to commend their activity, to acknowledge their amiable qualities, to do justice to their speeches or writings, while they are disconnected with dangerous or doubtful objects. On general subjects he never labours to discredit their opinions, unless they obviously stand in the way of something of more worth. But all these cheerfully allowed merits will never make him lose sight of any grand deficiency in the principle, of any thing erroneous in the tendency.

Of his own religion he neither makes a parade nor a secret; he is of opinion, that to avow his sentiments, prevents mistakes, saves trouble, obviates conjectures, and maintains independence. He acknowledges them with modesty, and defends them with firmness. On other occasions, instead of shutting himself up in a close and sullen reserve, because others do not agree with him in the great cause which lies nearest his heart, he is glad that the general diffusion of knowledge has so multiplied the points at which well-educated men can have access to the minds of each other; points at which improvements in taste and science may be reciprocally communicated, the tone of conversation raised, and society rendered considerably useful, and sometimes in a high degree profitable.

But notwithstanding the clearness of his own spirit, and the intimations of an enlightened conscience, yet he carries about with him such a modest sense of his own liableness to what is wrong, as keeps up in his mind the idea that the error may possibly be on his side. This feeling, though it never makes him adopt through weakness the opinion of another, makes him always humble in the defence of his own. He opposes what is obviously bad with an earnest but sober zeal, a fervid but unboisterous warmth, a vigorous but calm perseverance.

He will not hunt for popularity; he knows that this is one of the common dangers from which even good men are not exempt; for after all, the mere good men of the world do not monopolize all credit. Highly principled and pious men form a powerful and increasing minority, which, by concord, firmness, and prudence, often makes no inconsiderable figure. When viewed collectively,

> 'Bright as a sun the sacred city shines.

Each individual, however, according as he contributes or may fancy he contributes to the brightness, is in danger of priding himself on the general effect. And many a weak or designing man, placing himself under the broad shelter of what he delights to call *the religious world*, limits his zeal to the credit of being accounted a member, instead of extending it to the arduous duties it imposes, and while he superciliously decries many a worthy person, who without the pretension, performs the functions, he is as full of the world as the world is of itself. Popularity thus sought after and obtained, whether within or without the pale, even of a religious community, is of a dangerous tendency, and a truly Christian mind will alike tremble to bestow or receive the praise.

But if the Christian character we have been faintly attempting to sketch, possesses a commanding station, either in fortune, rank, or talent, especially if he combine them; his character without any assumption of his own, without

any affectation of superiority, will, by its own weight, its own attraction, above all, by its consistency, be a sort of rallying point, round which the well disposed, the timid, and the young, will resort to obtain a sanction, and to fortify their principles. For, if it is not the *prevailing* principle, there is yet n uch more piety in the world, than the pious themselves are willing to allow. If so strange a phrase may be allowed, we should almost suspect that, in a certain class, there is more good hypocrisy than bad; more who conceal their piety, than who make a display of it. Many, who are secretly and sincerly religious, want courage to avow their sentiments, want resolution to act up to them, either because the popular tide runs another way, or because they dread the imputation of singularity, and are afraid of raising a portentous cry against themselves.

The good man respects the world's opinion, without making it the leading motive of his conduct. He never provokes hostility by any arrogant intimation that he does not care what people think of him, a conduct not more offensive to others, than indicative of a self-sufficient spirit. He is careful to avoid a particular *cut*. He will not be pointed at for any trifling peculiarity. He fences in, not only his ordinary, but his best actions, with prudence, well knowing how much the manner may expose the matter to misrepresentation. He does this not merely for his own credit, but because, to a certain degree, with his reputation are involved the good of others and the honour of religion. He endeavours, as far as he can honestly do it, to remove prejudices, which an imprudent piety rather glories in augmenting, and thus widens the separation between the two classes of characters. Whereas, that which is intrinsically good should be always outwardly amiable. He, therefore, will not make his departure from the order which general usage has established, observable in any of the harmless and accredited modes of life. He will not voluntarily augment that wonder which his departure from the less innocent fashions of the world must excite. The wonder will be sufficiently great, why, in stronger cases, he should subject himself to a discipline different from theirs, and they will ask where is the use of aiming to be better than those whom they call good?

By the cheerful alacrity with which he performs and receives all acts of kindness, he gives the best answer to Lord Shaftsbury's character of Christianity, 'that it is so taken up with the care of our future happiness, as to throw away all the present:' a sneer which is about as true as the other sarcasms of this eloquent but superficial reasoner; for if religion does call for some sacrifices of pleasure and of profit, yet every part of its practice increases our real happiness, by the augmentation of our own virtue, as much as it advances that of others; by its promotion of kindness, beneficence, good will, and good order.

He not only refuses his time and his example to scenes of luxury and dissipation; his superfluous wealth has also a higher destination; he must not however, be expected to aim at a primitive frugality, many of the superfluities of life having in some measure, become classed among its necessaries. The spirit of a Christian can never be a penurious spirit. His habits of living will be proportioned to his rank and fortune, taking, however, the average expenditure of many of the more discreet. He will never, even on religious grounds, by the example of parsimony, furnish the sordid with a pretence for accumulation.

He has another powerful motive for avoiding extravagance. He knows that a well regulated economy is the only infallible source of independence. He will not therefore, lavish in idle splendour a fortune, that he may be driven to recruit by sacrifices, which by robbing him of his freedom, will diminish his virtue. He thinks that what Tacitus has said of a public exchequer is not less true of a private purse, that what is exhausted by profligacy, must be repaid by rapacity. This incommodious rectitude will expose him to the dislike of less correct men; for, after all that has been urged against the adoption of religious doctrines, it is not so much the strictness of opinion, as of practice, which renders a man obnoxious.

He may be of any religion he pleases, provided he will live like those who have none. If he be convivial and accommodating, they will not care if he worship Brama and Veeshnoo though they would not perhaps forgive his professing the Hindoo faith, if it involved the necessity of their dining with him upon rice; nor would he be pardoned for embracing the doctrines of the Arabian Prophet while the Koran continues to prohibit the use of wine.

Though pleasure is not the leading object of his pursuit, he yet finds more than those, who spend their lives in pursuit of nothing else. He finds the range of innocent and elegant enjoyment sufficiently ample and attractive, without being driven for a resource, to the disqualifying grossness of sensuality or the relaxing allurements of dissipation. The fine arts, in all their lovely and engaging forms of beauty, the ever new delights of literature, whether wooed in its lighter graces, or sought in its more substantial attractions, the exchange

> From grave to gay, from lively to severe,

shed sweet, and varied, and exhaustless charms on his leisure hours, and send him back with renewed freshness, added vigour, and increased animation to his necessary employments.

Though the strictly pious man is more exposed to temptation in the world than in retirement, yet he finds in it reasons which stimulate him to more circumspection. He is aware that he lies more open to observation, and of course to censure. As he is more observed by others, he more carefully observes himself. He watches his own faults with the same vigilance with which worldly men watch the faults of others, and for the same reason, that he may turn them to his own profit; the more he is surrounded with temptations, the more he is driven to feel his want of divine protection. If his talents or exertions are flattered, he flies more earnestly to *his* direction, 'from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.' We appeal to the pious rea-

der, whether he does not frequently feel more circumspect and less confident in society from which he fears deterioration, than in that on which he depends for improvement; whether he does not feel a sort of perilous security in company, in which an expansion of heart lessons his self-distrust; and whether he has never, by leaning on the friend, looked less to Him 'without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy.

If in debate he is sometimes accused of showing too much warmth in defence of religion, while its opponent, by his superior calmness, establishes his own character for moderation and good temper, it is because it costs the latter little to manifest a coolness which is the natural effect of indifference.—The man who plays for nothing needs not be moved whatever turn the game may take; while he, whose dearest interests are at stake, will not easily hide the emotion which he cannot but feel. When king Soloman decreed, as a test of affection, that the living child should be cut in pieces, the pretended mother calmly submitted to the decision.—She had nothing to lose. Her hope was dead. She would enjoy seeing her competitor reduced to her own desolate state; while the real mother, who had a vital interest in the object to be sacrificed, was tortured at the proposal. The genuineness of the feeling betrayed the reality of the relation.

The Christian, circumstanced as we have described him, hardly dares wish for an uninterrupted smooth and prosperous course; for, though he endeavours to sit loose to the world, every severe disappointment or privation makes him feel that he still clings too fondly for it; every trial and every loss, therefore, make him relax something of the firmness of his grasp.

Is your Christian, then, perfect, you will perhaps ask? Ask himself. With deep and sincere self-abasement he will answer in the negative. He will not only confess more failings than even his accusers ascribe to him, but he will own what they do not always charge him with—sins. He will acknowledge that there is no natural difference between himself and his censurer, but that, through divine grace, the one prays and struggles against those corruptions, the very existence of which the other does not suspect.

The peace of the confirmed Christian lies not at the mercy of events. As on the agitated ocean, storms and tempests never divert the faithful needle from its invariable object, so the distractions of the world shake not *his* confidence in Him who governs it. He remembers that these winds and waves are still bearing him onward to his haven, while on the stormy passage, they enable him to exhibit a trying but a constant evidence that God may be honoured in all, even in the most unpromising situations. Even in the worst condition, a real Christian is sure of the presence of his Maker, not only of his essential presence, which he has in common with all, but the presence of his grace; not only the sense of his being, but the support of his promise. God never appoints his servants to a difficult station, but he gives them the assurance of assistance in it, and of support under it. The solemn injunction, 'Be strong and work,' thrice repeated by the prophet, to reprove the dilatory builders of the second temple, was effectually enforced by the animating promise which followed it; *I will be with you.* When the disciples were sent forth by their divine Master to the grandest, but most perilous task, to which embassadors were ever appointed, they must have sunk under the conflicts which awaited, the dangers which threatened, and the deaths which met them; but the single promise *I will be with you*, was to them strength, and light, and life. The Christian militant, though called to a milder warfare, has the same reiterated assurance; *I will be with you always even to the end of the world.*

CHAP. XXV.

Candidus.

Candidus is a genuine son of the Reformation but being a layman, he does not think it necessary to define his faith so constantly as some others do, by an incessant reference to the Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies; though this reference would accurately express his sentiments: but, he observes, that it is become a kind of party standard equally erected by each side in intended opposition to the other, so that the equivocal ensign would not determine to which he belongs. He gives, however, the most indisputable proof of his zeal for these formularies, by the invariable conformity of his life and language to their principles.

From the warmth of his feelings, and the strength of his attachment to the church which fostered him, Candidus was once in no little danger of becoming a vehement party-man; he was, however, cured by a certain reluctance he found in his heart to undertake to hate half the world, which he found must be a necessary consequence.—Observation soon taught him, that Christians would be far more likely to escape the attack of unbelievers, if they could be brought to agree among themselves; but he saw with regret, that religion, instead of being considered as a common cause, was split into factions, so that the general interest was neglected, not to say, in some instances, nearly betrayed. And while the liege subjects of the same sovereign are carrying on civil war for petty objects and inconsiderable spots of ground, that strength, which should have been concentrated for the general defence, is spent in mutual skirmishes, and mischievous though unimportant hostilities; and that veneration of course forfeited, with which even the acknowledged enemy would have been compelled to behold an united Church.

Candidus is, however, firm in his attachments though not exacting in his requisitions; catholic, but not latitudinarian; tolerant, not from indifference, but principle. He contemplates, with admiration, the venerable fabric under whose shelter he is protected. He adheres to it, not so much from habit as affection. His adherence is the effect of conviction, otherwise his tenacity might be prejudice. It is founded in education, strengthened by reflection, and

confirmed by experience. But though he contemplates our ecclesiastical institutions with filial reverence himself, he allows for the effect of education, habit and conscience in others, who do not view them with his eyes. He is sorry for those who refuse to enter into her portal; he is more sorry for those who depart out of it, but far more concerned is he, for those who remain within her pale, with a temper hostile to her interests, with principles foreign to her genius, with a conduct unsanctified by her spirit.

Like a true lover, he delights not to expatiate on any imperfection she may have; but he will not, like an absurd lover, insist on any imperfection as an excellence. Persuaded that a mole or a pimple is no material diminution of beauty, he will no more magnify them into a deformity than he will deny their existence. His mind is so occupied with essential points, and so satisfied with their substantial worth, that he relinquishes whatever is of no vital importance to those microscopic eyes, which, being able to take in only the diminutive, value themselves on the detection of specks, as a discovery of their own, though keener eyes had discovered them long before, but slighted them as insignificant. Satisfied that it is the best of all the churches which exist, he never troubles himself to inquire if it is the best that is possible. In the church of England he is contented with excellence, and is satisfied to wait for perfection till he is admitted a member of the Church triumphant.

Candidus made early the discovery of a secret which Charles the Fifth did not discover, till by his ignorance of it, he had thinned the human race—the incurable diversity of human opinions. This irremediable difference he turned to its only practical purpose, not the vain endeavour to convince others, but the less hopeless aim of improving his own forbearance. He even doubted whether this disagreement, though a misfortune in the aggregate, was not even more calculated to promote individual piety, than an uniformity which would not have called this feeling into exercise.

The more he examines Scripture (and he is habitually examining it,) the more he is persuaded that the principles of his church are identically with the word of God; while he is enabled, by the same examination, to drink more deeply into that spirit of love, which warms his heart with kindness towards every conscientious Christian, who on some points thinks differently. His attachment is definite, but his charity knows no limits.

He observes that the loudest clamour for the Establishment is not always raised by the most pious, nor the most affectionate of her disciples; he therefore does not rejoice when he sees her honoured name hoisted as a political signal by those, who are careless of her spiritual prosperity; and he sometimes finds no inconsiderable difference between those who toast her, and those who study to promote her best interests; though the former obtain the reputation, which the others are only solicitous to deserve. He evinces his own affection by his zeal in defending her cause when attacked, by his prudence in never causelessly provoking the attack. Anxious that the walls of the sacred temple should be impregnable, he is still more anxious that the fires of her altars should burn with undecaying brightness; and that while her guardians are properly watching over the security of the one, the flame of the other be not extinguished. He gives the most unequivocal proof that he attends faithfully to her doctrines, by never separating them from her precepts, while he endeavours to incorporate both into his practice; adorning them by his example, recommending them in his writings, and illustrating them in his conversation.

If he produce little sensation among the intemperate, who exhibit their fidelity to the church by always representing her as on the very verge of destruction; yet he would, were the danger present, go greater lengths in her defence than some of her more declamatory champions; nay he does more now to avert her ruin, and they who seem to make her safety depend on their clamour. If he is not perpetually predicting open war, he is watchful against the hollow security of a false peace. The most difficult but not the least important part of his care, is not more to vindicate her against avowed enemies, than against friends at once vociferous and supine.

Candidus, though a good lover, is a bad hater, and it is this defect of hatred, which with a certain class, brings his love into suspicion. He has observed some who evince their attachment by their virulence against what they disapprove, rather than by cultivating, in support of what is right, that spirit which is 'first pure, then peaceable,' and which, if it be not peaceable, is not pure.—These are more remarkable for their dread of external evils, than their solicitude for the promotion of internal piety. Their religion consists rather in repulsion than attraction. On the other hand, it must be observed, that Candidus has none of that pliancy which, in this relaxed age, obtains in a different quarter, the praise of liberality from those who, thinking one religion about as good as another, are of course tolerant of any, because indifferent to all.

He has learned from the errors of two opposite parties, that fanaticism teaches men to despise religion, and bigotry to hate it. He knows that his candour is esteemed laxity by the prejudiced, and his firmness intolerance by the irreligious. There is, however, no ambiguity in his moderation; and he never, for the sake of popularity with either party, leaves it doubtful on what ground he takes his stand. Nor does he ever renounce a right principle, because one party abuses it, or another denies its existence; and while he deprecates the assumption of *names* by impostors, it does not alter his opinion of the *things* they originally signified; for instance, he does not think patriotism is a romance, nor disinterestedness a chimera, nor fervent piety a delusion, nor charity unorthodox; nor a saint necessarily a hypocrite.

He observes among his acquaintance, that there are some who sedulously endeavour to fix the brand of fanaticism on certain doctrines, which both the Bible and the Church not only recognize, but consider as fundamental, as the key-stone of the sacred arch on the strength of which our whole superstructure rests. These

doctrines, while they eject them from their own creed, they confound, in the creed of others, with certain dangerous opinions, with which they are by no means necessarily connected, though they uniformly charge those who adopt the one class with invariably maintaining the other. It is in vain that the persons so charged disavow the opinions; it is to no purpose that they only desire to be allowed to know what they hold, and what they reject.

Candidus, however, undaunted by clamour, and unmoved by insinuation, tenaciously maintains the doctrine of human apostacy, of salvation by grace through faith, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit in renovating the heart. In her avowal of man's corruption, he insists that the church of England is most emphatical. 'Read,' said he one day, in earnest conversation with one whom he could scarcely consider but as a virtual Socinian within the pale of the Establishment, 'read the pointed and explicit confession with which her service opens.'—He holds the same language with some others to whom the Church is a higher authority than the Bible, in regard to a subject next in connexion with that of human weakness, namely, the agency of the Divine Spirit; he remarks that both these doctrines are recognized in every prayer and in every office; that they are especially acknowledged in the *Collects*, those brief but beautiful effusions of devotion, which, for strength of expression, condensation of the sense, and neatness of composition, not only surpass every thing in the age in which they were composed, but remain unrivalled in the similar addresses of our own time, whose best praise it is, that, in this period of fine writing, our petitionary forms are accounted more or less excellent, as they approach nearer, or recede farther from, those models. 'Read their self-abasing acknowledgments —'Thou, God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do'—'O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee'—'Because the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall'—'Grant that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without Thee, may, by Thee, be enabled to live according to thy will'—'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy holy Spirit'—'Because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace.'

But there would be no end of enumeration. The same doctrines run through, and are incorporated with, the whole Liturgy. To get rid of them, mere omissions would be altogether insufficient, we must tear up the whole web, we must weave another, we must weave it too with new materials; for the old threads would retain the colour of the old doctrines, and communicate the original character to the new piece; it is not only the old form that must be new cast, but new principles that must be infused, a new train of sentiments that must be adopted, in short a new religion that must be substituted.

Candidus observes, that it is a proof how different the views of some of our contemporaries are on this subject from those of the primitive church, that while, with some of the former, divine influence is a theme of derision rather than of reverence; in the other, whatever was pure and holy, was ascribed to its operation. At the same time, being a diligent reader of ecclesiastical history, as well as an accurate observer of what passes before his eyes, he is aware what abuses have been and are still practised, and what deceits carried on, under pretence of being *the work of the Spirit*. The importance of the doctrine accounts for the imitations and counterfeits to which it is exposed; and he knows that the abuse of a thing is always pernicious in proportion to its excellence. The Old and New Testament abound with instances. To those of the former St. Peter reverts to guard his converts from those of the latter—'There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.' Another Apostle warns his hearers against the mischiefs which he himself had seen produced by these impious pretenders, by instructing them to 'try the spirits, whether they be of God.' Hence Candidus advises, with an able divine,* to try the spirits ourselves, not by putting them upon supernatural work, but to try them by a more infallible rule—by the doctrine they teach, that is, by its invariable conformity with Scripture. He thinks the same rule and the same necessity subsist now, in as full force, as when the injunction was given.

Candidus is aware that it is necessary, not only to be accurate in the use of his own terms, but to be on his guard against being misled by the inaccuracy of the terms employed by others. He therefore takes care to ascertain the character and temper of the man by whom any ambiguous term is used, as well as of him to whom the term is applied; without this caution he could not decide on the justness of the application. Even the founder of the Epicurean sect could say, *a man cannot live happily without living wisely*. Now, though every man, whatever be his principles, must assent to this truth as a general proposition, yet the phrase, 'living wisely,' conveyed a very different idea in the school of an atheistical philosopher, to what it would have conveyed in the follower of Zeno, and more especially in the disciple of Christ. Enthusiasm is one of these ambiguous terms.

Candidus is prudent on a principle which is sometimes denied. He considers that prudence is, in an ardent character, more likely to be an effect of grace than even zeal; because in the exercise of zeal he is indulging his natural temper, whereas, in the other case he is subduing it; and he has found that to resist a propensity is generally more the effect of principle than to gratify it.—Hence, he infers that if resistance be a work of grace, the sluggish and the cold hearted may judge of their own conquest over nature by a superinduced zeal, while he presumes *he* is conquering his own vehemence by a superinduced prudence; thus the same truth is illustrated by directly opposite instances.

Against enthusiasm, therefore, it is unnecessary to caution the discreet and enlightened Candidus. He avoids it as naturally as a wise man avoids folly, as a sober man shuns extravagance. But then it is the thing itself, and not

* Dr. Owen

what bigots call so; it is the real entity, and not the spectre, against which he is on his guard; for not being superstitious, he is not terrified by phantoms and goblins. He laments when he encounters a real enthusiast, because he knows that, even if honest, he is pernicious. But though he thinks him highly blameable, he does not think him worse 'than murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers.' He thinks enthusiasm mischievous, but he does not think it worse than impiety, worse than intemperance, worse than infidelity, worse than intolerance, worse than any other flagitious vice; especially he does not think it worse than all the other vices put together. Yet this he might be almost tempted to believe was the case, when he sees other vices comparatively left to enjoy themselves, and this doughty enormity, imaginary as well as real, singly attacked with the combined force of all the weapons which ought to be in turn applied to the whole family of sin. As he is very skilful in symptoms, he takes care to ascertain evident marks of the mania, palpable diagnostics of the rabid bite, before he pronounces on the disease, or proceeds to secure himself from the contagion.

By his well-exercised judgment, he can generally discover the different causes of the actual distemper. He can distinguish whether the patient is sick of a deluded imagination, or from having been in contact with the infected; whether he is mismanaged by artful, or injured by ignorant prescribers; whether the malady lies in the weakness of his natural powers, the agitation of his animal spirits, or the vanity of his mind—whether it be an inflammation on the brain, or a tumour in the heart—some or all of these appearances commonly indicating the fanatical fever. In either case he heartily subscribes to the reality and danger of the distemper, but even then he does not positively pronounce that the weak are wicked, or the disordered counterfeits.

But if, as is not seldom the case, he finds the appellation conferred only because the objects of it are deeply sensible of the unspeakable importance of religion, and the infinite value of eternal things—because they are no more afraid of feeling than of understanding the great truths of Christianity—because they think their souls are not a property to be complimented away through fear: if he find, that with all their warmth they are rational, with all their zeal they are humble, with all their energy they are consistent, with all their spirituality they are sober; if they obey the precepts of the Gospel as faithfully as they believe its doctrines—if their religion do not lie more in profession than in performance—if they give a striking evidence of their love of God, by their tenderness to their fellow-creatures—if they are as liberal to their bodily wants, as those are, who forget to take their souls into the account—if their piety appear as much in their practice as in their discourse, and their prudence keep pace with their earnestness, then he will not be forward to impute to them, as the unpardonable sin, those animated sentiments which are to themselves 'peace and joy in believing,' and to others benignity, philanthropy, and kindness.

And as he does not call well-directed zeal fanaticism, nor generous ardour delirium, so he does not rank those who believe in the omnipotence of divine grace among the enemies to virtuous action, nor does he suspect that the advocates for strenuous exertion are sworn foes to faith. Nor does he ever disavow a doctrine which he has adopted on conviction, because it may happen to be associated in the mind of another man, with other doctrines which he himself cannot adopt. And as he knows something of the internal constitution of the human heart and the nature of religious affections, he distinguishes between the sanguine temper of youth, between that warmth, which, in a rightly turned mind, time will cool, and experience temper, and which will retain no more than a due degree of spirit, when its first effervescence has subsided; he distinguishes this spirit from that blind zeal and headlong violence, which, as they are a part of no religion, so they are a discredit to any.

He has observed, that the reason why we see such misshapen representation of religion set up for the finger of reproach or ridicule to point at, is, that the reviler has not been looking out for truth; he has not taken his draught, we will not say from the highest model, but from the fair average of serious Christians; but he has taken it from the lowest specimen of what he has seen, and even more commonly from the distorted report of others. He was looking out for absurdity, and where it is studiously sought, it will not be difficult to find; and, if not found, it will be easily imagined. This caricature he produces as the representative of the whole body; taking care, however, to preserve in his portrait just resemblance enough to show a feature or two of the real face, that the disgusting and exaggerated physiognomy may not prevent its being recognized. If no glimpse of likeness could be traced, it would not answer the end; it would answer it still less, if the prevailing character of the piece were not deformity.

Candidus is persuaded that, of every combination of wickedness with folly which Satan has devised, hypocrisy is the greatest, as being the most generally unprofitable. The hypocrite is sure of being the abhorrence of both sides of the question. Where his duplicity is not suspected, the world hates him for the *appearance* of piety; God, who knows the heart, hates him for the abuse and affectation of it. But, though Candidus deprecates hypocrisy, he is cautious of suspecting it on light grounds, still more of charging it home without proof. As he is not omniscient, he cannot be quite sure that any man who appears more than usually pious *is* a hypocrite, nor does he so denominate him on that single ground. As he cannot scrutinize his heart, he judges him by his actions, and leaves him to settle his motive with his Maker.

On the whole, if he meet with a man, the consistency of whose life gives stronger evidence of the reality and depth of his religion, than other men, he is reluctant in suspecting him either of hypocrisy or enthusiasm. So far from it, he will find his own faith strengthened, his own victory over the world confirmed, his own indifference to human applause increased, by

such a living exemplification of the truth of Christianity, and calmly leave it to the inconsiderate, the incompetent, and the malevolent, to stigmatize the character which he reveres.

They who, when they observe eminent piety and zeal much above low water-mark, insinuate that such symptoms in the more animated Christian prove his tendency to be a separatist, pay a very wretched compliment to the established church. Is it not implying, that her service is not sufficiently high and enlarged to satisfy an energetic spirit; that she does not possess attractions to engage, and materials to fill, and spirit to warm a devout mind, but that a superior degree of earnestness will be in danger of driving its possessor to stray without her pale in search of richer pastures? Is it not virtually saying one of two things, either that a fervent piety is bad, or that the church is not good.

With Candidus, this is so far from being the case, he is so little 'given to change,' that he rejoices in belonging to a church of whose formularies we have already seen how much he had to say in commendation. In these standards he rejoices to see truth, as it were, pinned down, hedged in, and as far as is possible, in this mutable world, preserved and perpetuated. Her significant and spiritual ordinances, and the large infusion of Scripture in her offices and Liturgy, secure her from the fluctuations of human opinion; so that, if ever the principles of any of her ministers should degenerate, her service would be protected from the vicissitude. No sentiments but those of her prescribed ritual can ever find their way into the desk, and the desk will always be a safe and permanent standard for the pulpit itself, as well as a test by which others may ascertain its purity.

He values her government for the same reason for which he values her Liturgy, because it gives a definite bound to the inclosure, never forgetting that the fruit inclosed is of deeper importance than the fence which incloses. He always remembers, however, that, at no very remote period, when the hedge was broken down, disorder and misrule overspread the fair vineyard.

Among other doctrines, he is an accurate studier of the doctrine of proportions, in whatever regards the ecclesiastical institution. Though he cordially approves her form and discipline, though he believes they are not only essential to her dignity, but necessary to her existence, yet he discriminates between what is subordinate and what is supreme. If the one is the body, the other is the soul. It is to her strenuously maintaining the doctrines of the New Testament, that he looks for her preservation. This is her Palladium. Nor does it more resemble the fabled statue of Ilium, because, like that, it fell from heaven to earth, than in its having dropped down *while the Prince was building the citadel.*

If he adopt the Liturgy for his model, it is because he perceives how completely she has adopted the Bible for hers, in never giving undue prominence to one doctrine to the disparagement of the rest; like *her* he appreciates and settles them according to their due degrees of importance.

Among his many reasons for venerating the church of England, the principal is that she is an integral and distinguished portion of the Church of Christ. In the specific he never loses sight of the generick character; as a Churchman, he is first a Christian and a Protestant The ramification, so far from separating him from the root, unites him more closely to it. If he bear much fruit, it is because he is inserted into the true vine. Though quicksighted to what he conceives to be the errors, he does liberal justice to whatever is valuable in other communities. In many members of those which differ from his own, more in forms of government than in any of the essentials of doctrine he sees powerful ability and sound learning to admire, and much substantial piety to venerate. Even with regard to that church, from the corruptions and spiritual tyranny of which our own has been providentially rescued, he acknowledges much excellence in those missals from which our own ritual was partly extracted; he sees in many of her writers a genius, a sublimity, and an unction that rarely have been surpassed. In short, he exercises charity and kindness to all sects and all parties, except one, a sect which has lately been well animadverted on. It is not, indeed, a distinct sect; it is not a separate community, for then his prudence might escape all contact with it, but it is one, whose sloth, producing the same insinuating effect which the subtlety of the Jesuits formerly produced, without giving us, like the school Loyola, any hope of its extinction, has found means to thrust not a few of its followers into every religious denomination and society in the world—the sect of the *non-doers.*

In these worst of sectaries, no vaunting profession of faith, no flaming display of orthodoxy, no clamour for favourite, no hostility against reprobated doctrines, no outcry for or against the church or the state, will ever raise them in his estimation. He accounts them the barren fig-tree of every community in whose soil they spring up. They may, indeed, claim to belong to it, but it is as the worm belongs to the root, the canker to the bud, the excrescence to the healthful body.

In the constitution of the established church Candidus approves the degrees of rank and dignity, and the gradations of income. But, if he never entertains a desire that the highest were lower, he cannot help breathing a cordial wish that the lowest were higher. Convinced, however, that every thing human is in its very nature imperfect, he consoles himself with the hope, a hope which is confirmed by actual instances, that some of the most highly endowed will be examples of christian liberality, and some of the most lowly, of patient submission; so that their several portions may, while they enable them to furnish a pattern to others, minister to their own eternal good.

But evils which he cannot remove, he will never aggravate. He holds it criminal even to agitate questions which only fester and inflame the wounds they are meant to cure; he knows that fruitless discussion may irritate, but seldom heals; that querelous animadversions on irremediable grievances only serve

by stirring up discontent, to excite insubordination.

He respects every order and degree among them for the Lord's sake; and, if a case should occur in which he cannot honour the man, he will honour his office. If called on for his opinion as to any defect, his censures are discreet; if not called upon, he is silent. But if his censures, when just, are temperate; his commendations, when merited, are cordial. Above all, he holds the practice to be equally dishonest, disingenuous and vulgar, to make communities and bodies answerable for the faults and errors of individuals; while he never commends or vindicates any thing decidedly wrong, either in individuals or in communities.

CHAP. XXVI.

The established Christian.

We have it on the authority of a fine writer, that, *not to know what occurred before we were born, is to be always a child.* Yet while the intellect may be improved to the highest pitch by this antecedent knowledge, the will and the passions may, notwithstanding our study of the most elaborate discussions on their nature and effects, remain in the same state of childish imbecility. History and philosophy, though they inform the understanding, and assist the judgment, cannot rectify the obliquities of the heart.

The experience of all past ages has produced such an accumulated mass of disappointment, such a long unbroken series of mortification, such a reiterated conviction of the emptiness of this world, and of the insufficiency of its power to confer happiness, that one would be ready to imagine, that to every fresh generation, nay to every period of the life of every individual in every generation, wisdom would not have all her admonitions to begin over again. One would not think that the same truths require, not only to be afresh pressed upon us, but to be again unfolded; to be repeated as if all previous experiment had never been tried, as if all foregoing admonition had either never been given, or had been completely obliterated; as if the world were about to begin on a fresh stock of materials, to set out on an untried set of principles, as if it were about to enter on an original course of action of which preceding ages had left no precedent; on a line of conduct of which our forefathers had bequeathed no instances of failure, had experienced no defeat of expectation.

We read perpetually of multitudes, who lived in the long indulgence of unbounded appetite, who in the gratification of every desire, has drained the world to its last dregs; but does the narrative of ages record a single instance, that the end proposed and followed up in the fervent pursuit, I mean happiness, was ever attained? We contemplate these recorded examples, we lament the disgusts, and pity the mortifications of the disappointed; but who applies the knowledge to any practical use, to any personal purpose We are informed, but we are not instructed. We resolve, in full confidence of our own wisdom, and complete contempt for that of our predecessors, to make the experiment for ourselves. We, too, pursue the same end, and probably by the same path; secure that we shall escape the mistakes into which others have fallen, assured that we shall avoid the evils which they have incurred, evils which we attribute to their ignorance, or their neglect, to their error, or their indiscretion.

We set out fresh adventurers in the old tract. We weary our wits, we waste our fortune, we exhaust our spirits. Still we are persuaded that *we* have devised the expedient of which our precursors were ignorant; that *we* have hit on the very discovery which had eluded their search; that *we* have found the ingredient, which they, in mixing up the grand compound, earthly happiness, had overlooked.

The natural and pressing object of our desire is present enjoyment; those, therefore, who gratify our wayward fancies, or remove from us any immediate inconvenience, are sure of our favour. On them we seize as instruments for promoting our schemes of gratification, forgetting that they have schemes of their own to promote; that they are equally looking to us for our instrumentality; and that, if they are making any undue sacrifices to us, it is but in order to the furtherance of those schemes. Such is mere worldly friendship. As the intellectual eye seldom runs along the whole train of consequences, which is the only true way of taking our measure of things, the same principle which attaches us to the friend who is humouring us, makes us murmur at the dispensations of Him who is correcting us, dispensations which, though painful at the moment, may, by a train of circumstances of which we know neither the design nor the process, be insuring to us future benefits. But having no clear perception of remote good, we have no very ardent desires after it. Our short sightedness concurs with our selfishness in making this false estimate.

Divine goodness, which we perhaps have hitherto withstood, at length when He who gives the grace gives the desire, touches the heart so long closed against it. The still small voice which was drowned in the noise and tumult of the world is at length heard, and, through longer forbearance, and farther communications of that grace, is at length obeyed. Religion operating on the convictions of the heart, and our humility improving with the experience of our own mistakes, gradually remove the veil through which we had hitherto beheld the world.

As the heavenly light grows stronger, the false lights, drawn from the exhalations of sensuality and self-indulgence, which at once glimmer and mislead, are quenched. The day-star begins to dawn. In the clearer atmosphere, objects assume their proper shape; every thing appears in its true colours. The mind is insensibly disenchanted, the views take another turn. As the eye attains a more distinct sight, the desires acquire a juster aim. We discover that the best things on earth have an inseparable imperfection appended to them. Referring to our past experience, or present clearer observation of things, we find that the delights which we

fancied were indefectible are dying away; we find that pleasure dissolves, wit misleads, riches corrupt, power intoxicates, hope deceives, possession disappoints;—and, which now stamps upon our renewed feelings the deepest impression of the vanity of human things, difficulties sink our spirits, success agitates them; we find that what we want, we desire with a painful ardency; what we have, we either fear to enjoy, or the enjoyment is poisoned by the fear of losing it; and the intense delight could not long be borne, even if it could be obtained. The convictions of the Christian being settled, he is now desirous of imparting the benefits of his own experience to his younger friends, who, in their turn, commonly reject the transfer, thinking him to be as much mistaken as he had formerly thought his predecessors; like him, they prefer the experiment to the advice, the risk to the caution.

The sober thinker is now convinced, that between the fever of desire, the uncertainty of attainment, the disappointment attending what is attained, the alternation of hope and fear, the dread of the worst things, and the insuppressible sense of the brevity of the best, the mere man of the world can never be substantially happy. The Christian thus warned, thus wakened, is thankful, not for the mistakes he has committed, but for the salutary vexations that have attended them. The monitory wisdom of past ages rises in his esteem, in the same proportion as his own sinks. Above all, he has found, that there is no infallible wisdom but in the oracles of inspiration; there he looks for whatever is 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' There only he has found, that the 'man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'

In perusing the sacred records, he even derives consolation from what he has been, a source of derision to the profane, and of wonder to the ignorant—the fidelity with which the inspired writers have exhibited holy men, in the most censurable instances of their conduct, and in the lowest stages of their hope and confidence. He there beholds the chosen servants of God wading through doubts and apprehensions, assaulted by temptations, perplexed by trials. Had they never been presented but in their happier seasons, but in their triumphs, and their victories, the comparison with his own failures, with his own occasional depressions and fluctuations, would have sunk his spirits which they now support, would have weakened his faith which they now confirm.

He rejoices in the Gospel as a stream flowing from the fountain of love and mercy, the spring of all spiritual life and motion; he finds that genuine Christianity differs from every other good, as spirit differs from matter. It establishes the foundation of happiness as well as goodness; and both, not on any supposed merit in the recipient, but on the free mercy and voluntary grace of God. While it exacts obedience to the divine law, it shows that the requisition cannot be complied with, but by divine assistance; what it commands, it bestows; if it requires the will, it confers the power.

In the retrospect of his past life, he is astonished at the patience and forbearance of God under his own repeated provocations; especially he reflects with wonder, that the very prosperity which had been the special gift of his Maker, had alienated his heart from him. He is humbled to think, that it was in the very arms of his goodness he forgot him; when he tasted most abundantly of his bounty, then it was he neglected him most; when he most largely enjoyed his overflowing beneficence, the gift induced not gratitude, but intoxication. He looks back with remorse on the time he has wasted, and the errors he has committed, but he does not spend his remaining strength so much in regretting as in repairing them.

To be enchanted with things which have not much in them, he now finds is the mark of a weak and undistinguished mind. It shows the absence of a rational understanding, and the want of a manly spirit, to be inordinately attached to any object, whose worth will not bear out our judgment, and vindicate our attachment. Habitual considerations on the littleness of present things, the disappointing nature of all earthly enjoyments, the grandeur of his future prospects, with nearer views of the eternal world, all combine to give continence to his mind, moderation to his desires, and sobriety to his conduct.

We are slow in making the discovery of the large capacity of the human mind; that it is made capable of a felicity commensurate to its nature; that the rudiments, both of eternal misery and happiness, are laid in our souls here. Being endued with such faculties and powers for seeking the favour of God, and such means and graces for attaining to his presence, the Christian finds that the misery must be proportionate in missing it. He has also learned, that it is not the design of the Gospel merely to announce to us a state of future blessedness, but to fit us for it. It is but half of the work of infinite love to provide a heaven for man; it is its completion to make man a suitable recipient of the bliss prepared for him. Without this gracious provision, Christianity had been a scheme to tantalize, and not to save us. He sees that there is a higher destination for the passions than that to which he has hitherto applied them. Those affections which had been parcelled out, and severally fastened on their respective vanities, are now concentrated and devoted to God. Love, joy, hope, desire, the very propensities which have formerly misled him, having found their true object, now ripen him for that state from which they had so long seduced him; each contributes its quota towards framing him into a disposition for happiness, and to prepare him for its ultimate enjoyment.

He has long since discovered that the best pleasures of earth are drawn from cisterns not fountains, that our most prized delights are neither pure in themselves, nor permanent in their duration. The immortal mind cannot be satisfied in the pursuit, nor even in the enjoyment. They cannot confer what they do not possess, perfection and stability. Things perishable themselves cannot satisfy the desires of being made for eternity. The soul cannot exert its full powers, nor unfold its whole nature, nor dis-

play all its operations on this contracted stage. The bed is narrower than that a man can stretch himself on it.' There is no proportion between such a scanty space and such large capabilities, such trivial pleasures and such boundless desires, such a fleeting duration and a spirit formed for immortality.

He has found that it is of pressing necessity that this futurity be a happy one, otherwise the very circumstance that it is endless, which makes the happiness complete, turns against us, and makes the consummation of our misery. It is difficult to say whether the shortness of the time allotted us to secure this futurity, or the eternity of the state to be secured, should most stimulate our religious exertions. We have frequently spoken of the duty of learning of an enemy, here the lesson is peculiarly awakening. The reason assigned in the vision of St. John why the *great* enemy is working with such powerful energy, is, because *the time is short.* Shall we be equally assured of the brevity of our own time, and yet be less active in securing our salvation, than he is in promoting our destruction.

The boundlessness of the divine perfections presents to the soul the widest range for the exercise of faith and love, and the Gospel teaches the most unshaken confidence of happiness in the death of Christ. But that God is the King *eternal and immortal*, is to us the broad basis on which all the rest of the promises are built. It would moderate the delight with which we consider his attributes, if eternity were not annexed to them; his immortality alone being the pledge and security of ours. 'The weight of glory' announced by the Apostle derives its highest value from its being an *eternal* weight.

Of the joys of heaven there is in Scripture no description. This is wisely avoided, as the tastes, desires, and inclinations of men are so different, one conceiving that to be of the very essence of happiness, for which another has little relish. They are intimated by negatives, or by shadows, figures, and images of things, to which a general idea of enjoyment is annexed. There is only one idea respecting heaven, which is clear, and plain, and definite—its *eternity.* Of duration every man has some precision in his ideas. Other delineations might have led to dispute; but if the different notions of the nature of happiness might have kindled debate; about its immortality, there can be but one opinion. Perpetuity gives the finishing stamp to perfection.

And as we frame our ideas of eternity from what we know of duration; so we frame our faint notions of God from what we conceive of goodness. We meditate on the excellences of the highest created spirits, and then imagine something of God, though inconceivably elevated above that poor conception, yet not contradictory to it. We fill our mind with the idea of wisdom, goodness, knowledge, power, holiness, justice, purity, and to each of these attributes we prefix that of infinite; never forgetting that God is almost as much above our excellences as our weaknesses. Yet we can but ascribe to Him all that we feel or can imagine of perfection, and we should be still more lost in the mere abstract notion, if we had not some sensible feelings, though infinitely imperfect, derived from reality and exemplification.

The Christian must fill his vocation to the last. In this or that profession men are looking forward to the period when they may lay it down with safety and honour: the Christian's safety and honour consist in his carrying it on to the end. But there is between them this point of agreement. The man of business contracts his schemes, diminishes his labours, mitigates his activity, all with a view to his ultimate repose. If the religious man act thus, he does it with another view, and to a higher end. If he seek rest from his toils, it is in order to find a surer rest in God; if he contract his schemes, it is that he may enlarge his views. There is no specific period in which he can say, My work is done, till he lies down in the grave, where no man can work. He now finds that the tranquillity of his occupations, the beauties of nature, the peaceful pleasures of retirement, pleasures the most natural and congenial to the mind of unsophisticated man, would still be too little to fill his desires; that they would leave a melancholy void in his heart, without the sense of *His* presence whose gift they are. While a consciousness both of the presence and favour of God gives a relish to every enjoyment, and heightens even common comforts into blessings.

There is a progression in the habits of a Christian. In the advancement of his course his pursuits are probably slower, but his interruptions are fewer. If his progress be even less obvious, less apparently active, he is perhaps more substantially improving, more spiritually advancing. When, from the infirmities of declining life, he may seem to be doing nothing, he may then be doing most. If he is able to look less abroad, he is looking more within. He begins to taste more of the fruits of that victory which the Apostle describes as the evidence of a renovated heart; to give this best proof that he is 'born of God,' 'he overcometh the world.' This, if one of his latest, is one of his most important conquests. But though he has turned away his eyes from the world, because it never satisfied the desires of his heart, he endeavours to the last to serve it with much more sedulity, than when he looked to it for happiness.

He has long been persuaded, that even in this present low state of being, we must attain something of the rudiments of future happiness. He has learned that the first principles must be formed now, which are to have their consummation in heaven. To look forward to the completion of a state and character, of which we have not so much as begun to acquire the elements, is not acting according to any of the analogies of common life. The beginning and the process of any thing we have in contemplation always partake in an inferior, but still in a similar and progressive measure, of the nature of the end. It has the same properties and tendencies, in its initial state, with that which is hereafter to be completed. We must begin to lay in our hearts the foundation both of the love and knowledge of God, if we would hereafter attain to that perfection in both, which

we are told is of the essence of the heavenly happiness.

He has long found that there is no peace to the mind that does not entertain some one ultimate end. Broken views and mixed designs distract its attention, and corrode its quiet. In most of the enterprises of life, a man, besides being absorbed by present and perhaps opposing schemes, is looking anxiously forward to some point of change. He had no sooner framed one project, but his views are penetrating to something beyond it; something which he shall have adopted as soon as he shall have accomplished all his proximate objects. Thus the projecting, and fluctuating, and prospective mind, is never at rest. There is no stability but in God. No grand aim, no fixed position, no ultimate end, but in him. He who has once chosen his Redeemer for his portion, is subject to no more vicissitudes; has no after reference, no remoter pursuit, no further design, in reserve.

He, however, who makes heaven his aim, and God his end, will not therefore live idly, as if his choice being decided, his object being settled, he had nothing more to do. His object is indeed fixed, his choice is irreversibly determined, his portion is unalterably decided; but that which elevates his desires also enlarges his capacities, so that his pursuit never ceases, his search is never finished; nor ever can be, unless the perfection of its object could be exhausted. Mr. Boyle observes of a certain mineral, that a man may consume his whole life in the study of it, without ever arriving at the knowledge of all its properties. How much more shall he who seeks to 'acquaint himself with God, find that his entire life is too short, his whole powers too small, to find out the Almighty to perfection! This he will never completely accomplish on earth, yet his desires will grow with his attainments.

But as the happiness of a Christian is chiefly in prospect, he joyfully looks forward to its glorious consummation in a better world. 'When I awake up after thy likeness I shall be satisfied,' a plain intimation that till then we shall not be satisfied. From different passages of scripture, we collect that the happiness of Heaven consists in seeing God, in participating his likeness, in being satisfied with it. But how shall this blessedness be perfected hereafter, if the desire, if the endeavour, does not originate here? If there be no preliminary acquaintance begun with him who ransomed us with his blood, can we expect to dwell with him in eternal glory? 'Not to know God' is the portentous omen of being 'punished with everlasting destruction from his presence.' It is unspeakably distressing to apprehend, that this may possibly be the awful description of some, who are by no means destitute of credit or character; who go on without ever entertaining a conception, that such a beginning may be connected with such an end.

All the delineations of future misery, all the pictures of a disturbed imagination, all the terrors with which a restless conscience anticipates its torments, all the accumulated images, by which Revelation describes it, whether under the figure of the fire that is never quenched, or the worm that never dies, are but inferior degrees of this terrible climax, 'everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord!' All the doleful conceptions of unimaginable woe, all the shades and shapes of substantial, unutterable wretchedness, are comprised in this hopeless, everduring exile. What the soul suffers, there is no attempt to describe, what it loses is but faintly presented to the imagination. On the other hand, 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man conceived,' the final state of bliss. And it is observable that the two extremes are both most emphatically conveyed by negatives. We are only assured that assimilation with God is the perfection of joy, banishment from his presence the extremity of woe.

There is nothing that more humbles and abases the established Christian, than that, whilst in his happier moments, he is able to figure to himself a cheering image of the glory of the Redeemer, the blessedness of the redeemed, the beauty of Christian perfection; to feel himself not only awakened, but exalted, not merely enlightened, but kindled, almost possessing, rather than anticipating, heaven; while he is enabled, in a joyful measure, to meditate upon these things, feel his mind ennobled and his soul expanded by the contemplation, yet to find how soon the bright ideas fade, the strong impression is effaced, the heavenly vision vanished; he mourns to reflect, that he does not more powerfully exhibit in his conversation, more forcibly display in his life, that spirit of which his heart was lately so full, of which his mind was so enamoured. Cast down by these reflections, he still learns—painful lesson!—that 'those *must* sow in tears who would reap in joy;' that it is not expectation, but possession, which excludes all sense of sorrow; that it is heaven itself, and not the promise of it, that is to 'wipe all tears from our eyes.' His happiness in this life will, on these accounts, be as far below perfection, as his goodness; and when we speak of his joy and felicity, it must be understood, rather of a comparative, than an absolute happiness. It is the joy of hope rendered sure by faith. The soul will not be completely blessed till the body is disanimated, its temptations removed, and its infirmities at an end.

The Christian, as life wears away, must not be discouraged, if he feels not always those fervours, which once appeared to him inseparable from real piety. It is not, perhaps, that his piety is less sincere, but that years and infirmity, which have impaired his natural energy of character, may affect or seem to affect the liveliness of his devotion; but it may be mellowed, without being decayed; he will not too much distress himself by mistaking that for a diminution of grace, which may be only a wearing out of nature. Or it may be, that the principle, which is become habitual, may not for that very reason strike the mind so forcibly as on its more early adoption, yet it may have sunk deeper into his heart. There may be more *proportion* in his religion; all its component parts may be more balanced: there is more evenness in his character; more virtues, but of a less ostensible kind, are collected into

it than he formerly thought necessary. His piety is at once more solid, and more spiritual, more operative, yet more serene. His principles have somewhat of a different call for their exercise: the efforts he formerly made to resist temptations of a bolder character, are now exerted to repel the incursions of peevishness, the allurements of indolence, the murmurs of impatience. Qualities which he once relinquished to the unconverted, as thinking them merely natural, he now carefully cherishes. Cheerfulness, once considered as the mere flow of animal spirits is cultivated as a Christian grace; for it does not now spring from nature, but triumphs over it.

He is not so eager in support of some particular opinions as formerly, because each doctrine now maintains its proper place and due importance in his mind. If he make religion less a subject of discussion, he trusts it is become a more practical principle. His views are more deep, his judgment more just, his convictions more firmly rooted. There is a finer edge to his virtues, for they are now sheathed in humility; and this quality, the crowning point, and soundest evidence of a renovated mind, by rendering him more distrustful of himself, more candid in his opinions, and more temperate in his language, will have checked that forwardness of debate, rashness of decision and impatience with error, which, with the less enlightened, might formerly have given him the appearance of a more animated Christian.

But the more his character improves, the more he looks out of himself for his final happiness. His trust in his Redeemer, increases in exact proportion to those virtues of which that trust is the source, virtues on which too many others invite him to rest his dependence.

Some Christians, in their outset, are disposed to lay an almost exclusive stress on duties, without sufficiently cultivating the spirit which should prompt them; others too much overlook duties, relying on certain fervors for supplying their place. The established Christian is careful never to relax in duties, even though they are not attended with that energy which once gave more animation to the exercise. There may be in them a less sensible acting of the affections, which are naturally more alive in the active season of life, yet without any diminution of the real principle of piety; there will be rather an increased devotedness, an augmented acquiescence of the will, a more complete consecration of heart and spirit, to the only legitimate object of their entire affection.

He will, however, be solicitous, that if the flame emit not such vivid flashes, as when it was first lighted, yet that it shall burn more steadily, more equably; especially will he be vigilant, that he do not insensibly transfer to other objects that ardour which used to give life and spirit to his piety, and that while he fears he is not so much alive to God, it is because he is more alive to the world. Though others cannot fairly judge of his internal state, yet there is this sure test by which he will judge himself; if the natural tempers be not more subdued, if the irrascible passions retain their vehemence, if pride and selfishness maintain their sway, while the religious feelings alone are grown obtuse, it is an alarming symptom, a plain intimation, that religion has indeed lost, or rather, it is to be feared, that it never had obtained the supreme place in his heart.

And as he has observed, that in some vehement characters the lamp of religious fervour was first kindled by the fire of natural passions, so its flame declines with the declension of the natural powers; he is also aware, that there is a possibility to the Christian, as he advances in years, of a growing supineness, the too natural effect of which is a decay of the vital spirit of religion. This makes him tremble when he reflects that the same awful warning which, in the vision of the Apocalypse, 'the Spirit gives to the churches,' is addressed with equal emphasis to every individual Christian. He remembers that this compassionate Spirit, which succours us when tempted, strengthens us when persecuted, intercedes for us when afflicted, has promised no such soothing tenderness under declining piety. His language to the decaying Christian, as well as to the lukewarm church, is that of alarming menace. This gradual apostacy is the only case, because it is a hopeless one, in which he threatens final rejection. It is, indeed, infinitely grievous, when they, whom this blessed Spirit has enlightened, in whom he has excited devout dispositions and holy tempers, visibly sink below the state in which they once stood. In the volume of inspiration, every complaint, every expostulation, every argument which long-suffering goodness could suggest, every intreaty which insulted mercy could devise, is exhausted; nothing is omitted which can invigorate relaxing principle, nothing is neglected which can reanimate decaying piety.

The advanced Christian, therefore, will guard against the too natural delusion of imposing on himself the belief, that a declension in spiritual vigour is only natural decay. But he will guard against it, by watching its sensible and visible effects. He will discern, whether he sets less value on the things which are passing away; whether his attachment to the world diminishes, while his prayers for its prosperity and improvement increase; whether he is as zealous in promoting good works by his purse and his influence, as he was in the days of health and strength, by his personal exertions.

The confirmed Christian exemplifies the emphatical description of the good man in Scripture, 'he *walks* with God.' He does not merely approach him at stated times; he does not ceremoniously address him on great occasions only, and then retreat, and dwell at a distance; but he *walks* with him, his habitual intercourse, his natural motion, his daily converse, his intimate communication, is with his Redeemer: and he remembers that walking not only implies intercourse, but progress. His graces if not more sincere, are more universal; he knows and he endeavours to act upon the knowledge, that a Christian must be holy in '*all manner* of conversation;' that excellences in some part of his character will not atone for allowed defects in any.

In the still remaining varieties of this changing scene, not knowing to what particular trials

he may yet be called, he will have endeavoured to bring a general preparedness of spirit to every event. When he can no longer *do* the will of God by his accustomed exertions, he can, with a submission which is worn into a habit, *suffer* it. That which is the crime of an ordinary man, is his highest attainment. *He can submit to be useless.* He will cheerfully resign himself to be discharged from services, in which his former happiness had consisted. He will contentedly see himself laid by, though still stout in heart, and firm in spirit. He will kindly assist those who are rising up to fill the place which he is about to leave vacant, by his counsel his experience, his prayers. He can rejoice, that though the servant fails, the service is and will be supplied.

He will continue more assiduously to labour after that consistency of character, which is a more unequivocal evidence of high christian attainment, than the most prominent great qualities, which are frequently counteracted by their opposites. This consistency exhibits a most striking conformity to the image of his Maker; as in the works of creation, the wisdom of the Supreme Intelligence is more admirable in the agreement and harmony of one thing with another, than in the individual beauty and excellence of each. It is more conspicuous, in the fitness and proportion of its parts relatively, than in the composition of the parts themselves. By this uniformity, the results of religion are the most beautifully exhibited in the christian character.

And as a real Christian is, allowing for human infirmity, consistent with himself; so the same consistency is discoverable in the general features of all Christians. However men may differ in their natural character, yet there is, in all true believers, a sort of correspondent feeling, as well as common principle, which draws their affections to each other, as well as their hearts and faculties to one common source and centre. It is not a traditionary religion which attracts them to the faith of their ancestors, nor is it a party feeling which attaches them to some particular society, but it is a divinely infused principle, communicated by the Spirit of God; it is identified in all its essentials; and a genuine Christian is radically the same being, wherever he is found, and under whatever difference of circumstances he exists.

The nearer he approaches to God, the more, in one sense, he will be sensible of his distance from him. Higher views of God's unspeakable holiness, a deeper sense of his own unworthiness, act reciprocally, and confirm each other. Yet this growing consciousness of his distance only serves to augment his love. He more and more feels the goodness of God, in having never cast off human nature, in having, immediately on its apostacy, conceived the gracious design to repair its evils, and restore its dignity. He feels, in its full force, that unspeakable consolation which the disciples of the most sublime of all the pagan philosophers lamented was wanting in their religion; they regretted that *between the pure divinity and the impure creature, as there is no union, so there can be no communion.* Can any thing more strikingly demonstrate how completely the Mediator provides for that want, and establishes that communion? 'It is thus,' as a very learned and pious writer has observed, 'that the Gospel doctrine gives full relief of mind and ease of conscience, as well as encouragement to piety, and discouragement to sin.'* It gives not only future hope, but present peace! it is not all in promise, it is much in hand.

Through the silent, but effectual, operations of grace, obedience, is become acquiescence, duty, is transformed, not only into assent, but choice. If even a heathen could say, Lead me to whatsoever I am appointed, and I will *follow thee, but if I am unwilling, still I will follow thee*, no wonder if the confirmed Christian serves God not so much because he is bound to serve him, as because love is the dictate of his heart, affection the voluntary bent of his disposition. He needs no extraneous attraction, the impulse is from within. The raw recruit requires to be allured by the 'fife and spirit-stirring drum,' but the veteran soldier follows the service because he loves it, follows it for its own sake. There is no longer any violence done to nature, for the nature is made conformable to the object; the love of Christ constrains him, contrary principles are reconciled, opposite propensities are blended into one, and that one a blessed, though still imperfect, conformity to the image and the will of God. The more his perceptions are cleared and his will purified, the more his faith strengthens; the more simple his views become, the more his thoughts and affections reduce themselves to that one central point, where alone perfection resides.

As he has long observed that the scheme, the show, the fashion of this life passes away, so he does not forget, that his own progress keeps pace with the world, that he also is passing away with it. Fluctuation, vicissitude and decay, form the very characters of our being. 'Nothing continueth in one stay.' Surely these perpetual intimations of Scripture were intended for a constant memento, that fondness for things so transitory is as ill-suited to their value as disproportioned to their duration. These constant admonitions inculcate temperance in our joy, and moderation in our sorrow. They teach us to rejoice as if we rejoiced not, and to weep as if we wept not. Whatever is vain in the end, renders all reference to its intermediate course comparatively vain also.

The Christian observes the world around him to be most careful about the things which will end at death; his care is chiefly confined to the things which then begin; and as it is not so much to ascertain the time, as to secure the consequences of death, that he has been anxious; death can never properly be said to be sudden to him, who always knew that the event was as certain as the period was uncertain. But he does not convert the shadows of death into such a thick and substantial cloud, as shall prevent the mental eye from piercing through it, and seeing the glory beyond it. Through this deep, but pervious gloom, the bright prospect opens to that state, a glimpse of which, caught by the eye of faith, has in all ages, enabled the sincere

* John Smith.

Christian to work through all his earthly difficulties: as it has strengthened him to encounter, with holy hope and humble confidence, the trials of life, so he trusts it will sustain him in his last conflict with the terrors of death. 'Let me now,' says he, 'act as seeing him who is invisible, borne up by the promises of the Gospel, and strengthened by the eternal Spirit, let me anticipate my heaven, burst my present narrow bounds, shake off the incumbrance of body, annihilate a distance in itself so short, and make that immortality which is near, present.'

Thus is the image of divine goodness more clearly though still imperfectly, reflected in the confirmed Christian. The original character of the human heart, as it came from the hands of its Creator, is about to be reinstated in its pristine purity. Sin, the lawless tenant, not the native proprietor of the mansion, will soon be totally expelled; in the mean time, the primitive principle is radicated; the usurper is dethroned, if not altogether dispossessed; he is conquered, if not absolutely expelled; if he sometimes disturb, he can no longer destroy. The exile returns to his forsaken home, the prodigal to his father's house, the pardoned penitent to his God.

AN ESSAY

ON THE CHARACTER AND PRACTICAL WRITINGS OF

SAINT PAUL.

Saint Paul hath furnished us with so rich a variety of moral and spiritual precepts, subordinate to the general laws of piety and virtue, that out of them might well be compiled a body of Ethics, or system of precepts *de officiis*, in truth and completeness far excelling those which any philosophy hath been able to devise or deliver.—Dr. Barrow.

PREFACE.

It is with no little diffidence that the writer of the following pages ventures to submit them to the public eye. She comes 'in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling.' She is fully aware, that whoever pretends to institute an inquiry into the character, and especially into the writings of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, in a manner at all adequate to the dignity and excellence of both, should possess many and high requisites, to which she can make out no fair title. It would, however, be entirely superfluous to insist on her incompetency to the proper execution of such a work, on her deficiencies in ancient learning, Biblical criticism, and deep theological knowledge; because the sagacity of the reader would not fail to be beforehand with her avowal, in detecting them. It may, however, serve as some apology for the boldness of the present undertaking, that these volumes are not of a critical, but of a practical nature.

On the doctrinal portion, more especially, of Saint Paul's Epistles, such a multitude of admirable discourses have been composed, that to have attempted to add to their number, without reaching their excellence, would have been as unnecessary as it might have been presumptuous. On the practical part, also, much has been ably and usefully written. Dissertations, commentaries, treatises, and sermons, however, though of superior merit, have not worn out the subject; and elucidations of his writings, whether they relate to doctrine or to practice, cannot, in any point of view, be undertaken without exhibiting new proofs of those inestimable treasures they contain. They are a golden mine, in which the diligent workman, the deeper he digs, the more he will discover; the farther he examines, the more he will find. Rich veins, hitherto unheeded, will overpay his labours, will continue to pour out upon him their fresh abundance of precious ore. Even the present explorer, who had no skill to penetrate his depths, has been sometimes surprised at the opulence which lay upon the surface, and of which she had not before, perhaps, fully estimated the value.

There are, it is true, passages in the works of this great Apostle, (but they are of rare occurrence, and bear no proportion to such as are obvious,) which have been interpreted in a different and even contradictory manner by men, who, agreeing in the grand essentials of Christianity, may be allowed to differ on a few abstruse points, without any impeachment of the piety on either side. If one must be mistaken, both may be sincere. If either be wrong, both doubtless desire to be right; and, happily for mankind, we shall all be ultimately tried by a Judge, who is a searcher of the thoughts and intents of the *heart;* in whose sight the reciprocal exercise of Christian charity may be more acceptable than that entire uniformity of sentiment which would supersede the occasion of its exercise. 'What I know not, teach Thou me,' is a petition which even the wisest are not too wise to offer; and they who have prefered it with the most effect, are, of all others, the persons who will judge the most tenderly of the different views, or unintentional misconceptions of the opposite party.

That conquest in debate over a Christian adversary, which is achieved at the expense of the Christian temper, will always be dearly purchased; and, though a triumph so obtained may discomfit the opponent, it will afford no moral triumph to the conqueror.

Waving, therefore, both from disinclination, and inability, whatever passages may be consider

ed as controversial, the writer has confined herself to endeavour, though it must be confessed, imperfectly and superficially, to bring forward St. Paul's character as a model for our general imitation, and his practical writings as a store-house for our general instruction; avoiding whatever might be considered as a ground for the discussion of any point not immediately tending to practical utility.

It may be objected to her plan, that it is not reasonable to propose for general imitation, a character so highly gifted, so peculiarly circumstanced,—an inspired Apostle,—a devoted Martyr. But it is the principal design of these pages,—a design which it may be thought is too frequently avowed in them,—to show that our common actions are to be performed, and our common trials sustained, in somewhat of the same spirit and temper with those high duties and those unparalleled sufferings to which Saint Paul was called out; and that every Christian in his measure and degree, should exhibit somewhat of the dispositions inculcated by that religion, of which the Apostle Paul was the brightest human example, as well as the most illustrious human teacher.

The writer is persuaded, that many read the Epistles of Saint Paul with deep reverence for the station they hold in the Inspired Oracles, without considering that they are at the same time supremely excellent for their unequalled applicableness to life and manners; that many, while they highly respect the writer, think him too high for ordinary use. It has, therefore, been her particular object, in the present work, not indeed to diminish the dignity of the Apostle, but to diminish, in one sense, the distance at which we are apt to hold so exalted a model; to draw him into a more intimate connection with ourselves; to let him down, as it were, not to our level, but to our familiarity. To induce us to resort to him, not only on the great demands and trying occurrences of life, but to bring both the writings and the conduct of this distinguished Saint to mix with our common concerns; to incorporate the doctrines which he teaches, the principles which he exhibits, and the precepts which he enjoins, into our ordinary habits, into our every day practice; to consider him not only as the writer who has the most ably and successfully unfolded the sublime truths of our Divine religion, and as the instructor who has supplied us with the noblest system of the higher ethics, but who has even condescended to extend his code to the more minute exigences and relations of familiar life.

It will, perhaps, be objected to the writer of these pages, that she has shown too little method in her distribution of the parts of her subject, and too little system in her arrangement of the whole; that she has expatiated too largely on some points, passed over others too slightly, and left many unnoticed; that she has exhibited no history of the life, and observed no regular order in her reference to the actions of the Apostle. She can return no answer to these anticipated charges, but that, as she never aspired to the dignity of an expositor, so she never meant to enter into the details of the biographer.

Formed, as they are, upon the most extensive views of the nature of man, it is no wonder that the writings of St. Paul have been read with the same degree of interest, by Christians of every name, age, and nation. The principles they contain are, in good truth, absolute and universal: and whilst this circumstance renders them of general obligation, it enables us, even in the remotest generation, to judge of the skilfulness of his addresses to the understanding, and to feel the aptitude of his appeals to the heart.

To the candour of the reader,—a candour which, though perhaps she has too frequently tried, and too long solicited, she has, however, never yet failed to experience,—she commits this little work. If it should set one human being on the consideration of objects hitherto neglected, she will account that single circumstance, success;—nay, she will be reconciled even to failure, if that failure should stimulate some more enlightened mind, some more powerful pen, to supply, in a future work on the same subject, the deficiencies of which she has been guilty; to rectify the errors which she may have committed; to rescue the cause which she may have injured.

Barley-Wood, January 20, 1815.

AN ESSAY

ON THE CHARACTER AND PRACTICAL WRITINGS OF

SAINT PAUL.

CHAP. I.

Introductory remarks on the morality of Paganism, showing the necessity of the Christian Revelation.

The morality of a people necessarily partakes of the nature of their theology; and in proportion as it is founded on the knowledge of the true God, in such proportion it tends to improve the conduct of man. The meanest Christian believer has here an advantage over the most enlightened heathen philosopher; for what he knows of the nature of God, arising chiefly from what he knows of Christ, and entirely from what is revealed in Scripture, he gains from those divine sources more clear and distinct views of the Deity, than unassisted reason could ever attain; and of consequence, more correct ideas of what is required of himself, both with respect to God and man. His ideas may be mean in their expression, compared with the splendid language of the sages of antiquity; but the cause of the superiority of his conceptions is obvious.

While they 'go about to establish their own wisdom,' he submits to the wisdom of God, as he finds it in his word. What inadequate views must the wisest pagans, though 'they felt after him,' have entertained of Deity, who could at best only contemplate him in his attributes of power and beneficence, whilst their highest unassisted flights could never reach the remotest conception of that incomprehensible blessing, the union of his justice and his mercy in the redemption of the world by his Son—a blessing familiar and intelligible to the most illiterate Christian.

The religion of the heathens was so deplorably bad in its principle, that it is no wonder their practice was proportionably corrupt. 'Those just measures of right and wrong,' says Locke, 'which necessity had introduced, which the civil laws prescribed, or philosophy recommended *stood not on their true foundation.*' They served indeed to tie society together, and by these bands and ligaments promoted order and convenience: but there was no divine command to make them respected, and there will naturally be little reverence for a law, where the legislator is not reverenced, much less where he is not recognized. There will also be little obedience to a law without sanctions where neither penalty is feared, nor reward expected.

Previous to the establishment of Christianity, philosophy had attained to its utmost perfection, and had shown how low was its highest standard. It had completely betrayed its inability to effect a revolution in the minds of men. 'Human reason,' says the same great authority above quoted, 'never yet, from unquestionable principles or clear deductions, made out an entire body of the law of nature. If a collection could be made of all the moral precepts in the pagan world, many of which may be found in the Christian religion, that would not at all hinder, but that the world still stood as much in need of our Saviour, and of the morality he taught.' The law of the New Testament recommends itself to our regard by its excellence, and to our obedience by the authority of the Lawgiver. Christianity, therefore, presents not only the highest perfections, but the surest standard of morals.

In a multitude of the noble sentences and beautiful aphorisms of many of the heathen writers, there was indeed a strong tone of morality. But these fine sentiments, not flowing from any perennial source, had seldom any powerful effect on conduct. Our great poet has noticed this discordance between principle and practice in his dialogue between two great and virtuous Romans.—Cassius, who disbelieved a future state, reproves Brutus for the inconsistency between his desponding temper and the doctrines of his own Stoic school:

> You make no use of your philosophy,
> If you give way to accidental evils.

Many of their works, in almost every species of literature, exhibit such perfection as to stretch the capacity of the reader, while they kindle his admiration, and invest with no inconsiderable reputation, him who is able to seize their meaning, and to taste their beauties; so that an able critic of their writings almost ranks with him who excels in original composition. In like manner the lives of their great men abound in splendid sayings, as well as heroic virtues, to such a degree as to exalt our idea of the human intellect, and, in single instances, of the human character. We say, in single instances, for their idea of a perfect character wanted consistency, wanted completeness. It had many constituent parts, but there was no *whole* which comprised them. The moral fractions made up no integral. The virtuous man thought it no derogation from his virtue to be selfish, the conqueror to be revengeful, the philosopher to be arrogant, the injured to be unforgiving: forbearance was cowardice, humility was baseness, meekness was pusillanimity. Not only their justice was stained with cruelty, but the most cruel acts of injustice were the road to popularity which immortalized the perpetrator.—The good man was his own centre. Their virtues wanted to be drawn out of themselves, and this could not be the case. As their goodness did not arise from any knowledge, so it could not spring from any imitation of the Divine perfections. That inspiring principle, the love of God, the vital spark of all religion, was a motive of which they had not so much as heard; and if they had, it was a feeling which it would have been impossible for them to cherish, since some of the best of their deities were as bad as the worst of themselves.

When the history of their own religion contained little more than the quarrels and the intrigues of these deities, could we expect that the practice of the people would be much better, or more consistent than their belief? If the divinities were at once holy and profligate, shall we wonder if the adoration was at once devout and impure? The worshipper could not commit a crime but he might vindicate it by the example of some deity; he could not gratify a single appetite of which his religion did not furnish a justification.

Besides this, all their scattered documents of virtue could never make up a body of morals. They wanted a connecting tie.—The doctrines of one school were at variance with those of another. Even if they could have clubbed their opinions and picked out the best from each sect, so as to have patched up a code, still the disciples of one sect would not have submitted to the leader of another; the system would have wanted a head, or the head would have wanted authority, and the code would have wanted sanctions.

And as there was no governing system, so there was no universal rule of morals, for morality was different in different places.—In some countries people thought it no more a crime to expose their own children than in others to adopt those of their neighbour.—The Persians were not looked upon as the worst moralists for marrying their mothers, nor the Hyrcanians for not marrying at all, nor the Sogdians for murdering their parents, nor the Scythians for eating their dead.*

The best writers seldom made use of argu-

* Plutarch relates, that Alexander, after conquering these countries, had reformed some of their evil habits.

ments drawn from future blessedness to inforce their moral instruction. Excellently as they discoursed on the beauty of virtue, their disquisitions generally seemed to want a motive and an end. Did not such a state of comfortless ignorance, of spiritual degradation, of moral depravity, emphatically call for a religion which should 'bring life and immortality to light?' Did it not imperatively require that Spirit which should 'reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment?' Did it not pant for that blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin.

Even those fine theorists who have left us beautiful reflections on the Divine nature, have bequeathed no rule for his worship, no direction for his service, no injunctions to obey him; they have given us little encouragement to virtue, and no alleviation to sorrow but the impracticable injunction, not to feel it. The eight short beatitudes in the 5th of Saint Matthew convey not only more promises to virtue, and more consolation to sufferers, but more appropriate promise to the individual grace, more specific comfort to the specific suffering, than are to be found in all the ancient tomes of moral discipline.

Those who were invested with a sacred character, and who delivered the pretended sense of the Oracles, talked much of the gods, but said little of goodness; while the philosophers who, though they were professors of wisdom, were, not generally to the vulgar, teachers of morals, seldom gave the Deity a place in their ethics. Between these conflicting instructors the people stood little chance of acquiring any just notions of moral rectitude. They were indeed under a necessity of attending the worship of the temples, they believed that the neglect of this duty would offend the gods; but in their attendance they were neither taught that purity of heart, nor that practical virtue, which might have been supposed likely to please them. The philosophers, if they were disposed to give the people some rules of duty, were overmatched by the priests, who knew they should gratify them more by omitting what they so little relished. As to the people themselves, they did not desire to be better than the priests wished to make them.—They found processions pleasanter than prayers, ceremonies cheaper than duties, and sacrifices easier than self-denials, with the additional recommendation, that the one made amends for the want of the other.*

When a violent plague raged in Rome, the method they took for appeasing the deities, and putting a stop to the distemper, was the establishment of a theatre and the introduction of plays. The plague however, having no dramatic taste, continued to rage. But neither the piety nor ingenuity of the suppliants was exhausted. A nail driven into the temple of Jupiter was found to be a more promising expedient. But the gods being as hard as the metal of which the expiation was made, were no more moved by the nail, than the plague had been by the theatrical exhibition; though the event was thought of sufficient importance for the creation of a dictator!—What progress had reason, to say nothing of religion, made in the first metropolis in the world, when a nail or a play was thought a rational expedient for pacifying the gods and stopping the pestilence. Nor does reason, mere human reason, seem to have grown wiser in her age. During the late attempt to establish heathenism in a neighbouring country, does it not look as if the thirty theatres which were opened every night in its capital in the early part of the revolution had been intended, in imitation of the Romans, whose religion, titles, and offices, the French affected to adopt, as a nightly expiation to the *Goddess of Reason* for the cruelties and carnage of the day?

Whatever conjectural notions some of the wise might entertain of a future state, the people at large could only acquire the vague and comfortless ideas of it, which might be picked up from the poets. This indefinite belief, immersed in fable, and degraded by the grossest superstition, added as little to the piety as to the happiness of mankind. The intimations of their Tartarus, and their Elysian fields, were so connected with fictions, as to convey to the mind no other impression, but that they were fictions themselves. Such uncertain glimmerings of such a futurity could afford neither warning nor encouragement, neither cheerful hope, nor salutary fear. They might amuse the mind, but never could influence the conduct. They might gratify the imagination, but could not communicate 'a hope full of immortality.' They neither animated the pious, nor succoured the tempted, nor supported the afflicted, nor cheered the dying.

The study of their mythology could carry with it nothing but corruption. It neither intended to bring glory to God, nor peace and good will, much less salvation, to men. It was invented to embellish the fabulous periods of their history, to flatter the illustrious families, by celebrating the human exploits of their deified progenitors: and thus to give an additional and national interest to their bewitching fables. What a system did those countries uphold, when the more probable way to make the people virtuous, was to keep them ignorant of religion!—when the best way to teach them their duty to man, was to keep their duties out of sight.

It is indeed but justice to acknowledge, the most of the different schools of philosophy held some one great truth. Aristotle maintained the existence of a First Cause; Cicero, in opposition to the disciples of Epicurus, acknowledged a superintending Providence. Many of the Stoics were of opinion, that the consummation of all things would be effected by fire. Yet every philosopher, however rational in many parts of his system, not only adopted some absurdity himself, but wove it into his code. One believed that the soul was only a vapour, which was transmuted from body to body, and was to expiate, in the shape of a brute, the sins it had committed under that of a man. Another affirmed that the soul was a material substance, and that matter was endowed with the faculties of thought and reason. Others imagined every star to be a god. Some denied not only a superintending, but a creating Providence: insisting that the world was made, without any plan or

* See Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity.

contrivance, by a fortuitous concourse of certain particles of matter; and that the members of the human body were not framed for the several purposes to which they have been accidentally applied. One affirmed the eternity of the world; another, that we can be certain of nothing,—that even our own existence is doubtful.

A religion so absurd, which had no basis even in probability and no attraction but what it borrowed from a preposterous fancy, could not satisfy the deep thinking philosopher; a philosophy abstruse and metaphysical was not sufficiently accommodated to general use to suit the people. Lactantius, on the authority of Plato, relates, that Socrates declared there was no such thing as human wisdom. In short, all were dissatisfied. The wise had a vague desire for religion which comprehended great objects, and had noble ends in view. The people stood in need of a religion which should bring relief to human wants, and consolation to human miseries. They wanted a simple way, proportioned to their comprehension; a short way, proportioned to their leisure; a living way, which would give light to the conscience and support to the mind; a way founded, not on speculation, but evidence, which should carry conversion to the heart as well as conviction to the understanding. Such a religion God was preparing for them in the Gospel of his Son. Christianity was calculated to supply the exigences both of the Greeks and of the barbarians; but the former, though they more acknowledged their want, more slowly welcomed the relief; while the latter, though they less felt the one, more readily accepted the other.

Alexander, though he had the magnanimity to declare to his illustrious preceptor, that he had rather excel in knowledge than in power, yet blamed him for divulging to the world those secrets in learning, which he wished to confine exclusively to themselves. How would he have been offended with the Christian philosophy, which, though it has mysteries for all, has no secrets for any! How would he have been offended with that bright hope of glory, which would have displayed itself in the same effulgence to his meanest soldier, as to the conqueror of Persia!

But how would both the monarch and the philosopher have looked on a religion, which after kindling their curiosity, by intimating it had greater things to bestow than learning and empire, should dash their high hopes, by making these great things consist in poverty of spirit, in being little in their own eyes, in not loving the world, nor the things of the world.

But what would they have said to a religion which placed human intellect in an inferior degree in the scale of God's gifts; and even degraded it from thence, when not used to his glory? What would they have thought of a religion, which, so far from being sent exclusively to the conqueror in arms, or the leaders in science, frankly declared at its outset, that 'not many mighty, not many noble were called,' which professed, while it filled the hungry with good things, to send the rich empty away?

Yet that mysterious HOPE which Alexander declared was all he kept for himself, when he profusely scattered kingdoms among his favourites,—those ambiguous TEARS which he shed, because he had no more worlds to conquer; that deeply felt, but ill understood hope, those undefined and unintelligible tears, mark a profounder feeling of the vanity of this world, a more fervent panting after something better than power or knowledge, a more heart-felt 'longing after immortality,' than almost any express language which philosophy has recorded.

'Learn of me' would have been thought a dignified exordium for the founder of a new religion by the masters of the Grecian schools. But when they came to the humbling motive of the injunction, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart,' how would their expectations have been damped? They would have thought it an abject declaration from the lips of a great teacher, unless they had understood that grand paradox of Christianity, that lowliness of heart was among the highest attainments to be made by a rational creature.

When they had heard the beginning of that animating interrogation,—Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world? methinks I behold the whole portico and academy emulously rush forward at an invitation so alluring, at a challenge so personal; but how instinctively would they have shrunk back at the repulsive question which succeeds;—Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Yet would not Christianity, well understood and faithfully received, have taught these exalted spirits, that, to look down upon what is humanly great, is a loftier attainment than to look up to it?

Would it not have carried a sentiment to the heart of Alexander, a system to the mind of Aristotle, which their respective, though differently pursued, careers of ambition utterly failed of furnishing to either?

Reason, even by those who possessed it in the highest perfection, as it gave no adequate view even of natural religion, so it made no adequate provision for correct morals. The attempt appears to have been above the reach of human powers. 'God manifested in the flesh,—He who was not only true, but THE TRUTH, and who taught the truth as 'one having authority,'—was alone competent to this great work. The duty of submission to Divine Power was to the multitude more intelligible, than the intricate deductions of reason. That God is, and is a rewarder of them that seek him; that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, make a compendious summary both of natural and revealed religion; they are propositions which carry their own explanation, disentangled from those trains of argument, which, as few could have been brought to comprehend, perhaps it was the greatest wisdom in the philosopher never to have proposed them.

The most skilful dialectician could only reason on known principles; but without the superinduction of revealed religion, he could only, with all his efforts, and they have been prodigious, furnish 'rules,' but not 'arms.' Logic is indeed a powerful weapon to fence, but not to fight with; that which is a conqueror in the schools is impotent in the field. It is powerful to refute a sophism, but weak to repel a tempta-

tion. It may defeat an opponent made up like itself of pure intellect; but is no match for so substantial an assailant as moral evil. It yields to the onset, when the antagonists are furious passions and headstrong appetites. It can make a successful thrust against an opinion, but is too feeble to 'pull down the strong holds of sin and Satan.'

If, through the strength of human corruption, the restraining power of Divine grace is still too frequently resisted,—if the offered light of the Holy Spirit is still too frequently quenched, what must have been the state of mankind, when that grace was not made known, when that light was not fully revealed, when 'darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people?' But under the clear illumination of evangelical truth, every precept becomes a principle, every argument a motive, every direction a duty, every doctrine a law; and why? *Because thus saith the Lord.*

Christianity, however, is not merely a religion of authority; the soundest reason embraces most confidently what the most explicit revelation has taught, and the deepest inquirer is usually the most convinced Christian. The reason of philosophy, is a disputing reason, that of Christianity, an obeying reason. The glory of the pagan religion consisted in virtuous sentiments, the glory of the Christian in the pardon and the subjugation of sin. The humble Christian may say with one of the ancient Fathers.—I will not glory because I am righteous, but because I am redeemed.

CHAP. II.

On the Historical writers of the New Testament.

Among the innumerable evidences of the truth of Christianity, there is one of so rare and extraordinary a nature, as might of itself suffice to carry conviction to the mind of every unprejudiced inquirer, even if this proof were not accompanied by such a cloud of concurring testimonies.

The sacred volume is composed by a vast variety of writers, men of every different rank and condition, of every diversity of character and turn of mind: the monarch and the plebian, the illiterate and the learned, the foremost in talent and the moderately gifted in natural advantages, the historian and the legislator, the orator and the poet,—each had his immediate vocation, each his peculiar province: some prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, living in ages remote from each other, under different modes of civil government, under different dispensations of the Divine economy, filling a period of time which reached from the first dawn of heavenly light to its meridian radiance. The Old Testament and the New, the law and the gospel; the prophets predicting events, and the evangelists recording them; the doctrinal yet didactic epistolary writers and he who closed the Sacred Canon in the apocalyptic vision;—all these furnished their respective portions, and yet all tally with a dovetailed correspondence; all the different materials are joined with a completeness the most satisfactory, with an agreement the most incontrovertible.

This instance of uniformity without design, of agreement without contrivance; this consistency maintained through a long series of ages, without a possibility of the ordinary methods for conducting such a plan; these unparalleled congruities, these unexampled coincidences, form altogether a species of evidence, of which there is no other instance in the history of all the other books in the world.

All these variously gifted writers here enumerated, concur in this grand peculiarity, that all have the same end in view, all are pointing to the same object, all, without any projected collusion, are advancing the same scheme; each brings in his several contingent, without any apparent consideration how it may unite with the portions brought by other contributors, without any spirit of accommodation, without any visible intention to make out a case, without indeed any actual resemblance, more than that every separate portion being derived from the same spring, each must be governed by one common principle, and that principle being Truth itself, must naturally and consentaneously produce assimilation, conformity, agreement. What can we conclude from all this, but what is indeed the inevitable conclusion,—a conclusion which forces itself on the mind, and compels the submission of the understanding; that all this, under differences of administration, is the work of one and the same great, Omniscient, and Eternal Spirit.

If, however, from the general uniformity of plan, visible throughout the whole Sacred Canon, results one of the most cogent and complete arguments for its Divine original, others will also rise from its mode of execution, its peculiar diversities, and some other circumstances attending it, not so easily brought under one single point of view.—Does it not look as if Almighty Wisdom refused to divide the glory of his revelation with man, when, passing by the shining lights of the pagan world, He chose, in the promulgation of the Gospel, to make use of men of ordinary endowments, men possessing the usual defects and prejudices of persons so educated and so circumstanced? Not only the other immediate followers, but even the biographers of Christ, were persons of no distinguished abilities. Integrity was almost their sole, as it were the most requisite qualification. On this point it is not too much to maintain, that the writings of each of these men are not only so consistent with each other, but also with themselves, as to offer, individually, as well as aggregately, a proof of their own veracity, as well as of the truth itself.

Had they, however, all recorded uniformly the same more inconsiderable particulars; had there not been that natural diversity, that incidental variation, observable in all other historians;—had not one preserved passages which the others overlooked, some recording more of the actions of Jesus, others treasuring up more of his discourses; some particularizing the circumstances of his birth; others only referring to it as a fact not requiring fresh authentication; another again

plainly adverting to it by 'the WORD that was made flesh, and dwelt among us;' and adding a new circumstance by citing the testimony of the Baptist to 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;'—in short, had there been in the several relations not mere consistency, but positive identity, then, not only the fidelity of the writers would have been questionable, and concert and design justly have been suspected, but we should in effect have had only the testimony of one Gospel instead of four.

But to pass to other evidences of truth.—The manner in which these writers speak of themselves, is at once a proof of their humility and of their veracity. The conversion of Saint Matthew is slightly related by himself and in the most modest terms. He simply says, speaking in the third person; 'Jesus saw a man named Matthew, and saith unto him, Follow me: and he arose and followed him: and as Jesus sat at meat in the house, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him.'* Not a word is said of a sacrifice so honourable to himself, and so generously recorded by Saint Luke in those words, *he left all*, and followed him; not a word of the situation he renounced at the first call of the Master, and which appears to have been lucrative, from 'the great feast he made for him in his own house, and the great company of publicans and others who sat down with him.'† Saint Luke relates only his hospitality; Saint Matthew, as if to abase himself the more, describes only the sinners which made up his society previous to his conversion.

These sober recorders of events the most astonishing, are never carried away by the circumstances they relate, into any pomp of diction, into any use of superlatives. There is not, perhaps, in the whole Gospel a single interjection, nor an exclamation, nor any artifice to call the readers attention to the marvels of which the relaters were the witnesses. Absorbed in their holy task, no alien idea presents itself to their mind: the object before them fills it. They never digress, are never called away by the solicitations of vanity, or the suggestions of curiosity. No image starts up to divert their attention. There is indeed, in the Gospels, much imagery, much allusion, much allegory, but they proceed from their Lord, and are recorded as his. The writers never fill up the intervals between events. They leave circumstances to make their own impression, instead of helping out the reader by any reflections of their own. They always feel the holy ground on which they stand. They preserve the gravity of history and the severity of truth, without enlarging the outline or swelling the expression.

The Evangelists all agree in this most unequivocal character of veracity, that of criminating themselves. They record their own errors and offences with the same simplicity with which they relate the miracles and sufferings of their Lord. Indeed their dulness, mistakes, and failings are so intimately blended with his history, by their continual demands upon his patience and forbearance, as to make no inconsiderable or unimportant part of it.

This fidelity is equally amiable both in the composition, and in the preservation of the Old Testament, a book which every where testifies against those whose history it contains, and not seldom against the relators themselves. The author of the Pentateuch proclaims, in the most pointed terms, the ingratitude of the chosen people towards God. He prophesies that they will go on filling up the measure of their offences, calls heaven and earth to witness against them that he has delivered his own soul, declares that as they have worshipped gods which were no gods, God will punish them by calling a people who were no people. Yet this book, so disgraceful to their national character, this register of their own offences, they would rather die than lose. 'This,' says the admirable Pascal, 'is an instance of integrity which has no example in the world, no root in nature. In the Pentateuch and the Gospel, therefore, these parallel, these unequalled instances of sincerity, are incontrovertible proofs of the truth of both.

It is obvious that the impression which was to be made should owe nothing to the skill, but every thing to the veracity of the writers. They never tried to improve upon the doctrines or the requirements of their Master, by mixing their own wisdom with them. Though their views were not clear, their obedience was implicit. It was not, however, a mere mechanical obedience, but an undisputing submission to the Divine teaching. Even at the glorious scene of the Transfiguration, their amazement did not get the better of their fidelity. There was no vain impatience to disclose the wonders which had passed, and of which they had been allowed the honour of being witnesses. Though they inserted it afterwards in their narrations, 'they, as they were commanded, kept it close, and told no man in those days what they had seen.'

The simplicity of the narrative is never violated; there is even no panegyric on the august person they commemorate, not a single epithet of commendation. When they mention an extraordinary effect of his divine eloquence, it is history, not eulogy, that speaks. They say nothing of their own admiration; it is '*the people* who were astonished at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.' Again, it was 'the *multitudes* marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel.' Again, it was the *officers*, not the writer, who said, 'never man spake like this man.'

In recording the most stupendous events, we are never called to an exhibition of their own pity, or their own admiration. In relating the most soul-moving circumstance, there is no attempt to be pathetic, no aim to work up the feelings of the reader, no appeal to his sympathy, no studied finish, no elaborate excitement. Jesus wept;—no comment. He is hungry;—no compassion escapes them. He is transfigured;—no expression of astonishment. He is agonized;—the narrative does not rise in emphasis. He is betrayed;—no execration to the betrayer. He is condemned;—no animadversions on the iniquitous judge;—while their own denial and desertion are faithfully recorded. He expires;—no remark on the tremendous catastrophe, no display of their own sorrow. Facts alone sup-

* Matthew, ch. ix. † St. Luke, ch. v.

ply the void; and what facts? The earth quakes, the sun is eclipsed, the graves give up their dead. In such a history, it is very true, fidelity was praise, fact was glory. And yet, if, on the one hand, there were no need of the rhetorician's art to embellish the tale, what mere rhetoricians could have abstained from using it?

Thus, it seems obvious, that unlettered men were appointed to this great work, in order that the success of the Gospel might not be suspected of owing any thing to natural ability, or to splendid attainment. This arrangement while it proves the astonishing progress of Christianity to have been caused by its own energy, serves to remove every just suspicion of the contrivance of fraud, the collusions of interest, or the artifices of invention.

Had the first apostles been men of genius, they might have injured the purity of the Gospel by bringing their ingenuity into it.—Had they been men of learning, they might have imported from the schools of Greece and Rome, each from his own sect, some of its peculiar infusions, and thus have vitiated the simplicity of the Gospel. Had they been critics and philosophers, there might have been endless debates which part of Christianity was the power of God, and which the result of man's wisdom. Thus, though corruptions soon crept into the church, yet no impurities could reach the Gospel itself. Some of its teachers became heretical, but the pure word remained unadulterated. However, the philosophizing or the Judaizing teachers might subsequently infuse their own errors into their own preaching, the Gospel preserved its own integrity. They might mislead their followers, but they could not deteriorate the New Testament.

It required different gifts to promulgate and to maintain Christianity. The Evangelists did not so much attempt to argue the truth of the Redeemer's doctrines, as practically to prove that they were of Divine origin. If called on for a defence, they worked a miracle. If they could not produce a cogent argument, they could produce a paralytic walking. If they could not open the eyes of the prejudiced, they could open the eyes of the blind. Such attestation was to the eye-witnesses, argument the most unanswerable. The most illiterate persons could judge of this species of evidence so peculiar to Christianity. He could know whether he saw a sick man restored to life by a word, or a lame man take up his bed and walk, or one who had been dead four days, instantly obey the call—'Lazarus, come forth!' About a sentiment there might be a diversity of suffrages; about an action which all saw, all could entertain but one opinion. The caviller might have refuted a syllogysm, and a fallacy might have imposed on the multitude, but no sophistry could counteract occular demonstration.

But as God does nothing in vain, so he never employs irrelevant instruments or superfluous means. He therefore did not see fit to be at the expense of a perpetual miracle to maintain and carry on that church which he had thought proper to establish by miraculous powers. When, therefore, the Gospel was immutably fixed on its own eternal basis, and its truth unimpeachably settled by the authentic testimony of so many eye witnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; a writer was brought forward, contemporary, but not connected with them. Not only was he not confederate with the first instituters of Christianity; but so implacably hostile was he to them, that he had assisted at the death of the first martyr.

As the attestation of one notorious enemy in favour of a cause, is considered equivalent to that of many friends; thus did this distinguished adversary seem to be raised up to confirm and ratify all the truths he had so furiously opposed; to become the most able advocate of the cause he had reprobated, the most powerful champion of the Saviour he had vilified. He was raised up to unfold more at large those doctrines which could not be so explicitly developed in the historical portions, while an immediate revelation from heaven supplied to him the actual opportunities and advantages which the Evangelists had enjoyed. Nothing short of such a Divine communication could have placed Saint Paul on a level with the other apostles; had he been taught of man, he must have been inferior to those who were taught of Jesus.

For Saint Paul had not the honour to be the personal disciple of his Lord. His conversion and preaching were subsequent to the illumination of the Gospel; an intimation possibly, that though revelation and human learning should not be considered as sharing between them the work of spiritual instruction, yet that human learning might henceforward become a valuable adjunct, and a most suitable, though subordinate accessory in maintaining the cause of that Divine truth which it had no hand in establishing.

The ministry of Paul was not to be circumscribed, as that of his immediate precursors had been, by the narrow limits of the Jewis church. As he was designated to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, as he was to bear his testimony before rulers and scholars; as he was to carry his mission into the presence of 'kings, and not be ashamed,'—it pleased Infinite Wisdom, which always fits the instrument to the work, and the talent to the exigence, to accommodate most exactly the endowments of Paul to the demands that would be made upon them; and as Divine Providence caused Moses to acquire in Egypt the learning which was to prepare him for the legislator of a people so differently circumstanced, it pleased the same Infinite Wisdom to convey to Paul, through the mouth of a Jewish teacher, the knowledge he was to employ for the Gentiles, and to adapt his varied acquirements to the various ranks, characters, prejudices, and local circumstances of those before whom he was to advocate the noblest cause ever assigned to man.

Of all these providential advantages he availed himself with a wisdom, aptness, and appropriateness, without a parallel;—a wisdom derived from that Divine Spirit which guided all his thoughts, words, and actions: and with a teachableness which demonstrated that he was never *disobedient to the heavenly vision.*

Indeed it seemed necessary, in order to demonstrate that the principles of Christianity are not unattainable, nor its precepts impracticable,

that the New Testament should in some part, present to us a full exemplification of its doctrines and of its spirit; that they should to produce their practical effect, be embodied in a form purely human,—for the character of the founder of its religion is deified humanity. Did the Scriptures present no such exhibition, infidelity might have availed itself of the omission, for the purpose of asserting that Christianity was only a bright chimera, a beautiful fiction of the imagination; and Plato's fair idea might have been brought into competition with the doctrines of the Gospel. But in St. Paul is exhibited a portrait which not only illustrates its Divine truth, but establishes its moral efficacy; a portrait entirely free from any distortion in the drawing, from any extravagance in the colouring.

It is the representation of a man struggling with the sins and infirmities natural to man; yet habitually triumphing over them by that Divine grace which had first rescued him from prejudice, bigotry, and unbelief.—It represents him resisting, not only such temptations as are common to men, but surmounting trials to which no other man was ever called; furnishing in his whole practice not only an instructor, but a model; showing every where in his writings, that the same offers, the same supports, the same victories, are tendered to every suffering child of mortality,—that the waters of eternal life are not restricted to prophets and apostles, but are offered freely to every one that thirsteth—offered without money and without price.

CHAP. III.

On the epistolary writers of the New Testament, particularly St. Paul.

Can the reader of taste and feeling who has followed the much enduring hero of the Odyssey with growing delight and increasing sympathy, though in a work of fiction, through all his wanderings, peruse with inferior interest the genuine voyages of the Apostle of the Gentiles over nearly the same seas? The fabulous adventurer, once landed, and safe on the shores of his own Ithica, the reader's mind is satisfied for the object of his anxiety is at rest. But not so ends the tale of the Christian hero. Whoever closed Saint Luke's narrative of the diversified events of Saint Paul's travels; whoever accompanied him with the interest his history demands, from the commencement of his trials at Damascus to his last deliverance from shipwreck, and left him *preaching in his own hired house at Rome*, without feeling as if he had abruptly lost sight of some one very dear to him, without sorrowing that they should see his face no more, without indulging a wish that the intercourse could have been carried on to the end, though that end were martyrdom.

Such readers, and perhaps only such, will rejoice to renew their acquaintance with this *very chiefest of the Apostles;* not indeed in the communication of subsequent facts, but of important principles; not in the records of the biographer, but in the doctrines of the saint. In fact, to the history of Paul in the Sacred Oracles succeed his Epistles. And these Epistles, as if through design, open with that 'to the beloved of God called to be saints' in that very city, the mention of his residence in which concludes the preceding narrative.

Had the Sacred Canon closed with the evangelical narrations, had it not been determined in the counsels of Divine Wisdom, that a subsequent portion of inspired Scripture in another form, should have been added to the historical portions, that the Epistles should have conveyed to us the results of the mission and the death of Christ, how immense would have been the disadvantage, and how irreparable the loss: May we presume to add, how much less perfect would have been our view of the scheme of Christianity, had the New Testament been curtailed of this important portion of religious and practical instruction.

We should indeed have felt the same adoring gratitude for the benefits of the Redeemer, but we should have been in comparative ignorance of the events consequent upon his resurrection. We should have been totally at a loss to know how and by whom the first Christian churches were founded; how they were conducted, and what was their progress. We should have had but a slender notion of the manner in which Christianity was planted, and how wonderfully it flourished in the heathen soil. Above all, we should have been deprived of that divine instruction, equally the dictate of the Holy Spirit, with which the Epistles abound; or, which would have been worse than ignorance, uninspired men, fanatics, or impostors would have attached to the Gospel their glosses, conceits, errors, and misinterpretations.—We should have been turned over for information to some of those spurious gospels, and more than doubtful epistles, of which mention is made in the early part of ecclesiastical history. What attempts might have been made by such writers, to amuse curiosity with a sequel of the history of the persons named in the New Testament! How might they have misled us by unprofitable details of the Virgin Mary, or of Joseph of Arimathea!

What legends might have been invented, what idolatry even might have been incorporated with the true worship of God; what false history appended to the authentic record! Not only is the Divine Wisdom manifest in carrying on through the Epistles a confirmation of the Spirit and power of Christianity, but the same design is no less apparent in closing the book with the Apocalypse,—a writing which contains the testimony of the last surviving disciple of Jesus is extreme old age, to which he seems to have been providentially preserved for the very purpose of protecting the Gospel from innovations which were beginning to corrupt it.

The narratives of the Evangelists would indeed have remained perfect in themselves, even without the Epistles; but never could its truths have been so clearly understood, or its doctrines so fully developed, as they now are. Our Saviour himself intimated, that there would be a more full and complete knowledge of his doctrines, after he had ceased to deliver them, than

there was at the time. How indeed could the doctrine of the atonement, and of pardon through his blood, have been so explicitly set forth during his life, as they afterwards were in the Epistles, especially in those of St. Paul.

Saint Luke, in the opening of the Acts of the Apostles, referring the friend to whom he inscribes it, to his 'former Treatise of all that Jesus began to do, and to teach, till he was taken up, after that he had through the Holy Ghost given commandment to the Apostles' seems plainly to indicate that the *doing* and the *teaching* were to be carried on by them. All their doubts were at length removed. They had now a plenary conviction of the divinity of Christ's person, and of the dignity of his mission. They had now witnessed his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. They had attained the fullest assurance of the truths they were to proclaim, and had had time to acquire the completest certainty of their moral efficacy on the heart and life.

It was therefore ordained by that Wisdom which cannot err, that the Apostles, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, should work up all the doctrines of the anterior Scriptures into a more systematic form:—that they should more fully unfold their doctrines, extract the essence of their separate maxims, collect the scattered rays of spiritual light into a focus; and blend the whole into one complete body.

The Epistles, therefore, are an estimable appendix to the Evangelists. The memoir, which contains the actions of the Apostles, the work of an Evangelist also, stands between these two portions of the New Testament. Thus, no chasm is left, and the important events which this connecting link supplies—particularly the descent of the Holy Spirit, the emblematic vision of Saint Peter, and the conversion and apostleship of Saint Paul,—naturally prepare the mind for that full and complete commentary on the historical books, which the Epistles, more especially those of Saint Paul, present to us.

St. Paul was favoured with a particular revelation, a personal disclosure to him of the truths with which the other disciples were previously acquainted. This special distinction placed Paul on a level with his precursors. Though, in point of fact, he added nothing to the Gospel revelation, and in point of doctrine he only gave a larger exposition of truths previously communicated, of duties already enjoined, yet here was the warrant of his teaching, the broad seal of his apostleship. And unless we fall into the gross error of insisting that the Epistles in general would not equally be given by inspiration with other parts of the New Testament, I see not how any can withhold, from the Epistles of St. Paul in particular, that reverence which they profess to entertain for the entire letter of revelation.

It is a hardship to which all writers on subjects exclusively religious are liable, that if, while they are warmly pressing some great and important point, they omit at the same time, to urge some other point of great moment also, which they equally believe, but which they cannot in that connexion introduce without breaking in on their immediate train of argument, they are accused of rejecting what they are obliged to overlook, though in its proper place they have repeatedly insisted upon that very truth; nay, though the whole tendency of their writings shows their equal faith in the doctrine they are said to have neglected. To this disingenuous treatment, amongst other more serious attacks upon his character, no author has been more obnoxious than the Apostle Paul. It has been often intimated, that in dwelling on the efficacy of the death of Christ, he has not urged with sufficient frequency and energy the importance of Christian practice. He seems himself to have foreseen the probability of this reproach, and has accordingly provided against the consequence that would be drawn from his positions, if taken separately. It would be an endless task to cite the passages in which he is continually defending his doctrine against these anticipated misrepresentations. Among other modes of refutation, he sometimes states these false charges in the way of interrogatories: 'Do we make void the law through faith?' And not contented with the solemn negative, 'God forbid!' he adds a positive affirmative to the contrary: 'Yea we *establish* the law.' In a similar manner he is beforehand with his censors in denying the expected charge—'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?' and he obtests the same Almighty name to his opposite practice. Readers, of different views, are without ceasing, on the watch to take advantage of all the epistolary writers in this respect, while the fair method would surely be to form the general judgment, from the whole tenor and collective spirit of their writings.

But it has been argued with still greater boldness, that St. Paul was not a disciple.—Granted. But his miraculous conversion entitled him to the confidence, which some men more willingly place in those who were. This event is substantially recorded by Saint Luke: as if he foresaw the distrust which might hereafter arise, he has added to his first relation, in the 9th chapter of the Acts, two several reports of the same circumstance made by Saint Paul himself, first to the Jews, and afterwards to Festus and Agrippa. As Luke has recorded this astonishing fact three several times, we are not left to depend for its truth entirely on Saint Paul's own frequent allusions to it.

Much suspicion of this great Apostle is avowedly grounded on the remark of Saint Peter, who in adverting to his 'beloved brother Paul,' observes, that 'in his Epistles are some things hard to be understood, which they who are unstable and unlearned wrest to their own destruction.' Here the critic would desire to stop, or rather to garble the sentence which adds, 'as they do also the other Scriptures;' thus casting the accusation, not upon Saint Paul or 'the other Scriptures,' but upon the misinterpreters of both. But Saint Peter farther includes in the same passage, that 'Paul accounts the long-suffering of God to be salvation, *according to the wisdom given him.*' It is apparent, therefore, that though there may be more difficulty, there is not more danger in Saint Paul's Epistles, than in the rest of the Sacred Volume. Let us also observe what is the characters of these subverters of truth,—

the 'unstable' in principle and 'unlearned' in doctrine. If, then, you feel yourself in danger of being misled, in which of these classes will you desire to enrol your name? But it is worthy of observation, that, in this supposed censure of Saint Peter, we have in reality a most valuable testimony, not only to the excellence, but also to the inspiration of Saint Paul's writings; for he not only ascribes their composition to *the wisdom given unto him*, but puts them on a par with *the other Scriptures*,—a double corroboration of their Divine character.

This passage of St. Peter, then, is so far from impugning the character of Paul to Divine Inspiration, that we have here the fact itself established upon the authority of a favourite disciple and companion of Jesus. To invalidate such a testimony would be no less than to shake the pillars of revelation.

Besides, as an eminent divine has observed, 'if Saint Paul had been only a good man writing under that general assistance of the Spirit common to good men, it would be ascribing far too much to his compositions to suppose that the misunderstanding them could effect the *destruction* of the reader.'

Saint Peter says only, that 'some things' are difficult; but are there not difficulties in every part of Divine revelation, in all the operations of God, in all the dispensations of Providence; difficulties insuperable in the natural as well as the spiritual world? Difficulties in the formation of the human body; in the union of that perishable body with its immortal companion? Is it not then probable that some difficulties in various parts of the Divine Oracles may be purposely left for the humiliation of pride, for the exercise of patience, for the test of submission, for the honour of faith? But allowing that in Paul some things *are* hard to be understood, that is no reason for rejecting such things as are easy, for rejecting *all* things. Why should the very large proportion that is clear, be slighted for the very small one that is obscure? Scholars do not so treat an ancient poet or historian. One or two perplexing passages, instead of shaking the credit of an author, rather whet the critic to a nearer investigation. Even if the local difficulty should prove invincible, it does not lessen the general interest excited by the work. They who compare spiritual things with spiritual, which is the true Biblical criticism, must perceive that the epistolary writers do not more entirely agree with each other, than they agree with the doctrines, precepts, and promises delivered on the Mount. And as the Sermon on the Mount is an exposition of the law of Moses, so the Epistles are an exposition of the law of Christ. Yet some persons discredit the one, from an exclusive veneration for the other.

But is it not so derogatory from the dignity of our Lord to disparage the epistolary discussions written under the direction of his Holy Spirit, written with a view to lay open in the clearest manner the truths he taught in the Gospel, as it would be to depreciate the facts themselves, which that Gospel records?

The more general respect for the Gospels seems partly to arise from the circumstance that they contain facts: the disregard implied for the Epistles from this cause,—that they enforce doctrines. The former, the generality feel they dare not resist; the latter they think they can oppose with more impunity. But of how much less value would be the record of these astonishing facts if there were neither doctrines to grow out of them, nor precepts to be built upon them! And where should we look for the full instruction to be deduced from both, but in the commentaries of those, to whom the charge of expounding the truths previously taught was committed? Our Saviour himself has left no written record. As the Father committed all judgment to the Son, so the Son committed all written instruction to his select servants.

One of these, who had written a Gospel, wrote also three Epistles. Another carried on the sequel of the Evangelical history. If these men are worthy of confidence in one instance, why not in another? Fourteen of the Epistles were written by one who had an express revelation from Heaven; all the rest, the single chapter of Saint Jude excepted, by the distinguished apostles who were honoured with the privilege of witnessing the transfiguration of their Lord. The three Epistles of Saint John are only a prolonged expression of the devout feelings which breathe throughout his narrative, the same lively manifestation of the *word made flesh*, which shines throughout his Gospel.

In the Gospel, the doctrines and precepts are more dogmatically enjoined: in the Epistles they are enforced more argumentatively. The structure of the Epistle addressed to the Romans is the most systematical. All are equally consistent with each other, and with the general tenor of the antecedent Scriptures.

Does it not look as if the marked distinction which some readers make between the historical and the epistolary portions, arose from a most erroneous belief that they can more commodiously reconcile their own views, opinions, and practice, with the narratives of the Evangelists, than with the keen, penetrating, heart-exploring exposition of those very doctrines which are equally found, but not equally expanded, in the Gospels? These critical discoverers, however, may rest assured, that there is nothing more strong, nothing more pointed, nothing more unequivocally plain, nothing more awfully severe in any part of Saint Paul's writings than in the discourses of our Lord himself. He would indeed have overshot his duty in the same proportion in which he had outgone his Master. Does Paul enjoin any thing more contrary to nature than the excision of a right hand, or the plucking out of a right eye? Does Paul any where exhibit a menace, I will not say *more* alarming, but so repeatedly alarming, as his Divine Master, who expressly, in one chapter only, the 9th of St. Mark, three several times denounces eternal punishment on the irreclaimably impenitent, awfully marking out not only the specific place, but the specific torment,—the undying worm, and the unquenched fire?

No: these scrupulous objectors add nothing to the character of our Lord, by what they subduct from that of his apostle. Perfection admits of no improvement; deity of no addition. To degrade any portion of the revealed will of God

is no proof of reverence for Him whose will is revealed. But it is preposterous to insinuate, that a regard for the Epistles is calculated to diminish a regard for the Gospels. Where else can we find such believing, such admiring, such adoring views of him whose life the Gospel records? Where else are we so grounded in that love which passeth knowledge? Where else are we so continually taught to be looking unto Jesus? Where else are we so powerfully reminded that there is no other name under heaven by which we may be saved? We may as well assert, that the existing laws, of which *Magna Charta* is the original, diminish our reverence for this palladium itself; this basis of our political security, as the Gospel is of our moral and spiritual privileges. In both cases the derived benefit sends us back to the well-head from whence it flows.

He who professes to read the Holy Scriptures for his 'instruction,' should recollect, whenever he is disposed to be captious, that they are written also for his correction. If we really believe that Christ speaks to us in the Gospel, we must believe that he speaks to us in the Epistles also. In the one he addresses us in his militant, in the other in his glorified character. In one, the Divine Instructor speaks to us on earth; in the other, from heaven. The internal wisdom, the divinity of the doctrines, the accordance both of doctrine and precept with those delivered by the Saviour himself, the powerful and abiding effects which, for near two thousand years they have produced, and are actually producing, on the hearts and lives of multitudes; the same spirit which inspired the writer is still ready to assist the reader; all together forming, to every serious inquirer who reads them with an humble heart and a docile spirit, irrefragable arguments, unimpeachable evidence that they possess as full a claim to inspiration, and consequently have as forcible demand on his belief and obedience, as any of the less litigated portions of the book of God.

Whoever, then, shall sit down to the perusal of these epistles without prejudice, will not rise from it without improvement. In any human science we do not lay aside the whole, because some parts are more difficult than others; we are rather stimulated to the work by the difficulty, than deterred from it; because we believe the attainment will reward the perseverance. There is, indeed, an essential difference between a diagram and a doctrine, the apprehension of the one solely depending on the capacity and application of the student, while the understanding of the other depends not merely on the industry, but on the temper with which we apply. 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him.'

Let any reader say, if after perusing Saint Luke's biographical sketch of the Acts of the Apostles, after contemplating the work of the Spirit of God, and its effects on the lives and the preaching of these primitive saints, whether he has not attained an additional insight into the genius and the results of Christianity since he finished reading the Evangelist? Let him say further, whether the light of Revelation, shining more and more as he advances, does not, in his adding the perusal of the Epistles to that of the Acts, pour in upon his mental eye the full and perfect day?

As there was more leisure, as well as a more appropriate space, in the Epistles for building up Christianity as a system than in the Gospels, so these wise master-builders, 'building on no other foundation than that which was laid,' borrowed all the materials for the glorious edifice from the anterior Scriptures. They brought from their precursors in the immortal work, the hewn stones with which the spiritual temple is constructed, and having compacted it with that which every portion supplied; squared, rounded, and polished the precious mass into perfect form and shape, into complete beauty and everlasting strength.

CHAP. IV.

Saint Paul's Faith, a Practical Principle.

THERE are some principles and seeds of nature, some elements in the character of man, not indisposed for certain acts of virtue; we mean virtue as distinguished from the principle of pleasing God by the act or sentiment. Some persons naturally hate cruelty, others spurn at injustice, this man detests covetousness, that abhors oppression. Some of these dispositions certain minds find, and others fancy, within themselves. But for a man to go entirely out of himself, to live upon trust, to renounce all confidence in virtues which he possesses, and in actions which he performs,; to cast himself entirely upon another; to seek to be justified, not by his own obedience, but by the obedience of that other; to look for eternal happiness, not from the merit of his own life, but from that of another's death, that death the most degrading, after a life the most despised; for all this revolution in the mind and heart, there is no foundation, no seed, no element in nature; it is foreign to the make of man; if possessed, it is bestowed; if felt, it is derived; it is not a production, but an infusion; it is a principle, not indigenous, but implanted. The Apostle implies that faith is not inherent, when he says, 'to you it is *given* to believe.'

This superinduced principle is Faith, a principle not only not inherent in nature, but diametrically contrary to it; a principle which takes no root in the soil of the natural heart; *no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.* Its result is not merely a reform, but a new life,—a life governed by the same principle which first communicated it.

The faith of mere assent, that faith which is purely a conviction of the understanding seldom stirs beyond the point at which it first sits down. Being established on the same common ground with any scientific truth, or any acknowledged fact, it is not likely to advance, desiring nothing more than to retain its station among other accepted truths, and thus it continues to reside in the intellect alone. Though its local existence is allowed, it exhibits none of the undoubted signs of life,—activity, motion, growth.

But that vital faith with which the souls of the Scripture saints were so richly imbued, is an animating and pervading principle. It spreads and enlarges in its progress. It gathers energy as its proceeds. The more advanced are its attainments, the more prospective are its views. The nearer it approaches to the invisible realities to which it is stretching forward, the more their dominion over it increases, till it almost makes the future present, and the unseen visible. Its light becomes brighter, its flame purer, its aspirations stronger. Its increasing proximity to its object fills the mind, warms the heart, clears the sight, quickens the pace.

But as faith is of a spiritual nature, it cannot be kept alive without spiritual means. It requires for its sustenance aliment congenial with itself. Meditation familiarizes it with its object; prayer keeps it close to its end. If thus cherished by perpetual exercise, sustained by the habitual contemplation of the oracles of God, and watered with the dews of his grace, it becomes the pregnant seed of every Christian virtue.

The Holy Scriptures have not left this faith to grow merely out of the stock of injunction, exhortation or command; the inspired writers have not merely expatiated on its beauty as a grace, on its necessity as a duty, on its use as an instrument, but having infused it as a living and governing principle, have fortified their exhortations with instances the most striking, have illustrated their definitions with examples the most impressive.

The most indefatigable but rational champion of faith is the Apostle Paul. He every where demonstrates, that it is not a speculative dogma remaining dormant in the mind, but a lively conviction of the power and goodness of God, and of his mercy in Christ Jesus; a principle received into the heart, acknowledged by the understanding, and operating on the practice.

Saint Paul, among the other sacred authors, seems to consider that faith is to the soul, what the senses are to the body; it is spiritual sight. God is the object, faith is the visual ray. Christ is the substance, faith is the hand which lays hold on it. By faith the promises are in a manner substantiated. Our Saviour does not say, 'he that believeth on me *shall have life*, but *has* life.' It is not a blessing, of which the fruition is wholly reserved for heaven: in a spiritual sense, through faith the promise becomes performance, and assurance possession. The immortal seed is not only sown, but already sprung up in the soil of the renewed heart. The life of grace becomes the same in nature and quality with the life of glory, to which it leads. And if in this ungenial climate the plant will not attain its maturity, at least its progress intimates that it will terminate in absolute perfection.

In that valuable epitome of Old Testament biography, the eleventh of Hebrews, Paul defines faith to be a future but inalienable possession. He then exhibits the astonishing effects of faith displayed in men like ourselves, by marshalling the worthies who lived under the ancient economy, as actual evidences of the verity of this Divine principle; a principle which he thus, by numberless personifications, vindicates from the charge of being nothing more than an abstract notion, a visionary, unproductive conceit, or an imaginary enthusiastic feeling. He combats this opinion by exhibiting characteristically the rich and the abundant harvest, springing from this prolific principle. On these illustrious examples our limits will not permit us to dwell; one of two instances must suffice.

The patriarchal father of the faithful, against hope believed in hope. Natural reliance, reasonable expectation, common experience, all were against him. From all these impediments he averted his eyes; he raised them to Him who had promised. Though the promise was so great as to seem incredible, his confidence in Omnipotence overbalanced all his apprehensions of any hindrances. With the eye of faith he not only saw his offspring as if immediately granted, but all the myriads which should hereafter descend from him. He saw the great anticipated blessing; he saw 'the star come out of Jacob,'—'the sceptre rises out of Israel.' Though an exclamation of wonder escaped him, it was astonishment untinctured with distrust; he disregarded second causes; difficulties disappeared, impossibilities vanished, faith was victorious.

In this glorious catalogue of those who conquered by faith, there is perhaps not one who offers a more appropriate lesson to the higher classes of society than the great legislator of Israel. Here is a man sitting at ease in his possessions, enjoying the sweets of plenty, the dignity of rank, the luxuries of literature, the distinction of reputation. All these he voluntarily renounces; he foregoes the pomps of a court, the advantages of a city, then the most learned in the world; he relinquishes the delights of polished society: refused to be called the grandson of a potent monarch; chooses rather to suffer affliction with his believing brethren than to enjoy the temporary pleasures which a sinful connivance could have obtained for him: he esteems the reproach of Christ,—a Saviour unborn till many ages after, unknown but to the eye of faith,—greater than all the treasures of Egypt. The accomplished, the learned, and the polite, will be best able to appreciate the value of such a sacrifice. Does it not seem to come more home to the bosoms of the elegant and opulent; and to offer an instruction more intimate perhaps than is bequeathed even by those martial and heroic spirits who subdued kingdoms, quenched the violence of fire, stopped the mouths of lions, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens? These are instances of faith, which, if more sublime, are still of less special application. Few are now called to these latter sufferings, but many in their measure and degree to the other. May they ever bear in mind that Moses sustained his trials only *as seeing him who is invisible!*

To change the heart of a sinner is a higher exertion of power than to create a man or even a world; in the latter case, as God made it out of nothing, so there was nothing to resist the operation; but in the former he has to encounter, not inanity, but repulsion: not an unobtrusive vacuity, but a powerful counteraction; and to *believe* in the Divine energy which effects this renovation, is a greater exercise of faith than to

believe that the Spirit of God, moving on the face of the waters, was the efficient cause of creation.

In producing this moral renovation God has to subdue, not only the rebel in arms against the king, but 'the little state of man,' in arms against himself, fighting against his convictions, refusing the redemption wrought for him. Almighty goodness has the two-fold work of providing pardon for offenders, and making them willing to receive it. To offer heaven and then to prevail on man to accept it, is at once an act of God's omnipotence, and of his mercy.

Thus faith, which appears to be so easy, is of all things the most difficult:—which seems to be so common, is of all things most rare. To consider how reluctant the human heart adopts this principle; how it evades and stipulates; how it procrastinates, even when it does not pointedly reject; how ingenious its subterfuges, how specious its pretences; and then to deny that faith is a supernatural gift, is to reject the concurring testimony of reason, of Scripture, of daily observation, of actual experience.

St. Paul frequently intimates that faith is never a solitary attribute: he never separates it from humility, it being indeed the parent of that self-abasing grace. He also implies that faith is not, as some represent it, a disorderly, but a regulating principle, when he speaks of *the law of faith*, of the obedience of faith. Faith and repentance are the two qualities inseparably linked in the work of our salvation; repentance teaching us to abhor ourselves for sin,—faith, to go out of ourselves for righteousness. Holiness and charity Paul exhibits as its inseparable concomitants, or rather its necessary productions, their absence clearly demonstrating the want of the generating principle. May we not hence infer that wherever faith is seen not in his company, she is an impostor.

Of the great 'mysteries of godliness' enumerated by Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, he shows by his arrangement of the five particulars that compose them, that *God believed on in the world* is the climax of this astonishing process.'* And it may be deduced from his general writings that the reason why so many do not more anxiously labour for eternal happiness, is, because they do not practically believe it. The importance of this fundamental principle is so great, that our spiritual enemy is not so perseveringly bent on deterring us from this duty, or detaching us from that virtue, as on shaking the foundation of our faith. He knows if he can undermine this strong hold, slighter impediments will give way. As the first practical instance of human rebellion sprung from unbelief, so all subsequent obedience, to be available, must spring from faith.

Saint Paul shows faith to be a *victorious* principle. There is no other quality which can enable us to overcome the world. Faith is the only successful competitor with secular allurement. The world offers things great in human estimation, but it is the property of this grace to make great things look little; it effects this purpose by reducing them to their real dimensions.

* 1 Tim. chap. ii.

Nothing but faith can show us the emptiness of this world's glory at the best, because nothing else views it in perpetual contrast with the blessedness of heaven; nothing else can give us such a feeling conviction of its brevity at the longest, as that principle which habitually measures it with eternity. It holds out the only light which shows a Christian that the universe has no bribe worth his acceptance, if it must be obtained at the price of his conscience, at the risk of his soul.

Saint Paul demonstrates in his own instance, that faith is not only a regulating and conquering, but a *transforming* grace. It altered the whole constitution of his mind. It did not dry up the tide of his strong affections, but diverted them into a channel entirely different. To say all in a word, he was a living exemplification of the great Scripture doctrine which he taught—faith made him, emphatically, *a new man.* Thus his life as well as his writings prove that faith is an *operating* principle, a strenuous, influential, vigilant grace. If it teach that self-abasement which makes us lowly in our own eyes, it communicates that watchfulness which preserves us from the contamination of sin, a dread of every communication which may pollute. Its disciple is active as well as humble. Love is the instrument by which it works. But that love of God with which it fills the heart, is not maintained there in indolent repose, but quickened for the service of man. Genuine faith does not infuse a piety which is unprofitable to others, but draws it out in incessant desires and aims to promote the general good.

The Apostle knew that the faith of many is rather drowsy than insincere, rather slothful than hypocritical; that they dread the consequences it involves more than the profession it requires. He is therefore always explicit, always mindful to append the effect to the cause. Hence we hear so much from him and the other apostles of the *fruits* of faith, of adding to faith *virtue:* and it is worthy of remark, that in the roll of Saints,—those spirits of renown in the ancient church, to which allusion has been made,—the faith of every one is illustrated, not only by some splendid act, but by a life of obedience.

We may talk as holily as Paul himself, and by a delusion not uncommon, by the very holiness of our talk, may deceive our own souls; but we may rest assured that where charity is not the dominant grace, faith is not the inspiring principle. Thus, by examining our lives, not our discourse, we shall 'prove whether we are in faith.'

Though a genuine faith is peremptory in its decision and resolute in its obedience, yet it deeply feels the source from whence it is derived. In that memorable instance of Abraham's faith, in the very act, instead of valuing himself on the strength of his conviction, *he gave glory to God;* and it is obvious that the reason why faith is selected as the prime condition of our justification, is, because it is a grace which, beyond all others, gives to God the entire glory; that it is the only attribute which subducts nothing for, derives nothing from self. Why are christian and believer convertible terms, if this living principle be no ground-work of his character. If, the

it supplies his distinguishing appellation, should it not be his governing spirit of action?

Paul is a wonderful instance of the power of this principle. That he should be so entirely carried out of his natural character; that he who, by his persecuting spirit, courted the favour of the intolerant Sanhedrim, should be brought to act in direct opposition to their prejudices, supported by no human protection, sustained alone by the grace of Him whom he had stoutly opposed; that his confidence in God should rise in proportion to his persecutions from man: that the whole bent of his soul should be set directly contrary to his natural propensities, the whole force of his mind and actions be turned in full opposition to his temper, education, society, and habits; that not only his affections should be diverted into a new channel, but that his judgment and understanding should sail in the newly directed current; that his bigotry should be transformed into candour, his fierceness into gentleness, his untameable pride into charity, his intolerance into meekness,—can all this be accounted for on any principle inherent in human nature, on any principle uninspired by the Spirit of God?

After this instance,—and, blessed be God, the instance, though superior, is not solitary; the change, though miraculous in this case, is not less certain in others,—shall the doctrine so exemplified continue to be the butt of ridicule? While the scoffing infidel virtually puts the renovation of the human heart nearly on a footing with the metamorphoses of Ovid, or the transmigrations of Pythagoras; let not the timid Christian be discouraged: let not his faith be shaken, though he may find that the principle to which he has been taught to trust his eternal happiness, is considered as false by him who has not examined into its truth; that the change, of which the sound believer exhibits so convincing an evidence, is derided as absurd by the philosophical sceptic, treated as chimerical by the superficial reasoner, or silently suspected as incredible by the decent moralist.

CHAP. V.

The morality of Saint Paul.

Christianity was a second creation. It completed the first order of things, and introduced a new one of its own, not subversive but perfective of the original. It produced an entire revolution in the condition of man, and accomplished a change in the state of the world, which all its confederated power, wit, and philosophy, not only could not effect, but could not even conceive. It threw such a preponderating weight into the scale of morals, by the superinduction of the new principle of faith in a Redeemer, as rendered the hitherto insupportable trials of the afflicted, comparatively light. It gave strength to weakness, spirit to action, motive to virtue, certainty to doubt, patience to suffering, light to darkness, life to death.

It is a rule of Aristotle, that principles and conclusions must always be within the sphere of the same science; that error will be inevitable, while men examine the conclusions of one science by the principles of another. He observes, that it is therefore absurd for a mathematician, whose conclusions ought to be grounded on demonstration, to ground them on the probabilities of the rhetorician.

May not this rule be transferred from the sciences of the schools to the science of morals? Will not the worldly moralist err, by drawing his conclusions as to the morality of a serious Christian from the principles of the worldly school; not being at all able to judge of the principles, of which the religious man's morals are the result.

But in our application of this rule, the converse of the proposition will not hold good; for the real Christian, being aware of the principles of worldly morality, expects that his conclusions should grow out of his principles, and in this opinion he seldom errs.

Christian writings have made innumerable converts to morality; but mere moral works have never made one convert to religion. They do not exhibit an originating principle. Morality is not the instrument but the effect of conversion. It cannot say, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' But when Christ has given life, then morality, by the activity of the inspiring motive, gives the surest evidence of renovated vitality, and exhibits the most unequivocal symptoms, not only of spiritual life, but of vigorous health.

Saint Paul is sometimes represented not merely as the greatest of the Apostles,—this is readily granted,—but virtually as being almost exclusively great. Is not this just ascription of superior excellence, however, too commonly limited to the doctrinal part of his compositions, and is not the consummate moral perfection which both his writings and his character so consistently display, sometimes, if not overlooked, yet placed in the back ground?

Though he did more for the moral accomplishment of the human character than has ever been effected by any other man; though he laboured more abundantly than any other writer, to promote practical religion; yet polemical divinity on the one side, is too much disposed to claim him as her immediate champion; and then in order to make good her claim on the other, to assign to him a subordinate station in the ranks of sacred and moral writers.

Now the fact is, that all the prophets and apostles, aggregately, are not so abundant in ethical instruction, nor is the detail of moral conduct in any of them so minutely unfolded, or so widely ramified, as in the works of Saint Paul. We may indeed, venture to assert, that David and our apostles are almost the only Scripture characters, of whom we have such full-length pictures. And for this reason; what was left imperfect in their delineation by their respective historians, is completely filled up by their own compositions. The narratives may be said to exhibit their shape and features; their own writings have added the grace of countenance, the force of expression, and the warmth of colouring

It furnishes a complete answer to those who oppose the doctrines of grace, on the supposed ground of their encouraging sin; that, as there never was a man who expanded and illustrated those doctrines so fully, so there never was one whose character and compositions exhibit a more consistent and high-toned morality.

Like his sacred precursors, Paul always equally maintains the freeness of grace, and the necessity of holiness. The character of faith is not lowered by insisting that holy practice, which is nothing more than the exercises and consequences of faith, is the sign of its reality. Action, and motion, and speech are not life, but they are the most unequivocal signs of life. Life evidences itself in them; and we do not disparage the principle when we infer its effects, and estimate their value.

We sometimes hear in conversation Saint James set up as the champion of moral virtue against Saint Paul, the bold asserter of doctrines. For these two eminent apostles, there has been invented an opposition, which, as it never existed in their minds, so it cannot be traced in their writings. Without detracting from the perfect ethics of Saint James, may we not be allowed to insist, that Paul, his coadjutor, not his rival, is equally zealous in the inculcation of practice; only running it up more uniformly into its principle; descending more deeply into its radical stock, connecting it more invariably with its motive. It is worth observing, in confirmation of their similarity of views, and perfect agreement in sentiment, that Saint Paul and Saint James derive their instance of the principle for which each is contending, from the same example, the patriarch Abraham.

So far is Paul from undervaluing virtue, that he expressly declares 'that God will render to every man according to his deeds.' So peremptory on this head, that he not only directs men to do good works, but to 'maintain' them; so desirous to establish the act into a habit, that they must not only perform them, but be 'careful' in the performance; so far from thinking, that, after his conversion, man was to be an inactive recipient of grace, that he not only enjoins us to be 'always abounding in the work of the Lord,' but assigns the very reason for it —the reception of grace; 'forasmuch as ye know that your labour will not be in vain in the Lord.' He repeatedly presses on them perseverance, and perseverance is no fanatical symptom. His documents enforce a religion equable, consistent, progressive. This mode of instruction is no fruit of a heated brain, no child of emotion, no vapour of impulse, no effect of fancy.

Not to instance those ample tables of Christian practice, the twelfth of Romans, the fifth of Thessalonians, the whole Epistle of Titus, and the two last chapters to the Ephesians,—every part of his writings either deduces holy practice from some corresponding principle; or else, after he has been enforcing a system of doctrine, he habitually infers a system of morals growing out of it, inseparable from it. Indeed, throughout the whole of the last named Epistle, into which the very essence of Gospel doctrines is infused and compressed, all the social, personal, and relative duties are specifically detailed and enjoined:—the affection of husbands, the submission of wives, the tenderness of parents, the obedience of children, the subordination and fidelity of servants, economy of time, hands to be kept from stealing, 'a tongue from evil speaking,' a body maintained in 'temperance, soberness, and chastity;' a guarded conversation, a gravity of carriage; the very decencies of life are all proposed with a minuteness which will scarcely bear a comparison but with his own catalogue of virtues in a kindred Epistle: 'Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.'

So far from seeking to subvert the moral law, he takes unwearied pains to confirm it: but he fixes it on its true basis; while he denies its justifying power, he 'establishes' its importance as a rule. He vindicates its value, not as a covenant for salvation, but as a measure of conduct. In no instance, however light, does he deny the obligation of believers to maintain a steadfast adherence to it, or discountenance, a minute observance of it. He not only shows that every sin is to be abandoned, but the contrary virtue adopted: and, though one of the fathers observes, that 'a vice sometimes gives place where a virtue does not take it,' yet the only certain symptom of the expulsion of a bad quality is the substitution of its opposite. And no man ever more forcibly condemned an empty profession than Paul: no one more severely reprobated a dead faith, no one more unequivocally commended 'not the hearers, but the doers of the law.'

He proves unanswerably that the doctrine of grace is so far from being hostile to sound practice, that it is the only source from which all legitimate virtue springs;—so far from slackening diligence, that it gives vigour to its activity;—so far from making vigilance superfluous, that its constant language is, *Watch*;—so far from limiting to a favoured few the exhortation, that it makes it universal; 'What I say unto you, I say unto *all*—watch!'

In directing his converts to virtuous deeds, he never fails to include the spirit in the act;—they must be *ready* to distribute, *willing* to communicate. He never fails to show, that the characteristic and essence of all goodness is the desire of pleasing God. In other words, the action must be the fruit of love to Him. Qualities *merely amiable* are originally without that principle, and possessed even by animals, and possessed in a very high degree, as affection for their offspring, fidelity to their masters, gratitude for notice.

Paul, like his blessed Lord, is never so emphatically indignant against any of the signs of hypocrisy in professors, as against sinful practice. Like Him he is frequent in the enumeration of vices which he solemnly proclaims amount to an exclusion from heaven. Holy practice is indeed the only sign to the world of the sincerity of a Christian, and in a good measure is a sign to himself. It is the principal evidence which will regulate the retributive sentence of the last day.—Paul therefore

calls that day 'the *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God.' He does not call it the day of his forming the judgment, but of his declaring it. God, who witnessed the act when it was done, and the motive which impelled it, wants himself no such evidence to assist his decision, but he uses it to manifest to men and angels his own strict justice. 'In that awful day,' says an eminent divine, 'the judge will not examine men as to their experiences, he will not set every one to tell the story of his conversion, but he will bring forth his works.'*

How acceptable, even in the ears of the most thoughtless, would that proclamation sound, *the grace of God bringeth salvation*, were it unaccompanied by the moral power ascribed to it, that of teaching us to deny our sensual appetites! How many would give a cheap assent to the principle, were it not clogged with such an encumbering consequence. Those who insist, that our salvation is effected by works, would gladly adopt faith as a speculative notion, instead of the inconvenient evidences which this self-denying grace involves.

One would imagine, that some who so loudly insist that we shall be saved by works, must mean works of supererogation, and that they depended for salvation on the transfer of the superfluity of the merits of others to themselves; for it is remarkable, that *they* trust their future bliss most confidently to good works, who have the slenderest portion of their own to produce.

The Apostle is perpetually combating the fatal doctrine of those who insinuate that the freedom of the Gospel is a freedom from moral restraint. He describes it, indeed, as a deliverance from the sentence, but not from the precepts, of the law. No one ever more unremittingly opposed those who represent the constant inculcation of holy practice as an infringement of the liberty of a Christian. He perpetually demonstrates the necessity of a determinate rule of duty, without which even that love, which is sometimes pleaded as an apology for the neglect of duty,—that love, which is, indeed, the genuine source of all acceptable performance,—might be lowered into a vagrant, indefinite, disorderly principle. A religion, destitute of faith and love, is not the religion of Christ: a religion which furnishes no certain standard of conduct, is not the religion of the Gospel.

Saint Paul accordingly animadverts severely on those who presume to convert the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, into a pretence for licentious conduct. He strenuously refutes the charge, by intimating, that the New Covenant enforces holiness of life, even more than the Old, and enforces it on more engaging motives. The Law deters from sin by denunciations: the Gospel invites to goodness by the most winning persuasions; God so *loved* the world, that he gave his Son to save it. The Law shows man the danger of sin, and pronounces its punishment: the Gospel performs the higher act of love, it delivers him from its power. It is a quality ascribed to the love of Christ, that it 'constraineth;' it compels us, as it were, to be compassionate. What can make us so tender to others as the experience of God's goodness to ourselves? Who is so ready to show mercy as he who has received it?

Saint Paul derives all duties from this love of God in Christ as their foundation. All the motives to right action, all the arguments for holiness of life, are drawn from this source; all the lines of duty converge to this centre. If Paul censures, he points to this only spring of hope; if he laments, he turns to this only true consolation; if he insists that the *Grace of God hath appeared*, he points to its practical object, 'teaching us to live soberly, righteously, and godly.' When he determines to know nothing but his Saviour, and even him under the degrading circumstance of crucifixion, he includes in that knowledge all the religious and moral benefits of which it is susceptible.

They who contend that the Gospel is only a scheme of morals, struggle hard to keep down the compact to their own depressed standard. They will not allow of a grain or a scruple 'beyond the bond,' but insist, that whatever is not specifically commanded, is superfluous; what is above their own pitch is unnecessary. If they allow that it is sublime, they insist that it is impracticable. If they allow that the *love*, *peace*, and *joy* of the apostle, are desirable, they do not desire them as *fruits of the Spirit*, as signs of acceptance. The interior principle, those views which take in the very depths of the heart, as well as the surface of life,—any practical use of these penetrating truths, they consider as something which the enthusiastic reader does not find, but make.

The mere social and political virtues are made for this world. Here they have their origin, their use, and their reward. All the motives to various practice, not derived from the hope of future blessedness, will be inefficient. There is a powerful obligation to 'perfect holiness' to those who do not perfect it in the fear 'of God.' Grace will not thrive abundantly in that heart which does not believe it to be the seat of glory.

The moralist of our Apostle is not merely a man possessed of agreeable qualities, of some social and civil virtues, of generosity and good nature, qualities excellent as far as they go, and which, as a means to the good order of society, can scarcely be too much valued; but these qualities a man may possess, without having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, without desiring 'to live for him who died for him.' Such qualities will gain him credit, but that very credit may endanger his salvation, if worldly-esteem make him rest satisfied, without the 'honour which cometh from God.' The purity, sublimity, and consistency of Saint Paul's requirements every where manifest that his moral man is not merely a disciple of Antoninus or Epictetus, but a liege subject of the Messiah's spiritual kingdom.

Paul shows, that the humbling doctrines of the Cross are so far from lowering the tone of moral obligation, that they raise the standard of practical virtue to an elevation totally unknown under any other mode of instruction. But there is a tendency in the heart of man, in his natural state, to rebel against these doctrines, even while he professes himself an ad

* Edwards on Religious Affections.

vocate for virtue; to set up the virtue which he presumes that he possesses, against religion, to which he is chiefly hostile for the very elevation which it gives to virtue: this, more than the doctrines, and even than the mysteries of revelation, is the real cause of his hostility.

We have known persons, when pressed on the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, think to get rid of the argument, by declaring that they did not pretend to understand Saint Paul; that, for their part, they were quite satisfied with Micah's religion: 'To do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God,' was enough for them. In what they call this comfortable, and reasonable, and practicable scheme of religion, they are little aware what strictness is involved, what integrity, what charity, what holiness. They little think how nearly the Prophet's religion approached that of the Apostle. There is in fact no difference between them, but such as necessarily arises out of the two dispensations under which they lived. To walk humbly with God, we must believe in the revelation of his Son, and consequently adopt the principle he enjoins: we must adopt every doctrine, and believe every mystery. To walk humbly with God, is a principle which stretches to the bounds of the whole universe of revelation.

More men are indebted to Christianity for their morality, than are willing to confess the obligation. It communicates a secret and unacknowledged infection. Living under a public recognition of Christianity, under Christian laws, and in Christian society, causes many a proud heart to believe more than it cares to own, and to do more good than the man is willing to ascribe to the faith which, if it does not actually influence *his* mind, has made right actions so common, that not to do them is dishonourable. Others, who do not appear to live under the direct illumination of the Gospel, have yet the benefit of its refracted rays, which, if the conveyance is too imperfect to communicate religious warmth, yet diffuses sufficient light to point the way to many moral duties.

We are apt to call men good, because they are without certain bad qualities. But this is not only not knowing religion, it is not knowing human nature. All vices are not affinities; of course the very indulgence of one vice is not seldom an exclusion of another, as covetousness avoids profligacy, and ambition expels indolence; but though they are natural antipathies, they all spring from the same source; the same fountain of corrupt nature feeds both.

Nor does the goodness of Saint Paul's moral man consist merely in abstaining from wicked actions; nor merely in filling the external duties of his profession. While he is active in business, he must be fervent in Spirit. While transacting the ordinary affairs of life, he must be serving the Lord. In worldly moralists, the excessive pursuit of business, as well as of pleasure, leaves a clinging to it in the thoughts, and almost exclusive attachment to it in the heart, long after the actual engagement has ceased, the lankering mind continues to act over again the scenes of its interest, of its ambition, or of its amusement.

Again, the worldly moralist, while he practises some virtues, is indifferent to others. He is temperate, perhaps, but he is ambitious. He is diligent, but he is sordid. Whereas Christian morality as taught by St. Paul hangs as it were in clusters; every virtue issuing from *his* principles touches on other virtues at so many points, that no man possesses one in perfection who does not possess many, who does not at least desire to possess all; while the Divine Spirit, pervading like the sap every fibre of the soul, strengthens the connexion of its graces, and infuses holy aims into the whole character.

We have employed the term *morality* in compliance with common usage; but adopted in the worldly sense, it gives but an imperfect idea of the Apostle's meaning. His preceptive passages are encircled with a kind of glory; they are illuminated with a beam from heaven; they proceed from the Spirit of God, are produced by faith in Him. There is every where that beautiful intermixture of motive and action, that union of the cause and the effect, the faith and its fruits, that uniform balance of the principle and the produce, which render these Epistles an exhaustless treasury of practical wisdom, as well as an imperishable record of Divine Grace.

Saint Paul every where runs up the stream to the spring. The government he inculcates is spiritual. Not content to recommend the obedience of the life, he brings the very thoughts and desires under controul. He traces up the act to the temper which produces it. He dwells more on the spirit of the world than on its actual offences. He knew that many would reprobate bad actions, who do not seek that spirit which would prevent their generating. He knew that men judge soundly enough on questions in which they have no bias from interest or appetite. For one who believes that to be 'carnally-minded is death,' twenty believe in the miraculous gift of tongues, and even in the doctrine of the Trinity, because they fancy, that neither of these trenches on their purse, or their pleasure, or their vain projects.

What Paul calls 'doing by nature the things contained in the law,' and 'a man being a law unto himself,' we frequently see illustrated in some well bred and highly cultivated minds. They have a strong sense of honour and integrity; to this sense their credit and their comfort require they should live up. The natural make of their mind, perhaps, is liberal; from education they have imbibed noble sentiments: they have adopted a system of equity which they would think it dishonourable to violate; they are generous and humane; but in matters of self-indulgence they are not scrupulous; in subduing their inclinations, in abstinence from some one governing desire or impetuous appetite,—in all this they come short; to all this their rule does not extend. Their conduct, therefore, though amiable, and useful, and creditable, yet is not the 'obedience of faith;' these good qualities might have been exercised, had Christianity never existed; this is not bringing the practice, much less *the thoughts, into the captivity of Christ.* This man is a law unto himself, and acts consistently enough with this self-imposed legislation.

Even if no religion had ever existed, if a

Deity did not exist,—for the reference is not to religion, not to the will of the Deity,—such morality would be acceptable to society, because to society it is profitable. But how can action be pleasing to God in which there is no purpose of blessing him? How can any conduct be acceptable to God, to whom it renders no homage, to whom it gives no glory?

Scripture abounds with every motive to obedience, both rational and spiritual. But it would achieve but half its work, had it stopped there. As peaceable creatures, we require not only inducements to obedience, but a heart, and a power, and a will to obey; assistance is as necessary as motives; power as indispensable as precept;—all which requisites are not only promised by the word, but conferred by the Spirit of God.

CHAP. VI.

The Disinterestedness of Saint Paul.

The perfection of the Christian character does not so much consist in this excellence, or that talent, or the other virtue; in the performance of some right action, or the abstinence from some wrong one, as in *the determination of the whole soul for God.* This generous surrender of self, whether of the sensual or of the intellectual self is the unequivocal test of a heart consecrated by man to his Maker. He has no bye-ends, no secret reserves. His intention is single, his way is straight forward; he keeps his end in view without deflection, and he pursues it without weariness.

Saint Paul and his associates were the first moral instructors who preached not themselves. Perhaps there is scarcely a more striking proof of the grandeur of his spirit, than his indifference to popularity. This is an elevation of character, which not only no Pagan sage has reached, but which not every Christian teacher has been found to attain.

This successful apostle was so far from placing himself at the head of a sect, that he took pains to avoid it. In some subsequent instructors, this vanity was probably the first seed of heresy; the sound of Ebionites and Marcionites would as much gratify the ear of the founders, as bringing over proselytes to their opinions would delight their feelings. Paul would have rejected with horror any such distinction. He who earnestly sought to glorify his Master, would naturally abase himself. With a holy indignation he asks, 'What then is Paul, and what is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?' He points out to them the littleness of such exclusive fondness in men, who had such great objects in view—'overvalue not Paul or Apollos as yours, *for all things are yours.*'

It is impossible not to stop a moment, in order to notice the fine structure of the period to which these words are an introduction. It would be difficult to find a more finished climax: 'Let no man glory in men; for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; or the world, or life, or death; or things present or things to come; all are yours, and your are Christ's and Christ is God's.*

Knowing the proneness of human nature to this party spirit, he takes pains to prevent excessive individual attachments. There is no instance of a man so distinguished, so little distinguishing himself. He chooses to merge himself in the general cause, to sink himself in the mass of faithful ministers.—This is particularly evident in the beginning of many of his Epistles, by his humility in attaching, to his own, some name of far inferior note, as his associate in the work;—'Paul and Sosthenes'—'Paul and Sylvanus'—'Timotheus our brother;'—and in writing to the Thessalonians, he connects both the latter names with his own.

He laboured to make the people bear in mind that the apostles were the disseminators, not the authors, of the faith which they preached. Miraculous as his conversion had been, superior as were his endowments, favoured as he was by Divine inspiration, he not only did not assume, but he rejected, any distinction, and only included himself among the teachers of their common Christianity. Thus he bequeathed to his successors a standing pattern of humility, and of the duty of ascribing their talents, their application, and their success, to him, from whom whatever advantages they possess, are derived.

Saint Paul did not rank, on the one hand, with those liberal modern philosophers, who assert that virtue is its own reward; nor on the other, with those abstracted mystics, who profess an unnatural disinterestedness, and a superhuman disdain of any recompence but that which they find in the pure love of God. He was not above accepting heaven, not for any works of righteousness which he had done, but as the free gift of God through the righteousness that had been wrought for him. He was not too proud and independent to confess, that the nearness of heavenly glory was with him a most animating principle.

This hope cheered his fainting spirit; this prospect not only regulated, but almost annihilated his sense of suffering. Invisible things were made so clear to the eye of faith; remote things were brought so near to one, who always kept up in his mind a comparative estimate of the brevity of this afflicted life, and the duration of eternal happiness; faith so made the future present; love so made the labour light; the earnest of the Spirit was given him in such a measure;—that mortality seemed, even here, to be swallowed up of life. His full belief in the immediate presence of God in that world in which he was assured, that light, purity, holiness, and happiness would be enjoyed in their most consummate perfection, not only sustained his hope, but exhilirated his heart.

If it does not support *us* under our inferior trials in the same manner, it is because we have rather a nominal than a practical faith, rather an assenting than an obeying conviction; it is because our eyes are not fixed on the same objects, nor our hearts warmed with the same affections; it is because our attention is directed so sparingly to that Being, and that state, to

* 1 Corinth iii 22

which his was supremely devoted. Ought we to complain, that we enjoy not the same supports, nor the same consolations, while we do not put ourselves in the same way to obtain them?

But though Paul was no disciple of that metaphysical theology, which makes such untaught distinctions, as to separate our love of God from any regard to our own beatitude; though he might have been considered a selfish man, by either of the classes to whom allusion has been made, yet true disinterestedness was eminently his characteristic. Another instance of a human being so entirely devoid of selfishness, one who never took his own ease, or advantage, or safety, or credit, into the account, cannot be found. If he considered his own sufferings, he considered them for the sake of his friends. 'Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation.' The only joy he seemed to derive, when he was 'pressed out of measure, above strength,' was, that others might be comforted and encouraged by his sufferings. So also of his consolations; the principal joy which he derived from them was, that others might be animated by them. This anxiety for the proficiency of his converts, in preference to his own safety; his disposition to regard every object in due subjection to the great design of his ministry; his humble, vigilant care, while exulting in the hope of an eternal crown, that he might 'not himself be cast away;'—form, in combination with the rest of his conduct, a character which we must allow has not only no superior, but no parallel.

The union of generosity and self-denial,—and without the one the other is imperfect,—was peculiarly exemplified in our apostle.—His high-minded independence on man had nothing of the monkish pride of poverty, for he knew 'how to abound;' nor was it the worldly pusillanimous dread of it, for he 'knew how to want.'

In vindicating the right of the ecclesiastical body to an equitable provision, as a just requital of their labours, he nobly renounces all claim to any participation for himself.—'*I have used none of these things!*' This wise and dignified abstinence in the original formation of a church, which must be founded, before provision can be made for its continuance, while it maintained the dignity of his own disinterestedness, enabled him with the better grace, and more powerful effect, to plead the legitimate claims of her ministers; and to insist, that it was the duty of the people to supply their temporal things to those from whom they received ther spiritual things. While he himself refused to claim them, lest it should be made a pretence for hindering the Gospel, he yet looked forward with an eye of kindness and justice, in thus stipulating, as it were, for the comfort of the Christian ministers to the end of the world.

In a long expostulatory argument, illustrated by a variety of analogous instances, he shows the propriety of a provision being made for those who dedicated themselves to the spiritual instruction of others:—the warrior engaged in the defence of his country is supported at the public expense; the planter by the produce of his vineyard; the feeder of a flock by the milk of his flock; the agriculturist by the profits of his plough.

He strengthens his argument by an allusion to a humane practice in the old law, by which even the ox was allowed to participate in that plenty which his labour assisted to procure; then, by a sudden generous interjection,—'Doth God take care for oxen?' he intimates that this provision of mercy for the beast, was emblematical of this justice,—for it scarcely amounted to mercy,—which ought to secure to every minister a fair remuneration for the sacrifice he has made of ease and profit, by addicting himself to the service of the altar.

After, however, having declared that he renounced all reward for himself, fearing that this assurance might be construed into an insinuation of his wish to receive the emolument which he pretended to refuse, with a noble disdain of so mean an expedient, he protests that it would be better for him to die of want, rather than, by receiving pecuniary recompence, to rob himself of his honest claim to the consciousness of dis interested services.

Saint Paul's conduct in these instances affords something of the same fine climax in action, with that which Jesus expressed in words, when he sent to the Baptist the proofs of his divinity. After enumerating his miracles of love, he closes with declaring, as the highest possible instance of that love, *that the Gospel was preached*—but to what class? to the poor! From the words of Christ, turn to the life of Paul. The persecution of his enemies, the fatigue of his travels, the falsehood of his brethren, the labour of instructing so many nations, of converting so many cities, of founding so many churches,—what is his relaxation from such labours, what his refreshment from such perils, what his descent from such heights?—Working with his own hands for his daily bread, and for the relief of the poor. The profane critic may call this the art of sinking, the Christian will deem it the noblest point of elevation. Might not the apostle well say, 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ?'

How has the world stood in just admiration of the generous conduct of Cincinnatus! Tired with the fatigues of war, and satiated with the glories of conquest, he very rationally, and (as he refused all reward) it must be owned very disinterestedly, withdrew to his country house, from which he had been reluctantly torn. He withdrew to enjoy, in the bosom of his family, the advantages of agriculture and the pleasures of retirement. To such a retreat would Paul have flown with delight, had he not known that, for him it was not a duty. He, unlike the Dictator, had no intervals of unmolested claim; it was not in the quiet of repose, but in the very midst of perils and of persecutions, that he laboured for his own support.

It cannot be denied, that his whole consistent practice furnished this sure criterion of a faithful minister,—that he enjoined no self-denial, preached no mortification, recommended no exertion to others, of which he gave not himself a shining example. While he pointed out to his associates the duty of 'approving themselves ministers of God in afflictions, in necessities, in

distresses,' he was not himself *lying on a bed of roses;* he was not making light of sorrows, of which he was not personally partaking; he did not deal out orders for the patient endurance of sufferings the bitterness of which he had not tasted. He had largely shared in the stripes and imprisonments which it was possible some of his followers might be speedily called to endure.

At the same time, he furnishes them with cautions drawn from his own invariable prudence, when he exhorted them to *give no offence.* This was not altogether to avoid personal discredit, though that should be carefully guarded against, so much as to preserve the character of religion itself from the obloquy she would sustain from the faults of her disciples. His great object why *the ministry should not be blamed,* was because he knew how ineffectual all teaching would be rendered, if the teacher committed the faults he reprehended, or even exercised a religious vocation in an imprudent manner.

In another place, after recapitulating some of the hardships which himself and his companions were suffering, up to the very moment when he was describing them,—their hunger and thirst, their nakedness and buffeting, deprived of domestic comforts, destitute of a settled home; having shown what was their treatment, he proceeds to show what was their temper under it: —*Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat.* This is indeed practical Christianity!

After enumerating the trials to which they may be exposed, he sets over against them a catalogue of the qualities by which they should be distinguished,—*pureness, knowledge, kindness;* thus encouraging them to patience by the integrity of their motives; and to the adornment of their calling, by the skilfulness and affection with which they exercised it He tempers their sorrows and difficulties, by interspersing with the recital those Divine consolations, from which alone genuine cheerfulness can be derived.

In this enumeration he had not to rack his invention for precedents; he had only to make a transcript of the state of his own mind, and the tenor of his own practice, to give them a complete delineation of the ministerial character. While he encourages them to perseverance by the success which might attend their labours, he prepares them also to expect reproach; mingling *good and evil report* as the probable lot of every devoted servant of Christ.

When he was setting out from Ephesus for Jerusalem, 'bound in the spirit, not knowing the things that should befal him,' the indefinite yet certain anticipation of calamity which he expressed, might have been interpreted into the pusillanimous forebodings of his own apprehensive mind: he guards against this suspicion by informing us, it was by the unerring inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he was assured, 'that bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city;' so that he knew infallibly, wherever he went, it was only a change of place, not of peril. Yet was this conviction so far from arresting his purpose, so far from inclining him to hesitate, or not to persist in the path of duty because it was the path of danger, that his mighty faith converted duty into choice, elevated duty into joy. Hear his triumphant proclamation: 'But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.'

It is not the nature of Christianity to convert a man of sense into a driveller; if it make him self-abased in the sight of God, and in his own eyes, it does not oblige him to a renunciation of his just claims in civil society, nor to a base abjection in the sight of men. He is not desirous of honours which do not belong to him, but he does not despise those to which he has a lawful claim. The character of Paul, like the religion he taught, is manly, rational, ingenuous.

This combination of dignity with humility, he uniformly presents to us. He always humbles, but never disparages himself. He, who on one occasion was 'the least of all saints,' was, on another, 'not a whit behind the chiefest of them.' He that was 'not worthy to be called an apostle,' would yet magnify his apostleship. He who would patiently endure injury and reproach, yet refused to be scourged contrary to law. He, who was illegally imprisoned at Philippi, accepted not the deliverance till the magistrates themselves came in person to release him, —a resolution not only due to his own innocence, but probably intended also to render the magistrates afraid of proceeding unjustly against other Christians. He, who could submit to live by the labour of his own hands, and to receive charity in his sickness, would vindicate his civil title to respect, and not only urge his right of Roman citizenship, but press his peculiar ground of superiority over the officer who would have contended with him, by declaring that his own freedom was not a purchase, but an inheritance. He who determined to know nothing but 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' could assert, when it became proper, his liberal education under a master in Israel. He, who was now lying at the foot of the cross, avowed that he had been bred at the feet of Gamaliel. He who was beating down the pride of 'gifts' in the assuming Corinthians, scrupled not to declare his own superiority in this very article, yet with an exclusive ascription of the gift to the Giver. 'I thank my God, that I speak with more tongues than you all.'*

To those who understand what Bishop Horseley calls 'the paradoxes of Christianity,' it will be perfectly intelligible, that one, who was so feelingly alive to the perception of sin, as to deplore that 'when he would do good, evil was present with him,' could also, in the integrity of his heart, boldly appeal to the Thessalonians for the purity of his own conduct, and that of his companions—'you know how holily, and justly, and unblameably we have lived among you.'

He was aware that contentions about practices and opinions comparatively insignificant, were generally the most vehemently and uncharitably carried on by men who are the most cold and indifferent in the defence of truths of the most

* Acts, ch. 16.

awful moment. Inflexible himself in every thing which was of vital importance, yet accommodating in trivial matters, about which men of narrow views pertinaciously contend, he shaped the course of his usefulness to the winding current of life, and the flexure of circumstances; and was ever on the watch to see how, by giving way in things indifferent, he might gain men to the great cause which he lived only to promote.

Never was any sentiment more completely perverted, than that which is so expressive of the condescension that distinguishes his character,—*I am all things to all men.* The Latitudinarian in principle or in morals, who would not consider Paul's authority as paramount on any other occasion, eagerly pleads this text to justify his own accommodation to every thing that is tempting in interest, or seductive in appetite. This sentiment, which proceeded from a candour the most amiable, was, in the apostle, always governed by an integrity the most unbending.

To what purpose did he make use of this maxim? 'That he might by all means save some.' Let those who justify its adoption by the sanction of Paul, employ it to the same end to which he employed it. But is it not frequently carried to a conceding length, to which he would never have carried it, to answer *any* purpose; and is not the end itself often such as he would not have sought, even by the best means? To the perversion of this sentiment the fashionable doctrine of expediency may be imputed,—a doctrine not more corrupt in its principle, and dangerous in its results, than opposite to the whole bent and current of the apostles' views, as developed in his writings and in his practice.

That hollow maxim, of *doing evil that good may come*, had indeed been adopted by some of the wisest Pagan legislators. Not only the prudent Numa pretended to Divine communications with his inspiring goddess, in order that his laws might be received with more reverence; even the open hearted conqueror of Carthage used to enter the Capitol alone, under pretence of consulting the gods, that whatever enterprises he wished to recommend to the people, they might believe them to be directed and approved by their deities.—But nothing impedes the march of truth more than the offered assistance of falsehood. Nothing is more injurious to a good cause than the attempt to help it forward with fictitious or even doubtful additions. Some of the best cases,—cases corroborated by a thousand indubitable facts,—have been injured for a time, by the detection of petty instances of misrepresentation, or mistake, or aggravation in ill-judging advocates.

After the example of the illustrious Romans above recited, but with far less excuse, even some weak Christians, in the second century, fancying that deceit might succeed where truth had failed, attempted by forgery to supply the deficiencies of Scripture. Spurious Sybilline verses, under the reign of one of the Antonines, were imposed by fraud upon folly, as prophecies of Christ, pretending to be as old as the Deluge. The attempt to mend perfection never answers.

To these political impostures what a contrast does Saint Paul exhibit at once in his writings and his life!—In his writings he declares, in one short sentence, of all such principles, 'their condemnation is just.' In his life he *suffered* evil to extremity, that good might be produced; but never, under the most alluring pretence, *did* evil, or connived at it. He drew in no convert, by displaying only the pleasant side of Christianity. To bring forward the doctrine of the cross was his first object; though, since his time, to keep them out of sight has sometimes been thought a more prudent measure. But the political wisdom of the Jesuitical missionaries failed as completely as the simple integrity of the apostle succeeded.

His arguments, it is true, were powerful, his motives attractive; but he never shrunk from the avowal, that they were drawn wholly from things unseen, future, eternal. 'To you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his holy angels.' 'If we suffer with Christ, we shall be also glorified together.'—The sufferings of the present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.' And in this view he is not afraid to speak of suffering, as a favour connected with faith. It is *given* unto them, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to *suffer* for his sake.

How powerful must have been the convictions of his faith, and the integrity of his heart, which could not only conquer prejudice the most inveterate, but could lead him to renounce every prospect of riches and power, fame and distinction,—objects which were likely to have taken deep hold on a temper so fervent, a genius so active! He knew that the cause he was embracing would defeat all such expectations. He possibly might have advanced his fortune, certainly his reputation, under his Jewish masters, had he pursued those practices in which he was so hotly engaged, when he was *so exceedingly mad against the Church of God.*

What was the use which, in his new character, he made of his natural advantages? It was the same which he made of his supernatural graces. Did the one induce intellectual pride? Did the other inspire spiritual self-sufficiency? Was it his aim to exalt the accomplished preacher? Was it not his only endeavour to magnify the crucified Saviour? He sought no civil power, courted no ecclesiastical supremacy. He conferred honour on Episcopacy by ordaining bishops, but took no rank himself. He intermeddled with no party. All his interference with governments was to teach the people to obey them.

He had nothing to bias him at the time of his conversion, any more than afterwards.—He embraced Christianity when at the height of its discredit: in defending it, he was neither influenced by the obstinacy of supporting a preconceived opinion, nor the private motive of personal attachment. As he had not been a follower nor an acquaintance of Jesus, he had never been buoyed up with the hope of a place in his expected temporal kingdom. Had this been the case, mere pride and pertinacity in so strong a character might have led him to adhere to the falling cause, lest by deserting it he might

be accused of disappointment in his hopes, or pusillanimity in his temper. Was it probable then, that on any lower principle he would encounter every hazard, sacrifice every hope, annihilate every possibility of preferment, for the cause of a man, after his ignominious death, whom he had so fiercely opposed, when the danger was less alarming, and the hope less uncertain.

His strong faith was fortified by those trials which would have subdued a weak one. His zeal increased with the darkness of his earthly prospects. What were his inducements? The glory of God. What was his reward? Bonds and imprisonment. When arrived at any fresh scene of peril, did he smooth his language to secure his safety?—Did he soften an unpalatable truth to attract upon false grounds? Did he practise any artifice to swell the catalogue of his proselytes? Did he take advantage of ignorance and idolatry, when acclamations met him? Did he court popularity when he refused divine honours? Did he not prefer his Master's crown of thorns to the garlands with which the priests of Jupiter would have crowned him? Is it not observable, that this offer of deification disturbed the serenity of his spirit more than all his injuries had done?

Two remarks arise out of this circumstance. How little is popular acclamation any proof of the comparative excellence of the objects of acclaim; and how little is genuine grandeur of soul elated by it! Jesus, after all his miraculous deeds, as full of mercy as of power,—deeds repeatedly performed in his own country, and before the same spectators—never had divine honours paid him. While, for a single cure, Paul and his companions were instantly deified, though they rejected the homage with a holy indignation. Nothing could more fully prove their deep humility than that they bore the abuse and ill-treatment of the people with meekness; but when they would have worshipped them, 'they rent their clothes.'

In fine, no principle short of the faith described by our apostle in the eleventh of Hebrews, could have enabled him to sustain with such heroic firmness, the diversified sufferings alluded to in the twelfth of the second of Corinthians. Nothing short of that Divine support could have produced a disinterestedness so pure, a devotedness so sublime.

The afflictions of the saints serve to prove the distinguished character of God's favour. The grace so eminently afforded to this apostle neither exempted him from sorrow, nor suffering, nor dangers, nor calumny, nor poverty, nor a violent death. That its results were in the opposite direction shows at once the intrinsic nature of the Divine favour, and the spirit in which it is received and acted upon by sincere Christians.

CHAP. VII.

Saint Paul's prudence in his conduct towards the Jews.

The judgment of Saint Paul is remarkably manifest in the juxta-position of things. In opening his Epistle to his converts at Rome, among whom were many Jews for whose benefit he wrote, he paints the moral character of the Pagan capital in the darkest colours. The fidelity of his gloomy picture is corroborated by an almost contemporary historian,* who, though a Pagan and a countryman, paints it in still blacker shades, and without the decorum observed by Saint Paul.

The representation here made of Roman vice, would be in itself sufficiently pleasing to the Jews; and it would be more so, when we observe, what is most worthy of observation, the nature of the charges brought against the Romans. As if the wisdom of God had been desirous of vindicating itself by the lips of Paul in the eyes of his own countrymen the Jews, the vices charged upon the Romans are exactly those which stand in opposition to the spirit of some one injunction of the Decalogue. Now, though the heathen writers were unacquainted with this code, yet the spontaneous breach of its statutes proved most clearly these statutes to have been suggested by the most correct foreknowledge of the evil propensities of our common nature. The universal violation of the law, even by those who knew it not, manifested the omniscience of the Lawgiver.

And, let it be further remarked in this connection, that no exceptions could be taken against the justice of God, for animadverting on the breach of a law, which was not known: inasmuch as, so faithful was the law of Mount Sinai to the law of conscience, the revealed to the natural code of morals, that the Romans in offending one had offended both; in breaking unwittingly the Decalogue, they had knowingly rebelled against the law of conscience; they had sinned against the light of nature; they had stifled the suggestions of their better judgment; they had consciously abused natural mercies; they had confounded the distinctions of good and evil, of which they were not insensible. 'Their conscience bore them witness' that they violated many obvious duties, so that even these were without excuse.'

The unconverted Jews would, doubtless, then feel no small pleasure in contemplating this hideous portrait of human crimes as without excuse, and would naturally be tempted, with their usual self-complacency, to turn it to their own advantage, and boastfully to thank God that they were not like other men, or even like these Romans.

To check this unbecoming exultation, the apostle, with admirable dexterity, in the very next chapter † begins to pull down their high conceits. He presents them with a frightful picture of themselves, drawn from the life, and aggravated by a display of that superior light and knowledge which rendered their immoralities far more inexcusable. To the catalogue of the vices which he had reprehended in the others, he adds that of self-sufficiency, arrogance, and harsh judgment, which formed so distinguished a feature in the Pharisaic character. Paul in this point shows the equity of

* Suetonius. † Romans, ch. ii

distributive justice. The Jews had sinned, not only against the laws they knew, but the law they venerated.—They rested in the law, not with gratitude for the distinction, but with security in the privilege; and they were ruined, he suggests, by a vain confidence in those external advantages which would have been their glory, had not privilege been converted into a substitute for piety. What apology should he now offer for the sins of the chosen nation, the peculiar people, the possessors and the boasters of the law, distinguished, not only by having received, but by being the hereditary, exclusive proprietors of the Divine Oracles? Thus, while he convicts his own nation, he gives an awful lesson to posterity of the vanity of forms and profession, that it is not possessing nor dispersing the Bible that will carry men to heaven, but only as they individually believe its doctrines, submit to its authority, and conform to its precepts. The apostle reminds them, that it is not the knowledge of God's will, which they possessed; nor the approbation of 'things that are excellent,' which they manifested; nor their confident ambition of teaching others; nor their skill to guide the blind; nor the form of knowledge; nor the letter of the law, which could avail without personal holiness.

After this severe reproof, for doing themselves the wrong things they censured, and for not doing the right things they taught, he suddenly turns upon them with a rapid succession of interrogatories respecting their own practice; personally applying each distinct subject of their instruction of others to each distinct failure of their own in those very points of conduct which they insisted on; proving upon them, that through this glaring inconsistency, 'the name of God was blasphemed among unbelievers.'

Thus he demonstrates that the Jew and Gentile stand on the same level with regard to their definitive sentence, each being to be judged according to their respective law. Nay, the conscientious Pagan will find more favour than the immoral Jew. Profession will not justify, but aggravate offence. Men, indeed, may see our exactness in forms and observances, and will justly commend what is in itself commendable; but as they cannot discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, they may admire as piety what is at worst hypocrisy, and at best but form. Whilst of the sincere Jew he declares, as we may also of the sincere Christian, he is a Jew who *is one inwardly, not in the letter, but in the heart and the spirit, whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

By the august simplicity and incontrovertible reasoning of this Epistle to Rome, and by that supernatural power which accompanied it, he brought down the arrogance of human ability from its loftiest heights, subdued the pride of philosophy in its strong holds, and superseded the theology, without aiming at the splendour, of the most amiable and eloquent of all the Romans in his admired work on the 'Nature of the gods.' By one short address to that city, written in the demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, he 'destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Knowing that pride was the dominant disposition of his own countrymen, he loses no occasion of attacking this master sin, and frequently intimates how ill it became such an insignificant and perverse people to arrogate to themselves a superiority, for which though their advantages furnish them with means, their practice furnishes them with no shadow of pretence.

In speaking on this subject, Saint Paul used none of the cant, but displayed all the kindness of liberality. Speaking of the Jews, 'he bears them record that they had a zeal for God,' but instantly his veracity obliged him to qualify his candour, by lamenting that their zeal was not regulated by knowledge. Their perverseness rather increased his desire of serving them, than drove him into a hopeless indifference; their provocations grieved, but neither silenced nor exasperated him.

It was the high destiny of this distinguished apostle, that he was to be the honoured instrument of enlarging, to an indefinite extent, the hitherto contracted pale of Christianity. The law of Moses had been committed to one single people, and it was one of the conditions of that law, that they to whom it was given were interdicted from any free intercourse with the rest of the world. A larger heart and a higher mind than those of Paul could not have been found for the new and expanded service. Christianity, through him, opened wider her liberal arms, broke through the narrow barrier, and carried her unconditional offers of boundless emancipation to every captive of sin and ignorance throughout all the kingdoms of the world.

But though Paul's original destination was, that he should be the apostle of the Gentiles; though his labours were to be more especially consecrated to that innumerable mass to whom the narrow minded Jews grudged the very chance of access to heaven; yet where ever he came he showed this mark of regard, that he opened his first public instructions in the Jewish synagogue, referring the hearers in his discourses to their own prophets, as he did his Pagan auditors to their own authors.

It was necessary that the word of God should be first spoken to the Jews, they being the depositaries of the antecedent revelations made by the Almighty; which revelations being preparatory to the introduction of the Gospel, and abounding with prophetic intimations of the Messiah, if the Jews should accept the new revelation as the completion of the old, it would largely contribute to convince the heathen that Christianity was in truth a Divine institution.

The annals of the Jews, insulated as they had been as a people, had become, by Divine appointment, connected with the history of other nations. Their captivity had brought them into contact with Persia and Babylon. As they always continued a commercial people, they had, after their dispersion, by their extensive traffic, carried their religion with their commerce into various countries. Thus their proverbial love of gain had been over-ruled to a providential purpose, that of carrying the knowledge of the one true God among the Gentiles. This again, by that secret working of Infinite Wisdom, served as a prelude to the appearance

of Christianity in these countries, and would probably lessen their indisposition to receive it. By the same providential ordination of that Power who educes good from evil, the Emperor Claudius, in banishing the Christians from Rome, caused the faith to be more extensively spread by these exiles, who were dispersed through different countries:—and, to mention another instance, by the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, though the comfort of Christian society was mutually lost, yet their separation caused the Gospel to be preached at the same time in two places instead of one. But though the sins of the worst men, and the infirmities of the best, are made subservient to God's gracious purposes, they justify neither the resentment of the Saint, nor the crime of the Emperor.

Saint Paul, in directing his instructions, first to the Jewish sojourners in the heathen cities, bequeathed an important lesson to all reformers, —that the most extensive plans of doing good to strangers should be accompanied with the most unabated zeal at home; and that natural connexions have the prior, though not the exclusive claim to their services.

If in the first promulgation of the Gospel-message, the apostle showed a regard to the *rights* of the Jewish nation, in his subsequent conduct on every possible occasion, he consults even their *prejudices*. At all times he showed as much respect for their religion as was consistent with that which he now professed; always studiously endeavouring to obviate objection, and to cut off every plausible ground of complaint. Thus, in treating with deference the Jewish laws and usages, though virtually abrogated, he loudly instructs us that temperance is not to be swallowed up by zeal; that it may be prudent for a time, to let some inferior errors alone, yet not without intimation or implication that they *are* errors; that premature attacks upon the lesser may obstruct the removal of the greater. And in other cases we may learn, that though extirpation may be indispensably necessary, yet it may, under certain circumstances, be better effected by the gradual process of successive strokes, than by laying at the first blow the axe to the root.

A lesson of discreet kindness may also be learnt from the same example in the domestic walks of life. If pious young persons do not patiently bear with any averseness in a parent or a friend from that serious spirit which they themselves have been happily brought to entertain; moroseness and ill-humoured opposition will not only increase the distaste, instead of recommending a religion, of which their own *temper affords so unamiable* and so unfair a specimen.

It was the same discretion which led Paul at one time to confer on Timothy* the initiatory rite of the Jewish church, because his mother was of Jewish extraction; and at another, induced him to forbid Titus undergoing the same ceremony, because his origin was Pagan.† The one was allowed, to avoid doing violence to Jewish prejudices; the other prohibited, lest the Gentile convert should be taught to place his dependance on any thing but the Saviour. He inflexibly resisted granting this introductory rite to Pagan converts. Though this union of candour with firmness is a very exemplary part of his character, it has not escaped the charge of inconsistency. But he thought it was acting in a more Christian spirit, to continue, in different instances, his conformity to ancient usages than by a violent opposition to mere forms to irritate persons, some of whom conscientiously persevered in them.

Perhaps no quality has been more fatal to the interests of Christianity than prejudice. It is the moral cataract of the human mind. In vain the meridian sun of Truth darts his full beams The mental eye is impervious to the strongest ray. When religion is to be assailed, prejudice knows how to blend antipathies. It leagued those mutual enemies Herod and Pontius Pilate in one common cause. It led the Jews to prefer the robber to the Saviour. Though they abhorred the Roman yoke, yet rather than Jesus shall escape, 'they will have no king but Cæsar.' At Jerusalem it had united the bigot Pharisee and the infidel Sadducee against Paul, till his declaration that he was of the former class, by exciting a party-spirit, suspended, but did not extinguish their fury. At Athens it combined, in one joint opposition, two sects, the most discordant in sentiment and practice. When truth was to be attacked, the rigid Stoic could unite with the voluptuous Epicurean.

Prejudice had not only blinded the understanding of the Jews, so as to prevent their receiving the truth, but led them to violate it, by asserting a glaring falsehood. When our Lord told them that 'if they would know the truth, the truth would make them free'—as they had no idea of spiritual freedom, so of civil liberty they had nothing to boast. But, exasperated at any offer of deliverance, because it implied subjugation, they indignantly replied, 'we were never in bondage to any man,' though it was notorious that they had been bond-slaves in Egypt, captives in Babylon, and were, at the very moment of this proud boast, tributary to the Romans.

Ignorance and prejudice respecting religion can never be fairly pleaded in excuse by minds cultivated by diligent inquiry on other subjects. Paul, indeed, says, that, though a persecutor, he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly. The apology from him is valid, for he does not offer the plea for ignorance and prejudice, till he was cured of both. His sincerity appears in his abandoning his error, his humility in confessing it. Our spiritual strength is increased by the retrospection of our former faults. This remembrance left a compassionate feeling for the errors of others on the impressible heart of Saint Paul. Perhaps in his early mad career against the Church of Christ, he might be permitted to carry it to such lengths, to afford a proof that Omnipotence can subdue even prejudice!

It is a melancholy feature in the character of the human mind, that Saint Paul met with less mercy from his brethren, among whom he had been bred, and whose religion approached so much nearer to that which he had adopted, than

* Acts, xvi. 3. † Gal. ii.

from the higher class of the Pagans, who stood at the farthest possible distance from it. Caiaphas, Ananias, Tertullus, and the whole Sanhedrim, were far more violent than Lysias, Felix, Festus, Gallio, the town-clerk of Ephesus, or the rulers of Thessalonica.

Even on that awful occasion, when prejudice did its worst, the Roman judge who condemned the Saviour of the world, was more candid than the High Priest, who delivered him up. While the Jews cried, Crucify! the Governor declared 'he found no fault in him:' and, but for the suppleness and venality of his character, would have protected the life which he sacrificed to Jewish bigotry. While Pilate deliberated, Caiaphas cut the matter short on the plea of *expediency**—'it is expedient that one man should die for the people.' In this High Priest the doctrine found a patron worthy of itself.

There was in the Divine Sufferer a veiled majesty; there was a mysterious grandeur thrown round his character; there were glimpses of glory breaking through the obscurity in which he was shrouded, which excited a curiosity not unmingled with fear in the great ones of the earth. It was a grand illustration of that solemn indistinctness which is said to be one cause of the sublime. Both Herod and Pilate were surprised into something like an involuntary respect, mixed with a vague apprehension of they knew not what.

But to return from this too long digression, for which the only apology that can be offered, is, that the uniform temper and conduct of Saint Paul with the Jews was eminently calculated to parry every objection that had any show of reason, and to remove every prejudice which was not invincible.

In the case of Paul, Agrippa appears to have been the only Jew in authority who ever manifested any show of candour towards him. Even the offended Athenians were so far affected with his discourse, as to betray their emotion by saying, 'We will hear thee again on this matter;' thus civilly softening rejection into procrastination;—while there is scarcely an instance of any Jewish people, as a body, fairly inquiring into the truth of the Christian doctrine with a real desire of information.

The Bereans, indeed, offer an honourable exception, and are accordingly distinguished by one, who rarely employs epithets, the biographer of Saint Paul, with the appellation of 'noble.' This thinking people did not lightly embrace the new religion without inquiry, but received it upon rational examination, daily searching the Scriptures; thus presenting us with an example of that union of faith and reason which constitutes the character of a sound Christian.

Though the Gentiles were ready to oppose Saint Paul wherever he came, we do not find that they pursued him with hostility from one city to another, as the Jews of Thessalonica did, in following him to Berea, to excite a persecution against him.

The temper to which allusion has been made, is not, it is to be feared, quite extinct. Are there not, at this favoured period of light and knowledge, some Christians by profession, who manifest more hostility towards those who are labouring to procure instruction for the Hindoos, than towards Hindooism itself? Are not shades of our own colour looked at with a more jealous eye, than a colour of the most opposite character? and is not the remark too nearly founded in experience; that approximation rather inflames than cools; that nearness aggravates because it is not identity? If, like the apostle, a man is impelled by his conscience to act against the opinion of those with whom he desires to live well; to obey the impulse, as it is a severe trial of his feelings, so it is a surer test of his integrity, than to expose himself to the censure of his enemies; of *their* hostility he was assured before; he is, in the other case, risking the loss of his friends.

Saint Paul's prudence, under the Divine direction, led him to adopt very different measures in his intercourse with the Jews and with the Gentiles; measures suggested by the different condition of the two classes, both in their civil and religious circumstances. To the one, the very name of Messiah was unknown; of the other, he was both the glory and the shame. To the one true God in whom they fully believed, they were to add the reception of Jesus Christ. 'He came to his own,' but his own, so far from receiving, crucified him. Subsequently to this event, Paul laboured to convince them, that this was the Saviour promised, first by God himself, then by a long and unbroken succession of the very prophets whom they professed to venerate. With these adversaries, therefore, he had substantial grounds on which to expostulate; analogies, from which to argue; promises, which they believed; predictions, of which they had expected the accomplishment; and, to leave them without the shadow of excuse, he had to plead the actual recent fulfilment of these predictions.

But with the Gentiles he had no common ground on which to stand, no references to which to send them, no analogies from which to reason, except indeed the visible works of creation and providence. He did what a profound thinker of our own country has since done more in detail; he showed them *the analogy of revealed religion with the constitution and course of nature.** In this he had, as it were, to address their senses rather than their intellect or their knowledge, great as were both,—for their wisdom had served only to lead them wider from the mark.

As they were little acquainted with first principles, he had with them no middle way to take. He could not improve upon polytheism; there was no such thing as mending idolatry; it was not a building to be repaired; it must be demolished; no materials were to be picked out from its ruins towards the construction of the everlasting edifice; the rubbish must be rolled away. A clear stage must be left for the new order of things; with this order it had no compatabilities, old things were past away, all things must be come new.

* John xviii. 14.

* Bishop Butler.

The Sun of Righteousness which was to absorb the faint, but not false, lights of Judaism, was utterly to dispel the darkness of Paganism. One of the Roman emperors (most of whom thought that they could not have too many gods, nor too little religion) would have added Jesus to the number of their deities. Paul abhorred any such compromise. 'We know,' says he, 'an idol is nothing in the world.' Such an association, therefore, would not be of good and bad, but of every thing with nothing. Christianity would not accept of any thing short of the annihilation of the whole mythologic rabble.

The new economy was now to take place. The fundamental doctrine of One God over all blessed for ever, which had been long familiar to the Jew, was at length to be made known to the heathen, with the participation in common with the Jew, of salvation by his Son. The partition wall was taken down for ever.

Paul however retained, to the end of his ministry, a cordial kindness for 'his brethren after the flesh.' His heart's desire and prayer for Israel was, that they might be saved,—for the Rose of Sharon was grafted on the Stem of David. Not only the same God was to be worshipped by both, but 'Jesus whom he had sent;' while Paganism lay prostrate, never more to rise from its ruins. It is a remarkable circumstance, that while to this day surviving Israel remains without a temple, the surviving Pantheon remains without a worshipper.

CHAP. VIII.

Saint Paul's Judgment in his intercourse with the Pagans.

It is among the mysteries of Christianity, that the preaching of Jesus made so few converts, and his death so many. The more affecting were his discourses, the stronger was the indignation they excited; the deeper was the anxiety which he expressed for the salvation of men, so much the more vehemently were they exasperated against him; the more merciful were his miracles, so much the faster did they accelerate his ignominious catastrophe. 'Did not this prove,' says the eloquent Bossuet, 'that not his words, but his Cross was to bring all men to Him? Does it not prove that the power of his persuasion consisted in the shedding of his blood?' This he himself predicted—'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men into me.' Were it not for this reason, it would be astonishing to our shallow wisdom, that the Author of Christianity made so few proselytes to his own faith, and his apostles so many. That the disciple who denied him should, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, awaken, by a single sermon, the consciences of three thousand auditors; and that the persecutor, who reviled Him, should become under the influence of the same Divine Spirit, the mighty instrument of the conversion of the Pagan world.

If Saint Paul had declined visiting the learned and polished regions of Greece, it might have been produced against him, that he carefully avoided those cultivated cities where men were best able to judge of the consistency of the Gospel doctrines with its precepts, and of the truth of those miracles by which its Divinity was confirmed. The Greeks might have urged it as an argument against Paul's integrity, that he confined his preaching to the countries which they called barbarous, knowing they would be less acute in discovering inconsistencies, and more easily imposed upon by impostures which men of liberal education would have immediately detected. His visiting every city famous for literature, science, and philosophy, would also be a complete refutation of any such charge in after ages. 'Because,' says a judicious commentator, 'if upon an accurate examination, great numbers of men embraced the Gospel, who were best qualified to judge of its nature and evidences, their conversion would render it indubitable in after times, that the Gospel was supported by those great and undeniable miracles which were performed in every country by the preachers of Christianity; so that no person might hereafter suspect that idolatry was destroyed and Christianity established merely through the simplicity and ignorance of the people among whom it was first preached.'*

Saint Paul was with more propriety selected to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, than if he had been of Gentile extraction; none but a teacher, educated as he had been, under an eminent Jewish doctor, would have been so competent to produce, before both Jews and Gentiles, proofs that the miracles, sufferings, and death of Jesus happened in exact conformity to the predictions of those prophets of whom the Jews had perfect knowledge, and to whom, though the Gentiles previously knew them not, yet it is probable that he afterwards for their fuller confirmation would refer them.

There appears to have been a considerable difference between Saint Paul's reception among the Jewish and Gentile populace. Among the former, the 'common people, who had heard Jesus gladly,' must have had their prejudices softened, and in many instances removed; even those, probably, who were not converted, had seen and heard of his miracles with astonishment. They were also witnesses of the wonderful effects produced by Saint Peter's sermon. Their minds were become so favourably disposed, that after the miracle wrought by Peter and John,† the enraged council did not venture to punish them, 'because of the people, for all men glorified God for that which was done.'

While the Heathen governors seem, in their transactions with Saint Paul, less intolerant than the Jewish Sanhedrim, the Heathen multitude appear to have been more furious than the Jewish. The Jewish leaders had a personal hatred to Christ; the Gentile community had a national hatred to the Jews. If a party among the Jews detested the Christians, the Pagans as a body despised the Jews, whilst they would consider Christianity but as a new modification of an antiquated and degrading superstition, made worse by the offensive addition of certain tenets, still more unphilosophical and incredible

* Macknight on the Life of Saint Paul

† Acts, ch. iv.

than were taught under the old dispensation. The contempt of the Gentiles was founded on their ignorance of the true religion of Judaism, and that again had prevented any inquiry into their opinions. From the prejudiced pen of Tacitus, and the sarcastic muse of Juvenal, we see the disdain in which they were held. The great writers, only less culpable than modern infidels, like them collected a string of misrepresentations, and then turned into ridicule the system of their own invention.

The philosophers, who disagree each with the other, all join in the contemning more especially one doctrine of Christianity, which every sect alike conceived to be the most inconsistent with their own tenets, and the most contradictory to general philosophical principles,—the resurrection of the body, which they contemptuously called the *hope of worms*.

The Pagan magistrates looked with a jealous eye upon all innovators; not indeed so much from an aversion to any novelty of religious opinion, (for to this they were so indifferent as to make little objection to any mode of worship which did not seek to subvert their own;) but, through the machinations of the mercenary priests, who fearful of any invasion of their corrupt establishment, any detection of their frauds, any disclosure of their mysteries, any danger of their altars, their auguries, their profitable oracles, and above all, any abridgment of their political influence; excited the civil governors against Paul by the stale artifice of insinuating that his designs were hostile to the state.

The artisans who enriched themselves by the occupation of making the symbols of idolatry, found that, by the contempt into which their deities were likely to be brought, their craft would not only be endangered, but destroyed. This conviction, more perhaps than any zeal for their own religion, served to influence them also against that of Saint Paul. And finally the populace, who liked the easy and pleasant way of appeasing their divinities by shows and pageants, and ceremonies, and lustral days, were unwilling to lose their holidays, and all the decorations and pleasures which distinguished them, and did not care to exchange this gay and amusing religion for the spiritual, sober, and unostentatious worship of the Christians.

There was therefore no disposition in any class of society to receive the doctrines of the Gospel, or to forgive the intrusion of its teachers. Paul, unsupported, unfriended, had to open his own commission to audiences backed by multitudes, protected by power, patronized by learning, countenanced by the national priesthood. It was a far more unequal contest than that of David and Goliath; for, besides the people, he had to combat with the giants of Areopagus. But greater was He that was for him, than they who were against him.

Had he not been an adept in the knowledge of human nature, how could there have been, in his diversified discourses, such an adaptation to the moral wants of men? His superiority in this respect appears not only in his general knowledge of man in the abstract, but in his acquaintance with life and manners, in what we call knowledge of the world; in his scrupulous observance of time and place, in his admirable judgment in so skilfully accommodating his discourses to the condition, character, and circumstances of the persons whom he addressed. To some he applied as to decided enemies to Christianity; to others as utterly unacquainted with its nature, and ignorant of its design, but not averse from inquiring into its truth. He always carefully distinguished between the errors of the followers of religion and the sins of her adversaries. To some he addressed himself as awakened, to others, as enlightened, to many as sincere, but to none as perfect.

The various powers of his opulent mind he exercised with a wise appropriation to the genius of those whom he addressed. With the Jews 'he reasoned;' with the Athenian controvertists 'he disputed;' at Ephesus 'he boldly disputed and persuaded.'

The apostle's zeal was never cooled by the improbability of success. He knew that what seemed hopeless to men was not impossible to God. Even at Paphos, where the most impure worship was offered to the most impure deity, he made a most important convert in the Proconsul himself.* This wise governor holds out an example to men in high public stations; he suffered not himself to be influenced by report, or duped by misrepresentation; he would hear with his own ears 'the word of God' which Paul preached, and see with his own eyes the miracle which confirmed it.

In his preaching at Antioch,† he introduces his great commission to the Gentiles in the most dignified and masterly manner, referring the Jewish auditors to the striking passages of their national history; to the prophecies and their fulfilment: to the attestation of the Baptist; to Christ's death and resurrection. He ends with a most awful peroration; 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish;' and then, with a measured sternness which nothing could shake, he makes the disclosure of that grand scheme, of Almighty goodness, the scheme of proclaiming to the Gentiles that Gospel which the chosen people to whom it had been offered, so contumeliously rejected. How striking the contrast of manner in which these words of the apostle were received by the two classes of hearers!—the envy and malignity, 'the contradictions and blasphemies of the Jews;' the joyful gratitude with which the heathen 'glorified the word of the Lord,' at the annunciation of a blessing so vast and so unexpected!

To the people of Lystra his address is short, plain, and simple, yet passionate and energetic: so plain, as to be not only understood, but felt by the meanest auditor; yet so powerful, that when aided by a miracle of mercy, which he wrought before them, he scarcely restrained them from offering him divine honours. His appearance before Felix having been more largely detailed by the sacred historian, we may well be allowed a more particular consideration of it. Heathen historians represent Felix as having, by every kind of misconduct, excited disturbances in Judea, and by exactions and oppressions obtained the contempt of his subjects, to whom he

* Sergius Paulus. † Acts, ch. 13

had occasioned great calamities; his mal-administration, but for the intervention of the governor of Syria, would have kindled a war; and an instance of it indeed occurs on the very occasion of which we are about to speak, in Paul's long detention in confinement. It is recorded in the Acts, that he hoped the apostle would have bribed him with money, in order to procure his escape.*

Let us now contrast the different conduct of the popular advocate retained by the Jews against Paul, with that of Paul himself, towards this corrupt governor. Tertullus, a florid speaker, is not ashamed, in the true spirit of party oratory, to offer the grossest adulation to this wicked judge; not only extolling what he knew to be false,—the tranquillity produced by his administration, and 'the worthy deeds' done by him,—but even exalting him into a sort of deity, by whose *providence* their prosperity was procured. Then, in the usual strain of artful and disingenuous adulation, having already exceeded all bounds of decency, he finishes his harangue by hypocritically expressing his fears that praise 'might be tedious to him.'

After the affected declamation of this rhetorical parasite, how are we refreshed with the wise, temperate, and simple defence of the apostle! Instead of loading Tertullus with reproaches for the infamous charges of heresy and sedition brought against himself, he maintains a dignified silence till the governor 'beckoned to him to speak.' He then enters upon his vindication without a single invective against his accusers, and what is still more honourable to his own character, without a single compliment to his judge, though well aware that his liberty, and even his life, were in his hands. Unjust as Felix was, the charges against Paul were too flagrantly false to mislead him, and the noble simplicity of the prisoner's defence carried in it something so convincing to the understanding of the judge, that he durst not act upon the allegations of the accuser, nor condemn the innocent.

At a subsequent meeting, Paul seemed more intent to alarm the conscience of the governor, than he had previously been to assert his own integrity. Felix, ever presenting us with the idea of a bad mind, ill at ease with itself, sends for Paul, and desires to 'hear him concerning the faith of Christ.' Charmed, no doubt, with the occasion given him, Paul uses it widely. He does not embark on topics irrelevant to the immediate case of his auditors, nor by personal reproof does he expose himself to the charge of contumacy. He never loses sight of the respect due to the judge's office, but still, as he knew the venality and profligacy with which he administered that office, together with the licentious character of his wife, who was present, he reasoned, not declaimed; he '*reasoned*' on the virtues in which he knew they were so shamefully deficient—*righteousness and temperance;* and then, doubtless with the dignity of one who was himself to 'judge angels,' closed his discourse with referring these notorious violators of *both* duties to the judgment to *come.*

The result of this discourse is the best evidence of the power of his reasonings.—Conscience struck, *Felix trembled.* The judge dissolved the court, dismissed the prisoner, withheld the sentence, deferred the further trial to an indefinite time,—which time he contrived should never arrive,—till both were cited to appear together before the mighty Judge of quick and dead. Paul throughout maintains his character, and Felix adds one to the numberless instances in which strong convictions not being followed up, only serve to enhance guilt and aggravate condemnation.

To the inhabitants of Ephesus, his reasoning and his persuasive powers are alternately exercised. In his conduct in this place we incidentally discover a singular instance of his discretion in avoiding to excite unnecessary irritation. He found in the Ephesians a strong devotion to one particular idol; yet it is intimated, in a candid speech of their chief magistrate, that he had neither reviled their great goddess, Diana, nor profaned their temples. We may, therefore, fairly presume that he contented himself with preaching against idolatry in general, instead of endeavouring to excite the popular indignation by inveighing against the local idol. *

It is not the meanest of the triumphs of incipient Christianity, that at this place the professors of forbidden arts brought out their costly professional books, the registers of their unlawful mysteries, and burnt them, giving a striking proof of the sincerity of their conversion, by thus putting it out of their power to repeat their impious incantations; their destroying them in the presence of the people, was a triple sacrifice of their prejudices, their credit, and their profit. What an example have they left to those who, though professing Christianity, give birth, or afford encouragement, to profane or profligate books, which, though of a different character from those of the Ephesian sorcerers, possess a *magic* power over the mind of the reader, not less pernicious in itself, and far more extensive in its influence. †

Saint Paul's good sense, and may we be permitted to say, his good taste—qualities we could rather wish than expect to see *always* brought to the service of religion,—were eminently displayed in his examination at Cesarea. While his pleading before the royal audience, and other persons of dignity and station, exhibits a fine specimen of wisdom and good breeding, it exhibits it without the smallest sacrifice of principle, or the least abatement of truth. At once, his doctrines are scriptural, and his language is classical. On this occasion, as upon all others, conscious dignity is mingled with politeness, an air, carrying with it the authority of truth, with the gentleness of Christianity, pervades all he says and does.

This admirable conduct has extorted, even from that eloquent rhapsodist, the sceptical au-

* Acts, ch. 24.

* Acts, 19.

† When the French revolution had brought to light the fatal consequences of some of Voltaire's writings, some half-scrupulous persons, no longer willing to afford his fourscore volumes a place in their library, sold them at a low price. This measure, though it 'stayed the plague' in their own houses, caused the infection to spread wider. The Ephesian magicians made no such compromise; they burnt theirs

thor* of 'the Characteristics,' a confession, 'how handsomely Paul accommodates himself to the apprehension and temper of those polite people, the witty Athenians, and the Roman court of judicature, in the presence of their great men and ladies.' At this last-named memorable audience, with what admirable temper does he preserve his reverence for constituted authorities, while he boldly recapitulates those passages in his former life which were naturally calculated to give offence.—His preliminary compliment to Agrippa was judiciously conceived in a manner to procure attention to his projected defence, without in any sense deserving the name of flattery, or in any degree compromising the truth he meant to deliver. While it answered its proper end, it served as an attestation of his own veracity and of the truth of Christianity; for in complimenting the king on the knowledge of the facts to which he referred him, he laid himself open to immediate detection if the circumstances had not been strictly correct, affording, 'a remarkable proof,' says Lord Lyttelton, 'both of the notoriety of the fact and the integrity of the man, who, with so fearless a confidence, could call upon a king to give testimony for him, while he was sitting in judgment upon him.'

The whole defence is as rational as it is elegant. The self-possession, the modest intrepidity, and the pertinent choice of matter; furnish a model for innocent sufferers under similar circumstances.

As on the one hand it is a great hardship for an accused person to have to plead before ignorance and prejudice, so on the other it was not more just than polite and prudent, for Paul to begin by expressing his satisfaction that he should at least be tried by a judge, who, from his knowledge, his education, and his habits, was competent to determine on the cause. While he scruples not to declare the inveterate prejudices, the blindness, and persecuting spirit of his former life, he does ample justice to his own character as a scholar and a moralist. Well as he knew that his piety would not clear him at the tribunal before which he stood, yet the fair justification of himself from the crimes laid to his charge, was due, not only to his own character, but to the religion which he professed.

Having been himself brought to embrace Christianity by no powers of reasoning, by no trains of argument, he allowed himself either to employ or neglect them at discretion in addressing these assemblies. On the present occasion he limits himself to matter of fact, and seems to think a statement of his own conversion would be more likely to impress a judge 'expert in all customs and questions which were among the Jews.' He insisted dogmatically but on one point, the great doctrine of the Resurrection, for asserting which he had been so often assailed; and he asks, why should it be thought a thing incredible? This, however, he does not *argue;* perhaps conscious of having so amply stated, and so argumentatively defended it in his epistolary writings, now sufficiently known.

* Lord Shaftsbury.

Festus, with that scorn which any allusion to his tenet never failed to excite, impatiently interrupted him, but with a reproof which had more of irony than anger, as if he thought his credulity rather the effect of insanity than of wickedness, the object of ridicule rather than of censure. This irritating charge, however, did not make Paul forget the respect due to the place which Festus filled; and while he vindicated the soundness of his own intellect and the sobriety of his doctrine, he did not fail to address the governor by the honourable appellation of 'most noble,' to which his dignity entitled him. His example in this respect, as in all other particulars, was of an instructive nature; teaching us to separate the civility of speech due to office from the respect due only to personal character, and justify the modern titles and epithets of reverence which have occasioned so much discussion in many of our public forms.

The apostle's speech had produced a considerable emotion in the king, who, however, was determined to act rather upon his convenience than his convictions. The apostle concludes as he had begun, by seizing on the part of Agrippa's character which he could most conscientiously commend, his perfect knowledge of the subject before the court. In his solemn interrogation at the close, 'King Agrippa, believest thou the Prophets?' more is meant than meets the ear; for, if he really believed the prophets, could he refuse to believe the accomplishment of their predictions? His emphatical answer to his own question, 'I know that thou believest,' drew from the startled monarch a free avowal of his partial convictions. The brief but affecting prayer with which the trial closes, is as elegantly turned as if the Apostle had been the courtier.

Agrippa appears, in this instance, in a light so much more advantageous than any of the other judges before whom either Paul or his Lord were cited, that we cannot but regret that he let slip an occasion so providentially put in his way. This illustrious person affords another awful proof of the danger of stifling convictions, postponing inquiries, and neglecting opportunities.

Though the political and military splendour of Athens had declined, and the seat of government, after the conquest of Greece by the Romans, was transferred to Corinth, yet her sun of glory was not set. Philosophy and the liberal arts were still carefully cultivated; students in every department, and from every quarter, resorted thither for improvement, and her streets were crowded by senators and rhetoricians, philosophers and statesmen.

As Paul visited Athens with views which had instigated no preceding, and would probably be entertained by no subsequent traveller, so his attention in that most interesting city was attracted by objects far different from theirs. He was in all probability qualified to range, with a learned eye, over the exquisite pieces of art, and to consult and enjoy the curious remains of literature,—theatres, and temples, and schools of philosophy, sepulchres, and cenotaphs, statues of patriots, and portraits of heroes;—monuments by which the artist had insured to himself the immortality he was conferring. Yet one edifice

alone arrested the apostle's notice.—the altar of the idolatrous worshippers. One record of antiquity alone invited his critical acumen,—THE INSCRIPTION TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

The disposition of this people, their passion for disputation, their characteristic and proverbial love of novelty, had drawn together a vast assembly. Many of the philosophical sects eagerly joined the audience. Curiosity is called by an ancient writer, the wantonness of knowledge. These critics came, it is likely, not as inquirers, but as spies.—The grave stoics probably expected to hear some new unbroached doctrines which they might overthrow by argument; the lively Epicureans some fresh absurdity in religion, which would afford a new field for diversion; the citizens, perhaps, crowding and listening from the mere motive that they might afterwards have to tell the *new thing* they should hear. Paul took advantage of their curiosity. As he habitually opened his discourses with great moderation, we are the less surprised at the measured censure, or rather the implied civility of his introduction. The ambiguous term 'superstitious' which he employed, might be either construed into respect for their spirit of religious inquiry, or into disapprobation of its unreasonable excess; at least he intimated that they were so far from not reverencing the acknowedged god, that they worshipped one which was 'unknown.'

With his usual discriminating mind, he did not 'reason' with these elegant and learned Polytheists 'out of the Scriptures,' of which they were totally ignorant, as he had done at Antioch and Cesarea, before judges who were trained in the knowledge of them: he addressed his present auditors with an eloquent exposition of natural religion, and of the providential government of God, politely illustrating his observations by citing passages from one of their own authors. Even by this quotation, without having recourse to Scripture, he was able to controvert the Epicurean doctrine, that the Deity had no interference with human concerns; showing them on their own principles, that 'we are the offspring of God;' that 'in Him we live and move, and have our being;' and it is worth observing, that he could select from a poet, sentiments which should come nearer to the truth than from a philosopher.

The orator, rising with his subject, after briefly touching on the long suffering of God, awfully announced that ignorance would be no longer any plea for idolatry; that if the Divine forbearance had permitted it so long, it was in order to make the wisest not only see, but feel the insufficiency of their own wisdom in what related to the great concerns of religion; but he now *commanded all men every where to repent.*—He concludes by announcing the solemnities of Christ's future judgment, and the resurrection from the dead.

In considering Saint Paul's manner of unfolding to these wits and sages the power and goodness of that Supreme Intelligence who was the object of their 'ignorant worship,' we are at once astonished at his intrepidity and his management; intrepidity, in preferring this bold charge against an audience of the most accomplished scholars in the world,—in charging ignorance upon Athens! blindness on 'the eye of Greece!'—and management in so judiciously conducting his oration that the audience expressed neither impatience nor displeasure, till he began to unfold the most obnoxious and unpopular of all doctrines,—Jesus raised from the dead.

It is recorded by Saint Luke of this polished and highly intellectual city, that it was *wholly given up to idolatry;* a confirmation of the remark of Pausanias, that there were more image-worshippers in Athens than in all Greece besides.

We have here a clear proof that the reasonableness of Christianity was no recommendation to its adoption by those people who, of all others, were acknowledged to have cultivated reason the most highly.—What a melancholy and heart-humbling conviction, that wit and learning, in their loftiest elevation, open no natural avenue to religion in the heart of man; that the grossest ignorance leaves it not more inaccessible to Divine truth. Paul never appears to have made so few proselytes in any place as at Athens; and it is so far from being true, as its disciples assert, that philosophy is never intolerant, that the most bitter persecution ever inflicted on the Christians was under the most philosophical of all the Roman Emperors. *

In this celebrated city, in which Plato, near five hundred years before, discoursed so eloquently only the immortality of the soul, Paul first preached the resurrection of the soul, Paul first preached the resurrection of the body. Horace Speaks of *searching* for truth in the groves of Academus. But Saint Paul was the first who ever *taught* it there.

CHAP. IX.

On the general principles of Saint Paul's writings.

ONE of the most distinguished writers of antiquity, says, that 'one man may believe himself to be as certain of his error as another of his truth.' How many illustrious ancients, under the influence of this conceit, may either, have carried truth out of its proper sphere, or brought on some error to fill the place where the truth, so transferred, had left vacant. The Pagan philosophers held so great a variety of opinions of the supreme good of the nature of man, that one of their most learned writers is said to have reckoned the number to amount to no less than two hundred and eighty-eight. †

Christianity ought to be accounted a singular blessing, were it only that he has simplified this conjectural arithmetic, and reduced the hundreds to a unit. Saint Paul's brief, but comprehensive definition, 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' forming one grand central point, in which, if all the vain aims and unsatisfied desires of the anxious

* Marcus Aurelius. † Varro.

philosophers do not meet, this succinct character of Christianity abundantly supplies what their aims and desires failed to accomplish; for 'they erred, not knowing the Scriptures: those Scriptures which proclaim the wants of man when they declare his depravity, and the power of God, in providing its only remedy.'

Saint Paul labours sedulously to convince his converts of the apostacy of the human race. He knew this to be the only method of rendering the Scriptures either useful or intelligible; no other book having explicitly proclaimed or circumstantially unfolded this prime truth. He furnishes his followers with this key, that they might both unlock the otherwise hidden treasures of the Bible, and open the secret recesses of their own hearts. He knew that, without this strict inquisition into what was passing within, without this experimental knowledge of their own lapsed state, the best books may be read with little profit, and even prayer be offered up with little effect.

He directs them to follow up this self-inspection, because without it they could not determine on the quality, even of their best actions. 'Examine yourselves; prove your own selves,' is his frequent exhortation. He knew, that if we did not impede the entrance of Divine light into our own hearts, it would show us many an unsuspected corruption; that it would not only disclose existing evils, but awaken the remembrance of former ones, of which perhaps the consequences still remain, though time and negligence have effaced the act itself from the memory. Whatever be the structure they intend to erect, the apostles always dig deep for a foundation before they begin to build. 'On Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' as on a broad basis, Saint Paul builds all doctrine and grounds all practice; and firm indeed, must that foundation be, which has to sustain such a weight. He points to him as the sole author of justifying faith. From this doctrine he derives all sanctity, all duty, and all consolation. After having proved it to be productive of that most solid of all supports, *peace of God;* this peace he promises, not only through the benignity of God, but through the grace of Christ, showing, by an induction of particulars, the process of this love of God in its moral effects,—how afflictions promote 'patience,' how patience fortifies the mind by 'experience,' and how experience generates 'hope;'—reverting always in the end to that point from which he sets out; to that love of God, which is kindled in the heart by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

He makes all true holiness to hinge on this fundamental doctrine of redemption by the Son of God, never separating his offices from his person, nor his example from his propitiation; never teaching that man's nature is to be reformed, without pointing out the instrument, and the manner by which the reformation is to be effected. For one great excellence of Saint Paul's writings consist, not only in his demonstrating to us the riches and the glories of Christ, but in showing how they may be conveyed to us: how we may become possessed of an interest, of a right in them.

Though there is no studied separations of the doctrinal from the practical parts of his Epistles they who would enter most deeply into a clear apprehension of the former, would best do it by a strict obedience to the precepts of the latter. He every where shows, that the way to receive the truth is to obey it; and the way to obey is to love it. Nothing so effectually bars up the heart and even the understanding, against the reception of truth, as the practice of sin. 'If any man will do his will,' says the Divine Teacher himself, 'he shall *know* of the doctrine.'*

It is in this practical application of Divine truth, that the supreme excellence of St. Paul's preaching consists. Whenever he has been largely expatiating on the glorious privileges of believers, he never omits to guard his doctrine from the use to which he probably foresaw loose professors might convert it, if delivered to the uninformed, stripped from the connection with its proper adjunct. †

Thus, his doctrines are never barely theoretical. He hedges them in, as we have elsewhere observed, with the whole circle of duties, or with such as more immediately grow out of his subject, whether they relate to God, to others, or ourselves. Though it would not be easy to produce, in his writings, a single doctrine which is not so protected, nevertheless, perhaps, there is scarcely one, in the adoption of which, bold intruders have not leaped over the fence he raised; or by their negligence laid it bare for the unhallowed entrance of others, converting his inclosure into a waste. If the duty of living righteously, soberly, and godly, was ever pre-eminently taught by any instructor, that instructor is Saint Paul; if ever the instructions of any teacher have been strained or perverted, they are his. But if he never presses any virtue, as independent of faith, which is too much the case with some, he never fails to press it as a consequence of faith, which is sometimes neglected by others. The one class preach faith as if it were an insulated doctrine; the other, virtue, as if it were a self-originating principle.

It is also worthy of observation, that in that complete code of Evangelical law, the twelfth chapter of the Romans, after unfolding with the most lucid clearness, the great truths of our religion, he carefully inculcates the *temper* it demands, before he proceeds to enforce the duties it imposes; that we must be 'holy' before we can be 'acceptable;' that we must be transformed in the renewing of our mind, is at once made a consequence of the grace of God, and a preliminary to our duties towards our fellow creatures. We must offer up '*ourselves* a living sacrifice to God,' before we are directed to act conscientiously to man. The other disposition, which he names as an indispensable prelude, is humility; for in the very opening of his subject, he prefaces it with an injunction, *not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.* To omit to cultivate the spirit in which doctrines are to be embraced, and the temper in which

* John vii. 17.

† We learn from St. Peter, that this perversion had begun even in his own time. Ebion and his followers afterwards pushed the charge against Paul as far as antinomianism. Nor has the spirit of the accusation on the one hand, nor the adulteration of the principle on the other, entirely ceased

duties are to be performed, is to mutilate Christianity, and to rob it of its appropriate character and its highest grace. After having shown the means for the acquisition of virtue, he teaches us diligently to solicit that divine aid, without which all means are ineffectual, and all virtues spurious.

In this invaluable summary, or rather this spirit of Christian laws, there is scarcely any class of persons, to which some appropriate exhortation is not directed. After particularly addressing those who fill different degrees of the ministerial office, he proceeds to the more general instructions in which all are equally interested. Here, again, he does not fail to introduce his documents with some powerful principle. Affection and sincerity are the inward feelings which must regulate action; 'let *love* be without *dissimulation*.'

The love he inculcates is of the most large and liberal kind; compassion to the indigent, tender sympathy with the feelings of others, whether of joy or sorrow, as their respective circumstances require; the duties of friendship and hospitality are not forgotten; condescension to inferiors; a disposition to be at peace with all men is enforced; from his deep knowledge of the human heart, implying, however, by a significant parenthesis—*if it be possible*—the difficulty, if not impossibility, which its corruptions would bring to the establishment of universal discord.

He applies himself to all the tender sensibilities of the heart, and concatenates the several fruits of charity so closely, from being aware how ready people are to deceive themselves on this article, and to make one branch of this comprehensive grace stand proxy for another: he knew that many are disposed to make almsgiving a ground for neglecting the less pleasant parts of charity; that some give, in order that they may rail, and think that while they open their purses, they need put no restraint on their tongues.

He closes his catalogue of duties with those which we owe to our enemies; and in a paradox peculiar to the genius of Christianity, shows that the revengeful are the conquered, and those who have the magnanimity to forgive, the conquerors. He exhorts to this new and heroic species of victory over evil, not merely by exhibiting patience under it, but by overcoming its assaults with good. Could this conquest over nature, which soars far above mere forgiveness, be obtained by any other power but the supernatural strength previously communicated?

Thus he every where demonstrates, that the maxims of the morality he inculcates, are derived from a full fountain, and fed by perennial supplies. When he speaks of human virtue, he never disconnects it from Divine influence. When he recommends the 'perfecting holiness,' it must be done 'in the fear of the Lord.' He shows that there is no other way of conquering the love of the world, the allurements of pleasure, and the predominance of selfishness, but by seeking a conformity to the image of God, as well as by aiming at obedience to his law.

That ignorance is the mother of devotion, has been the axiom of a superstitious church; nor is the votary of fanaticism less apt to despise knowledge than the slave of superstition.

The first thing that God formed in nature was light. This preliminary blessing disclosed the other beauties of his creation, which had else remained as unseen as if they had remained uncreated. By that analogy which runs through his works, his first operation on the heart is bestowing on it the light of his grace. Amidst the causes of the corruption, the darkness of ignorance is scarcely to be distinguished from that of sin.

Such indeed is the condition of man in his present state, that he ought to labour indefatigably under the Divine teaching, to recover some glimpses of that intellectual worth which he lost when he forfeited his spiritual excellence. Religious men should be diligent in obtaining knowledge, or they will not be able to resist gainsayers; they will swallow assertions for truths, and conclude every objection to be valid which they cannot refute. An unfurnished mind is liable to a state of continual indecision. Error will have the advantage in the combat, where the champion of truth enters the field without arms; for impiety still shows itself, as it did in the Garden of Eden, under the semblance of knowledge.

Saint Paul estimated just views and right notions of religion so highly, that he makes the improvement in knowledge in the Colossians, a matter not only of fervent desire, but of incessant prayer. He prays not only that they might be sincere, but intelligent Christians, 'filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;' but he does not forget to teach them that this knowledge must be made practical, *they must walk worthy of the Lord, they must be fruitful in every good work.* It is among the high ascriptions of glory to Christ, that in Him are hid all the treasures of *wisdom* and *knowledge.* And this ascription is pressed upon *us* for the manifest purpose of impelling us to seek a due participation of them from Him.

Saint Paul was a strenuous opposer of religious ignorance. It is not too much to say, that he places Intelligence as the ground-work of Christianity. To know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, he considers as the first rudiments taught in the divine school. This knowledge can only be acquired by a cordial love, and indefatigable study of the volume of inspiration. All the conjectures of the brightest imagination, all the discoveries of the profoundest science, all the glorious objects of created beauty, all the attributes of angels, all the ideas of excellence we can conceive or combine, affords but faint shadows, inexpressive figures of the Divinity. The best lights we can throw upon his perfections are from his own Word, assisted by his own Spirit; the clearest sight we can obtain of them is from our faith in that word, and our only strength from our acquiescence in the offers of that Spirit.

And where shall we look in the whole sacred Record for a more consummate statement, at once of the proper objects of knowledge, and of the duties resulting from its acquisition, than in the writings of this Apostle? No one who has devoutly studied him, can shift off the neglect

of duty by the plea of ignorance. It would be vindicating one sin by committing another. He every where exhibits such luminous characters of God and Christ, such clear views of right and wrong, such living pictures of good and evil, such striking contrasts of human corruption and Christian purity, that he who would evade the condemnation which awaits the neglect, or the violation of duty, must produce some other apology than that he did not know it. What excuse will those modern sceptics offer for their traducement of writings, which they were too shrewd either to despise or neglect? Whatever is good in their systems, they derive from a Revelation which they affect to contemn. They are rich only from what they steal, not from that property which they may call their own. Reason, which could in no wise discover what Christianity has taught, is glad to adopt, while she disavows, what she could never have found out herself. She has, however, too little honesty, and too much pride, to acknowledge her obligation, to the source from which she draws. She mixes up what she best likes with her own materials, and defies the world, by separating them, to detect the cheat. Revelation, in truth, has improved reason, as well as perfected morals.

But if the human reasoner despises Christianity, some Christians are too much disposed to villify reason. This contempt they did not learn of Saint Paul. He never taught, that, to neglect an exact method of reasoning, would make men sounder divines. No such consequences can be deduced from his writings. Revealed religion, indeed, happily for the poor and illiterate, may be firmly believed, and vitally understood, without a very accurate judgment, or any high cultivation of the rational powers. But without both, without a thorough acquaintance with the arguments, without a knowledge of the evidences, it can never be successfully defended. Ignorance on these points would throw such a weight into the scale of scepticism, as would weaken, if it did not betray the cause of truth. In our days an ignorant teacher of religion is 'a workman that *needeth* to be ashamed.' He should carefully cultivate his reason, were it only to convince himself of its imperfection. The more he proceeds under the guidance of God's Spirit to improve his rational faculties, the more he will discover their insufficiency: and his humility striking its root more deeply as his knowledge shoots higher, he will become more profoundly thankful for that Divine revelation, which alone can satisfy the desires of his mind, and fill the cravings of his heart.

Some well-meaning instructors have pleaded, in justification of their low attainments, Saint Paul's exaltation of 'the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' 'It was,' says a learned divine, 'a mode not unusual with Saint Paul, to call a thing, not by a term descriptive of its real nature, but by a name expressive of the opinion formed of it by the world, and of the effects produced by it.'—In calling the Gospel foolishness, therefore, he only adopted the language of the Greeks, its Pagan enemies. It was 'the natural man,' to whom the things of the Spirit of God were foolishness. The expression, therefore, offers no apology for nonsense, no plea for ignorance. However, the humility of Paul might lead him to depreciate 'the wisdom of his own words,' he has left us the means of knowing that they were of the very first excellence. He depreciates, it is true, all eloquence, whether true or false, which was adopted as a substitute 'for the Cross of Christ.' He would indeed reprobate the idea of loading a discourse with ornaments, which might draw the attention of the audience from the Saviour to the preacher, which by its splendour might cast into shade the object he was bound to reveal; which might throw into the back ground that Cross which should ever be the prominent figure. But though, in establishing the doctrine of the Cross, God accomplished a promise of long standing, and frequent repetition that he would 'destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent,' yet there is no promise that ignorance or folly shall be erected on the ruins of wisdom; the promise runs, that the wisdom from above shall supersede the pride of human wisdom.

One of the fundamental truths which the apostle labours to establish, is, that the attainment of Divine knowledge, progress in holiness, conquest over sin, with all other spiritual gains, are only to be effected by the power of the Spirit of God. This doctrine, the importance of which he every where intimates, he more explicitly teaches in the eighth chapter of Romans. This conviction, which he felt deeply, he paints forcibly.—Yet, though insisted on with such frequency and emphasis, many receive this as a speculative dogma, instead of a highly practical truth. Many distrust the reality of this power, or if they allow its existence, they disbelieve its agency.

This tenet, however, so slightly regarded, is in every part of the New Testament, not barely noticed by allusion, but incessantly either peremptorily asserted, or constantly assumed. Would the apostle repeatedly refer us, as the only deliverer from sin, to an ideal person! Would he mock us by a bare statement of such a power, and an unmeaning promise of such a deliverance, without directing us how it is to be obtained? The fervent habitual prayer of faith is the mean suggested. It is rational to suppose that spiritual aid must be attained by a spiritual act. God is a spirit. Spirit and truth are the requisites expected in his worshippers.—Though this doctrine is insisted on not less than *twelve times* in this chapter only, there is not one tenet of Christianity, in the adoption of which, the generality are more reluctant.

It is unreasonable for us to say, we disbelieve the possibility of the operation of the Holy Spirit, because we do not understand when, or in what manner it acts, while we remain in such complete ignorance how our own spirits act within ourselves. It is proof sufficient, that we see its result, that we perceive the effect of this mysterious operation, in the actual change of the human heart.—Our sense of our internal weakness, must convince us, that it is not effected by any power of our own. The humble cannot but feel this truth, the ingenuous cannot but acknowledge it. Let us be assured, that Infi-

nite Wisdom, which knows how we are constituted, and what are our wants, knows how his own Spirit assists those who earnestly implore its aid.

Saint Paul powerfully inculcates that new and spiritual worship which was so condescendingly and beautifully taught by the Divine Teacher, at the well of Sychar, when he declared that the splendours of the Temple worship, hitherto performed exclusively in one distinguished place, should be abolished, and the cumbrous ceremonies and fatiguing forms of the Jewish ritual set aside, to make way for a purer mode of adoration; when the contrite heart was to supersede the costly sacrifice, and God should be worshipped in a way more suited to his spiritual nature. *

Yet, even here, the wise moderation of Paul is visible. He did not manifest his dislike of one extreme point by flying to the antipodes of opposition: when ostentatious rites were pronounced to be no longer necessary, he did not adopt, like some other reformers, the contrary excess of irregularity and confusion. While the internal principle was the great concern, the outward appendage must be decorous. To keep the exterior 'decent' and 'orderly,' was emblematical of the purity and regularity within!

While Paul's severe reproof of the confusion and irregularities, which disgraced the Church of Corinth, proves him to be a decided enemy to the distempers of spiritual vanity and enthusiasm; he does not, like a worldly reprover, seize the occasion given by their imprudence to treat with levity the power of religion itself; he does not lay hold on the error he condemns for a pretence to deride true zeal, and to render ridiculous the gifts which had been indecently abused. On the contrary, he observes how improperly these gifts and supernatural powers had been used by some on whom they were conferred; who, he laments, were more anxious to eclipse each other in these showy distinctions, than to convert them to the purposes of practical use and excellence; advises, that 'spiritual gifts' may be directed to their true end; 'that he may excel to the edifying of the Church;' gently reminds the offenders that they themselves were nothing more than vehicles and organs of the operation of the Spirit. While he insinuates that, were these miraculous powers their sole distinction, it might be doubtful by what specific mark to recognize in them the genuine Christian; he removes the difficulty, by showing them there *was a more excellent way*, by which they might most indisputably make out their title. This 'way,' which is now as it was then, the discriminating characteristic of the true believer, is Charity; all the properties of which he describes, not for their instructions only, but for ours also.

If the apostle has here, on the one hand, furnished no example or apology for enthusiasm and eccentricity; if the solidity of his piety, and the sobriety of his mind, are uniformly opposed to the unprofitable fervours of fanaticism, both in doctrine and conduct, yet on the other hand his life and writings are quite as little favourable to a more formidable, because a less suspected and more common evil,—we mean indifference. Coldness and inefficiency, indeed, are, in the estimation of some persons, reputable, or at least safe qualities, and often obtain the honourable name of Prudence; but to Saint Paul it was not enough that nothing wrong was done; he considered it reproach sufficient that nothing was done.

He sometimes intrenches himself in the honest severity which his integrity compels him to exercise against the opposers of vital Christianity, by adducing some pointed censure against them from men of their own party or country. For instance, when he condemns, in his letter to their new bishop, Titus, the luxurious, avaricious, and slothful Cretans, he corroborates the truth of his testimony by the authority of one of their own poets, or prophets. These slow sensualists, these indulgers of appetite, these masters of ceremonies, he not only stigmatizes himself, but adds to his pagan quotation, 'This witness is true.' And it may be adduced as a striking instance of his discriminating mode of church government, that this wise ecclesiastical ruler, who had before exhorted Timothy, the bishop of another Church, to 'be gentle unto all men, meekly instructing those who oppose themselves,' now directs Titus to 'rebuke sharply' these temporizing teachers, and unholy livers.

He saw that a grave and sedate indolence, investing itself with the respectable attribute of moderation, eats out the very heart's core of piety. He knew that these somnolent characters communicate the repose which they enjoy; that they excite no alarm, because they feel none. Their tale of observances is regularly brought in; their list of forms is completely made out. Forms, it is true, are valuable things, when they are 'used as a dead hedge to secure the quick;' but here the observances are rested in; here the forms are the whole of the fence. The dead fence is not considered as a protection; but a substitute. The teacher and the taught, neither disturbing nor disturbed, but soothing and soothed, reciprocate civilities, exchange commendations. If little good is done, it is well; if no offence is given, it is better; if no superfluity of zeal be imputed, it is best of all. The Apostle felt what the Prophet expressed,—'My people love to have it so.'

Perhaps the sum and substance of the duties of a Christian minister, to which there is also a reference in this chapter, was never compressed into so small a compass as in his charge to his beloved Titus;*—'In all things showing *thyself a pattern of good works. In doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech.*' We see here, in a few significant words, a rule of conduct and of instruction which is susceptible of the widest expansion. The most elaborate paraphrase will add little to the substantial worth of this brief monition. Every instructor must furnish his own practical commentary by transferring into his life the pattern, and into his preaching the precept. He adds, the sure effect of a life and doctrine so correct

* Gospel of St. John, chap. iv

* Titus, ch ii.

will be to silence calumny; the adversary of religion will be ashamed of his enmity when he sees the purity of its professor defeat all attempts to discredit him.

It is a truth, verified in every age of the church, that the doctrines which Paul preached, stood in direct opposition to the natural dispositions of man; they militated against his corrupt affections; they tended to subdue what had been hitherto invincible,—the stubborn human will; to plant self-denial where self-love had before overrun the ground. To convince of sin, to point to the Saviour, to perfect holiness, yet to exclude boasting, are the apostle's invariable objects. These topics he urges by every power of argument, by every charm of persuasion; by every injunction to the preacher, by every motive to the hearer; but these injunctions, neither argument, persuasion, nor motive, can ever render engaging.—Man loves to have his corruptions soothed; it is the object of the apostle to combat them: man would have his errors indulged; it is the object of the religion which Paul preached, to eradicate them.

Of the dislike excited against the loyal ambassadors of the Gospel, by those who live in opposition to its doctrines, our common experience furnishes us with no unapt emblem. When we have a piece of unwelcome news to report, we prepare the hearer by a soothing introduction; we break his fall by some softening circumstances; we invent some conciliatory preamble: he listens; he distrusts—but we arrive at the painful truth;—the secret is out, the preparation is absorbed in the reality, the evil remains in its full force; nothing but the painful fact is seen, heard, or felt.

'Thy news hath made thee a most ugly man.'

The apostle knew that it would afford little comfort to the humble Christian to talk of the mercy of God in the abstract, and the forgiveness of sins in vague and general terms. He persuades the believer to endeavour to obtain evidence of his own interest in this great salvation. The fountain of forgiveness may flow, but if the current reach not to us, if we have no personal interest in the offered redemption, if we do not individually seek communion with the Father of spirits, the Saviour of the world will not be our Saviour. But that he might not give false comfort, Paul, when he wishes 'peace' wishes 'grace' also; this last he always places first in order, knowing that, before the peace can be solid, it must have grace for its precursor. The character of the peace which he recommends is of the highest order of blessings. The peace which nations make with each other frequently includes no more than that they will do each other no evil; but 'the peace of God,' insures to us all that is good, by keeping our hearts and minds in the love and knowledge of the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ!

In regard to Saint Paul's ecclesiastical polity, we are aware that some persons, with a view to lower the general usefulness of his Epistles, object, that in many instances, especially in the second to the Corinthians, the apostle has limited his instructions to usages which relate only to the peculiar concerns of a particular church or individual person, and that they might have been spared in a work meant for general edification.

But these are not, as some insist, mere local controversies, obsolete disputes, with which we have no concern. Societies, as well as the individuals of whom they are composed, are much the same in all periods, and though the contentions of the churches which he addressed might differ something in matter, and much in form and ceremony, from those of modern date yet the spirit of division, of animosity, of error, of opposition, with which all churches are more or less infected, will have such a common resemblance in all ages, as may make us submit to take a hint or a caution even from topics which may seem foreign to our concerns; and it adds to the value of Saint Paul's expostulation, that they may be made in some degree applicable to other cases.—His directions are minute, as well as general, so as scarcely to leave any of the incidents of life, or the exigencies of society, totally unprovided for.

There are, it is obvious, certain things which refer to particular usages of the general church at its first institution, which no longer exist. There are frequent references to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and other circumstances, which though they have now ceased, are of great importance, as connected with its history, and assisting in its first formation; and the writer who had neglected to have recorded them would have been blameable, and the Epistles which had not alluded to them would have been imperfect.

While the apostle made ample provisions, such as the existing case required, or rather permitted, he did not absolutely legislate, as to external things, for any church, wisely leaving Christianity at liberty to incorporate herself with the laws of any country into which she might be introduced; and while the doctrines of the new religion were precise, distinct, and definite, its ecclesiastical character was of that generalized nature which would allow it to mix with any form of national government. This was a likely means both to promote its extension, and to prevent it from imbibing a political temper, or a spirit of interference with the secular concerns of any country.

The wonder is, that the work is so little local, that it savours so little of Antioch or Jerusalem, of Philippi or Corinth; but that almost all is of such general application: relative circumstances did indeed operate, but they always operated subordinately.—The Epistle to the Ephesians is not marked with one local peculiarity. There is not a single deduction to be made from the universal applicableness of this elegant and powerful epitome of the Gospel.

Saint Paul belongs not particularly to the period in which he lived, but is equally the property of each successive race of beings. Time does not diminish their interest in him. He is as fresh to every century as to his own; and the truths he preaches will be as intimately connected with that age which shall precede the dissolution of the world, as that in which he wrote. The sympathies of the real believer will always be equally awakened by doctrines which

will equally apply to their consciences, by principles which will always have a reference to their practice, by promises which will always carry consolation to their hearts. By the Christians of all countries Paul will be considered as a cosmopolite, and by those of all ages as a contemporary. Even when he addresses individuals, his point of view is mankind. He looked to the world as his scene, and to collective man as the actor.

CHAP. X.

The Style and Genius of Saint Paul.

Though Saint Paul frequently alludes to the variety of his sufferings, yet he never dwells upon them. He does not take advantage of the liberty so allowable in friendly letters—that of endeavouring to excite compassion by those minute details of distress, of which, but for their relation in the Acts of the Apostles, we should have been mainly ignorant.

How would any other writer than the Apostle have interwoven a full statement of his trials with his instructions, and how would he have indulged an egotism, not only so natural and so pardonable, but which has been so acceptable in those good men who have given us histories of their own life and times. That intermixture, however, which excites so lively an interest, and is so proper in Clarendon and Baxter, would have been misplaced here. It would have served to gratify curiosity, but might not seem to comport with the grave plan of instruction adopted by the apostle; whilst it comes with admirable grace from Saint Luke, his companion in travel.

Saint Paul's manner of writing will be found in every way worthy of the greatness of his subject. His powerful and diversified character of mind seems to have combined the separate excellences of all the other sacred authors—the loftiness of Isaiah, the devotion of David, the pathos of Jeremiah, the vehemence of Ezekiel, the didactic gravity of Moses, the elevated morality and practical good sense, though somewhat highly coloured, of Saint James; the sublime conceptions and deep views of Saint John, the noble energies and burning zeal of St. Peter. To all these he added his own strong argumentative powers, depth of thought and intensity of feeling. In every single department he was eminently gifted; so that what Livy said of Cato might with far greater truth have been asserted of Paul,—that you would think him born for the single thing in which he was engaged.

We have observed in an early chapter, that in the Evangelists the naked majesty of truth refused to owe any thing to the artifices of composition. In Paul's Epistles a due, though less strict degree of simplicity is observed; differing in style from the other as the comment from the text, a letter from a history; taking the same ground as to doctrine, devotion, and duty, yet branching out into a wider range, breaking the subject into more parts, and giving results instead of facts.

Though more at liberty, Paul makes a sober use of his privilege; though never ambitious of ornament, his style is as much varied as his subject, and always adapted to it. He is by turns vehement and tender, and sometimes both at once; impassioned, and didactic; now pursuing his point with a logical exactness, now disdaining the rules, of which he was a master; often making his noble neglect more impressive than the most correct arrangement, his irregularity more touching than the most lucid order. He is often abrupt, and sometimes obscure: his reasoning, though generally clear, is, as the best critics allow, sometimes involved, perhaps owing to the suddenness of his transitions, the rapidity of his ideas, the sensibility of his soul.

But complicated as his meaning may occasionally appear, all his complications are capable of being analyzed into principles; so that from his most intricate trains of reasoning, the most unlearned reader may select an unconnected maxim of wisdom, a position of piety, an aphorism of virtue, easy from its brevity, intelligible from its clearness, and valuable from its weight.

An apparent, though not unpleasing, disconnection in his sentences is sometimes found to arise from the absence of the conjunctive parts of speech. He is so affluent in ideas, the images which crowd in upon him are so thick-set; that he could not stop their course while he might tie them together. This absence of the connecting links, which in a meaner writer might have induced a want of perspicuity, adds energy and force to the expression of so spirited and clear-sighted a writer as our apostle. In the sixth chapter of the second of Corinthians, there are six consecutive verses without one conjunction. Such a particle would have enfeebled the spirit, without clearing the sense. The variety which these verses, all making up but one period, exhibit, the mass of thought, the diversity of object, the impetuosity of march, make it impossible to read them without catching something of the fervour with which they are written. They seem to set the pulse in motion with a corresponding quickness; and without amplification seem to expand the mind of the reader into all the immensity of space and time.

Nothing is diffused into weakness. If his conciseness may be thought, in a very few instances, to take something from his clearness, it is more than made up in force. Condensed as his thoughts are, the inexhaustible instructions that may be deduced from them, prove at what expansion they are susceptible. His compression has an energy, his imagery a spirit, his diction an impetuosity, which art would in vain labour to mend. His straight-forward sense makes his way to the heart more surely than theirs, who go out of their road for ornament. He never interrupts the race to pick up the golden bait.

Our apostle, when he has not leisure for reflection himself, almost by imperceptible methods invites his reader to reflect. When he appears only to skim a subject, he will suggest ample food for long-dwelling meditation. Every

sentence is pregnant with thought, is abundant in instruction. Witness the many thousands of sermons which have sprung from these comparatively few, but most prolific seeds. Thus, if he does not visibly pursue the march of eloquence by the critic's path, he never fails to attain its noblest ends. He is full without diffuseness, copious without redundance. His eloquence is not a smooth and flowing oil, which lubricates the surface, but a sharp instrument which makes a deep incision. It penetrates to the dissection of the inmost soul, 'to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.'

The numerous and long digressions often found, and sometimes complained of, in this great writer, never make him lose sight of the point from which he sets out, and the mark to which he is tending. From his most discursive flights he never fails to bring home some added strength to the truth with which he begins; and when he is longest on the wing, or loftiest in his ascent, he comes back to his subject enriched with additional matter, and animated with redoubled vigour. This is particularly exemplified in the third chapter of the Ephesians, of which the whole is one entire parenthesis, eminently abounding in effusions of humility, holiness, and love, and in the rich display of the Redeemer's grace.

In the prosecution of any discourse, though there may appear little method, he has frequently, besides the topic immediately in hand, some point to bring forward, not directly, but in an incidental, yet most impressive manner. At the moment when he seems to wander from the direct line of his pursuit, the object which he still has had in his own view, unexpectedly starts up before that of his hearer. In the recapitulation of the events of his life before Festus and Agrippa, when nothing of doctrine appears to be on his mind; he suddenly breaks out, 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?' He then resumes his narrative as rapidly as he had flown off from it; but returns to his doctrine at the close, with the additional circumstance, that 'Christ was the first that should rise from the dead;'—as if, having before put the question in the abstract, he had been since paving the way for the establishment of the fact.

Saint Paul is happy in a mode of brief allusion, and in the art of awakening recollection by hints. It is observable often, how little time he wastes in narrative, and how much matter he presses into a few words; 'Ye, brethren, have suffered the like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men,—forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved; to fill up their sins always—for the wrath is come upon them to the utmost.' What a quantity of history does this sketch present! What a picture of their character, their crimes, and their punishment!

Nor does this brevity often trench on his explicitness. In the fifth chapter of the first Thessalonians, from the fourteenth to the twentieth verse, there are no fewer than seventeen fundamental, moral, and religious monitions, comprising almost all the duties of a Christian life in the space of a few lines. The selection of his words is as apt, as his enumeration of duties is just. He *beseeches* his converts 'to know them that are over them, and very highly to esteem them in love for their works' sake;' while to the performance of every personal, social, and religious duty, he *exhorts* them.

The correctness of his judgment appears still more visibly in the aptness and propriety of all his allusions, metaphors, and figures. In his epistle to the Hebrews, he illustrates and enforces the new doctrine by reasonings drawn from a reference to the rites, ceremonies, and economy of the now obsolete dispensation; sending them back to the records of their early Scriptures. Again, he does not talk of the Isthmian games to the Romans, nor to the Greeks of Adoption. The latter term he judiciously uses to the Romans, to whom it was familiar, and explains, by the use of it, the doctrines of the grace of God in their redemption, their adoption as his children, and their 'inheritance with the saints in light;' on the other hand, the illustration borrowed from the rigorous abstinence which was practised by the competitors in the Grecian games; to fit them for athletic exercises, would convey to the most illiterate inhabitant of Achaia, a lively idea of the subjugation of appetite required in the Christian combatant. The close of this last mentioned analogy by the apostle, opens a large field for instruction, by a brief but beautiful comparison, between the value and duration of the fading garland worn by the victorious Greek, with the incorruptible crown of the Christian conqueror.

But whether it be a metaphor or illustration, or allusion, he seldom fails to draw from it some practical inference for his own humiliation. In the present case he winds up the subject with a salutary fear, in which all who are engaged in the religious instruction of others are deeply interested. So far is he from self-confidence or self-satisfaction, because he lives in the constant habit of improving others, that he adduces the very practice of this duty as a ground of caution to himself. He appropriates to himself a general possibility, 'lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

Another metaphor, to which for its peculiarity we cannot help making a distinct reference, occurs in the twelfth chapter of the first of Corinthians. The figure with which he there instructs the Church of Corinth in the nature, use, and variety of spiritual gifts, whilst it bears a strong resemblance to the celebrated apologue with which Menenius Agrippa appeased the tumult of the Roman populace in the infancy of the Consular government, is still much superior to it. Saint Paul reproves their dissentions in a long chain of argument, where he illustrates the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in his distribution of gifts, by a similitude taken from the component parts of the human body; which, though distinct and various, make up by union one harmonious whole. He explains their incorporation into Christ by the interest which the body has in the

several members, each of which by its specific office contributes to the general good. He proves the excellence of the dispensation to consist in that very variety which had produced the contention; and shows that, had the same powers been given to all, the union would have been broken as each portion would have been useless in a state of detachment from the rest, which now contributed to the general organization of the human frame.

As an orator, Paul unquestionably stands in the foremost rank. When the renowned Athenian so 'wielded the fierce democracy,' as to animate with one common sentiment the whole assembly against Philip; when his great rival stirred up the Roman senate against their oppressors, and by the power of his eloquence made Cataline contemptible, and Anthony detestable; they had every thing in their favour. Their character was established: each held a distinguished office in the state. They stood on the vantage-ground of the highest rank and reputation. When they spoke, admiration stood waiting to applaud. Their characters commanded attention. Their subject ensured approbation. Each, too, had the advantage of addressing his own friends, his own countrymen —men of the same religions and political habits with themselves. Before they started, they had already pre-occupied half the road to success and glory.

Now turn to Paul!—A stranger, poor, persecuted, unprotected, unsupported—despised before-hand, whether he were considered as a Jew or a Christian; solitary, defenceless, degraded even to chains—yet did he make the prejudiced king vacillate in his opinion, the unjust judge tremble on his seat. The Apostle of the Gentiles owed none of his success to an appeal to the corrupt passions of his audience. Demosthenes and Cicero, it must be confessed, by their arguments and their eloquence, but not a little also by their railing and invective, kindled strong emotions in the minds of their respective audiences. Now these vituperations, it must be remembered, were applied to other persons, not to the hearers,—and men find a wonderful facility in admiring satire not directed at themselves. But in the case of Saint Paul, the very persons addressed were at once the accused and the judges. The auditors were to apply the searching truths to their own hearts; to look inward on the mortifying spectacle of their own errors and vices: so that the apostle had the feelings of the hearers completely against him, whilst the Pagan orator had those of his audience already on his side.

To crown all, Saint Paul has nobly exemplified the rule of Quinctilian. He owed the best part of his oratory to his being a 'good man,' as well as a good speaker. 'Otherwise,' says that great critic, 'though the orator may amuse the imagination, he will never reach the heart.'

Conviction was the soul of his eloquence. He has no hesitation in his religious discussions. Whenever he summoned the attributes of his mind to council, decision always presided. His doctrines had a fixed system. There was nothing conjectural in his scheme. His mind was never erratic for want of a centre. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' is the sun of his system, and round this centre every doctrine issuing from his lips, every grace beaming in his soul, moved harmoniously. Whilst he did not, like the exploded philosophy, invert order, by making the orb of day dependent on the lesser fires, which owe to him whatever light and heat they possess; he did not shrink, like the restorer of an astronomical truth, from the most decisive and effectual avowal of his opinions. It is curious to observe that both these persons shared a similar fate. The astronomer was rewarded for his discoveries with being thrown into prison by a pontiff of Rome; for the diffusion of moral light, the apostle was thrown into prison by an emperor of Rome. But mark, in the sequel, the superior influence of revealed truth over the conduct, to that of the clearest and best founded deductions of human reason. The philosopher was irresolute; the apostle persevered. Copernicus recanted what he knew to be truth, and was set free; Paul disdained liberty upon such terms and was put to death.

This resolute avowal, this predominant conviction of the sublimest of truths, enabled Saint Paul to throw into his eloquence a heart and a life unknown to other orators; 'as a dying man, he spoke to dying men;' and pleaded to the feelings of immortal beings for the life of their souls Others have selected noble objects, objects well worthy their genius and their zeal,—the love of their country, liberty, and life. Paul embraced the same topics, but how ennobled in their nature! He taught his hearers 'to desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.' He showed them 'the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.' He pointed them to 'life everlasting.'

In the various counsels or reproofs founded upon these divine doctrines, can we be surprised at the frequent interruption of an ejaculation or an apostrophe which he seems wholly unable to repress? Often do we participate those feelings which, as it were, break in upon his most subdued moments, and impel him to magnify that name, which is above every name, with ascription of glory, and honour and praise, and sainted adoration: With a kindred joy and elevation of soul, we seem to make even the most highly wrought devotional and practical effusions of so great a writer our own: and so far from coldly condemning what we almost believe our own, we realize something of the observation of the finest critic of antiquity, 'that when the mind is raised by the true sublime, it rejoices and glories as if itself had produced what it had so much delight in contemplating.' 'No real Christian can read the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Ephesians, without being impressed and roused by it, as by the sound of a trumpet.'*

David, between whose temper and genius, and those of Saint Paul, there seems to have been a great resemblance, frequently manifests the same inextinguishable energy of soul. His heart, like that of the Apostle, is hot within him; the fire burns while he is musing. Many of the Psalms under such an influence become only one varied

* Macknight's Preface.

strain of laudatory prayer. In the nineteenth, for instance, he breaks out in admiration of the Divine law, almost to appearance on a sudden, and in such an inexhaustible diversity of expression, as if he could never unburden the fulness of his overflowing heart. He describes it in no less than six different forms of perfection: and with every form, still resembling his great fellow saint of after ages, he connects a practical deduction. Thus by an infinite variety he proves that his mental opulence is above tautology, and at the same time shows that spiritual riches should be devoted to moral purposes. 'The law of the Lord so extolled converts the soul,—gives wisdom to the simple,—rejoices the heart,—gives light to the eyes,—is not only true, but righteous altogether.'

If Paul indulges the glowing expression of his own gratitude, it is to communicate the sacred flame to those he addresses; if he triumphs in 'the enlargement of his own heart,' it is because he hopes by the infection of a holy sympathy to enlarge theirs. In catching, however, the sacred flame, let us never forget that, in his warmest addresses, in his most ardent expressions of grateful love to his God and his Saviour, he never loses sight of that soberness and gravity which becomes both his subject and his character. It is *the King eternal, immortal, invisible —the blessed and only potentate—King of kings, Lord of lords,—He who hath immortality—who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto,—He who hath honour and power everlasting*, to whom, and of whom, he feels himself to speak.

May we venture to express a wish, that some persons of more piety and discernment, among whom there are those who value themselves on being more particularly the disciples of Saint Paul, would always imitate his chastised language. When the apostle pours out the fulness of his heart to his Redeemer, every expression is as full of veneration as of love. His freedom is a filial freedom, while *their* devout effusions are sometimes mixed with adjectives, which betrays a familiarity bordering on irreverence.*

'If I am a father, where is mine honour: if I am a master, where is my fear?' They may indeed say with truth that they are invited to come *boldly* to the throne of grace. But does not the very word Throne imply majesty on the one part, and prostration on the other? Is not 'God manifest in the flesh' sometimes treated with a freedom, I had almost said a fondness, in which the divine part of his nature seems to be swallowed up in the human? Coarseness of whatever kind, may, it is true, be palliated by piety, but is never countenanced by it: it has no affinity to piety; it is only as the iron and the clay at the foot of the magnificent image, and is just so far removed from the true refinement and golden sanctity of taste, which will be learned by a due study of the first of models. If the persons so offending should plead warmth of affection, their plea will be admitted as valid, if in this feeling they can prove their superiority to their great master. In our own admirable church service, this scriptural soberness of style is most judiciously adopted, and uniformly maintained. Portions of it are indeed addressed to the Second Person in the blessed Trinity; but we look in vain for any familiar expression, any distinguishing appellative.

Much less do Saint Paul's writings present an example, to another and more elegant class, the learned speculatists of the German school, as recently presented to us by their eloquent and accomplished eulogist. Some of these have fallen into the opposite extreme of religious refinement; too airy to be tangible, too mystic to be intelligible. The apostle's religion is not like theirs, a shadowy sentiment, but a vital principle; not a matter of taste, but of conviction, of faith, of feeling. It is not a fair idea, but a holy affection. The deity at which they catch, is a gay and gorgeous cloud; Paul's is the Fountain of Light. His religion is definite and substantial, and more profound than splendid. It is not a panegyric on Christianity, but a homage to it.

He is too devout to be ingenious, too earnest to be fanciful, too humble to be inventive. His sober mind could discern no analogy between the sublime truths of Christianity and 'the fine arts.' Nor would he have compared the awful mysteries of the religion of Jesus with those of 'Free Masonry,' any more than he would have run a laboured parallel with the mysteries of Eleusis, or the Bona Dea. Nor does he love to illustrate the word of God by any thing but his works. His truth hath no shades; in Him, whatever is right is absolute. Nor does he ever make error perform the work of truth, by ascribing to 'enthusiasm' any of the good effects of religion. In the celestial armory of Christianity no such spiritual weapons as enthusiasm or error are to be found.

Had the Apostle placed the doctrines of revelation as congenial associates with the talent of poets and artists, he would have thought not only that it was a degradation of the principle of our faith, but an impeachment of the divine dispensations. God would have all men to be saved; Christ would have the gospel preached to every creature. Now if we compare the very small minority of ethereal spirits, who are fed by genius, who subsist on the luxuries of imagination, who are nurtured by music, who revel in poetry and sculpture, with the innumerable multitudes who have scarcely heard whether there be any such thing,—such a limited, such a whimsical, such an unintelligible, such an unattainable Christianity, would rob the mass of mankind of all present comfort, of all future hope. Paul would have thought it a mockery, when the Holy Spirit could alone help their infirmities, to have sent them to the Muses. To refer them to the statuary when they were craving for the bread of life, would be literally 'giving them stones for bread.' Nor would he have derided the wants of those who were 'thirsting for living water,' by sending him to the fountain of Aganippe.

To be more serious:—To have placed the vast majority of the human race out of the reach of privileges which Christianity professes to have made commensurate with the very ends of the earth, and to have adapted to every rational in-

* This remark applies more particularly to certain Hymns written in a very devout strain, but with a devotion rather amatory than reverential.

habitant on its surface, would have been as base and treacherous, unjust and narrow, as the totality of the actual design is vast and glorious.

Even had those few eminent men who ruled the empire of intellect in Greece and Rome, attained, by the influence of their philosophical doctrines, to perfection in practice, (which was far from being the case,) that would neither have advanced the general faith, nor improved the popular morals. In like manner, had Christianity limited its principles, and their consequent benefits, to evangelists and apostles, or to men of genius, how insignificant would have been her value in comparison of the effects of that boundless benevolence which commands the Gospel to be preached to all, without any distinction of rank or ability. Through this blessed provision the poorest Christian, rich in faith, can equally with Boyle or Bacon relish the beauty of holiness in the pages of Saint Paul, though he may not be rich enough in taste to discover its 'picturesque beauties,' as exhibited in the pages of some modern philosophic theologians.

Ours is a religion, not of ingenuity, but of obedience. As we must not omit any thing which God has commanded, so we must not invent devices which he does *not* command. The talent of a certain Lacedæmonian was not accepted as an excuse, when he added to his warlike instrument a string more than the state allowed. Instead of being commended for his invention, he was cashiered for his disobedience: so far from being rewarded for improving his music, he was punished for infringing the law.

Much were it to be wished, that these deep thinkers and brilliant writers, to whom we allude with every consideration for their talents, would make their immense mental riches subservient to their spiritual profit: and as Solon made his commercial voyages the occasion of amassing his vast intellectual treasures, so that *they* would consecrate their literary wealth, and devote their excursions into the regions of fancy to the acquisition of the one pearl of great price.

Too often persons of fine genius, to whom Christianity begins to present itself, do not so much seek to penetrate its depths, where alone they are to be explored, in the unerring word of God, as in their own pullulating imaginations. Their taste and their pursuits have familiarized them with the vast, and the grand, and the interesting: and they think to sanctify these in a way of their own. The *feeling of the Infinite* in nature, and the beautiful in art; the flights of poetry, of love, of glory, alternately elevate their imagination, and they denominate the splendid combination, Christianity. But 'the new cloth' will never assort with 'the old garment.'

These elegant spirits seem to live in a certain lofty region in their own minds, where they know the multitude cannot soar after them; they derive their grandeur from this elevation, which separates them with the creature of their imagination, from all ordinary attributes, and all associations of daily occurrence. In this middle region, too high for earth, and too low for heaven; too refined for sense, and too gross for spirit; they keep a magazine of airy speculations, and shining reveries, and puzzling metaphysics; the chief design of which is to drive to a distance, the profane vulgar; but the real effect to separate themselves and their system from all intercourse with the wise and good.

God could never intend we should disparage his own gift, his highest natural gift, intellectual excellence. But knowing that those who possessed it, would be sufficiently forward, not only to value the talent, but to overvalue themselves for possessing it, he knew also that its possessors would require rather repression than excitement. Accordingly, we do not recollect an eulogy on mere intellectual ability either in the Old or the New Testament. In the Old, indeed, there is the severe censure of a Prophet on its vain exercise; 'thy wisdom and thy knowledge have perverted thee;' and in the New, the only mention of 'high imaginations,' is accompanied with an injunction, 'to cast them down,' and this in order to the great and practical end of 'bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.'

Saint Paul was deeply sensible of the necessity of circumscribing the passions, the powers, and the genius of men within due limits. He knew that they were not to be trusted to their own operation, without positive institutions, fixed laws, prescribed bounds. To subdue the pride and independence of the human heart, he knew to be no less requisite than to tame the sensual appetites. He was aware, that to fill the imagination with mere pictures of heroic virtue would not suffice for a creature like man, under the influence of that disorderly and inflammable faculty, without the infusion of holy habits, and the prescription of specific duties and defined rules. In fine, the discipline of Paul learns not so much to give play to his fancy, as to submit his will; and the first question which seems presented in his pages is not this, 'How bright are thy conceptions?' but 'How readest thou?'

The subject is too important, as a matter of caution, not to be placed in every possible light. Let us remember then that admiration is not conviction. There is something in perfection of every kind, which lays hold on a heart glowing with strong feelings, and a mind imbued with true taste. On this ground, even Rousseau could be the occasional eulogist of Christianity. He could institute a comparison between the son of Sophroniscus and the Son of Mary, with a pen, which seems plucked by a fallen spirit from a seraph's wing. His fine imagination was fired with the sublime of Christianity, as it would have been with a dialogue of Plato, a picture of Raffaelle, or any exhibition of ideal beauty.

Longinus, a still more accomplished critic in intellectual beauty than Rousseau, amongst the various illustrations of his doctrine in his beautiful work, quotes the Almighty fiat at the creation, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' as a perfect instance of the sublime. He calls it 'a just idea, and a noble expression of the power of God.' Yet, though struck with this passage of the Jewish legislator, whom he coolly calls, 'no ordinary person, he was satisfied with

the beauty of the sentiment without examining into that truth which is the spring and fountain of all beauty. Though he lived so late as the third century, yet he does not appear to have inquired into the truth of the Christian revelation; and thus but too lamentably demonstrated, that the taste may give its most favourable verdict to a system which had yet made no impression on the heart.

Saint Paul found in the wants of man something that could not be supplied; in his sorrows, something that could not be consolated; in his lapse, something that could not be restored by elegant speculation or poetic rapture. He found that the wounds inflicted by sin could not be healed by the grace of composition; and that nothing but the grace of the Gospel could afford a remedy adequate to the demand. Let us, then, give our willing admiration to every species of true genius. Let us retain our taste for what is really excellent even in heathen models. But when called upon to identify the impressions of taste with the infusions of piety, let us boldly reply with the Prophet, 'What has Ephraim to do any more with Idols?'

CHAP. XI.

Saint Paul's Tenderness of Heart.

Among the peculiarities of Christianity, it is one of the most striking, that they who, in Scripture language, love not the world, nor the things of the world, are yet the persons in it who are farthest from misanthropes. They love the beings of whom the world is composed, better than he who courts and flatters it. They seek not its favour nor its honours, but they give a more substantial proof of affection,—they seek its improvement, its peace, its happiness, its salvation.

If ever man, on this ground, had a pre-eminent claim to the title of philanthropist, that man is the Apostle Paul. The warmth of his affections, as exhibited in a more general view, in the narrative of Saint Luke, and the tenderness of his feelings, as they appear more detailed throughout his own Epistles, constitute a most interesting part of his very diversified character.

This truth is obvious, not only on great and extraordinary occasions, but in the common circumstances of his life, and from the usual tenor of his letters.

There are persons, not a few, who, though truly pious, defeat much of the good they intend to do, not always by a natural severity of temper, but by a repulsiveness of manner, by not cultivating habits of courtesy, by a neglect of the smaller lenient acts of kindness. They will indeed confer the obligation, but they confer it in such a manner as grieves and humbles him who receives it. In fulfilling the letter of charity, they violate its spirit. We would not willingly suspect, that if they are more averse from bestowing commendation, than from receiving it, a little envy, unsuspected by themselves, mixes with this reluctance. But be this as it may, tender spirits and feeling hearts, especially in the first stages of their religious course, require the fostering air of kindness and encouragement. They are not able to go alone, they need the soothing voice and the helping hand. They are ready to suspect that they are going wrong, if not occasionally encouraged to believe that they are going right.

History presents us with numberless instances, in which the success or the failure of great enterprises has depended, not altogether on the ability, but partly on the temper of him who conducted it. The importance of conciliatory and engaging manners is no where more strikingly illustrated than by the opposite conduct and different success of two famous Athenian generals. Plutarch observes, that though Pericles and Nicias both pursued the same end, the former, in the progress of his purpose, always won the people by his kind and insinuating address; while the latter, not employing the mild powers of persuasion, exasperated instead of winning them over, and thus commonly failed in his enterprise.

Paul's consummate knowledge of human nature, no less than his tenderness of heart, led him to encourage in his young converts early opening promise of goodness. He carefully cultivates every favourable symptom. He is 'gentle among them as a nurse cherisheth her children.' He does not expect every thing at once; he does not expect that a beginner in the ways of religion should start into instantaneous perfection. He does not think all is lost if an error is committed; he does not abandon hope, if some less happy converts are slow in their progress. He protects their budding graces, he fences his young plants till they have had time to take root; as they became strong he exposes them to the blast. If he rejoices that the hardy are more flourishing, he is glad that the less vigorous are nevertheless alive.

Characters which are great are not always amiable; the converse is equally true; in Saint Paul there is an union of both qualities. He condescends to the inferior distresses, and consults the natural feelings of his friends, as much as if no weightier cares pressed on his mind. There is scarcely a more lovely part of his character, though it may be less striking to the common eyes, as being more tender than great than the gentleness exhibited to his Corinthian converts; where he is anxious before he appears among them again that any breach might be healed, and every painful feeling done away, which his sharp reproof of an offending individual might have excited. He would not have the joyfulness of their meeting overshadowed by any remaining cloud.

Though he expresses himself in the most feeling manner, lest he might have given them pain by his severe reproofs in a preceding letter, yet instantly the predominating integrity of his mind leads him to take comfort in the reflection, that this temporary sorrow had produced the most salutary effects on them who felt it. His rejoicing that the very sorrow he had excited was a religious sorrow,—his reflections on the beneficial results of this affliction,—on the repentance it had produced, the distinction between this and worldly sorrow,—his

generous energy in enumerating the several instances in which this good effect had appeared; 'yea, what carefulness is wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear,' and the animating conclusion, that 'in all things they had proved themselves to be clear in the matter;' all afford a proof of his being on the watch to lay hold of any possible occasion, on which to build instruction, as well as to graft consolation.

No one ever possessed more nearly in perfection, the virtuous art of softening the severity of the censure he is obliged to inflict, no one ever more combined flexibility of manner with inflexibility of principle. He takes off the edge of reproof by conveying it negatively. To give a single instance out of many, when he thought some of his converts had acted improperly, instead of saying I blame you, he adopts a mitigating phrase, 'I praise you not.' This address would prepare them to receive with more temper the censure to which it is an introduction.

Of this Christian condescension each successive example furnishes us with a most engaging and beautiful model for our own conduct. With what deep regret does he allude to the necessity under which he had been of animadverting severely on the atrocious instance of misconduct above-mentioned! With what truth and justice does he make it appear that reproofs, which are so painful to the censor, are a more certain evidence of friendship, than commendations, which it would have given to him as much joy to have bestowed, as to them to have received! An important admonition to all, to those especially whose more immediate concern it is to watch over the conduct of others, that though this most trying duty should never be neglected by them, yet that the integrity which obliges them to point out faults, should be exercised in a manner so feeling as to let the offender see, that they have no pleasure in adopting harsh measures; of this truth they give the surest proof by the joy with which, like the apostle, they welcome the returning penitent back to virtue.

Observe the delicacy of his distinctions,—he wrote to them *out of much affliction and anguish of heart;* not that he wished to grieve them by a display of his own sorrow, but that they might judge by it *of the abundant love he had for them.* Nor does he, as is the vulgar practice, blame a whole community for the faults of individuals: *I am grieved but in part, that I may not overcharge you all.* Mark his justice in separating the offending party from the mass. Is not this a hint against an indiscriminate mode of attack? Do we not occasionally hear one audience addressed as if it were composed entirely of saints, and another, as if all were grossly impenitent sinners?

Having received sufficient proofs of the obedience of the community in inflicting the punishment, and of the penitence of the offender in submitting to it, he was now not only anxious for his restoration, but for his comfort. He sets a most amiable example of the manner in which the contrite spirit should be cheered, and the broken heart bound up. No one was ever more studious than Saint Paul, to awaken contrition; none more eager to heal its pangs.

Want of consideration is an error into which even good men sometimes fall. They do not always enter intimately into the character and circumstances of the persons they address. Saint Paul writes to his friends like one that felt, because he partook the same fallen humanity with them: like one who was familiar with the infirmities of our common nature, who could allow for doubt and distrust, for misapprehension and error; who expected inconsistency, and was not deterred by perverseness; who bore with failure where it was not wilful, and who could reprove obduracy, without being disappointed at meeting with it. In Saint Paul, the heart of flesh was indeed substituted for the heart of stone.

Our spiritual strength is invigorated by the retrospection of our former errors.—Saint Paul's tenderness for his converts was doubtless increased by the remembrance of his own errors; a remembrance which left a compassionate feeling on his impressible heart. It never, however, led him to be guilty of that mischievous compassion of prefering the ease of his friends to their safety. He never soothed where it was his duty to reprove. He knew that integrity was the true tenderness; that a harsh truth, which might tend to save the soul, had more humanity than a palliative which might endanger it.

From this intimate knowledge of the infirmities even of good men, he had such a conviction of the possibility of relaxing in religious strictness, that he scrupled not to express his fears to his Corinthian friends, that when he came among them, 'he should not find them such as he would;' in order to soften, he divides the blame, by fearing, that 'he should be found of them such as they would not.' Knowing, too, that the temper was more under control, and irritation less easily excited, by epistolary than by verbal communication; when he expresses his fears that at their meeting he might find among them 'debates, envyings, wrath, swellings,' he tenderly apologizes for expressing his apprehensions, *because lest in conversation he might use sharpness,* In his most severe animadversions he does not speak of any with hopeless harshness. He seldom treats the bad as irreclaimable, but generally contrives to leave them some remains of credit. He seems to feel that by stripping erring men of every vestige of character, he should strip them also of every glimmering of hope, of every incitement to reformation. It is indeed almost cutting off any chance of a return to virtue, when we do not leave the offender some remnant of reputation to which he may still be led to act up. May not this preservation from despair lead to the operation of a higher principle? Though Timothy is exhorted to have no company with him who obeys not the word of Paul's Epistle, the prohibition is only in order 'that he may be ashamed;' 'yet is he not to be accounted as an enemy, but exhorted as a brother.'

As there seems to have been no church which had fallen into such important errors as that of Corinth, and consequently none where more pointed reproof was necessary, so in no Epistle is there more preparatory soothing, more conci-

liatory preliminaries to the counsels or the censures he is about to communicate. He tells them that 'in every thing they are enriched,'—'that they come behind in no gift,' before he reprehends them for their contentious spirit, for their divisions, for their strifes. Thus, though the reproof would be keenly felt, it would not be met with a spirit previously exasperated—a spirit which those reprovers infallibly excite, who by indiscriminate upbraiding stir up the irascible passions at the outset, shut up every avenue to the kind affections, and thus deprive the offender of that patient calmness with which he might otherwise have profited by the reproof.

This intimate feeling of his own imperfection is every where visible. It makes him more than once press on his friends, the Christian duty of bearing one another's burdens, intimating how necessary this common principle of mutual kindness was, as they themselves had so much to call forth the forbearance of others. In his usual strain of referring to first motives, he does not forget to remind them, that it was fulfilling the law of Christ.

As the ardent zeal of Saint Paul led him into no enthusiasm, so the warmth of his affections never blinded his judgment. Religion did not dry up, as it is sometimes accused of doing, the spring of his natural feeling; his sensibility was exquisite; but the heart which felt all, was quickened by an activity which did all, and regulated by a faith which conquered all.

His sorrows and his joys, both of which were intense, never seem to have arisen from any thing which related merely to himself. His own happiness or distress were little influenced by personal considerations; the varying condition, the alternate improvement or declension of his converts alone, could sensibly raise or depress his feelings. With what anguish of spirit does he mourn over some, 'of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.' Mark again his self-renouncing joy—'We are glad when we are weak and ye are strong.' Again, 'Let me rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.'

When he expressed such a feeling sense of distress, upon the interesting occasion of taking his departure for Jerusalem, 'the Holy Ghost witnessing in every city that bonds and imprisonment awaited him,'* still he felt no concern for his own safety. No: he anticipated without terror his probable reception there. With a noble disregard of all personal considerations, he exclaims, 'but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.' †

If none of these things moved him, then whence arose the sorrow he so keenly felt? It arose from no selfish cause; it was from a consideration far superior to that tender feeling, that they should meet no more, though that too he would deeply regret; it was occasioned by reflection the future condition of the church, and a prophetic view of that corruption of doctrine to which he foresaw his beloved converts would be soon exposed.

There is something singularly beautiful in the dignity, simplicity, and godly sincerity of this apostolic charge, to which we allude.—With humble confidence, he refers his audience to their own knowledge of his whole conduct. He assures them, that neither any fears of the insidious Jews, always on the watch to circumvent him, nor the hostility of the idolatrous Gentiles, always ready to oppose him, had ever driven him to withhold any important truth, any salutary admonition. He slightly touches on the two fundamental truths on which all his instructions had been built, *faith and repentance:* then he reminds them, that not satisfied with the public exercise of his function, he had practised that subsidiary and valuable method of instruction—private visits at the houses of individuals—a method equally practicable in all ages of the church; equally desirable to all who wish to gain a real acquaintance, in the intervals of public service with the necessities, the infirmities, and the sins of their respective hearers. This would enable him to perform his stated ministrations with ten-fold effect. It would initiate him into the endless variety of characters of which every audience is composed; it would enable the teacher to be more personal in his exhortations, more pointed in his reproofs, more specific in his instruction, than he could be when he addressed them in the great assembly. It would also qualify him for more extensive usefulness in those public addresses by the materials which he was thus collecting. It would be among the means also to win their affection and increase their attachment, when they saw that his zeal for their spiritual advancement was large and cordial; that he did not content himself with the stipulated scantling of bare weight duty; that he did not deal out his instruction with a legal scrupulosity, but was willing to spend, and desirous to be spent, for them.

With what a holy satisfaction did the conscience of the apostle further testify that no desire of pleasing, no fear of offending, had prevented him from delivering wholesome truths, because they might be unpalatable! What an awful intimation to every ambassador of Christ, that this indefatigable apostle, at the moment of final separation, could call on all present to testify that whatever might have been the negligence of the hearer, the preacher 'was pure from the blood of all men;' that he had never been guilty of that false tenderness, of not declaring to them the whole counsel of God! He appeals to his disinterestedness, that, so far from being influenced by any lucrative motive, he had laboured with his own hands, not only to support himself, but to assist the poor. How touching, no doubt to his hearers, was the intimation, that the same hands which had been raised for them in prayer, had been employed for their support!

This modest allusion to his own liberality, and to the personal labour which had enabled him to exercise it, was a proper parting lesson. It reminded his auditors, that no part of his re-

* Acts, xx.

† We make no apology for the repeated references to this portion of this most interesting chapter.

ligion was merely theoretical. He had, doubtless, frequently insisted on the principle; he here shows them its practical effect; in this, as in other instances, pressing home every truth he taught by every virtue he exercised.

He concludes with a powerful application to his associates in the ministry, to whom he was about to commit the care of the people. The tender grief, the grateful sympathy, the prayers, the tears, and embraces of the afflicted audience, 'sorrowing most because they should see his face no more,' bore a truer testimony to the fidelity of the preacher, than the most elaborate eulogy on his style or manner; and doubtless afforded a higher test of excellence, than any temporary effect, produced by an artificial harangue, which, while it fills the hearer with admiration of the preacher, leaves his own conscience untouched, his own heart unhumbled.

He then bequeaths, as a kind of dying legacy, the people to their ministers; affectionately exhorting the latter, first; to 'take heed to themselves,' as the only sure earnest of their taking heed to their flock, strengthening his exhortation 'to feed the church of God,' by a motive at once the most powerful and the most endearing, because *he hath purchased it with his own blood.*

In that great and terrible day of the Lord when the glorious Head of the Church shall summon the assembled universe to judgment, among the myriads who shall tremblingly await their own definitive sentence, how will the exploring eye of men and angels be turned on the more prominent and public characters, who, from rank, profession, talent, or influence, were invested with superior responsibility! What individual among these distinguished classes will be able to endure the additional load of other men's sins, brought forward to swell his personal account.

Though it is not easy to image to the mind a more touching event than this parting scene of Christian friends on the shores of Ephesus, yet there is one to come of far higher interest, that of their re-union;—that august scene, when the pastor and his flock shall appear together, at the call of the Chief Shepherd,—when the servants of the Universal Master,—'they who have sought that which was lost, and brought again that which was driven away, and bound up that which was broken, and strengthened that which was sick,'* shall deliver up to Him who laid down his life for the sheep, that flock 'which he will require at their hands.'

Yes! among the candidates for a blessed immortality will stand awfully pre-eminent the band of Christian ministers, each surrounded by 'the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer,' every one of whom had sacramentally declared, at his introduction into the fold, that he undertook the sacred office in obedience to that solemn call.† What a sound, 'Well done good and faithful servant!' to him who shall have acquitted himself of his tremendous responsibility! What a spectacle?—multitudes entering into the joy of their Lord, gratefully ascribing their opening and inconceivable felicity to the zeal, the fidelity, the prayers of their pastor. For them, to resume the beautiful metaphors of the Holy Book,—for them, *the green pastures*, into which they had conducted their flock, shall flourish in everlasting verdure; for them, *the waters of comfort, beside which they had led them*, shall flow from a source which eternity cannot exhaust, from those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore.

If this spectacle *has* a contrast, we avert our eyes from the contemplation. If even the picture is too terrible to be sketched, who could stand the possibility of its being realized?

This whole valedictory address to the elders of Ephesus combines every beauty of composition: it exhibits an energy, a devotion, a resignation, an integrity, a tenderness, which cannot be sufficiently admired. And the more intimately to touch their hearts by mixing the remembrance of the friend with the injunctions he had delivered, he not only refers them to the doctrines which he had taught, but the tears which he had shed.

There is nothing like stoical indifference. Nothing like a contempt of the sensibilities of nature, in his whole conduct; and it furnishes a proof how happily magnanimity and tenderness blend together, that as there is probably no character in history which exhibits a more undaunted heroism than that of Saint Paul, so there is perhaps not one whose tears are so frequently recorded. 'What mean ye to weep and break my heart?' is an interrogatory as intelligible to us in the character of Paul, as the heroic declaration, 'I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.' What ground, then, is there for that charge so frequently brought against persons of eminent piety, that they are destitute of natural feeling. The Old Testament Saints were striking examples of domestic tenderness.

When Paul exhorts his converts 'to stand fast in the Lord,' he declares his own participation in the blessings of this steadfastness, in terms the most endearing—'dearly beloved and longed for, my crown and joy, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved;'—as if he would add to the motives of their perseverance, the transport it would afford to himself. His very existence seems to depend on their steadfastness in piety—'for now we *live* if ye stand fast in the Lord.' Again, as a proof how dear his converts were to him, he was desirous of imparting to them *not only the Gospel of God, but also his own soul.*

The spirit of Christianity is no where more apparent than in the affectionate strain in which he adjures his Roman friends only to consent to save their own souls. One would suppose it was not the immortal happiness of others, but his own, which so earnestly engaged him. How fervently tender is his mode of obtesting them! 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God'—'I Paul by myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.'* As the representative of his master, he implores of man the reconciliation for which it would be natural to expect that man himself, whose own concern it is, should be the solicitor.

Saint Paul's zeal for the spiritual welfare of

* Ezekiel, ch. xxxiv. 16.
† See the Ordination Service.

* Romans xii. 1.

whole communities, did not swallow up his ardent attachment to individuals; nor did his regard to their higher interest lead him to overlook their personal sufferings. He descends to give particular advice to one friend* respecting the management of his health. In his grief for the sickness of another,† and his joy at his recovery, he does not pretend to a feeling purely disinterested, but gratefully acknowledges that his joy was partly for his own sake,' 'lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow.' These soft touches of sympathy for individuals particularly dear to him, in a man so like-minded with Christ, in the instances of Lazarus and John, are a sufficient refutation of the whimsical assertion of a lively genius; that particular friendships are hostile to the spirit of Christianity.‡

The capacious heart of this blessed apostle was so large as to receive into it all who loved his Lord. The salutations with which most of his Epistles close, and the affectionate remembrances which they convey, include perhaps the names of a greater number of friends, than any dozen of Greek or Roman heroes, in the plenitude of success and power, ever attracted; if we may judge in the one case by the same rule as in the other, the narrative of history, or the writings of biographical memoirs.

But his benevolence was not confined to the narrow bounds of friends or country.—*He was a man*, and nothing that involved the best interests of man was indifferent to him. A most beautiful comparison has been drawn by as fine a genius as has adorned this or any age, between the learned and not illaudable curiosity which has led so many ingenious travellers to visit distant and dangerous climes, in order 'to contemplate mutilated statues and defaced coins; to collate manuscripts, and take the height of pyramids,' with the zeal which carried the late martyr of humanity on a more noble pilgrimage, 'to search out infected hospitals, to explore the depth of dungeons, and to take the guage of human misery' in order to relieve it.

Without the unworthy desire to rob this eminent philanthropist of his well earned palm, may we not be allowed to wish, that the exquisite eulogist of Howard had also instituted a comparison which would have opened so vast a field to his eloquent pen, between the adventurous expeditions of the conqueror, the circumnavigator, the discoveror, the naturalist, with those of Paul, the martyr of the gospel? Paul, who, renouncing ease and security, sacrificing fame and glory, encountering 'weariness and painfulness, watching, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness; was beaten with rods, frequent in prisons, in deaths oft, was once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, was a day and a night in the deep,'* went from shore to shore, and from city to city, knowing that bonds and imprisonment awaited him; and for what purpose? He, too, was a discoverer, and in one sense a naturalist. He explored not indeed the treasures of the mineral, nor the varieties of the vegetable world. His business was with man; his object the discovery of man's moral wants; his study, to apply a proportionate remedy; his work, to break up the barren ground of the human soil; his aim, to promote the culture of the undisciplined heart; his end, the salvation of those for whom Christ died. He did not bring away one poor native to graft the vices of a polished country on the savage ignorance of his own; but he carried to the natives themselves the news, and the means of eternal life.

He was also a conqueror, but he visited new regions, not to depopulate, but to enlighten them. He sought triumphs, but they were over sin and ignorance. He achieved conquests; but it was over the prince of darkness. He gained trophies, but they were not military banners, but rescued souls. He erected monuments, but they were to the glory of God. He did not carve his own name on the rocky shore, but he engraved that of his Lord on the hearts of the people. While conflicting with want, and struggling with misery, he planted churches; while sinking under reproach and obloquy, he erected the standard of the Cross among barbarians, and (far more hopeless enterprize!) among philosophers; and having escaped with life from the most uncivilized nations, was reserved for martyrdom in the imperial queen of cities!

* Timothy. † Epaphroditus.

‡ It is however a debt of justice due to a departed friend to observe, that no suspicion could be more unfounded than that Mr. Soame Jenyns was not sincere in his profession of Christianity. The author lived much in his very pleasant society, and is persuaded that he died a sincere Christian. He had a peculiar turn of humour; he delighted in novelty and paradox, and perhaps brought too much of both into his religion. Ingenious men will sometimes be ingenious in the wrong place. If he lays too much stress on some things, and underrates others; if he mistakes or overlooks even fundamental points, so that some of his opinions must appear defective to the experienced Christian; yet the general turn of his work on the Internal Evidence of Christianity may render it useful to others, by inviting them by the very novelty of his manner to consult a species of evidence to which they have not been accustomed. A sceptical friend of the writer of these pages, who had stood out against the argument of some of the ablest divines, was led by this little work to examine more deeply into Internal Evidence; it sent him to read his Bible in a new spirit. He followed up his inquiries, consulted authors whose views were more matured, and died a sound believer.

CHAP. XII.

Saint Paul's Heavenly Mindedness.

True religion consists in the subjugation of the body to the soul, and of the soul to God. The apostle every where shows, that by our apostacy this order is destroyed, or rather inverted. At the same time he teaches, that though brought into this degraded state by our own perverseness, we are not hopelessly abandoned to it. He not only shows the possibility, but the mode of our restoration, and describes the happy condition of the restored, even in this world, by declaring, that *to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

He knew that our faculties are neither good nor evil in themselves, but powerful instruments for the promotion of both; active capacities for either, just as the bent of our character

* 2 Corinthians, ch. xi.

is determined by the predominance of religion or of sin, of the sensual or the spiritual mind. Saint Paul eminently exhibited, both in his example and in his writings, the spiritual mind. He was not only equal in correctness of sentiment and purity of practice with those who are drily orthodox, and superior to those who are coldly practical; but he 'perfects holiness in the fear of God.' He abounds in the heavenly mindedness which is the uniting link between doctrinal and practical piety, which, by the unction it infuses into both, proves that both are the result of Divine grace; and which consists in an entire consecration of the affections, a voluntary surrender of the whole man to God.

This disposition the apostle makes the preliminary to all performance, as well as the condition of all acceptance. This it is which constitutes the charm of his writings. There is a spirit of sanctity which pervades them, and which, whilst it affords the best evidence of the love of God shed abroad in his own heart, infuses it also into the heart of his readers. While he is musing, the fire burns, and communicates its pure flame to every breast susceptible of genuine Christian feeling. Under its influence his arguments become persuasions, his exhortations entreaties. A sentiment so tender, and earnestness so imploring, breathes throughout them, that it might seem that all regard for himself, all care for his own interests, is swallowed up in his ardent and affectionate concern for the spiritual interest of others.

The exuberance of his love and gratitude, the fruits of his abundant faith, break out almost in spite of himself. His zeal reproves our timidity, his energy our indifference. 'He dwells,' as an eloquent writer has remarked, 'with almost untimely descant,' on the name of Him who had called him out of darkness into his marvellous light. That name which we are so reluctant to pronounce, not through reverence to its possessor, but fear of each other, ever sounds with holy boldness from the lips of Paul. His bursts of sacred joy, his triumphant appeals to the truth of the promises, his unbounded confidence in the hope set before him, carry an air not only of patience, but of victory, not only of faith, but of fruition.

Whoever desires more particularly to compare this spirit of Divine power manifested by the apostle, with the opposite spirit of the world, let him carefully peruse the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. After describing the strong and painful conflict with the malignant power of sin in the seventh chapter, with what a holy exultation does he, in the opening of the eighth, hurry in, as it were, the assurance that 'there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' It somewhat resembles that instant, I had almost said, that impatient, mercy of God in the third of Genesis, which seems eager to make the promise follow close upon the fall, the forgiveness upon the sin; to cut off the distressing space between terror and joy, to leave no interval for despair. God, who is so patient when he is to punish, is not so patient when he is to save. He delays to strike, but he hastes to pardon. 'After the first offence,' says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, 'God could not stay from redeeming;' nor could Paul stay from proclaiming that we *are* redeemed. The apostle, like his Creator, loses not a moment to comfort the soul which he has been afflicting.

In this divine effusion we at once discern the difference between natural weakness and superadded strength; between the infirmities which are fortified by the assistance of the Spirit, and the sensual mind, which not only is not, but cannot be subject to the law of God; between him who not having 'the Spirit of Christ, is none of his,' and him in whom 'Christ, the spirit of life, dwells;' between him, who, if he yield to the pleasures of sense, shall die, and him who, through the Spirit mortifying the deeds of the body shall live.

It is worth observing, that he does not make the line of demarcation between the two classes of characters, to consist merely in the actual crimes and grosser vices of the one class, and the better actions of the other. It is to the sensual and spiritual *mind*, the fountain of good and evil deeds, to which he refers as the decisive test. This radical distinction he further conceives to be a more obvious line of separation than even any difference of religious opinions, any distinction arising from the mere adoption of peculiar dogmas.

That the reviving assurance may appear to belong exclusively to real Christians, he marks the change of character by the definite tense *now*, implying their recent victory over their old corruptions, which he had been deploring. This precaution would prevent those, who remained in their former state from taking to themselves the comfort of a promise in which they have no part. He guards it still more explicitly, by declaring, that the true evidence of this renovation of heart, was their *walking* after the Spirit; a term which describes habitual progress in the new way, to which we are conducted by the new nature, and which, if it do not always preserve us from deviating from it, recalls us back to it.

The power Paul felt; and on this principle he wrote; and he never wrote on any principle on which he did not act. After he had carried piety to the most heroic elevation; after he had pressed the most fervent exertions on others, and gained the splendid conquests over himself, still he considered himself only in the *road* to salvation; still he never thought of slackening his course; he thought not of resting; he had not reached his end. He was not intimidated from pursuing it by new difficulties; his resolution rose with his trials; all he feared for himself, all against which he cautioned others, was declension; his grand solicitude for them and for himself was, that they might not lose the ground they had gained. He well knew, that even the present position could not be long maintained without the pursuit of farther conquests. He *walked* after the Spirit.

The terrible forms of distress which he summons to view in this, as well as in other parts of his Epistles, always remind him of the principle which makes them supportable. He enumerates human miseries in all their variety of shapes,—*tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword.* But to what end

does he muster this confederate band of woes? He calls on them not to avert the sufferings they inflict; no, he challenges them to separate the Christian sufferer *from the love of Christ*. He presents himself to us as an instance of the supreme triumph of this love over all earthly calamity. The man whose *distresses abounded*, who was *pressed above measure*, comes out of the conflict, not only a conqueror,—that to one of his ardent spirit seemed too poor a triumph, *he is more than a conqueror*. But how is this victory achieved? *Through him who loved us*. That lowliness which made him say just before, 'that which I do I allow not, but what I hate that I do,' must have been lifted by a mighty faith when he exclaimed, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor life, nor death, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

In speaking, in this chapter, of the glories of the eternal world, his rapture does not escape him as the sally of the imagination, as a thought awakened by a sudden glance of the object; he does not express himself at random from the impulse of the moment; his is not the conjectural language of ignorant desire, of uncertain hope; it is an assumption of the sober tone of calculation. 'I reckon,' says he, like a man skilled in this spiritual arithmetic,—'I reckon,' after a due estimate of their comparative value, 'that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.'

No man was ever so well qualified to make this estimate. Of the sufferings of the present world he had shared more largely than any man. Of the glory that shall be revealed, he had a glimpse granted to no other man. He had been caught up into Paradise. He 'had heard the words of God, and seen the visions of the Almighty,' and the result of his privileged experience, was, that he 'desired to depart, and to be with Christ;' that he desired to escape from this valley of tears; that he was impatient to recover the celestial vision, eager to perpetuate the momentary foretaste of the glories of immortality.

We perceive, then, how this hope of future felicity sustained him under conflicts, of which we, in an established state of Christianity, and suffering only under the common trials of mortality can have no adequate conception. His courageous faith was kept alive and fortified by fervently practising the duty he so unwearyingly urges upon others; *continuing instant in prayer*.

To encourage this practice in his readers, and at the same time to point out the source of his own heavenly hope, and continual intercourse with the Divine presence, he adds, 'the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.' Nor does his high trust and confidence in God, thus gendered, easily find its limit. On the contrary, he adds, 'we know that *all* things work together for good to them that love God.'

This trust was an assurance of the largest import, and it involved indefinite consequences. Having cordially confided in him for salvation through the blood of Christ, he found, as is always the case, the greater involving the less: he found that he had little difficulty in trusting Him with his inferior concerns. To Him to whom he had committed his eternal happiness, to Him he could not scruple to confide his fortune, his health, his reputation, his life.

We have not, it is true, these manifestations, of which the apostle was favoured with a temporary enjoyment. But we have *his* testimony, added to the testimony, the evidences, the proofs, the promises, the demonstrations of the whole New Testament. Why, then, are we not supported, encouraged, animated by them? It is because we do not examine these evidences, because we do not consult these testimonies, because we neglect these proofs: therefore it is, that we are not nurtured by these promises. We entertain them as speculations, rather than as convictions, we receive them as notions, rather than as facts.

If ever a cordial desire of these devout assurances is conferred, it is in fervent prayer. What an encouragement to this holy exercise, is the hope of being raised by it, to the heart-felt belief that such felicity is real, and that it is reserved for the final portion of the humble Christian? Too humble, perhaps, to give full credit that such great things can be in store for him. For a moment he is staggered, till faith, the parent of that humility which trembles while it believes, enables him to apply to himself the promises of Him to whom nothing is impossible, the merits of Him for whom nothing is too great, the death of Him who died that we might live forever.

In whatever part of his writings the Apostle speaks of the efficacy of the death of Christ, and of the 'constraining' power of his love, there is a vehemence in his desire, a vivacity in his sentiments, an energy in his language, an intensity in his feelings, which strongly indicate a mind penetrated with the depth of his own views. He paints the love of his Lord as a grace, of which, though his soul was deeply sensible as to its nature, yet as to the degree, it is 'exceeding abundantly above' not only 'all that he could ask,' but 'all that he could think.' His boldest conceptions sink under the impression which no language could convey.

Yet these sublime portions of his writings, which bear the more special stamp and impress of the gospel, which afford the nearest view of realities as yet unapproachable, are set aside by many, as things in which they have no personal concern. They have, indeed, a sort of blind reverence for them, as for something which they conceive to be at once sacred and unintelligible, such a kind of respect as a man would naturally entertain at the sight of a copy of the Scriptures in a language which he did not understand.

Eloquent as he was, we often find him labouring under his intense conception of ideas too vast for utterance. In describing the extent of the love of God, its height and depth, its length and breadth, his soul seems to expand with the dimensions he is unfolding. His expressions seem to acquire all that force with which he in-

timates that the soul itself, so acted upon, is invested. *To be strengthened with might*, would have been reckoned tautology in an ordinary writer on an ordinary subject; and to be strengthened with *all* might, would seem an attribute impossible to mortality. But holy Paul had himself felt the excellency of that power; he knew that it is derived, and that the fountain of duration is *the glorious power of God.*

In delineating the mighty operations of Divine love on the human mind, the seeming hyperboles are soberly true. Where the theme is illimitable, language will burst its bounds. He preaches *riches which are unsearchable*—exhorts to know *the love which surpasses knowledge*—promises *peace which passes understanding*—we must *look at things which are not seen—against hope we must believe in hope*—while *sorrowful we must always be rejoicing—as having nothing we must reckon that we possess all things—dying, and behold we live—though unknown we are well known*—In short, he reconciles contradictions, unites opposites. Antipathies by nature become affinities by grace. The love of God in Christ is the point where he makes contraries centre, and impossibilities meet.

His spirit seems most intimately to identify itself with the church of Ephesus. What an improbable union! The late idolatrous worshippers of Diana, and the late persecutors of the saints of Jesus, have now but one heart and one soul! These recent enemies to Christ, and to each other, now meet in one common point of attraction. With what holy triumph does he dilate on their common faith! that love of God in Christ Jesus which is their common centre and bond of union!

Still, as we have such frequent occasion to observe, he does not sacrifice practical duty to the indulgence of his rapture. Still he does not allow even these Ephesians to rest satisfied with the grace they have received. It is not enough that they have been favoured with a vocation, they must 'walk worthy of it.' 'The perfecting of the saints' must be carried on; 'they must reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' No such perfection had been attained as would allow them to rest in their present position. Even in this highly favoured church, *progress* is enjoined, pressed, reiterated.—No elevation of devout feeling sets him above attention to moral goodness.

Nothing can be more beautiful than the abrupt apostrophes of praise and gratitude into which, in the midst of sorrow, of exhortation, of reproof, he unexpectedly breaks out. The love of his Redeemer so fills his soul, that it requires an effort to restrain its outward expression. Even when engaged in the transaction of business, and directing the concerns of others, which, by an ordinary mind, would have been pleaded as a valid reason for suspending spiritual ideas, and dismissing spiritual feelings, they yet mix themselves, as it were involuntarily, with his secular cares; there is not only a satisfaction but a joyfulness in these escapes of affection which seem to spring from his soul, in proportion to the depression of his circumstances, to the danger which surrounded, to the deaths which threatened him.

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi, it is recorded that they prayed at midnight. This would naturally be expected from such men, under such circumstances; but it is added, 'they sang *praises* unto God.' Thus they not only justified, but glorified Him, under this suffering, as well as degradation. For it must not be forgotten, that this imprisonment was not merely a measure for securing their persons,—they were stripped bare—many stripes were laid upon them, and the iron entered into their soul. Yet they sang praises unto God.

What a triumph is here of the element of spirit over the force and violence of outward circumstances!

'Th' oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range,
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;
And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.'

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, to which we have just referred, we are presented with a fresh instance how much his devotion rose under the same circumstances of distress.—It was written from a prison, and is almost one entire effusion of love and praise. It is an overflowing expression of affectionate gratitude, that has no parallel. It seems to be enriched with an additional infusion of the Spirit of God, and has perhaps more of the heroism of Christian feeling than, except in the discourses of our Lord, is to be found in the whole sacred treasury. It seems to come fresh from the celestial world. He speaks not as from a prison, but as from a region of light, and life, and glory. His thoughts are in heaven, his soul is with his Saviour, his heart is with his treasure: no wonder, then, that his language has a tincture of the idiom of immortality.

As Archimedes, when Syracuse was taken by the besiegers, was so intent on a mathematical demonstration, that he knew not when the city was lost: so the apostle, absorbed in a concern as much superior to that of the philosopher as Scripture truth is to scientific, lost sight of the cruelties of Nero, forgot his former sufferings, felt not his present captivity, thought not of his impending fate—present, past, and future, as they related to himself, were absorbed in his zeal for the salvation of the church, for the glory of its founder! Mark the divine supports vouchsafed to this imprisoned Saint! Note his state of grace! Observe the perfection of his faith! How the motion of his spirit was accelerated as it drew nearer to its centre! He whose deep humility had suggested to him the possibility, that, after converting others, he might himself be rejected: he who had desired not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon—now declares that he is *ready* to be offered up, now *desires* to depart; not in the gentle decay of exhausted nature, not in the weaning languor of a sick bed, not in the calm of a peaceful dissolution, suffering only the pains inseparable from an ordinary death; but he is prepared to meet the hand of violence: he is ready to pour out his blood upon the scaffold; he is longing to join 'the souls which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.' So far from being dismayed, because he knew that his mar-

tyrdom was at hand; he who knew not what it was to boast, yet knowing in whom he had trusted; feeling his eternal redemption drawing nigh, could exclaim with a holy bravery; 'I have finished my course; I have kept the faith.'

Then in a rapture of triumphant joy at the mental view of the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, 'had prepared for him against the great day,' that same unparalleled philanthropy, which he had so constantly manifested, breaks out and consecrates a moment, when we might have supposed the immediate nearness of his own unspeakable blessedness would have engrossed his whole soul. His religion was no selfish piety, his hope no solitary salvation. Gratitude swells into its highest transport from the reflection that the Lord Jesus had not exclusively reserved the crown for him, no, nor for the beloved Timothy, to whom he writes, nor for the multitudes of his own friends, nor for the converts who were to be peculiarly 'his joy and crown of rejoicing;' but 'for ALL them also which love his appearing,' for all 'the redeemed of the Lord' to the end of the world.

CHAP. XIII.

A general view of the qualities of Saint Paul: his knowledge of human nature—his delicacy in giving advice or reproof—his integrity.

THERE is in Saint Paul's writings and conduct, such warmth and openness; so much frankness and candour; such an unreserved pouring out of his very soul; such a free disclosure of his feelings, as well as of his opinions; such an elevation, mingled with such a soberness of thinking; so much social kindness, with so much Divine love; so much practical activity, with such deep spirituality; so much human prudence, with so much of the wisdom which is from above; so much tenderness for the persons of men, with so little connivance at their faults; so much professional dignity, with so much personal humility,—as it would be difficult to find in any other human being.

Yet in all these opposite excellences, there is nothing that is not practicable, nothing that is not imitable. His religion, like his morality, has a peculiar sedateness. His ardent feelings betray him into no intemperance of speech, into no inequality of action. His piety is free from eccentricity, his faith from presumption.

Uniformly we find a great reasonableness in his character; and it adds to his value as an example, that he was, if we may be allowed so familiar an expression, eminently a man of business. His transactions, indeed always tended to the same end with his devotions and his instructions; he was full of care, but it was the care of all the churches; each day was fully occupied, but it was that same 'care' which came upon him, not only as a Sunday, but as a daily care.'

The perfection in which he possessed this quality, proves that his devotedness had in it nothing of abstraction. He exhibited no contempt of the common usages, no renunciation of the common comforts of life, when the former could with propriety be observed, or the latter be lawfully enjoyed; no coveting of sufferings, when they could be conscientiously avoided. He was no pattern for ascetics, no prototype for Stylites. He bequeathed no example of bodily macerations, nor uncommanded austerities, nor penances unprofitably aiming at atonement. His idea of self-denial was to sacrifice his own will; his notion of pleasing God was to do and suffer the Divine will.

His discretion was scarcely less conspicuous than his zeal: unlike some enthusiastic Christians in the early ages of the Church, who, not contented to meet persecution, invited it; he never sought, whilst he never shrunk from danger. Though his life was one continued martyrdom, to which the brief suffering of the stake or the axe would have been a mercy, yet he was contented to live for lengthened services; though he would have finished his course with joy to himself, he was willing to protract it for the glory of God; though *he counted not his life dear*, yet he knew it to be useful, and therefore desired its continuance.

He was entirely exempt from that indiscreet zeal which seems to glory in provoking the displeasure of the world. He had nothing of that bad judgment, which seeks distinction from singularity. His straight-forward rectitude neither courted the applause, nor despised the good opinion of men. He who, in the integrity of his heart could say, 'We sought glory neither of you nor yet of others; in the tenderness of that heart could say, to the same persons, 'for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing; are not even ye,—ye are our glory and joy."

He was totally free from any irrational confidence in supernatural interpositions. Though living under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he felt no enthusiastic inflation.

Though, in his perilous* voyage, assured by an angel of God that there should be no loss of lives, yet he helped *with his own hands* to throw out the tackling, and the ship *must* be worked by his direction. He went farther, declaring, 'except the men abide in the ship ye *cannot* be saved.' Could the boldest impugner of Divine Providence have exercised more prudence, have exhibited more activity?

Not only from this passage, but from the general spirit of his writings, we may learn, that merely to say, we trust in God for the accomplishment of any thing within our power, without using ourselves the rational means of accomplishing it, is a total want of sense; and not entirely to trust in Him, while we are using them, is an utter want of faith.

Though favoured with immediate revelations from above, yet was Paul so singularly modest, as only slightly to advert to Divine communications, and then in the name of a third person,—*I knew a man in Christ.*—So continent of speech, as not even to disclose this distinction till near fourteen years after it had been conferred. May we not then agree with the sagacious Paley, that 'Saint Paul's mind had none of the characteristics of enthusiasm; that the coolness of his

* Acts, ch. xxvii.

head always kept pace with the warmth of his heart?'

His conduct uniformly exhibits the precise distinction between Christian wisdom and worldly policy. His boundary-line is clearly defined, and he never steps over it to serve a purpose. Of that prudence which is a-kin to selfishness, of that discretion which leans to craft, of that candour which tends to undue pliancy, of that wisdom which is sensual and earthly, he had not the slightest tincture. What an illustrious orator of our own time said of his contemporary statesman, may be far more appropriately applied to Saint Paul,—that, in gaining admiration, *his virtues were his arts.**

His intellectual powers were admirably constituted to second his high moral and spiritual attainments. He had an intuitive sagacity of mind. This deep master of the science of man was intimately acquainted with all the doublings and turnings, the intricacies and perverseness of the heart. In short he knew the exact point from which to take the most comprehensive view of this *scene of man;* and his writings possess this great advantage, that they also put the intelligent reader in the position to take the same view. He knew every plait and fold of the human character. He had studied the species in all its modifications and varieties, from the monarch on the throne to the meanest officer in his court; from the high priest presiding in the Sanhedrim to the pharisee praying in the street: of the intolerance of the one, he had had personal experience; through the duplicity of the other, his keen eye could pierce, without consulting the breadth of his phylactery.

The same acute penetration brought him no less acquainted with the errors of the well-intentioned, with the weaknesses of the wise, with the failings of the virtuous, and the inconsistencies of even the conscientious. Yet did he never convert his knowledge of all the shades of the human mind to an unkind, malevolent, or selfish purpose. It never taught him to hate the unworthy, with whose obliquities it made him acquainted; or to despise the weak whose infirmities it had discovered. So far was he from availing himself of his sagacity, by turning the vices or imbecilities of others to his own account, that it inspired him with a more tender and compassionate feeling for the frailties of their common nature.

In perusing his Epistles, we should always bear in mind, that Saint Paul is not addressing the profligate and profane, but converts, or, at least, religious professors. This consideration would prevent our putting the reproofs and corrections which he thought necessary for them at too great a distance from ourselves. Into this danger we may be too much inclined to fall, if we do not bring these people nearer to what we suppose to be our own level. They were already Christians. It was not, therefore, always necessary to arrange all the fundamental doctrines into a regular system, much less to begin with a formal exposition of the elements of a religion, with the principles of which they were already imbued; or at least with the doctrines of which they were acquainted. This manner of addressing them is a proof that their progress was already considerable.

The first Epistle is inscribed 'to all that are at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, whose faith is spoken of throughout the world.' The next is 'to the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints in Achaia.' Another 'to the saints that are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.' Again, 'to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse.' His letters to individual friends, designate also the piety of his correspondents. 'To Timothy, his son in the faith;' 'to Titus, his own son after the common faith.' And in writing to the Hebrews collectively, he denominates them 'holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.'

It would be well if the generality of Christians could aspire to rank with any of these classes. Saint Paul's knowledge of mankind, however, of which we have said so much, would prevent his addressing the best of his converts, as characters who did not require either caution, correction, or improvement. He knew even after they had adopted the Christian profession, how pertinaciously bad habits would cleave to some, how much besetting sins, natural infirmity, temptation without, and passion within, would impede the progress of others. He was aware that many who thought themselves sincere, and perhaps really were so, were yet careless and cold hearted; that many who were warm in profession, were selfish, indolent, covetuous; that many who appeared to be lovers of God, were yet inordinately lovers of pleasure; that some who professed to be dead to sin, were alive to the world. 'Alexander did him much evil,' 'Demas forsook him;' 'Phygellus and Hermogenes turned away from him.'

The persons to whom he wrote might, on the whole, be considered as no unfair specimen of professing Christians in every age. Consequently neither his doctrine nor his precepts can, by any fair rule of judgment, be limited to the community, or even to the individual, to whom they were immediately inscribed; he has erected his mandate into an unalterable standard of general Christianity.

The inspiring guide of Saint Paul knew that human nature, left to its own specific operation, would be the same in that church of Rome to which his Epistle was addressed, as in the now existing church of that metropolis,—a church which has so far departed from the simplicity of its founder; that the church of Ephesus would differ only in its local circumstances and form of government from the church of England; that the same sort of beings, with the same wants and weaknesses which composed the church of Galatia, would compose that of Geneva and of Holland; that it was not the Corinthian convert alone who should become 'a new creature;' that it was not the member of any *particular* community that must 'put off the old man with his deeds;' he knew that the transmuting power of true religion would confer the same character of newness upon every genuine believer; that as in every age the principle is the same, so also will be the results.

In illustration of these general remarks, let

* Mr Burke of the Marquis of Rockingham.

us select a particular case.—Our apostle had not studied the human heart to so little purpose as not to perceive that it is of itself commonly indisposed to liberality. Even where a measure of religious feeling has conferred or enlarged this virtue, he knew that it requires excitement to keep the flame alive; that if easily kindled by some affecting tale, or some present object, it may, by being left to itself, be as easily extinguished. He knew that impressions, if not immediately followed up, and acted upon, soon wear out; that a warm impulse, if left to cool, evaporates in mere profession. On this principle, then, we find him delicately reminding the Corinthians* of the zeal with which they had voluntarily engaged to raise a fund for the indigent, and remonstrating on the obligation to put their own plan in execution, by distributing as well as collecting.

In suggesting this duty, he takes a circuitous path, by intimating the necessity of consistency in the conduct of Christians, by dwelling on the expediency of those who abounded in faith and eloquence, and religious knowledge, abounding also in acts of beneficence; and by hinting that a high profession, without that broad principle of Christian charity, of which he knew almsgiving to be one fruit, would be an anomaly discreditable to themselves, and injurious to religion.

He then proposes to them, with the hand of a master, persuasions, arguments, and examples; he makes duties grow out of motives, and impresses both by actual instances. He mentions, in a sort of incidental way, the benevolence of a less opulent and less instructed people, the Macedonians; and, according to his invariable custom, produces their charity as growing out of their piety. *They gave themselves first unto the Lord*, and then, as the effect would naturally follow the cause, *they gave unto us by the will of God*. He informs them, that this generous people did not wait to confer their bounty till it was solicited. He intimates, that in this instance it was not those who wanted the charity, but those who gave it, 'that pressed it, with much entreaty;' instructively hinting, that they had made true use of afflictions; for that 'their poverty,' instead of being pleaded as an apology for withholding their charity, 'abounded to the riches of their liberality.'

This was a powerful intimation, that if those more indigent converts had been so bountiful, what might not be expected from the opulent metropolis of the regions of Achaia? It was also an experiment of their sincerity; for if they were more forward in profession, and more abundant in graces, would it not be an expected consequence, that they should be more abundant in works of charity?

And, finally not contented with pressing upon them the example of a church of inferior note, he rises suddenly to the sublimest of all precedents. He does not, to *them*, quote any injunction of their Divine Master to charity, though with such injunctions the Gospel abounds; but in a manner strong, and instant, unexpectedly presses his *example*, and in the loftiest possible instance:* 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. To what a trifle, to what a nothing does he, by this admirable turn, reduce the largest pecuniary bounty, by directing their attention to the UNSPEAKABLE GIFT!

To the same purpose he directs his friends at Ephesus, in his last affectionate discourse, to the *precept* of Christ. After the most powerful exhortations, he alludes to his having himself supplied his necessities by the labour of his own hands, in order to the exercise of charity; and then, lest they should suppose this to be any vaunt of his self-denial, rather than a declaration made to stimulate his hearers to similar industry, by a similar motive of charity,—he sums up the charge by a most powerful incitement, equal of itself to account for his own generosity, as well as to awaken theirs, producing the only posthumous quotation which Scripture has preserved of the Divine Instructor: 'Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Another instance of his delicacy is that in addressing the same people, when he would lower to its just inferiority the value of gifts and miraculous powers, in comparison of *the more excellent way*, he does not directly point at their vanity and self-exultation, but with a refinement worthy the attention of all censors, he transfers the application to himself—Though *I* (not though you) speak with the tongues of men and of angels; though I have the gift of prophecy and faith; though *I* bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, *I* am nothing.†

As he thought it necessary, in this address to adduce the strongest supposeable instances, even instances which could not be thought to exist, there was no method which could so effectually expose the radical evil of uncharitableness with so little offence to those who were guilty of it, as to apply the imaginary case to his own person: nor could the most elaborate harangue on the beauty of charity have produced without it so powerful an effect; nor would any delineation of all the opposite vices, which were notoriously practised by the proud and sensual Corinthians, have affected them so much, as this beautiful portrait of the heavenly virtue in which many of them were eminently deficient, and to whom the picture therefore presented such a contrast.

Yet, while he thus combated their preference of those which might raise admiration, to those which tended to the public good, he thought proper to let them see that the inferior value he set on them was not to screen or justify any ignorance of his own; and that, as is too commonly the case, he did not depreciate learning, because he did not possess it.

After having enjoined on the Thessalonians, that it was their duty 'to love one another, as they were taught of God,' lest it might look like a suspicion rather than a reminding, he encouragingly subjoins,—'and indeed ye do it.' In the same spirit, after saying to the same

* 2 Cor. ch. viii

* 2 Cor ch viii. † Cor. ch. xiii

church, 'Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another,' he again intimates that they did not so much require to be instructed as congratulated, by adding, 'even as also ye do.'

Again, with a holy generosity, when he has any thing to notice, which he can honestly praise, the commendation he bestows is undivided; when any unacceptable point to press, he softens prejudices and courts compliance by mixing himself with the injunction, or involving himself in the censure: 'Let *us* cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh or spirit.' In lamenting, in the seventh of Romans, the dominion of sin, he speaks in his own person: in referring, in the subsequent chapter, to the dominion of grace, he extends the consolation to all believers. On every occasion which calls both qualities, gentleness and lowliness, into exercise, Saint Paul shows himself not only to be the humblest, but the politest of men.

Had a late noble and polished preceptor* been as conversant with the Holy Scriptures as he unquestionably was with polite literature, and had his principles been as sound as his taste, he would have had no occasion to look farther than the writings of Paul of Tarsus, for the most complete illustration of that favourite maxim, the adoption of which he so repeatedly enjoined on his misguided pupil. His fine sense, under the influence of religion, would have led him, while he pressed the injunction, to give it all it wanted,—a right direction. He would have found the *suaviter in modo* accompany the *fortiter in re*, more uniformly in our apostle than in any other writer.

In addition to the numberless instances of this union, that occur in his Epistles, some of which we have already noticed, we cannot forbear mentioning, that in writing to Timothy, he recommends 'the spirit of power and of a *sound mind;*' to which he subjoins, '*hold fast the form of sound words.*' But while he is so peremptory as to the force of the matter, he is not less attentive to the duty of mildness in the manner. He directs, that the dictates of this sound mind be conveyed with *affection*,—this form of sound words be communicated with *love*; and in expatiating on these gentle graces, we must not forget the situation under which he exercised them.

In the days of prosperous fortune, we frequently see the appearance of cheerfulness and complacency in characters not remarkable for gentleness of mind: but Paul, under the most disastrous circumstances, never fails to exhibit the same amiable courtesies. It is therefore not easy to account for the prejudices of certain persons, who always speak of him, as a character of the most repulsive harshness.

I should be very unwilling to suspect, if a few of these critics are to be found among my own sex, that their dislike to this apostle arises from a cause which is rather calculated to inspire gratitude than to provoke censure. His attention, in not being limited to their highest interests, but descending also to their minutest concerns is a proof surely that he thought nothing beneath his notice, which might raise the dignity and add to the beauty of the female character. I should be very unwilling to suppose that their disapprobation arises from his having said, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Nor could I presume to suspect, that his injunction of submission to their husbands, —of subordination *always*, and of silence *sometimes*,—can possibly be the cause of the hostility of any Christian ladies.

Still less would I venture to suppose, that their displeasure is owing to his having recommended 'that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel,'—nor that they should object to him for his preference of 'shamefacedness' to 'costly array,'—of 'sobriety' to 'broidered hair,'—of 'good works' to 'gold and pearls.'*

It looks as if Saint Paul was of opinion, that the external appearance of women was an indication of the disposition of the mind; and this opinion it is probable made him so earnest in recommending these symbols of internal purity. He doubtless more strongly prohibits certain personal decorations, because they were the insignia of the notoriously unworthy females of his time. And it may be fairly presumed, that he never thought it could be construed into a hardship to be cautioned against wearing the badge of the profession of Lais.

If they are of opinion, that his pointedly suggesting to them the ornaments of *a meek and quiet spirit*, was at least a *superfluous* injunction, they will forgive him on the ground that he might not think it unnecessary, even to the most gentle, to 'stir up their pure mind by way of *remembrance*.'

It is obvious that he could not possibly entertain any prejudices against a sex, in which he counted so many valuable friends. And let it be seriously observed, that in whatever relates to pious affections, to Christian practice, to disinterested kindness, to zeal and diligence, there was obviously, in Saint Paul's estimation, neither male nor female. For we do not hear more of his affectionate regard for good women, and of his generous testimony to their worth, than we hear of the friendship with the sex of any other character in history? He delights in their praises. 'Phebe' is warmly commended for her good offices 'to the Saints at Rome,' not only as having been an important assistant to the apostle himself, but as 'the succourer of many' Christians. 'Priscilla' is honourably recorded as 'his helper in Christ Jesus,' as one who with her husband, had, 'for his life laid down their necks.' For this he thankfully observes, they are entitled not only to his thanks, but also to 'the thanks of all the churches of the Gentiles.' He acknowledges that 'Mary had bestowed much labour on him and his converts.' The name of 'Apphia,' and that of 'Julia,' is perpetuated by his affectionate gratitude. That of 'Chloe' stands prominent in his grateful page. 'Tryphena and Tryphosa laboured much in the Lord.' To the honour of British ladies be it remembered, that his friend 'Claudia' was our countrywoman.†

* Lord Chesterfield

* 1 Tim. ch. ii.

† If any consideration should increase the interest we

Paul observes that, in the family of Timothy, piety on the female side was hereditary, and he congratulates his friend on the excellent principles of his two maternal relations; and virtually ascribes to these instructresses, 'that from a child he was acquainted with the Scriptures.' Others he has named, whose praise is not only in the churches, but whose names are in the book of life.

Are not these testimonies to female excellence from such an eulogist, and in such a cause,

'Above all Greek, above all Roman fame?'

If it stands recorded on the monument of a noble Englishman, as his highest distinction, that he was *friend to Sir Philip Sidney*, it stands engraven on a monument more durable than brass, even in the indestructible records of the Book of God, that so many women were the honoured friends of the chiefest apostle of Jesus Christ.

If Saint Paul has been further accused by some persons of being an enemy to the state of marriage, it must be by those who forget to take into the account what a calamitous time, that in which he wrote was for Christians, · who forget also his own express declaration, that the suggested suspension of such an union was 'good for the *present distress*.' His compassionate mind foresaw the aggravated calamities to which the entrance into this tender connection would, at this particular juncture, involve the persecuted Christians. Is it not absurd to suppose that this zealous apostle of Christ would suggest, as a permanent practice, a measure which must in a few years, if persisted in, inevitably occasion the entire extinction of Christianity itself?

Since, then, it would be derogatory to any, especially of my own sex, to suspect that their objection to Saint Paul can arise from any of these causes, may we not more rationally conjecture, that it proceeds from a prejudice lightly taken up on hearsay evidence—a prejudice propagated without serious inquiry, without having themselves closely examined his writings? Such an examination, to which they are now earnestly invited, would convince them that, to all his exalted qualities, he added, in an eminent degree, urbanity, feeling, and liberality.

But nothing more raises our veneration for Saint Paul's character, than that his extreme sensibility of heart, and his rare delicacy in consulting the feelings of others, to which we have so frequently referred, is never exercised at the expense of his integrity. There are, as we have before observed, many upright minds, whose honesty is yet somewhat disfigured by a harsh temper. They are too conscientious to censure unjustly, but, knowing the censure to be merited, they have rather a pleasure in inflicting the correction. And though they are not glad the offender deserves it, they are not sorry it is *their* duty to impart it. Saint Paul never severely reproved another, that he did not inflict a wound on his own feelings. Yet though he would rather have spared another than himself, he would spare neither when the imperative voice of duty demanded plain dealing. Gentleness of manner in our apostle was the fruit of his piety; the good breeding of some men is a substitute for theirs.

The conduct of Saint Peter and Saint Paul presents at once a striking instance of the integrity of Christian friendship, and of the imperfection of human excellence. Before the apostles met at Antioch, Peter seems to have erred in a material point, not in associating freely with the Gentiles, but in disingenuously shunning their society on the return of his Jewish friends. This fear of human censure, which was not yet entirely extinguished in this great apostle, while it strengthened the prejudices of the Jews, weakened the influence of the other apostles; misled Barnabas 'though a good man, and a just; and not a little alarmed Paul.

This vigilant minister thought the example so fraught with dangerous consequences, that he boldly remonstrated on this act of duplicity,—an act unlike the general character of Peter, which, except in *one* awful instance, rather inclined to indiscreet frankness. Paul himself informs us, in his Epistle to the Galatians, that he 'withstood him to his face,' not to gratify any resentment of his own, but because his friend 'was to be blamed;' not privately, to spare his confusion, but 'before them all,' to avert the danger. Nor does this Christian sincerity appear to have interrupted their friendship; for it did not prevent Peter, on a subsequent occasion, from alluding to Paul as his *beloved brother*. From this circumstance we may learn among other things, that the 'fear of man,' is one of the lingering evils which quits the human heart with the greatest reluctance: it shows that it may cleave to him, even in his renovated state, and that therefore the same vigilance is necessary in this, as in his previous character.

Peter, on this occasion, gave an instance of that prompt repentance which he had so repeatedly manifested after the commission of an error. He offered no justification of his fault, but observed a meek silence. We learn also, from the recorded failings of Saint Peter, that this *first* bishop of Rome, at least, did not arrogate to himself the claim of infallibility.

Saint Paul's kindness for his brethren never made him on any occasion lose sight of his courageous integrity. Considering the Gentile proselytes to be peculiarly the objects of his care, he resolutely defended them from the necessity of submitting to the law of Moses, thus preserving to the Gentiles their liberty, and to the Gospel its purity. By his firmness in this instance, a great obstacle to the reception of Christianity was removed.

May we here be allowed to observe, though somewhat out of place, that the characters of these two apostles are brought forward with such remarkable prominency and detail, in Sacred History, that it would be a subject well worthy some able pen, to delineate the characters of the men, and interweave that of their writings, in some connected work. Thus placed in one frame, we should have a most interesting view of these two eminent persons as the repre-

take in this blessed apostle, it would be the strong presumption, from testimonies recently adduced by a learned, pious, and laborious prelate, that Saint Paul, in all probability, preached the Gospel in Britain, to which country it is conjectured, after the most diligent research, that he returned with the family of Caractacus.

sentatives of the Gentile and the Jewish Churches of Christ. This representation, incorporated with the circumstances which distinguished the first promulgation of the Gospel, renders every particular concerning them highly affecting.

But to return. It is to be observed, as a fresh proof of the honesty and the spirit of self renunciation which governed our apostle, that when he reprehends the Corinthians for their imprudence in opposing one minister to another;—in the partiality and favouritism which he condemns, he makes no exception for Paul: the preference to himself above Apollos would not gratify a mind, who, beside the danger to the flattered individual, saw the evil of opposition, of rivalry, of division, let who will be the person preferred.

He might have seen the dangerous and blinding influence of excessive prepossession and party attachment; when even his wise and virtuous contemporary, Seneca, could say of Cato, that he would rather esteem drunkenness a virtue than think Cato vicious. Nor would he probably have accepted of the same compliment which Cicero pays to the famous discourse on the Immortality of the Soul,—that though Plato had given no *reason* for it, yet his *authority* would have determined him.

CHAP. XIV.

Saint Paul on the Love of Money.

Among the innumerable difficulties daily incident to the life of man, we may reckon as not among the least, the danger almost inseparable, which attends the yet inevitable necessity for money. To reconcile integrity in the pursuit with innocence in the possession, is indeed to convert a perilous trial into a valuable blessing. Riches are no evil in themselves: the danger lies, in not being able to manage the temptation they hold out to us. Even where the object is fairly pursued, and the acquisition not unfairly appropriated, a close application to the attainment of wealth is not without its snares to the most upright and liberal mind.

Even these better-disposed persons, in spite of purity of intention and integrity of conduct, are in constant danger, while in pursuit of their object, of being entangled in complicated schemes, and overwhelmed with excessive solicitude; of being so overcharged with the cares of this world, as to put that world which is out of sight, out of mind also.

Others find, or fancy, that there is a shorter cut and a surer road to riches, than that in which plodding industry holds on his slow and weary way. Industry is too dull for an enterprising spirit; integrity too scrupulous for the mind which is bent on a quick accomplishment of its object. The rewards of both are too remote, too uncertain, and too penurious, for him 'who maketh haste to be rich.'

Much occurs to this point, in Saint Paul's charge to Timothy, contained in the latter part of the last chapter of his first Epistle. Keeping one main end in view, the apostle has indeed adopted a sort of concealed method, which requires some attention in the reader to discover. The general drift of this powerful exhortation is, less to guard his beloved friend himself, who was perhaps in comparatively small danger from the temptation, than to induce him to warn those over whom he had the spiritual superintendence, against the *love of money*. In order to this, he does not immediately enter upon the main subject, but opens with another proposition, though in no very remote connection with it; a proposition the most important, and the most incontrovertible, namely, the immense gain to that soul which should combine *godliness* with *contentment*. He knew the union to be inseparable; that as godliness cannot subsist without contentment, so neither can true contentment spring from any other than an inward principle of real piety. All contentment, which has not its foundation in religion, is merely constitutional—animal hilarity, the flow of blood and spirits in the more sanguine character; coldness and apathy in the more indifferent.

The pressing, then, this preliminary principle, was beginning at the right end. A spirit of contentment is stifling covetousness in its birth; it is strangling the serpent in the cradle. Strong and striking are the reasons which the apostle produces against discontent. To the indigent he says, 'they brought nothing into the world,' therefore they need the less murmur at possessing little in it. To the wealthy he holds out a still more powerful argument against *the rage canine of dying rich*, when he reminds them that they 'can carry nothing out of it.'

This reflection he intends at once to teach content to the poor, and moderation to the rich. The one should be satisfied with a bare subsistance, for the poorest cannot be poorer than when they came into the world: the other should not enlarge their desires for boundless indulgences, to the means of gratifying which, as well as to the gratification itself, the grave will so soon put a period.

The apostle, having shown his deep insight into the human mind by his brief but just view of the subject, goes on to show the miserable consequences of discontent, or, which is the same thing, of an indefinite desire of wealth. 'They that *will* be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.' The words are weighty and powerful, and amply verified by experience, whether we consider money in its acquisition or in its possession. Its votaries 'fall into a snare.'

We have need to be more intently on the watch against the intrusions of this unsuspected sin, because there is not one which intrenches itself within so many creditable pretences; none in which more perverted passages are adduced from Scripture itself in its support. 'If any provide not for those of his own house, he is worse than an infidel,' is frequently translated into a language foreign to its meaning, unfavourable to dispersing abroad. That charity begins at home, is not seldom pleaded as a reason why she should never turn out. There is one plea always ready as an apology for the eagerness for amassing superfluous wealth; and it is a plea which has a good look. *We must*

provide for our children is the pretence, but we must indulge our avarice, is the truth. The fact is, a man is *provident* for his family, but he is covetous for himself. The sordid mind and the grasping hand are too eager to put off their gratification to so remote a period as the future aggrandizement of those for whom they pretend to amass. The covetous man hungers for instant gratification, for the pleasure of counting his hoards, for the pride of 'calling his lands by his own name.'

Even many professing Christians speak with horror of public diversions, or even of human literature, as containing the essence of all sin, yet seem to see no turpitude, to feel no danger, to dread no responsibility, in any thing that respects this private, domestic, bosom sin; this circumspect vice, this discreet and orderly corruption. Yet the sins which make no noise are often the most dangerous, and the vices of which the effect is to procure respect, instead of contempt, constitute the most deadly snare.

Wit has not been more alert in shooting its pointed shafts at avarice, than argument has been busy in its defence. No advocate, it is true, will venture to defend it under its own proper character; but avarice takes the license used by other felons, and, by the adoption of an *alias*, escapes the reprobation attached to its own name. Covetousness has a bad sound; it is, if we may be allowed the application, a moral cacophony, a fault which no critic in ethics can at any rate tolerate. It is a tacit confession of its hateful nature, and its possessor never avows its real name, even to himself. This quality not only disguises its turpitude by concealment, but shrouds its own character under the assumed name of half the virtues. When accused, it can always make out a good case. It calls itself frugality, moderation, temperance, contempt of show, self-denial, sobriety; thus at once cherishing the pleasure and the profit of the sin, and the escaping its infamy.

Even the most careless in conduct, the most negligent of character, he who never defends himself against the charge of what he calls the more generous vices, indignantly fights off the imputation of this. While he deems it a venial offence to deny himself no guilty pleasures, to pay no just debts, he would repel the accusation of being sordid as strongly as a man of principle. Yet at the same time his thirst of money may be as ardent, in order to make a bad use of it, as his who covets it without intending to use it at all.

Let not therefore 'the snares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches' make us forget that he who covets money as a means to other forbidden gratifications, is as much guilty of covetousness as he who desires it as an end. He who makes it the minister to improper indulgences, is not less criminal as an example, and is far more criminal as to the effects of his conduct, than he who covets in order that he may amass. The Word of Inspiration calls covetousness idolatry; but are not inordinate lovers of pleasure, for which money supplies the aliment, idolators also; inasmuch as the sacrifices they offer to their idol prevents their being 'lovers of God?'

If this ensnaring love of money assumes to be connected with the sober qualities, which is commonly the case in quiet minds, it is far otherwise in those of a different order. In most minds it is the enemy of charity. The demands of this great duty are amongst the first and most easy sacrifices at the shrine of Mammon, more especially where a too large scale of expense has been established, and a reduced expenditure is thought necessary: how often do we see the first deduction made, by withholding a little paltry sum which had been assigned to charity; a sum perhaps originally disproportionate to the general habits of expense; while no blow is aimed at the redundances of a devouring luxury, of an inordinate vanity; though the retrenchment in the first instance will scarcely be felt, while, in the latter, it might restore the power, not only of perpetuating, but of augmenting beneficence.

But the mischief is of still wider extent. In more animated minds the love of money is frequently allied to the bolder vices; to rapacity to oppression, to injustice: and as these more formidable sins are usually practised for the purpose of obtaining the means of splendour, magnificence, and show: wealth, even thus obtained, not seldom procures its own protection. The gay and unthinking, whose grand object in life is to multiply the scenes of dissipation, and who enjoy these pleasant effects of their neighbour's vices by participating in the amusements they procure, are not very inquisitive as to the source from whence these prodigal pleasures flow. The unsuccessful aspirer after forbidden wealth is indeed not only avoided but stigmatized; with them his crime lies not so much in the attempt as in the failure; while prosperous corruption easily works itself into favour: having first struggled for oblivion for the cause, it soon obtains praise for the effect, and finds little difficulty in maintaining a station which it required some management to reach.

But if there are few vices which separate a man less from the friendship of the world, than avarice, there are few that separate him more widely from the duty which he owes to his neighbour, or stand more fearfully between his soul and his God; 'it drowns men in destruction and perdition.' When the eye is first opened on the eternal world, how will many among the rich, the powerful, the flattered, be astonished to find all the attributes which made them great, extinct; all the appendages which made them arrogant, vanish; to find—nothing but themselves.

It is to be observed, that Saint Paul not only calls the love of money an evil, for in this view, where the passion is acknowledged, it is commonly considered; but he proceeds further to denominate it the 'root,' the radical principle, not only of one evil, but of *all* evil. Besides that there is scarcely any sin which the determined lovers of money will not be led to commit, in order to gain money, there are also, as we have observed, innumerable evils in its misapplication when gained; these he probably included in their general condemnation. Other vices are loved for their own sake, but riches are idolized for the sake of every indulgence of

which they procure the enjoyment, of every vice to which that enjoyment leads.

This it is which makes riches the general centre of human desire. They who do not accumulate money persuade themselves that they do not love it; but many love it for far other ends than to hoard it. Saint Paul knew that it was the *universal* snare; a trap appropriately baited with every allurement congenial to the taste of the person on whom the temptation is to be practised;—to the elegant desires of the more refined, or the coarser appetite of the more grossly voluptuous. The sensual, the aspiring, the vain, and the prodigal, all consider it as the grand indispensable material with which to build their visionary fabrics of happiness.

Money is the most efficient tool with which ambition works; it is the engine of political mischief, and of domestic oppression; the instrument of individual tyranny, and of universal corruption. Money is the elementary principle of pleasure; it is the magnet which, to the lover of flattery, attracts parasites; which the vain man loves for the circle it describes about him, and the train which it draws after him, even more than for the actual enjoyments which it procures him. It is the grand spring and fountain of pride and self-sufficiency; more especially to those who have nothing better to value themselves upon; to those of inferior education, suddenly raised to wealth or power; to those who are deficient in intellectual as well as spiritual endowments. In short, as the fabled king turned every thing into gold which he touched, so its craving possessor turns gold into every thing he desires. It is the substance and the essence which, under endless modifications, ensnares, betrays, and finally disappoints the heart of man.

After enumerating the various moral dangers to which the love of money lays the heart open, the Apostle adverts to its highest possible corruption; he declares it to be the root of apostacy. He doubtless alluded to his own immediate knowledge of certain persons, who, while they 'coveted after riches, had erred from the faith.' There is something extremely touching in this effect of covetousness, which Saint Paul appears himself to have witnessed among some of whom he had once seemed to hope better things;—*they had pierced themselves through with many sorrows*, with incurable anguish perhaps for that abandonment of God, into which covetousness had seduced them.

It was probably these living instances of the ruin of virtuous principles by this vice, which leads him to warn even Timothy, so great a proficient in piety, of the perils attached to the love of money. And nothing affords matter of more awful reflection to the most sincere Christian, than that Paul thought it necessary to caution his 'dearly beloved Timothy, his own son in the faith,' Timothy, the exemplary Bishop of Ephesus, against the snares of this insidious enemy. Shall a common, shall even a sincere Christian, think vigilance superfluous, when this distinguished saint was not only charged to caution others, but to guard himself against this most treacherous of all temptations?

There is something peculiarly solemn in the apostle's mode of adjuring Timothy to avoid this sin. The single apostrophe, 'O man of God!' would be a panoply against the temptation. The implied impossibility that *a man of God* could be a coveter of money, was equal to a thousand arguments against it.

The two-fold guard with which he arms Timothy is equally applicable to all Christians He does not say, deliberate on your danger, reason on the temptation, produce your strong arguments against it,—but *flee these things*. Flight is in this case the only courage; escape the only security; turning your back upon the enemy, the only sure means of conquering him.

But Saint Paul does not only direct what is to be avoided, but what is to be done. The flight from sin is not a mere negative act, it involves positive duties; in its view it involves, *following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness*. All these spiritual and moral graces he draws up in battle array, to assist as auxiliaries in the combat he is about to enjoin. The Christian will have to maintain a conflict with corruption and temptation, during the whole scene of action. Going on to sustain the metaphor drawn from the military warfare, he calls on Timothy *as a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ;* and while he exhorts him to *fight the good fight of faith*, he presents to his view the crown of victory. He assures him that it will not be a mere gratuitous fight, *he will lay hold on eternal life*.

He reminds Timothy of his special vocation 'whereunto thou art called.' He animates him with the quickening recollection of the glorious profession he had made; and that, not in the retirement of devotion, but 'before many witnesses,' intimating how much the honour of the Gospel is concerned in the proficiency, the steadfastness, the perseverance to the end, of all its professors, especially of its appointed teachers. He not only reminds him of his profession at his baptism, and consecration to the ministry, but in order to elevate his mind to the highest pitch, he adjures him *in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things*, and could raise him to immortal glory; and, as if he would fill his mind with every grand and awful image, reminds him of the 'good confession made by the Divine Confessor before Pontius Pilate,' exhorting him from all these lofty motives, to 'keep this commandment spotless and unreproachable until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ!' In so doing, men could not rebuke him, religion would not be wounded by him, and his Saviour would finally receive him with the plaudit he has promised, and the crown he had purchased.

The sublime doxology which follows; the ascription to God, of all power, praise, and dominion, glory and immortality, the fervour of his mind, rapt as it seems to be with the present view of the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, Lord of lords, immortal, invisible, unapproachable, and surrounded with visions of glory,—do not make the apostle forget to revert to the main object of his charge, the danger of riches; or rather the anticipation of future bliss had fired his soul with more intense zeal against that sin which he thought most likely to shut out his beloved converts from the enjoyment of

it; 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches.'

Having thus shown the nature of riches—'uncertain' in every thing but their danger,—he soon despatches the concluding and most pleasant part of his office, by showing how the Christian use of riches may convert a snare into a blessing; an instrument of ruin into an evidence of faith. He proposes a scheme of moral usury, shows that there is a species of avarice which he not only allows, but enjoins, *that they who are rich in this world* increase the interest of their money by laying it out in good works; that *they lay up in store against the day to come;* against a remoter period than that for which the covetous provide. This is beating the miser at his own weapons; this is indeed giving perpetuity to riches; what they lay out for the poor they lay up for themselves, by *lending unto the Lord.* This is a legitimate love of money, this is a covetousness worthy of a Christian. This is indeed lodging their treasure beyond the reach of moth, rust or thieves.

He cautions them against the love of riches from their *uncertainty;* an argument likely to weigh with those who are blind to higher considerations; an argument more illustrated *to us* by actual instances in the late frenzy of revolution, than any other period of history. He then contrasts what is uncertain with what is solid and durable. That confidence which is not to be placed in 'uncertain riches,' he directs to be transfered to 'the living God,' the foundation of all substantial opulence, the giver of all the good that is enjoyed; the giver of all 'the power to get wealth,' and of the heart to use it to his glory. This readiness 'to distribute,' this willingness 'to communicate,' these unequivocal fruits of faith, obedience, and love, not the purchase of heaven but the evidences of faith in him who died to purchase it for them, will not be rejected by real Christians, after HIS declaration, 'inasmuch as ye have done unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

When we consider the contradiction which the lives of some authors, on religious subjects, form with their writings, may they not be said somewhat to resemble the workmen employed in building the ark? These infatuated men spent years in preparing an asylum from the deluge, without practically believing that it would ever take place. While they were mechanically employed in working for the salvation of the others, their labour made no provision for their own safety. The sweeping flood descends; but the builders are excluded from the very refuge which they have assisted in providing!

How different was the conduct of our apostle? His exhortation in this, as in all other instances, derives great additional weight from the consistency of his conduct with his writings. The philosopher Seneca, composed his excellent book of Ethics, in the same city, and near the same time in which this Epistle to Timothy was written. He suffered also a violent death under the same Roman emperor with Saint Paul. In the writings of the philosopher are many beautiful passages directed against the vice we have been considering, and no one ever inveighed more pointedly against the luxurious indulgences to which riches are applied. Yet Seneca, first the disciple of the abstinent school of Pythagoras, and afterwards of the self-denying sect of the Stoics, made himself, by his inordinate desire of amassing wealth, the richest man in Rome, and by his passion for splendour the most magnificent.

This inconsistency of profession with practice, at once illustrates the exact difference between speculation and conviction, conceit and truth; and serves, without any other arguments which, however, are not wanting, to demonstrate the real character of Seneca. Though acquainted probably with the religion of Jesus Christ, and not improbably with our apostle himself, from his near connection with Gallio, one of Paul's judges; yet he can never be considered as its convert; and trying them by the testimony of their lives, we are obliged to conclude of these two martyred moralists, that Paul lived a Christian, and Seneca died a Heathen.

CHAP. XV.

On the genius of Christianity, as seen in Saint Paul.

HAD a sinful human being, ignorant of Christianity, labouring under the convictions of a troubled conscience, and dreading the retribution which that conscience told him his offence merited,—had such a being, so circumstanced, been called upon to devise the means of pardon and acceptance from an offended Creator, how eagerly, in the hope of relieving his tormented spirit, would he have put his imagination to the stretch! How busily would he have sharpened his invention, to suggest something difficult, something that should have exhausted all human means, that should put nature to the rack —penances, tortures, sacrifices,—all Lebanon for a burnt offering, thousands of rams for an atonement, rivers of oil for an oblation,—still concluding that he must perform the act with his own hands, still expecting that himself must be the agent of his own deliverance.

But when a full offer of peace, of pardon, of reconciliation, comes from the offended party, comes voluntarily, comes gratuitously, comes, not with the thunders of the burning mount, but in the still small voice of benignity and love, —free love, benignity, as unsought as unmerited;—when the trembling penitent is assured, in the cheering words of our apostle, that he shall be 'justified freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,'—when he is assured that all that is demanded on his part of the compact is to accept the propitiation made for his sins, through the forbearance and tender mercy of God; when he hears that to him, and not to him only, but to all who will accept it on the offered terms of faith and repentance, this previously inconceivable proposal is made;—who would doubt that, overwhelmed with joy and gratitude at the report of a world redeemed, he would eagerly fly to lay hold on an offer, not

only beyond his hope or expectation, but beyond his possibility of conception?

Yet is not the fact too often directly the reverse? His pride had suggested to him, that if some difficult thing were to be done, he should have done it himself,—if something were to be suffered in the way of hardship and austerity, or something achieved in the way of glorious enterprise; something that should be splendid in the act, which should bring renown to the doer,—then his natural powers would be set at work, his energies exerted, his emulation kindled, for he would become the procurer of his own reward, the purchaser, or rather the rightful possessor of a heaven of his own earning.

But while God, by a way of his own devising, by a process of his own conducting, had made foolish the wisdom of this world, and baffled the vain and impracticable schemes of impotent man, for effecting his deliverance by any conception or act of his own,—does not man's unwillingness to partake of the offered mercy, look as if his proud heart did not choose to be freely forgiven, as if his haughty independence revolted at the plan, in which, though he has all the benefit, he has none of the merit? Does it not seem as if he would improve the terms of the treaty? as if he would mend the plan of salvation, and work it up into a kind of partnership scheme, in which his own contribution should have the predominance?

But it will be urged men do not say this; we reply, they do not profess it in words; but do not some say it virtually, when they practically decline the terms; or, if they do not entirely disbelieve them, give at least a reluctant, and partial and qualified assent?

With the genius of Christianity, with its peculiarities, with its applicableness to the wants of man, the whole soul of Saint Paul was singularly imbued. His acute mind, his lofty qualities, his penetrating spirit, and his renovated heart, entered profoundly into the character and essence of the gospel. His mind was a transcript of divine truth; his life an exemplification of it. What he conceived intimately, he imparted explicitly. To combat the rebellion of the natural man, against the salvation wrought for him, is the leading object of his endeavour. He who was always looking unto Jesus, as the author and finisher of his own faith, uniformly holds him out to others as the sum and substance of theirs.

He delights to dwell on the divine compassion; he introduces it under every form, he illustrates it by every figure, he magnifies it under every mode of expression. Reconciliation is the grand object of his mission. He exhibits the difference between the conduct of the Redeemer, and that of man, in this negociation. In human cases it is usually the offender who makes the advances, who tries all means to recover the friend he has lost, the patron he has offended. But here he shows it to be just the reverse. Here it is the insulted benefactor, here it is the injured friend, who conjures the offender to return, who entreats the enemy to be reconciled, who promises not only pardon but immunity, not only oblivion but reward. The penitent is every where encouraged to believe, that his offences are forgiven, that his sins have been punished in his Saviour; that the Judge has not only pardoned the malefactor, but has suffered in his stead.

The apostle demonstrates, that God is the fountain, not only of our mercies, but of our virtues—if we turn, it is he who turns us—if we pray, it is he who invites us—if we apply to him, it is he who first draws us—if we repent, it is 'the grace of God which leads us to repentance.' Whatever right thing there may be in us, it is not our natural property, but his gift. His bounty is the spring from which our goodness, if we have any, flows, instead of our goodness being the original motive of his love.

Hitherto we have sketched, though very superficially, Christianity as to its spirit, its design, its offers. We now turn to what is our more immediate object, its practical effects, its general results, its tranforming nature, its renovating power.

If the law of God is spiritual, it is not a conformity to its letter, nor is it partial conformity, to its spirit, that constitutes Christian obedience. Christian obedience is ascertained by its universality. It esteems *all* God's precepts concerning *all* things to be right; it hates *every* false way. The prohibitory as well as the preceptive principle of the gospel is general. Though it makes much allowance for the infirmity of the act, it makes none as to its spirit; it confines its prescription to no particular duties, makes no exception for favourite virtues, to the exclusion of such as are more difficult, or less palatable. If Scripture had barely *informed* us, that it was the perfection of the Christian character, to unite in itself, not only different, but opposite qualities; if we had been only *told* that firmness is little worth, unless combined with meekness; that integrity is imperfect, if separated from humility; that the warmest zeal for the good of others, must, in order to be acceptable, be connected with the most vigilant attention to our own heart; that generosity is a spurious virtue, if disconnected with self-denial; that religion requires, with a consciousness of divinely infused strength, a deep sense of our own helplessness; that while it demands a trust in God, so complete, that we must renounce every other trust, it demands also a holiness so exact, as if we trusted only in ourselves.

If we had been only shown, in some thin theory, that it is the genius of Christianity thus to amalgamate contraries, to blend into one common principle, the deepest self-abasement with the most active exertions,—if all this had been proposed to us in an abstract way, or drily and didactically taught, we should have conceived Christianity to be a system of pleasing paradoxes, an invention of beautiful impracticabilities; we should have thought it an institution fabricated for some world, different from ours, for some race of immaculate beings, for angels who had stood firm in their pristine purity, for creatures who had never lost the impression of the Divine image; but never could we have imagined it to be a practical religion, intended for the fallible, peccable children of fallen mortality.

It has, however, as we observed in an early

chapter, pleased Infinite Wisdom to give us, in the sacred records, striking solutions of this enigma, actual instances of conflicting attributes in men of like passions with ourselves, men possessing qualities, which would seem to exclude each other, combining contrarieties of excellence. Among these, there is not a brighter exemplification, than the great apostle of the Gentiles.

Yet there is nothing in this high description, which exclusively belongs to Saint Paul. Nothing which does not address itself individually to us. Though converted by a miracle, favoured with divine revelations, writing, and frequently acting, under immediate inspiration; yet was he, in the ordinary condition and transactions of life, weak and helpless. Though sustained by Divine power, he did not monopolize it.—Nor was it specially vouchsafed to *him* for his common comforts; or earthly deliverances. It was not given to rescue him from suffering, but to uphold him under it. He was, like his Lord, exposed to all the exigencies of a laborious and afflicted life. He was obnoxious to all its trials, liable to the snares of the world, and to the temptations of the great spiritual enemy. If his conflicts were more in number, and greater in magnitude than ours, he obtained victory over them, by a power to which he directs *us*, a power to which we have equal access. The same sincerity of petition will procure the same gracious assistance; that grand resolver of doubt, that omnipotent vanquisher of difficulty—*my grace is sufficient for thee*—though directly addressed to Saint Paul, is also, through him, addressed to every one of us.

It was probably a charge brought against Saint Paul, that his conversion contributed little to the improvement of his moral and civil virtues. But such an allegation, if made, must have come from the party which he had quitted. They considered him as an apostate from the faith; they considered his zeal for the religion which he had once persecuted, as a degrading inconsistency, as a defection from all moral goodness. His subsequent life, which afforded the most lively comment on the new doctrines, is the best answer to such an allegation. His perseverance afforded a rational conviction, that the change was neither the effect of fear nor of fancy. A conduct corresponding to his first emotions, and a continually growing excellence, completely repel the charge.—He who in the first moment of alarm, exclaimed, *what wilt thou have me to do? did* through life all which he then desired to be taught.

Every convert should endeavour to produce in his measure and degree, the same proofs that he too is under no deception; he should give the same evidence, that he is misled by no fanciful illumination; and this can only be effected by exhibiting a change of conduct, not only obvious, but permanent; not only during the first terrors or transports of which we so frequently hear, but by a steady consecration of his whole future life to his Creator. Every other plea may be illusion, may be hypocrisy; while this test, being visible, will be incontrovertible. The more the penitent is observed; the more this paramount evidence will eventually remove all doubts. By his patient continuance in well-doing, he will be likely to lessen the objection not only to the individual professing it, but to the doctrine itself.

When we compare this blessed apostle, who now fears to wound the *feelings* of others, with the same man who had lately no regard even for their *lives;* the man who now treats with tenderness the very prejudices of Christians, with him who 'before made havoc of the church;'—the man whom we find weeping over all sufferings but his own, with him who had persecuted 'to the death;' when we consider him who aforetime was 'binding and imprisoning the followers of Jesus,' now burning with zeal for his cause, though he knew that punishments the most severe awaited himself; him who had been assisting at the death of the first martyr, now heroically pursuing that course which he was forewarned would lead to his own martyrdom; the man who 'destroyed them who called on the name of Jesus,' now 'confounding the Jews, and proving that this is indeed the very Christ'—shall we, when we see these astonishing results, refuse our homage to the transforming genius of Christianity—to that power which enabled this fierce assailant to 'put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?'

Saint Paul did not furnish such authentic evidence of that power of God which produced this total revolution in the character, merely by suffering death in confirmation of his faith—for error has had its confessors, and idolatry its martyrs,—but he proved it by the persevering holiness of a long and tormented life; he proved it, by suffering himself as courageously as he taught others to suffer. May we venture to add, he gave a testimony, less accredited perhaps, but almost more convincing. The conceited Pharisee is become the humblest of men; the proud bigot is meekness personified.—This *change of disposition* is the surest test of his total renovation. The infusion of a heavenly temper, where a bad one had predominated, is one of the rarest results of Almighty Power. And it not only affords a substantial proof of the individual improvement, but furnishes one of the most striking displays of the distinguishing character of our religion.

It is owing to this specific character of Christianity that, while philosophy had gloried in its wisdom, Saint Paul glories only in his weakness. If he ever exults, it is in the strength of the hand which employs him. His confidence in this supernatural strength explains his paradox, *when I am weak then I am strong.* Sometimes, indeed, he boasts of himself, but it is always of his disadvantages. He avows his determination not to avail himself of any personal acquirements; and after his utmost success in 'winning souls,' he expressly disclaims that *excellency of speech* which others consider as the grand instrument for converting them. He strips himself of all ground of boasting; acknowledges that he comes *in weakness, in fear, in much trembling;* and requires that the glory of every success which attended his labours might be wholly ascribed to God. He demonstrates that all the wisdom

with which the world had been dazzled, was to be eclipsed by that *hidden wisdom* 'which none of the princes of this world knew,' and their ignorance of which was the only extenuation that he offers of their guilt in 'crucifying the Lord of Glory.'

The same trials seem in some measure to have been reserved for Saint Paul which had been sustained by his Lord. This was perhaps determined, that he might glorify God by meeting them in the same spirit; and thus might leave a human example of the highest Christian attainment. Of Jesus it is recorded, that 'his disciples all forsook him and fled.' Like him Saint Paul declared, in his last appearance before the Roman tribunal, 'no man stood by me, but all men forsook me.' As the Master had prayed for his cruel enemies,—'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,' so Paul interceded for his faithless—'I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.' Even under this severest blow to natural feelings, the desertion of those we love, holy Paul forgets not to glorify 'the Lord, who stood by him, and strengthened him;' and who enabled him to act a part consistent with his Christian profession, and to bear an honourable testimony to the truth of the Gospel before his persecuting judges.

Thus again did he resemble his great Exemplar, 'who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession.' And may we not suppose that this example of heroic constancy assisted in sustaining our Latimers and our Ridleys, when, by manifesting a similar spirit under similar sufferings, they showed their cause and their confidence to be so nearly allied to those of the apostle?

Nor does Christianity, (as we shall have occasion to observe more at large hereafter,) limit the exercise of this temper to apostles and martyrs, but enjoins it under the inferior trials of common life.

Finally, the judgments of heaven bore the same kind of testimony to the truth of the Gospel, in the prison at Philippi, as it had done on the Mount of Calvary. In the one instance, 'Behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.' In the other, 'Suddenly there was a great earthquake, the foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors were opened, the chains were loosened, the captives were freed, the jailor was converted!' Are not all these circumstances, taken together, a clear solution of Saint Paul's otherwise obscure declaration, that he thus *filled up what remained of the sufferings of Christ?* Did the sense of victory, did the joys of peace, did the honourable scars brought from the field of battle, ever excite such a feeling in the mind of the conqueror as Saint Paul felt at thus *bearing in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus*, and at the encouragement they gave him to achieve new conquests?

What a strange use does Paul immediately make of his scourgings and imprisonment at Philippi? He uses them as an argument why his *entrance into Thessalonica was not in vain!* His shameful treatment at the former place, instead of intimidating him from further services, redoubled his courage to preach to the Thessalonians that very Gospel which had procured him such disgraceful treatment at Philippi. On this occasion he adduces a touching instance of the effect of his imprisonment, which, though striking, is not singular to those who understand the genius of Christianity. His unjust captivity, as the champion of the new faith, which, in the opinion of those to whom the motive principle of our religion is unknown, would have been likely to extinguish the flame, had only served in his estimation to fan it. Others, timid before, 'grew more confident,' by the very bonds which were intended to discourage them. Their fears were absorbed in their faith, and the chains of the Saint caused a wider and more rapid diffusion of that Gospel which they were intended to stop. And though 'some preached Christ of contention,' yet holy Paul was so exhilarated by the general success, that he was less solicitous about the motives of the instructor, than the progress of the instruction. He looked for the benefit rather from the power of the Gospel, than from the purity of the preacher.

We have repeatedly observed, that an ardent affection was one of the prominent features in Saint Paul's character: it is natural, therefore, that the expression of this temper should be particularly stamped on his writings. If he expresses this satisfaction with more unmingled delight to any one church than another, it seems to be to that which he had planted at Philippi. He appears to repose himself with grateful joy on their fidelity, and with assured hope in their progress. In every prayer he makes request for them, with a joy, which manifested the dependence he had on their perseverance. This was a proof that his 'confidence' did not abate the necessity of his supplications, though he made them with a joy which this confidence inspired. While his knowledge of the fluctuations of the human heart led him to rejoice with trembling, yet the continuance of this favoured church in the principles into which they had been initiated by his visit to them ten years before, gave him a reasonable ground of their persevering steadfastness.

This church afforded an eminent proof not only of its attachment to Paul, its founder, but of its zeal for Christianity. Not satisfied with advancing the credit of religion, and assisting its ministers in their own country, with a truly catholic spirit, these Philippian converts repeatedly sent money to Paul at Thessalonica, that, by relieving the Christians there from the expense which would attend the establishment of the Gospel, they might be led to conceive a higher idea of the religion itself by the disinterestedness of its ministers. This generous superiority to any lucrative views, gave Paul a marked advantage over their philosophical teachers, who bestowed no gratuitous instruction.

The apostle gratefully considers it as one of the practical effects of the confirmed piety of his beloved Philippians, that they were so liberally kind to himself; he received their affectionate services to the aged, afflicted, and now imprisoned servant of Jesus Christ, as a proof of their fealty to his Lord. An ambassador, though in bonds, will still be considered as a representative of his king, by every liege subject.

With what cordiality does he solemnly attest the Omniscient to the truth of his attachment to them, and his desire to see them!

Highly, however, as he estimates their religious improvement, he does not consider them as having attained that elevation of character which renders monition superfluous, or advancement unnecessary; for he exhorts even 'as many as be perfect,' that they press forward and reach forth unto those things which are before: in his usual humble way identifying himself with those he is admonishing—'Let *us* be thus minded.'

Again—'Though he is confident that he that begun a good work in them,' will accomplish it, yet they must still work out their salvation; but lest they might be tempted to value themselves on their exertions, they are instantly reminded who it is that 'worketh in them to will and to do.' Though they *professed* the Gospel, 'their conversation must be such as becometh it.' To accomplish his full desire, their love, already so great, must 'abound more and more.' Nor would he be satisfied with an ignorant or disorderly piety—their love must manifest itself *more and more* 'in knowledge and judgment:' in knowledge, by a perpetual acquisition; in judgment, by a practical application of that knowledge.

How little, in the eyes of the sober Christian, does the renowned Roman, who, scarcely half a century before, sacrificed his life to his appointment, at this very Philippi, appear, in comparison of the man who addressed this epistle to the same city! Saint Paul was not less brave than Brutus, but his magnanimity was of a higher strain. Paul was exercised in a long series of sufferings, from which the sword of Brutus, directed by any hand but that of Paul himself, would have been a merciful deliverance. Paul, too, was a patriot, and set a proper value on his dignity as a Roman citizen. He too was a champion for freedom, but he fought for that higher species of liberty

'Unsung by Poets, and by Senators unprais'd.'

Was it courage of the best sort, in the Roman enthusiast for freedom, to abandon his country to her evil destiny, at the very moment when she most needed his support? Was it true generosity or patriotism, after having killed his friend, to whom he owed his fortune and his life,* usurper though he was, voluntarily to leave this adored country a prey to *inferior* usurpers? Though Cæsar had robbed Rome of her liberty, should Brutus rob her of his own guardian virtues? Why not say to the Romans, as Paul did to the Philippians—*Though I desire to depart, nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you?* This would have been indeed patriotism, because it would have been disinterested. Was not Paul's the truer heroism? He also was in a *strait between two* events, life and death. He knew what Brutus, alas! did not know, 'that to die was gain;' but, instead of deserting his cause, by a pusillanimous self-murder, he submitted to live for its interest. The gloomy despair of the Stoic, and the cheerful submission of the Saint, present a lively contrast of the effects of the two religions on two great souls.

* At the battle of Pharsalia.

It is a coincidence too remarkable to be passed over in silence, that Paul was directed by '*a vision from heaven*' to go to Philippi; that Brutus was summoned to the same city by his *evil genius*. The hero obeyed the phantom; the apostle was 'not disobedient to the heavenly vision;' to what different ends, let the concluding histories of the devoted suicide and the devoted martyr declare! Will it be too fanciful to add, that the spectre which lured the Roman to his own destruction, and the vision which in the same place invited the apostle to preach salvation to others, present no unapt emblem of the opposite genius of Paganism and Christianity.

CHAP. XVI.

Saint Paul's respect for constituted authorities.

The Gospel was never intended to dissolve the ancient ties between sovereign and subject, master and servant, parent and child, but rather to draw them closer, to strengthen a natural by a lawful and moral obligation. As the charge of disaffection was, from the first, most injurious to the religion of Jesus, it is obvious why the apostle was so frequent, and so earnest, in vindicating it from this calumny.

It is apparent from every part of the New Testament, that our Lord never intended to introduce any change into the civil government of Judea, where he preached, nor into any part of the world to which his religion might extend. As his object was of a nature specifically different, his discourses were always directed to that other object. His politics were uniformly conversant about his own kingdom, which was not of this world. If he spake of human governments at all, it was only incidentally, as circumstances led to it, and as it gave occasion to display or enforce some act of obedience. He discreetly entangled the Pharisees in the insidious net which they had spread for him, by directing, in answer to their ensnaring question, that the things which belonged even to the sovereign whom they detested, should be 'rendered' to him.

Saint Paul exhibited at once a striking proof of the soundness of his own principles, and of the peaceable character of Christianity, in his full and explicit exposition of the allegiance due to the ruling powers. His thorough conviction that human nature was, and would be, the same in all ages, led him to anticipate the necessity of impressing on his converts the duty of rescuing the new religion, not only from present reproach, but from that obloquy to which he foresaw that it would always be exposed.

He knew that a seditious spirit had been alleged against his Lord. He knew, that as it was with the master so it must be with the servant. One was called a 'pestilent fellow;' another 'a stirrer-up of the people:' others were charged with 'turning the world upside down.'

These charges, invented and propagated by the Jews, were greedily adopted by the persecuting Roman emperors, and their venal instruments; and have always been seized on and brought forward as specious pretences for exile, proscription, massacre.

Many of the Protestant Reformers were afterwards accused, or suspected, of the same factious disposition; and if a similar accusation has not been boldly produced, it has been insidiously implied, against some of the most faithful friends of the government, and of the ecclesiastical constitution of our own country; as if a more than ordinary degree of religious activity rendered their fidelity to the state suspicious, and their hostility to the church certain. We do not deny, that though Christianity has never been the cause, it has often been made the pretence for disaffection. Religion has been made the handle of ambition by Popery, and of sedition by some of the Puritan Reformers. Corruption in both cases was stamped upon the very face of those who so used it. Nothing, however, can be more unfair, than *eagerly* to charge religious profession with such dangers, which yet the instances alluded to have given some of our high churchmen a plausible plea for *always* doing. This plea, though in certain cases justly furnished, has been most unjustly used by being applied to instances to which it is completely inapplicable.

For the truth is, that a factious spirit is so far from having any natural connection with the religion of the Gospel, that it stands in the most direct opposition to it. Saint Paul, in taking particular care to vindicate Christianity from any such aspersion, shows that obedience to constituted authorities is among the express commands of our Saviour. He might have added to the strength of his assertion, by adducing his example also; for, in order to be enabled to comply with a law of government, Christ did, what he had never done to supply his own necessities—he wrought a miracle.

The apostle knowing the various shifts of men, from their natural love of gain, to evade paying imposts, is not content with a general exhortation on this head, but urges the duty in every conceivable shape, and under every variety of name, as if to prevent the possibility of even a verbal subterfuge—*tribute*, *custom*, *fear*, *love*, *honour*, *fidelity in payment;* and then, having exhausted particulars, he sums them up in a general—*owe no man any thing*. Thus he leaves not only no public opening, but no secret crevice to fiscal fraud. *

Perhaps it is an evidence, in this instance, rather of the sagacious, than of the prescient, spirit which governed Saint Paul; that there is as much tendency to it now, as when the apostle first published his prohibitory letter. The known principles of human nature, as we have just observed, might lead us to expect it alike in all ages. At the same time, we cannot be too mindful of that command of Inspiration, which, by enjoining us to render to all their dues, has enlarged the sphere of civil duty to the very utmost limit of human actions. And it is no little credit to Christianity, that intimations are so frequently repeated, by *all* the apostles *to all* classes of society, that their having become Christians was the very reason why all their lawful obligations should be the more scrupulously discharged.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul preach the same doctrine, but most judiciously apply their injunctions to the different modes of government under which their several converts lived. Saint Peter, who wrote *to the strangers scattered through Pontus*, *Asia*, &c. where the governments were arbitrary, orders them *first to obey the king as supreme*. Saint Paul, addressing the people of Rome, where it is well known the emperor and the senate did not always act in concurrence, with his usual exquisite prudence makes choice of an ambiguous expression, *the higher powers*, without specifically determining what those powers were.

Loyalty is a cheap quality, where a good government makes a happy people. It is then an obligation, without being a virtue.—That every man should be obedient to the existing powers, is a very easy injunction to us, who are living under the mildest government, and the most virtuous king. When Paul enjoined his beloved disciple 'to put the people in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates,'—had the Episcopal Titus been acting under the merciful government of the Imperial Titus, Paul might have been denied any merit in giving this authoritative mandate, or the bishop in obeying it; it might have been urged, that the injunctions were accommodated to a sovereign whose commands it would be unreasonable to dispute.

The submission which Saint Paul practised and taught was a trial of a higher order, but though hard, it was not too hard for his principles. To enjoin and to practice implicit obedience, where Nero was the supreme authority, furnished him with a fair occasion for exhibiting his sincerity on this point.—Never let it be forgotten for the honour of Christianity, and of the apostle who published it, that Paul chose to address his precepts of civil obedience to the Christians at Rome, under the most tyrannical of all their tyrants. He commands them to *submit for conscience sake*, to a sovereign, who, —their enemy, Tacitus, gives the relation,—made the martyrdom of the Christians his personal diversion; who burnt them alive by night in the streets, that the flames might light him to the scene of his licentious pleasures.

In the first three centuries, till the Roman government became Christian, there is not, we believe, an instance upon record, of any insurrection against legitimate authority.—Tertullian, in his 'Apology,' challenges the Pagans to produce a single instance of sedition, in which any of the Christians had been concerned; though their numbers were become so great, as to have made their opposition formidable, while the well-known cruel and vengeful principle of their oppressors would have rendered it desperate. Even that philosophical politician Montesquieu acknowledged, that in those countries where Christianity had even imperfectly taken root, rebellions have been less frequent than in other places.

* Romans xiii.

Nor did Saint Paul indemnify himself for his public submission, by privately villifying the lawful tyrant: the emperor is not only not named, but is not pointed at. There is not one of those sly inuendos, which the artful subverters of states know how to employ, when they would undermine the stability of law, without incuring its penalty.—He betrays no symptom of an exasperating spirit, lurking behind the shelter of prudence, and the screen of legal security.

It is observable, that in the very short period, from the origin of Christianity under Augustus to the time at which Saint Paul wrote, there were four successive Roman emperors, each of whom was worse than the preceding, as if it had been providentially so determined, as a test of the meek and quiet spirit of Christianity, whose followers never manifested resistance to any of these oppressive masters.

Paul knew how to unite a respect for the government, with a just abhorrence of the vices of the governor. We are not advocating the cause of passive obedience—but it may be fairly observed, in this connection, that political passions are so apt to inflame the whole mind, that it is dangerous for those, who are professionally devoted to the service of religion, to be too powerfully influenced by them.

I believe there has been no government, under which Christianity has not been able to subsist. When the ruling powers were lenient to it, and especially when they afforded it protection, it has advanced in secular prosperity, and external grandeur; when they have been intolerant, its spirit has received a fresh internal impulse; it has improved in spiritual vigour, as if it had considered oppression only as a new scene for calling new graces into exercise.

With the specific nature of the populace, in all countries, Paul was well acquainted. He knew that till religion has operated on their hearts, they have but one character. Of this character we have many correct, though slight sketches, in the New Testament. Now we hear the stupid clamour of the Ephesian idolaters, vociferating, for two hours, their one* phrase. Then we see that picture of a mob, so exactly alike in all ages, from the uproar in the streets of Ephesus, to the riots in the streets of Westminster; 'the greater part knew not wherefore they were come together.' On another occasion, 'the certainty could not be known for the tumult.' Then their mutable caprice, changing with the impulse of the event, or of the moment. When the viper fastened on Paul's hand, 'he was a murderer,' when he shook it off unhurt, 'he was a god.'† At Lystra the same people who had offered him Divine honours, no sooner heard the false reports of the Jews from Antioch, than *they stoned him and dragged him out of the city as a dead man.*'‡ It was the very spirit which dictated the 'Hosanna' of one day, and the 'crucify him' of the next.

Saint Paul well knew these wayward motions of the mob. He knew also that, without the faculty of thinking, their gregarious habit gave them a physical force, which was a substitute for rational strength; and that this instinctive and headlong following the herd, without reason without consistency, makes them as formidable by their aggregate number, as they are inconsiderable by their individual weight. Yet, did he ever attempt to turn the knowledge, in which he was so well versed, to a political purpose? Did he ever cajole the multitude, as an engine to lift himself into power or popularity? Did he consider them, as some designing orators have done, the lowest round in ambition's ladder, by which, its foot fixed in the dirt, they strive to scale the summit of public favour; alluring by flattery beings they despise, and paying them by promises, which they know they shall never be able to keep.

Saint Paul's love of order is an additional proof of the soundness of his political character. He uses his influence with the vulgar, only to lead them to obedience. Nor did he content himself with verbal instructions to obey; he seconded them by a method the most practically efficient. Together with order itself, he enjoined on the people those industrious habits which are the very soul of order. He was a most rigorous punisher of idleness, that powerful cherisher of insubordination in the lower orders. Not to eat was the penalty he inflicted on those who would not work. He commands the Thessalonian converts 'to correct the disorderly'—again enjoining, that 'with quietness they work and eat their own bread.'—'Stirrers up of the people' never command them to work, and though they promise them bread, knowing they shall never be able to give it to them, yet they do not, like Paul, command them to eat it in peace. By thus encouraging peaceable and laborious habits, he was at once ensuring the comforts of the people, and the security of the state. Are these exhortations, is this conduct, any proof of that tendency to faction, which has been so often charged on the religion of Jesus?

In his political discretion, as well as in all other points, Paul imitates his Lord. Jesus, in the earlier part of his ministry, was extremely cautious of declaring who he was, never but once owned himself to be the Messiah; when at last, knowing 'that his hour was come,' he scrupled not to express his resentment publicly against the Sanhedrim, by almost the only strong expression of indignation. Which Infinite Wisdom, clothed in Infinite Meekness, ever thought fit to use. Even then, he said nothing against the civil governor.

But while Paul thus proved himself a firm supporter of established authorities, as such, he would not connive at any formal act of injustice, while he resigned himself to the Roman powers, his lawful judges, he would not submit to be condemned illegally by the Jews. When he appealed to Cæsar, he declared with a dignified firmness becoming his character, that though he refused not to die, he would be tried by the rightful judicature.

If it be objected, that, in a single instance, he sharply rebuked Ananias for violating the law, by commanding him to be punished unjustly; he immediately cleared himself from the charge of contumacy, by declaring 'he knew not that it was the High Priest;' and instantly took occasion to extract a maxim of obedience from his

* Acts, xix. † Acts, xxviii. ‡ Acts, xv.

own error; and to render it more impressive sanctioned it by Scriptural authority, *It is written*, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.'*

It must have been obvious to his Pagan judges, that he never interfered with their rights, or even animadverted on their corruptions. His real crime in their eyes, was, not his intermeddling with government, but his converting the people. It was by exposing the impositions of their mercenary priests, by declaring *their idols ought not to be worshipped*, that he inflamed the magistrates; and they were irritated, not so much as civil governors, as guardians of their religion. He knew the consequences of his persevering fidelity, and like a true servant of the true God, never shrunk from them.

To complete the character of his respect to authorities, he sanctifies loyalty, by connecting it with piety. He expressly exhorts the new bishop of the Ephesians,† that throughout his Episcopal jurisdiction, 'prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for kings and all in authority;'—and adds, as a natural consequence of the obligation, arising from the reciprocal connection, 'that subjects may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.' There could not have been devised a more probable method of insuring allegiance; for would it not be preposterous to injure or vilify those, for whom we make it a conscience to pray?

Yet even this important duty may be overestimated, when men's submission to kings is considered as paramount to their duty to 'another king, one Jesus.' An instance of this we have seen exemplified in our own time, though it has pleased Almighty Goodness to overrule it to the happiest results. And among the triumphs of religion which we have witnessed, it is not the least considerable, that, whereas Christianity was originally charged with a design to overturn states and empires, *we* have seen the crime completely turned over to the accusers; *we* have seen the avowed adversaries of Christ become the strenuous subverters of order, law, and government.

To name only one of the confederated band:—Voltaire had reached the pinnacle of literary fame and general admiration, not, it is to be hoped, *for* his impiety, but *in spite* of it. The fearful consequences of his audacious blasphemies were hid behind those graces of style, that gay wit, those fascinating pleasantries, that sharp, yet bitter raillery, which, if they did not conceal the turpitude, decorated it, and obtained, for his profaneness, something more than pardon. His boldness increased with his impunity. He carried it with a high hand, against the whole scheme of revelation; substituting ridicule for argument, and assertion for fact; and then, reasoning from his own misrepresentations, as consequentially as if he had found the circumstances he invented.

But the missile arrows of his lighter pieces, barbed, pointed, and envenomed, (the exact characters of that slender weapon) proved the most destructive in his warfare upon Christianity; and he could replenish his exhaustless quiver, with the same unparalleled celerity with which he emptied it. The keen sagacity of his mind taught him, that witty wickedness is of all the most successful. Argumentative impiety hurts but few, and generally those who were hurt before. Besides it requires in the reader a talent, or at least a taste, congenial with the writer; in this idle age it requires also the rare quality of patient investigation; a quality not to be generally expected, when our reading has become almost as dissipated as our pleasures, and as frivolous as our conversation.

For though Voltaire contrived to make every department of literature the medium of corruption; though the most unpromising and least suspected vehicles were pressed into the service to assist his ruling purpose; yet historical falsehoods might be refuted by adverting to purer sources, unfair citations might be contradicted, by refering to the originals. The popular engine of mischief is not the art of reasoning, but the art of raillery. The danger lies not in the attempt to prove a thing to be false, so much as in the talent which aims to make what is true, ridiculous; not so much in attacking, as in misstating, not in inverting, but in discolouring.

Metaphysical mischief is tedious to the trifling, and dull to the lively. Who now reads the 'Leviathan?' Who has *not* read Candide? 'Political Justice,' a more recent work, subversive of all religious and social order, was too ponderous to be popular, and too dry to answer the end of general corruption. But when the substance, by that chemical process well known to the preparers of poison, was *rubbed down* into an amusing novel, then it began to operate; the vehicle, though made pleasant, did not lessen the deleterious quality.

In Voltaire, a sentiment that cut up hope by the roots was compressed into a phrase as short as the motto of a ring, and as sparkling as the brilliants which encompass it. Every one can repeat an epigram, and even they who cannot understand, can circulate it. The fashionable laughed before they had time to think; the dread of not being supposed to have read, what all were reading, stimulated those who read, in order that they might talk. Little wits came to sharpen their weapons at the forge of this Philistine, or to steal small arms from his arsenal.

The writer of these pages has not forgotten the time when it was a sort of modish competition who could first produce proof that they had received the newest pamphlet from Ferney, by quoting from it; and they were gratified to find that the attributes of intelligence and good taste were appended to their gay studies. Others indulged with a sort of fearful delight, in the perilous pleasure. Even those who could not read, without indignation, did not wait, without impatience. Each successive work, like the book in the Apocalypse, was 'so sweet in the mouth,' that they forgot to anticipate the bitterness of digestion. Or, to borrow a more awful illustration from the same divine source, 'A star fell from heaven on the waters, burning like a lamp, and the star was called Wormwood; and many died of the waters, because they were made bitter.' That bright genius, which might have illuminated the world, became a destructive

* Acts, ch. xxiii. † Timothy.

flame, and, like the burning brand thrown by the Roman soldier into the Temple of Jerusalem, carried conflagration into the Sanctuary.

At length, happily for rescuing the principles, but most injuriously for the peace and safety of society, the polished courtier became a furious anarchist. The idol of monarchical France, the equalized associate of the Royal Author of Berlin, changed his political note, the parasite of princes, and the despot of literature, sounded the trumpet of Jacobinism. The political and moral world shook to their foundation. Earth below trembled. Heaven above threatened. All was insecurity. Order seemed reverting to original chaos. The alarm was given. Britain first awoke, roused by the warning voice of Burke. Enthusiasm was converted into detestation. The horror which ought to have been excited by his impiety was reserved for his democracy. But it was found that he could not subvert thrones with the same impunity with which he had laboured to demolish altars. He gave, indeed, the same impulse to sedition, which he had long given to infidelity, and by his own activity increased the velocity of both. The public feeling was all alive, and his political principles justly brought on his name that reprobation which had been long due to his blasphemies, but which his blasphemies had failed to excite.

Divine Providence seems to have spared him to extreme old age, that by adding one crime more to his long catalogue, his political outrages might counteract his moral mischiefs. But his wisdom seems to have been equally short-sighted in both his projects. While the consequences of his designs against the governments of the world, probably outran his intentions, his scheme for the extinction of Christianity, and for the obliteration of the very name of its author, fell short of it. Peace, law, and order are restored to the desolated nations. Kings are reinstated on their rightful thrones, and many of the subjects of the King of kings, it is hoped, are returned to their allegiance.

The abilities of this powerful but pernicious genius, were not more extraordinary than their headlong, yet diversified course. His talents took their bent from the turn of the age in which he was cast. His genius was his own, but its determination was given from without. He gave impressions as forcibly, as he yielded to them suddenly. It was action and reaction. He lighted on the period, in which, of all others, he was born to produce the most powerful sensation. The public temper was agitated; he helped on the crisis. Revolt was ripening; he matured it. Circumstances suggested his theories; his theories influenced circumstances. He was inebriated with flattery, and mad with success; but his delirious vanity defeated its own ends; in his greediness for instant adoration he neglected to take future fame into his bold but brief account.

> 'Vaulting ambition overleap'd itself,
> And fell on t'other side.'

CHAP. XVII.

St. Paul's attention to Inferior Concerns.

It is one great advantage of epistolary writing that it is not subject to the general laws of composition, but admits of every diversity of miscellaneous matter. Topics which might be thought beneath the dignity of a Treatise, or inconsistent with the solemnity of a Sermon, or the gravity of a Dissertation, find their proper place in a letter. Details of which are not of the first importance, may yet be of such a nature as to require notice or animadversion.

The epistolary form has also other advantages; it not only admits of a variety of subjects, but of the most abrupt transition, from one subject to another, however dissimilar. It requires not the connecting links of argumentative composition, nor the regularity of historical, nor the uniformity of ethical; nor the method and arrangement of each and of all these. The free mind, unfettered by critical rules, expatiates at will, soars or sinks, skims or dives, as the objects of its attention may be elevated or depressed, profound or superficial.

Of the character of this species of writing, the authors of epistles of the New Testament have most judiciously availed themselves. Saint Paul, especially, has taken all due advantage of the latitude it allows. His epistles, though they contain the most profound reasoning, and on the most important subjects on which the mind of man can be engaged, are not, exclusively, regular discussions of any set topics; though they breathe strains of devotion almost angelic, yet do they also frequently stoop to the concerns of ordinary life: partaking, as occasion requires, of all that familiarity, versatility, and ease, which this species of writing authorizes. Yet though occasional topics and incidental circumstances are introduced, each epistle has some particular drift, tends to some determined point, and, amidst frequent digressions, still maintains a consistency with itself, as well as with the general tendency of Scripture; the method being sometimes concealed, and the chain of argument not obvious, the closest attention is required, and the reader, while he may be gathering much solid instruction, reproof or consolation, from scattered sentences, and independent axioms, will not, without much application of mind, embrace the general argument.

Amidst, however, all the higher parts of spiritual instruction; amidst all the solidity of deep practical admonition, there is not, perhaps, a single instance in which this author has omitted to inculcate any one of the little morals, any one even of what may be called those minor circumstances, which constitute the decorums and decencies of life. Nor does his zeal for promoting the greatest actions, ever make him unmindful of the grace, the propriety, the manner in which they are to be performed.

It is one of the characteristic properties of a great mind that it can, 'contract as well as dilate itself;' and we have it from one of the highest human authorities, that the mind which cannot do both is not great in its full extent.* The minuter shades of character do not of themselves make up a valuable person; they may be possessed in perfection, separate from great excel

* Lord Bacon.

lence. But as that would be a feeble mind, which should be composed of inferior qualities only, so that would be an imperfect one, in which they were wanting. To all the strong lines of character, Saint Paul added the lighter touches, the graceful filling up which finish the portrait.

In a character which forcibly exhibits all the great features of Christianity, these subordinate properties do not only make up its completeness, they give also an additional evidence of the truth and perfection of a religion which makes such a provision for virtue, as to determine that nothing which is right, however inconsiderable, can be indifferent. The attention to inferior duties is a symptom of a mind not satisfied with its attainments, not so full of itself, as to fancy that it can *afford* to be negligent; it is indicative of a mind humble enough to be watchful, because it is suspicious of itself; of a conscience ever on its guard, that its infirmities may not grow into vices, nor its occasional neglects into allowed omissions. But it is chiefly anxious, that its imperfections may not be brought as a charge against religion itself; for may not its enemies say, if he is neglectful of small and easy duties, which cost little, is it probable that he will be at much pains about such as are laborious and difficult? Saint Paul never leaves an opening for this censure. He always seems to have thought small avenues worth guarding, small kindnesses worth performing, small negligences worth avoiding: and his constant practical creed is, that nothing that is a sin is small; that nothing that is right is insignificant. But Saint Paul was an accurate master of moral proportion. He took an exact measure of the positive and relative value of things. If he did not treat small objects as great ones—If he did not lift proprieties into principles, he by no means overlooked them; he never wholly neglected them. He graduated the whole scale of doctrine, and of action, of business and of opinion, assigning to every thing its place according to its worth.

Though he did not think the dissention in religious opinions between two individuals, Euodias and Syntyche* of as much importance as the contentions and schisms in the church of the Corinthians, yet he thought it of sufficient importance to be healed; and anxiously desired to reconcile them, to 'make them of one mind in the Lord.' He knew that disunion is not only unfavourable to the piety of the persons at variance, but that, while it gratifies the enemies, it injures the cause of religion.

But if he gives their due importance to inferior, though necessary duties, he draws a still nicer line in regard to matters in themselves indifferent. The eaters of herbs and the eaters of flesh are alike, in his estimation, as to the act; but when the indulgence in the latter becomes a temptation to an undecided believer, then, even, this trifling concession was no longer a matter of indifference. It became then a just ground for the exercise of self-denial, which perhaps he was not sorry to have the opportunity of enforcing.

* Philippians, ch. iv.

He knew that there were persons who profess to have made a great proficiency in piety, who are not defective in point of cheap attainment, but *are* defective in the more difficult attainments which involve self-denial; persons who, though very spiritual in their conversation, are somewhat selfish in their habits; who talk much of faith, and yet decline the smallest sacrifice of ease; who profess to do all for Christ, but do little for his poor members. He wished to see a high profession always accompanied with a corresponding practice. The Israelites, who were so forward to exclaim, 'all that the Lord hath commanded us we will do,' went and made them a golden calf.

In the mind of our apostle, all is consistent. He that said, 'Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus,' said also, *let all things be done decently and in order.* Right things must be done in a right manner. This simple precept indicates the soberness of Paul's mind. An enthusiast has seldom much dislike to disorderly conduct; on the contrary, he has generally a sovereign contempt for small points, indeed for every thing which does not exclusively tend to advance the one object, whatever that may be, which is nearest his heart.

Saint Paul sometimes appends small objects to great ones, thus increasing their importance by their position. Immediately after giving his exquisite portrait of charity,* he goes at once to recommend and enforce, by powerful illustrations, certain proprieties of behaviour in the public congregations.—Knowing the readiness of the world to catch at the slightest irregularity in religious professors, he puts them on their guard 'not to let their good be evil spoken of;' but wishes that they might acquit themselves unexceptionably as to manner, in things which were already right as to the matter.

From the high duties of Episcopal dignity, he stoops to the concerns of individuals of the most degraded condition. From the most important points of moral action in women, he descends to the very minutiæ of their apparel. This indicates how well aware he was, that every appearance of impropriety in personal adornment, is an implication of a wrong state of mind. If this seemingly inferior concern was not judged to be beneath the notice of an inspired apostle, surely it ought not to be unworthy the regard of my fair countrywomen.

One might have suspected, in the case of Paul, that the heavy load of cares, and sorrows, and persecutions; with the addition of ecclesiastical affairs, the most extensive and the most complicated, might have excused him from attending minutely to an object so inconsiderable, as the concerns of a poor run-away slave, 'the son of his bonds.'

Yet this once guilty, but now penitent servant, he condescends to make the exclusive subject of a letter to his late master.† This application to Philemon, in behalf of Onesimus, is a model in its kind; sincere, polite, tenderly affectionate to the convicted offender; strong, yet respectfully kind to his friend. In point of ele-

* 1 Corinthians, ch. xiii. and xiv.
† Epistle to Philemon.

gance and delicacy, in every excellence of composition, it may vie with any epistle of antiquity; and is certainly far superior, in ingenuity, feeling, warmth, and argument, to the admired letter of Pliny, in recommendation of his friend Arrianus Maturius.

There are people who sometimes forgive the piety of a man, in consideration of his influence, his reputation, his talents, or some other agreeable quality connected with it.—Genius is accepted by the world as a sort of atonement for religion; and wit has been known to obtain the forgiveness of the gay, for the strict principles of the grave. *Here* is a striking instance of two persons, connected by the closest ties of Christian friendship, who acted on other grounds. Philemon was not ashamed of his pious friend Paul, though a prisoner; nor was Paul ashamed of Onesimus, though a servant.

In urging his request on his friend, the apostle does not adopt the corrupt practice of too many, who, in order to put the person addressed in good humour, preface their petition by flattering him on some point, where, perhaps, he least deserves it. Paul, notwithstanding he would have reprobated such insincerity, yet thought it fair to remind Philemon of his high principles; thus indirectly to furnish him with a standard to which he expected his friend would act up.

He then proceeds to press his suit, with all the variety of argument and persuasion of which he was so great a master. His earnestness of entreaty, for so inconsiderable an object, conveys a lesson to ministers and to heads of families, that there is no human being so low as to be beneath their kindness; no offender so great as to be beyond their hope.

He had opened his request with a motive the most calculated to touch the heart of a Christian friend—*that he always made mention of him in his prayers.* This tender plea he follows up with the affectionate commendation of his Christian virtue, that the friend he was beseeching *abounded in love and faith*, not only 'to the Lord Jesus, *but to all saints.*'

After this soothing address, he urges his claims to the boon he was about to ask; in doing which, though he had been always mindful of the dignity of his Apostleship, he chose rather to sink this consideration in the more tender pleas of affection to his friend, and the distressed state of the person for whom he petitioned. 'Paul the aged, and a prisoner of Jesus Christ,' were touching and powerful motives: but what was likely to penetrate a generous mind, was, that the aged and imprisoned Paul, in sending back the penitent servant to his own master, and depriving himself of his attendance, was at once performing an act of justice and of self-denial. He would not detain him from his rightful owner, though he was so great a comfort to himself in his forlorn confinement. It was also a fine occasion of pressing on Onesimus, that the return to his duty would be the surest evidence of his conversion.

Thus anxiously, for an offending slave, does he seek to touch every spring of pity in the heart of his friend. Who would imagine that the man, who thus labours in the cause of so obscure an individual, had the superintendence of all the christian churches in the world?

But, with Paul, rectitude is always the prevailing principle. His zeal for his convert never makes him lose sight of the duty of restitution. Destitute, and a prisoner himself, he offers to make good the loss which Philemon might have sustained by his servant's misconduct. He candidly reminds him, however, how much the spiritual obligations of Philemon (his convert also) exceeded in value the debt due to him from Onesimus; though he refuses to avail himself of the plea. Thy servant perhaps owes thee a paltry sum of money—*thou owest me thine own self.*

With his characteristic disinterestedness, he not only thus pathetically pleads for him who was to receive the good, but for him who was to do it; as if he had said—Give me ground to rejoice in this evidence of thy christian benevolence. He farther stimulates him to this act of charity, by declaring the *confidence he had in his obedience;* thus encouraging him to the duty, by intimating the certainty of his compliance. An additional lesson is given to religious professors, not only that their being Christians includes their being charitable, but that no act of charity should infringe on the rights of justice.

We conclude, by remarking on the union of judgment and kindness in Saint Paul's conduct respecting Onesimus. He sends him back to Philemon at Colosse, as a proof, on the part of Onesimus, of penitent humility, and, on the part of Paul, of impartial equity. At the same time, he more than takes away his disgrace, by honouring him with the office, in conjunction with Tychicus, of being the bearer of his public epistle to the Colossian church. He confers on him the farther honour of naming him, in the body of his epistle, as a faithful and beloved brother.

How different is this modest and rational report by an inspired apostle, of a penitent criminal, a convert of his own; one who had survived his crimes long enough to prove the sincerity of his repentance by the reformation of his life;—how different is this sober narrative by a writer who considered restitution as a part of repentance, and humility as an evidence of faith, from those too sanguine reports which are now so frequently issuing from the press, of criminals brought to execution for violating all the laws of God and man!

The Gospel presents us but with one such instance; an instance which is too often pressed into a service where it has nothing to do; yet we far more frequently see the example of the penitent thief on the cross, brought forward as an encouragement to those who have been notorious offenders, than that of Onesimus though the latter is of general application, and the former is inapplicable to criminals in a Christian country; for the dying malefactor embraced Christianity the moment it was presented to him. This solitary instance, however, no more offers a justification than an example of fanatical fervours; for if it exhibits a lively faith, it exhibits also deep penitence, humility, and self condemnation. Nor does the just confidence

of the expiring criminal in the Redeemer's power, swell him into that bloated assurance, of which we hear in some late converts.

For in the tracts to which we allude, we hear not only of one, but of many, holy highwaymen, triumphant malefactors, joyful murderers! True, indeed, it is, that good men on earth rejoice with the angels in heaven, over even one sinner that repenteth. We would hope many of these were penitents; but as there was no space granted, as in the case of Onesimus, to prove their sincerity, we should be glad to see, in these statements, more contrition and less rapture. May not young delinquents be encouraged to go on from crime to crime, feeling themselves secure of heaven at last, when they see, from this incautious charity, that assurance of acceptance, which is so frequently withheld from the close of a life of persevering holiness, granted to the most hardened perpetrators of the most atrocious crime?

As it has been observed, that the baskets of the hawkers have *this year* abounded in these dangerous, though doubtless well-meant tracts, may not the lower class in general, and our servants in particular, be encouraged to look for a happy termination of life, not so much to the dying bed of the exemplary Christian as to the annals of the gallows? A few exceptions might be mentioned, honourable to the prudence, as well as to the piety, of the writers of some of these little narratives.

CHAP. XVIII.

Saint Paul on the Resurrection.

Before the introduction of Christianity, so dark were the notices of a state beyond the grave, that it is no wonder if men were little inclined to give up the pleasures and interest of one world, of which they were in actual possession, for the possibility of another, doubtful at best, and too indistinct for hope, too uncertain for comfort.

If a state of future happiness was believed, or rather guessed at, by a few of those who had not the light of revelation, no nation on earth believed it, no public religion in the world taught it. This single truth, then, firmly established, not only by the preaching of Jesus, but by his actual resurrection from the dead, produced a total revolution in the condition of man. It gave a new impulse to his conduct; infused a new vitality into his existence. Faith became to man an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. This anchorage enables him to ride out the blackest storms; and though he must still work out his passage, the haven is near, and the deliverance certain, 'while he keeps his eye to the star, and his hand to the stern.'

The value and importance, then, of this doctrine, seems to have made it an especial object of Divine care. Founded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, perhaps it may have afforded one reason, why the long-suffering of God permitted Jerusalem to stand near half a century after this last event had taken place. By this delay, not only the inhabitants of that city, but the multitudes who annually resorted thither, could gain full leisure to examine into its truth. Had the destruction followed immediately upon the crime which caused it, occasion might have been furnished to the Rabbies for asserting, that a truth could not now be authenticated, which was buried in the ruins of the city. Nor would the enemies of Jesus have scrupled any subordination to discredit his pretensions, even though at the expense of a doctrine, which involved the happiness of worlds unborn.

Jerusalem, however, survived for a time, and the doctrine of a resurrection was established for ever. And now, had it been a doctrine of any ordinary import, as Saint Paul was not writing to persons ignorant of the truths of Christianity, but to Christian converts, it might have been less his object to propound it dogmatically, than to develope and expand it; being a thing previously known, acknowledged, and received. In writing a letter, when we allude to facts already notorious, we do not think our notices the less acceptable, because we do not repeat intelligence already popular; while we content ourselves with drawing inferences from it, making observations upon it, or allusions to it. The reader, having in view the same object with the writer, would catch at intimations, seize on allusions, and fill up the implied meaning.

Such, however, was not Saint Paul's conduct with respect to this doctrine. There were indeed, it should seem, among his converts, many sceptical Jews, infected with the philosophizing spirit of the Grecian schools, and who doubted, what these last derided, the resurrection of the dead. Consequently, upon every account, Saint Paul is found to give it a peculiar prominence, and on all occasions to bestow upon it more argument and illustration, than on most other tenets of the new faith.

There is no profession, no class of men, whether Jew or Gentile, before whom Paul was not ready to be examined on this subject, and was not prompt to give the most decided testimony. Uniformly he felt the strength of evidence on his side; uniformly he appealed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as a fact established on the most solid basis,—a fact, not first propagated in distant countries, where the facility of imposition would have been greater; not at a distant period of time, when the same objection against it might have been made; but on the very spot where it occurred, at the very moment of its occurrence.

In his writings, also, the same confidence, the same urgency appears. He always adverts to this tenet, as to the main hinge on which the whole of Christianity turns. The more reasoning oppugners of the faith thought, that if this doctrine could be got rid of, either by argument or ridicule, it would subvert the whole fabric of Christianity. It was, in reality, the only *sensible* proof that could be adduced of the immortality of the soul; an opinion which, indeed, many of them professed to entertain, though they would not be indebted to this doctrine for its proof. The more, however, they oppugned, the more

he withstood; and of so high importance did he represent it, that he even makes 'believing in the heart that God hath raised Jesus from the dead,' to be a principal condition of salvation.

We must not judge of the inspired Saint Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the same canons of criticism, by which we pronounce judgment on other writers. Notwithstanding the elevation of his genius, his hand was in a great measure held, by the nature of his subject and his character, from the display of his talents as an author. From the warmth of his feelings, and the energy of his mind, we infer, that he possessed an imagination peculiarly bright. That he subdued, instead of indulging, this faculty, adds worth to his character, dignity to his writing, and confirmation to the truth. To suppress the exercise of a powerful imagination, is one sacrifice more, which a pious writer makes to God. Independently of that inspiration which guided him, his severe judgment would show him, that the topics of which he treated were of too high and holy a nature to admit the indulgence of a faculty rather calculated to excite admiration than to convey instruction.

In considering his general style of composition, we are not to look after the choice of words, so much as to the mind, and spirit, and character of the writer. If, however, we venture to select any one part of Saint Paul's writings, to serve as an exception to this remark, and to exhibit a more splendid combination of excellences than almost any other in his whole works, we should adduce the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he fully propounds the article in question. As our Lord's discourse, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, is the only explicit description of the last judgment; and Saint John's vision, at the close of the Apocalypse, the only distinct view given us of the heavenly glory; so this is the only graphical representation which Scripture has presented to us of this most important and consolatory doctrine, the resurrection of the dead.

The subject of this fifteenth chapter is quite distinct from that which precedes or follows it; it is interposed between matter quite irrelevant to it, forming a complete episode. As a composition, it stands unrivalled for the unspeakable importance of its matter, its deep reasoning, and lofty imagery. Saint Paul sometimes leaves it to others to beat out his massy thoughts into all the expansion of which they are so susceptible. His eloquence, indeed, usually consists more in the grandeur of the sentiment than in the splendour of the language. Here both are equally conspicuous. Here his genius breaks out in its full force: here his mind lights upon a subject which calls out all its powers; and the subject finds a writer worthy of itself. It furnishes a succession of almost every object that is grand in the visible and the invisible world. A description becomes a picture; an expostulation assumes the regularity of a syllogism; an idea takes the form of an image; the writer seems to be the spectator; the relator speaks as one admitted within the veil.

According to his usual practice of appealing to facts, as a substratum on which to build his reasoning, he produces a regular statement, in their order of succession, of the different times at which Jesus appeared after his death, authenticated by the unimpeachable evidence of the disciples themselves, by whom he was seen individually, as well as in great bodies. The evidence he corroborates by his own personal testimony at his conversion; an evidence which he produces with sentiments of the deepest self-absement.

So important, he proceeds, was it to settle the belief of this doctrine, that if it were not true, all their hopes fell to the ground. To insist on this grand peculiarity of the Gospel, was establishing the truth of the whole by a part. It was the consummation of the validity of the mission of Christ. Without this finishing circumstance, what proof could his followers adduce, that his atonement was accepted; that his mediation was ascertained; that his intercession would be available; that his final judgment would take place; that because He was risen, they should rise also! It was not one thing, it was every thing. It was putting the seal to a testament which, without it, would not have been authentic. It involved a whole train of the most awful consequences. Such a chain of inferences would be destroyed by this broken link, as nothing could repair. In short, it amounted to this tremendous conclusion: 'Those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.' You who live in the hope of the redemption wrought for you, 'are yet in your sins.' If Jesus remains under the power of death, how shall we be delivered from the power of sin? If the doctrine be false, then is my preaching a delusion, and your faith a nullity. He adds, that they who were now the happiest of men, in their assured hope of eternal life, would become, 'of all men most miserable;' in short, as in another place he asks, to what purpose has Christ died for our sins, if he has not 'risen for our justification?'

The apostle having shown himself a consummate master of the art of reasoning, by his refutation of the absurdities that would follow ar assumption, that Christ was not risen; and having cleared the ground from most of the objections and difficulties which had been thrown in his way, proceeds to the positive assertion, that not only Christ is risen, but that all his faithful followers have their own resurrection ascertained by his.—He illustrates this truth by an apposite allusion to the custom of a Jewish harvest, the whole of which was sanctified by the consecration of the first-fruits.

In his distinguishing characteristics of the different properties of the body of man, in its different states of existence, every antithesis is exact. The body that is sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, is raised in incorruption, glory, and power.—The material body is become spiritual.—'The first man was made a living soul,' possessing that natural life communicated by him to all his posterity; but Christ was a quicking spirit, through whom, as from its source, spiritual life is conveyed to all believers.

If Paul uniformly makes every doctrine a fountain flowing with practical uses, it is no wonder that he should make this triumphant consummation of all doctrine subservient to the

great ends of holiness. For it is worthy of remark, that in this very place, with all the interest which his argument excites, in all the heat which his defence kindles, carried away, as he seems to be, by his faith and his feelings, —yet, in his usual manner, he checks his career to introduce moral maxims, to insinuate holy cautions. Not contented to guard the people against the danger of corrupt and corrupting society upon his own principles, he strengthens his argument by refering them to a Pagan poet, whose authority, with some at least, he might think would be more respected than his own, on the infection of 'evil communications.' He suggests ironically, as a practical effect of the disbelief of this truth, the propriety of Epicurean voluptuousness, and even ventures to recommend the utmost indulgence of a present enjoyment, upon the supposition of a death which is to cut off all future hope, and all posthumous responsibility.

Then assuming a loftier note, with an awfully warning voice, he proceeds to this solemn adjuration—'Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God.' As if he had said,—If you give into this incredulity, your practice will become consonant to your belief. Every man will defend his error when it favours his vice. Your evil habits will complete the corruption of your faith. If you find an interest in indulging your mistake, your next step will be to think it true. What is first a wish, will gradually become an opinion; an opinion will as naturally become a ground of action; and what you now permit yourself to do, you will soon become willing to justify.

He produces, as the strongest proof of his belief in the doctrine in question, the complacency of Christians in suffering. Why did others press forward to martyrdom?—Why did he himself expose his life to perpetual peril? Why, but from the firm persuasion, that as Christ was risen, they should rise also. Would not their voluntary trials be absurd? Would it not be madness to embrace, when it was in their power to avoid, all the hardships which embittered life, all the dangers which were likely to shorten it. He and his colleagues were not impassable substances, but feeling men, sensible to pain, keenly alive to suffering, with nerves as finely strung, with bodies as tenderly constituted, with souls as reluctant to misery, as others. Take away this grand motive for patience, rob them of this sustaining confidence, strip them of this glorious prospect, and their zeal would lose its character of virtue, their piety its claim to wisdom. Their perseverance would be fatuity. Mighty then must be their motive, powerful indeed their assurance, clear and strong their conviction, that their brief sorrows were not worthy to be compared with the glories which were insured to them by the resurrection of Christ.

Again, he resumes the task of repelling the more plausible objections. But it is not our business to follow him through all his variety of illustration, all his diversified analogy, all his consecutive reasoning on the nature of the resurrection of the body. Resemblances the most distant, substances the most seemingly dissimilar in themselves, are yet brought together by a skill the most consummate, by an aptness the most convincing. All the objects of our senses, whatever is familiar to the sight, or habitual to the mind, are put in requisition—all the analogies of nature are ransacked—the vegetable, the animal, the terrestrial and the celestial world, are brought into comparison; and the whole is made to demonstrate the truth of this awful doctrine. Such a cluster of images, all bearing upon one point, at once fill the mind, dilate the conception, and confirm the faith.

There is singular wisdom in the selection of these illustrations, not only as being the most apposite, but the most intelligible.—They are not drawn from things abstruse or recondite, but from objects with which all classes are equally acquainted. An incidental, but not unimportant proof of the universal design of Christianity. The most ordinary man is as conversant with the springing up and growth of corn, with the distinction between the flesh of the different animal species, as the philosopher. He can also as clearly discern the exterior distinction between the different luminaries of heaven, as the astronomer Here is no demand of knowledge, no appeal to science.—Sight is the witness, sense the arbiter in this question.

To bestow immortality on mortals, and to revive the dead, had been pronounced by a heathen author to be beyond the reach of divine power. To the bold Pyrrhonists therefore, who might be among the Corinthians, and who sought to perplex the argument by asking—'how are the dead raised up?—With what body do they come?' he answers peremptorily, by refering them to the great resolver of difficulties—THE POWER OF GOD, inscribed in the book of daily experience—*God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him.* He reminds them, that this divine power they perpetually saw exercised in a wonderful manner in the revolution of seasons in the resusitation of plants apparently dead; and in the springing up of corn, which dies first, in order that it may live. To that omnipotence which could accomplish the one, could the other be difficult?

Who can pursue without emotion his rapid, yet orderly transition from one portion of his subject to another? The interest still rising till it closes in the triumphant climax of the final victory over the two last enemies, death and the grave! At length by a road, in which deviation does not impede his progress, he reaches the grand consummation. Behold I show you a mystery—we shall not all sleep—but we shall be changed—in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—at the last trumpet—for the trumpet shall sound—and the dead shall be raised incorruptible—and we shall all be changed. It is almost profane to talk of beauties, where the theme is so transcendant; but this is one of the rare instances in which amplification adds to spirit, and velocity is not retarded by repetition. The rythm adds to the effect, and soothes the mind; while the sentiment elevates it. The idea was not newly conceived in the apostle's mind; he had told the Thessalonians 'the Lord himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of an Archangel, and the trump of God.'

His grateful spirit does not forget to remind them to whom the victory is owing, to whom the thanks are due.

In the solemn close, alighting again from the world of light, and life, and glory, he just touches upon earth to drop another brief, but most impressive lesson—that though the victory is obtained, though the last conquest is achieved, though Christ is actually risen—all these ends accomplished, are not to dismiss us from diligence, but to stimulate us to it. They furnish only an additional argument for abounding in the work of the Lord.' It adds animation to the motive, that from this full exposition of the doctrine they not only *believe*, but they *know*, that their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

With this glorious hope what should arrest their progress? With such a reward in view—eternal life, the purchase of their risen Saviour, he at once provides them with the most effectual spur to diligence, with the only powerful support under the sorrows of life, with the only infallible antidote against the fear of death.

To conclude, this blessed apostle never fails, where the subject is susceptible of consolation as well as of instruction, to deduce both from the same premises. What affectionate Christian will not here revert, with grateful joy, to the same writer's cheering address to the saints of another church, who might labour under the pressing affliction of the death of pious friends?* He there offers a new instance, not only of his never-failing rule of applying the truth he preaches, but of their immediate application to the feelings of the individual. This it is which renders his writings so personally interesting. That the mourner over the pious dead might not 'sorrow as those who have no hope,' after the declaration that 'Jesus died and rose again.' He builds on this general principle, the particular assurance, 'Even them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.'

What a balm to the breaking heart!—What! the loved companion of our youth, the friend of our age, the solace of our life, with whom we took sweet counsel, with whom we went to the house of God as friends, will Christ bring with him? Shall the bliss of our suspended intercourse be restored, unalloyed by the mutual infirmities which here rendered it imperfect, undiminished by the dread of another separation?

Well then might the angel say to Mary at the forsaken tomb, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' Well might Jesus himself repeat the question, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' Tears are wiped from all eyes. 'The voice of joy and thanksgiving is in the tabernacles of the righteous.' 'The right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.' The resurrection of Christians is indissolubly involved in that of Christ: 'because I live, ye shall live also.'—What are the splendid triumphs of earthly heroes, to his triumph over the grave? What is the most signal victory over a world of enemies, to his victory over his last enemy? 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

* 1 Thessalonians, iv. 14.

CHAP. XIX.

Saint Paul on Prayer, Thanksgiving, and Religious Joy.

Prayer is an act which seems to be so prepared in the frame of our nature; to be so congenial to our dependent condition, so suited to our exigencies, so adapted to every man's known wants, and to his possibilities of wants unknown; so full of relief to the soul, and of peace to the mind, and of gladness to the heart; so productive of confidence in God, and so reciprocally proceeding from that confidence, that we should think, if we did not know the contrary, that it is a duty which scarcely required to be enjoined, that he who had once found out his necessities, and that there was no other redress for them, would spontaneously have recourse as a delight, to what he had neglected as a command; that he who had once tasted the bounties of God would think it a hardship not to be allowed to thank him for them; that the invitation to pray to his Benefactor, was an additional proof of Divine goodness; that to be allowed to praise him for his mercies, was itself a mercy.

The apostle's precept, 'pray always,'—pray evermore, pray without ceasing, men ought always to pray,—will not be criticised as a pleonasm, if we call to remembrance that there is no state of mind, no condition of life, in which prayer is not a necessity as well as an obligation. In danger, fear impels to it; in trouble, we have no other resource; in sickness, we have no other refuge; in dejection, no other hope; in death, no other comfort.

Saint Paul frequently shows the word *prayer* to be a term of great latitude, involving the whole compass of our intercourse with God. He represents it to include our adoration of his perfections, our acknowledgment of the wisdom of his dispensations, of our obligation for his benefits, providential and spiritual; of the avowal of our entire dependance on him, of our absolute subjection to him, the declaration of our faith in him, the expression of our devotedness to him; the confession of our own unworthiness, infirmities, and sins; the petition for the supply of our wants, and for the pardon of our offences; for succour in our distress; for a blessing on our undertakings; for the direction of our conduct, and the success of our affairs.

If any should be disposed to think this general view too comprehensive, let him point out which of these particulars prayer does not embrace; which of these clauses, a rational, a sentient, an enlightened, a dependent being can omit in his scheme of devotion.

But as the multifarious concerns of human life will necessarily occasion a suspension of the exercise; Saint Paul, ever attentive to the principle of the act, and to the circumstances of the actor, reduces all these qualities to their essence, when he resolves them into the *spirit* of supplication.

To pray incessantly, therefore, appears to be, in his view of the subject, to keep the mind in an habitual disposition and propensity to devotion; for there is a sense in which we may be said to *do* that which we are *willing* to do,

though there are intervals of thought, as well as intermissions of the act.—'As a traveller,' says Dr. Barrow, 'may be said to be still on his journey, though he stops to take needful rest, and to transact necessary business.' If he pause, he does not turn out of the way; his pursuit is not diverted, though occasionally interrupted.

Constantly maintaining the disposition, then, and never neglecting the actual duty; never slighting the occasion which presents itself, nor violating the habit of stated devotion, may, we presume, be called 'to pray without ceasing.' The expression 'watching unto prayer,' implies this vigilance in finding, and this zeal in laying hold on these occasions.

The success of prayer, though promised to all, who offer it in perfect sincerity, is not so frequently promised to the cry of distress, to the impulse of fear, or the emergency of the moment, as to humble continuance in devotion. It is to patient waiting, to assiduous solicitation, to unwearied importunity, that God has declared that he will lend his ear, that he will give the communication of his Spirit, that he will grant the return of our requests. Nothing but this holy perseverance can keep up in our minds an humble sense of our dependence. It is not by a mere casual petition, however passionate, but by habitual application, that devout affections are excited and maintained; that our converse with heaven is carried on. It is by no other means that we can be assured, with Saint Paul, that 'we are risen with Christ,' but this obvious one, that we thus seek the things which are above; that the heart is renovated; that the mind is lifted above this low scene of things; that the spirit breathes in a purer atmosphere; that the whole man is enlightened, and strengthened, and purified; and that the more frequently, so the more nearly, he approaches to the throne of God. He will find also, that prayer not only expresses, but elicits the Divine grace.

Yet do we not allow every idle plea, every frivolous pretence, to divert us from our better resolves? Business brings in its grave apology; pleasure its bewitching excuse. But if we would examine our hearts truly, and report them faithfully, we should find the fact to be, that disinclination to this employment, oftener than our engagement in any other, keeps us from this sacred intercourse with our Maker.

Under circumstances of distress, indeed, prayer is adopted with comparatively little reluctance: the mind, which knows not where to fly, flies to God. In agony, nature is no atheist. The soul is drawn to God by a sort of natural impulse; not always, perhaps by an emotion of piety; but from a feeling conviction, that every other refuge is 'a refuge of lies.' Oh! thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, happy if thou art either drawn or driven, with holy David, to say to thy God, 'Thou art a place to hide me in.'

But if it is easy for the sorrowing heart to give up a world, by whom itself seems to be given up, there are other demands for prayer equally imperative. There are circumstances more dangerous, yet less suspected of danger, in which, though the call is louder, it is less heard; because the voice of conscience is drowned by the clamours of the world. Prosperous fortunes, unbroken health, flattering friends, buoyant spirits, a spring-tide of success—these are the occasions when the very abundance of God's mercies is apt to fill the heart till it hardens it. Loaded with riches, crowned with dignities, successful in enterprise; beset with snares in the shape of honours, with perils under the mask of pleasures; then it is, that to the already saturated heart, 'to-morrow shall be as this day, and more abundant,' is more in unison than 'what shall I render to the Lord?'

Men of business, especially men in power and public situations, are in no little danger of persuading themselves, that the affairs which occupy their time and mind, being, as they really are, great and important duties, exonerate those who perform them from the necessity of the same strictness in devotion, which they allow to be right for men of leisure; and which, when they become men of leisure themselves, they are resolved to adopt;—but now is the accepted time, here is the accepted place, however they may be tempted to think that an exact attention to public duty, and an unimpeachable rectitude in discharging it, is itself a substitute for the offices of piety.

But these great and honourable persons are the very men to whom superior cares, and loftier duties, and higher responsibilities, render prayer even more necessary, were it possible, than to others. Nor does this duty trench upon other duties, for the compatibilities of prayer are universal. It is an exercise which has the property of incorporating itself with every other; not only not impeding, but advancing it. If secular thoughts, and vain imaginations, often break in on our devout employments, let us allow religion to vindicate her rights, by uniting herself with our worldly occupations. There is no crevice so small at which devotion may not slip in: no other instance of so rich a blessing being annexed to so easy a condition; no other case in which there is any certainty, that to ask is to have. This the suitors to the great do not always find so easy from them, as the great themselves find from God.

Not only the elevation on which they stand makes this fence necessary for their personal security, by enabling them to bear the height without giddiness, but the guidance of God's hand is so essential to the operations they conduct, that the public prosperity, no less than their own safety, is involved in the practice of habitual prayer. God will be more likely to bless the hand which steers, and the head which directs, when both are ruled by the heart which prays. Happily we need not look out of our own age or nation for instances of public men, who, while they govern the country, are themselves governed by a religious principle: who petition the Almighty for direction, and praise him for success.

The duty which Paul enjoins—'praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereto with all perseverance,'—would be the surest means to augment our love to God. We gradually cease to love a benefactor of whom we cease to think. The frequent recollection would warm our affections,

and we should more cordially devote our lives to him to whom we should more frequently consecrate our hearts. The apostle therefore inculcates prayer, not only as an act, but as a frame of mind.

In all his writings effectual prayer uniformly supposes accompanying preparatory virtue. Prayer draws all the Christian graces into its focus. It draws Charity, followed by her lovely train—of forbearance with faults; forgiveness of injuries, pity for errors, and relieving of wants. It draws repentance, with her holy sorrows, her pious resolutions, her self-distrust. It attracts Faith, with her elevated eye—Hope, with her grasped anchor—Beneficence, with her open hand—Zeal, looking far and wide to serve—Humility, with introverted eye, looking at home. Prayer, by quickening these graces in the heart, warms them into life, fits them for service, and dismisses each to its appropriate practice. Prayer is mental virtue; virtue is spiritual action. The mould into which genuine prayer casts the soul, is not effaced by the suspension of the act, but retains some touches of the impression till the act is repeated.

Prayer, divested of the love of God, will obtain nothing, because it asks nothing cordially. It is only the interior sentiment that gives life and spirit to devotion. To those who possess this, prayer is not only a support, but a solace: to those who want it, it is not only an insipid task, but a religious penalty. Our apostle every where shows that purity of heart, resignation of spirit, peace and joy in believing, can by no other expedient, be maintained in life, activity, and vigour.—Prayer so circumstanced is the appointed means for drawing down the blessing we solicit, and the pardon we need.

Yet that the best things are liable to abuse is a complaint echoed by all writers of ethics. Certain mystics, pretending to extraordinary illumination, have converted this holy exercise into a presumptuous error. Intense meditation itself has been turned into an instrument of spiritual pride, and led the mistaken recluse to overlook the appointed means of instruction; to reject the scriptures, to abandon the service of the sanctuary, and to expect to be snatched, like holy Paul, up to the third heaven, deserting those prescribed and legitimate methods which would more surely have conducted him thither. The history of the apostle himself presents a striking lesson in this case. 'Let us remember,' says one of the fathers, 'that though Paul was miraculously converted by an immediate vision from heaven, he was nevertheless sent for baptism and instruction to a man.'

Holy Paul calls upon us to meditate on the multitude and the magnitude of the gifts of God. When we consider how profusely he bestows, and how little he requires; that while he confers like Deity, he desires only such poor returns as can be made by indigent, mendicant mortality; that he requires no costly oblation; nothing that will impoverish, but, on the contrary, will inconceivably enrich the giver. When we consider this, we are ready to wonder that he will accept so poor a thing as impotent gratitude for immeasurable bounty. When we reflect, that our very desire to praise him is his gift—that his grace must purify the offering, before he condescends to receive it, must confer on it that spirit which renders it acceptable—that he only expects we should consecrate to Him, what we have received from him—that we should only confess, that of all we enjoy, nothing is our due—we may well blush at our insensibility.

We think, perhaps, as we have observed in another place, had he commanded us 'to do some great thing,' to raise some monument of splendor, some memorial of notoriety and ostentation, something that would perpetuate our own name with his goodness, we should gladly have done it. How much more when He only requires,

Our thanks how due!

When he only asks the homage of the heart, the expression of our dependence, the recognition of his right!

Concerning the duty of intercessory prayer for those we love, the apostle hath bequeathed us a high and holy example. He has given us not only injunctions, but specimens. Observe for what it is that 'he bows his knees to God' in behalf of his friends. Is it for an increase of their wealth, their power, their fame, or any other external prosperity? No: it is that 'God would grant them according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man:'—it is that 'Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith;'—it is 'that they may be rooted and grounded in love,' and this to a glorious end—'that they may be able, with all saints, to comprehend' the vast dimensions of the love of Christ;—that 'they may be filled with all the fulness of God.' These are the sort of petitions which we need never hesitate to present. These are the requests which we may rest assured are always agreeable to the divine will; here we are certain we cannot 'pray amiss.' These are intercessions of which the benefit may be felt, when wealth, and fame, and power shall be forgotten things.

Why does Paul 'pray day and night that he might see the face of his Thessalonian converts?' Not merely that he might have the gratification of once more beholding those he loved—though that would sensibly delight so affectionate a heart—but 'that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith.'

Here is an instance of a spirit so large in its affections, so high in their object; of a man who had so much of Heaven in his friendships, so much of soul in his attachments, that he thought time too brief, earth too scanty, worldly blessings too low, to enter deeply into his petitions for those to whom time and earth, the transitory blessings of life, and life itself, would so soon be no more.

In exciting us to perpetual gratitude, Saint Paul stirs us up to the duty of keeping before our eyes the mercies which so peremptorily demand it. These mercies succeed each other so rapidly, or rather, are crowded upon us so simultaneously, that if we do not count them as they are received, and record them as they are enjoyed, their very multitude which ought to penetrate the heart more deeply, will cause them to slip out of the memory.

The apostle acknowledges the gratitude due to God to arise from his being the universal proprietor,—*whose I am, and whom I serve;* thus making the obedience to grow out of the dependence. He serves his Maker because he is his property. We should reflect on the superiority of the bounties of our heavenly Father, over those of our earthly friends, not only in their number and quality, but especially in their unremitting constancy. The dearest friends only think of us occasionally, nor can we be so unreasonable as to expect to be the constant object of their attention. If they assist us under the immediate pressure of distress, their cares are afterwards remitted.

Many, besides us, have a claim upon their kindness, and they could not invariably attend to us without being unjust to others. If a man were to lay out his whole stock of affection upon one individual, how many duties must he neglect, how many claims must he slight, how much injustice must he commit, of how much ingratitude would he be guilty! And as an earthly friend cannot divide his benefits, or even the common acts of kindness among an indefinite number, and as human means have limits, so his benevolence can generally be little more than good will. But the exhaustless fund of infinite love can never be diminished;—though the distribution is universal, though the diffusion is as wide as his rational creation, though the continuance is as durable as his own eternity, the beneficence of almighty power needs not, like his creatures, deduct from one because it is liberal to another.

Our kindest friend may not always know our secret sorrows, and with the utmost goodness of intention cannot apply a balsam, where he does not know there is a wound; or it may be a wound deeper than human skill can reach, or human kindness cure. Again, our weaknesses may often weary, and sometimes disgust, even an attached friend; but it is the feeling of these very infirmities with which our divine High Priest is so tenderly touched. His compassion arises from a deep and intimate sense of sympathy—for he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet in no point did he sin.

It is in this view that we become so personally interested in the attributes of God; that they come in so completely in aid of our necessities, and to the supply of our comforts. As his omniscience brings him fully acquainted with all our wants, and his omnipotence enables him to relieve them; so his immortality is pledged for our's, and ensures to us the perpetuity of our blessings. What a glorious idea, that the attributes of the self-dependent and everlasting God are laid out in the service of his children!

But the apostle, not contented with the double injunctions,—*pray ever more; in every thing give thanks*—links to it a most exhilirating duty —*rejoice for ever more.* This single exhortation—*rejoice in the Lord*—is not sufficient, it is reiterated without limit, *again I say rejoice!* But what are the chief causes of Paul's joy?—'that God hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,'—'that he hath delivered us from the powers of darkness,'—'that he hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son'—that we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' What is 'his hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing!—that he should meet his converts in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.

But this blessed saint found surprising subjects of joy, subjects with which a stranger does not desire to intermeddle. *To rejoice in tribulation; to take joyfully the spoiling of his goods; to rejoice in the sufferings of his friends; to rejoice that he was counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ.* This is, indeed, a species of joy which the world does not desire to take from him, nor to share with him. In the close of the description of his way of life, of which temptation, and trial, and sorrow, and sufferings, are the gradations, the climax is commonly not merely resignation, but triumph: not submission only, but joy.

It is worth our observation, that by perseverance in prayer he was enabled to glory in the infirmity which he had thrice besought the Lord might depart from him. And it is a most impressive part of his character, that he never gloried in 'those visions and revelations of the Lord,' but in the infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions for Christ's sake, which were graciously sent to counteract any elation of heart, which such extraordinary distinctions might have occasioned. Like his blessed Lord, he disclosed all the circumstances of his degradation to the eye of the world, and concealed only those of his glory.

The same spirit of Christian generosity which directed his petitions, influenced also his thanksgivings for his friends. What are the subjects for which he praises God on their behalf?—not that they are enriched or exalted, but 'that their faith groweth exceedingly.' Again to the Philippians, 'holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

But the apostle endeavours most especially to kindle our grateful joy for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; a blessing which, though thrown open to the acceptance of all on the offered terms, is to every believer distinctly personal. He endeavours to excite our praises for every instance of faith and holiness recorded in Scripture. He teaches, us that whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our instruction. The humble believer may claim his share—for in this case appropriation is not monopoly—of every doctrine, of every precept, of every promise, of every example. The Christian may exultingly say, the Holy Scriptures were written for *my* reproof, for *my* correction, for *my* instruction in righteousness. The Holy Spirit, who teaches me to apply it to myself, dictated it for *me.* Not a miracle upon record, not an instance of trust in God, not a pattern of obedience to Him, not a gratulation of David, not a prophecy of Isaiah, not an office of Christ, not a doctrine of an Evangelist, not an exhortation of an apostle, not a consolation of Saint Paul, but has its immediate application to *my* wants; but makes a distinct call on *my* gratitude; but furnishes a personal demand upon my

responsibility. The whole record of the sacred Canon is but a record of the special mercies of God to me, and of his promises to myself, and to every individual Christian to the end of the world.

That Divine Spirit, which dictated the inspired Volume, has taken care that we should never be at a loss for materials for devotion. Not a prophet or apostle but has more or less contributed to the sacred fund, but has cast his mite into the treasury. The writings of Saint Paul, especially, are rich in petitions, abundant in thanksgivings, overflowing in praises. The Psalms of David have enlarged the medium of intercourse between earth and heaven. They have supplied to all ages materials for Christian worship, under every supposeable circumstance of human life. They have facilitated the means of negociation for the penitent, and of gratitude for the pardoned. They have provided confession for the contrite, consolation for the broken hearted, invitation to the weary, and rest for the heavy laden. They have furnished petitions for the needy, praise for the grateful, and adoration for all. However indigent in himself, no one can complain of want who has access to such a magazine of intellectual and spiritual treasure. These variously gifted compositions, not only kindle the devoutest feeling, but suggest the aptest expressions: they invest the sublimest meanings with the noblest eloquence. They have taught the tongue of the stammerer to speak plainly; they have furnished him who was ready to perish for the lack of knowledge, with principles as well as feelings; they have provided the illiterate with the form, and the devout with the spirit of prayer. To him who previously felt not his wants, they have imparted fervent desires, they have inspired the faint with energy, and the naturally dead, with spiritual life.

The writings and the practice of Saint Paul do not less abundantly, than the compositions of David, manifest the supreme power of fervent devotion. The whole tenor of his life proves that his heart was habitually engaged in intercourse with the Father of spirits. His conversation, like the face of Moses, betrays, by its brightness, that he had familiar admission to the presence of God. He exhibits the noblest instance, with which the world has presented us, of this peculiar effect of vital religion: that supplication is the dialect of the poor in spirit, thanksgiving the idiom of the genuine Christian, praise his vernacular tongue.

CHAP. XX.

Saint Paul an Example to Familiar Life.

THE highest state of moral goodness is compounded of the avowed properties of ripened habits, growing out of genuine Christian principles, invigorated and confirmed by the energy of the Holy Spirit:—this is evangelical virtue.

Saint Paul contrasts the power of opposite habits with wonderful force in his two pictures, one of the debasing slavery of a vicious mind, and the other of the almost mechanical power of superinduced good habits in a virtuous one —'*Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*'* What a dominion must holy principles and holy habits have obtained in that mind, when he could say, '*The life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,*'—'*I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me!*' Mere morality never rose to this superhuman triumph, never exhibited such a proof of its own power to establish Christian practice. To these rooted habits the sacred writers sometimes apply the term perfection.

Saint Paul, when he speaks of perfection, could only mean that fixedness of principle, and Christian elevation of character, which, under the influence of Divine grace, is actually attainable; he could not mean to intimate that he expected man to be freed from liability to error, to be completely exempted from the inroads of passion, to be no longer obnoxious to deviations and deflections from the law, by which he is yet mainly guided and governed. He could not expect him to be entirely and absolutely delivered from the infirmities of his frail and fallen nature. But though this general uniformity of good habits may occasionally, through the surprise of passion and the assaults of temptation, be in some degree broken, yet these invaders are not encouraged, but repelled: though some actions may be more imperfect, and some wrong tempers may still unhappily intrude themselves, yet vigilance and prayer obtain such a power of resistance, as finally almost to subdue these corruptions; and those that are not altogether conquered, but occasionally break out, induce a habit of watchfulness over the suspected places, and keep the heart humble, by a feeling of these remains of infirmity.

But even here, such are the stratagems of the human heart for concealing its corruptions, not only from others, but from itself, that it is incumbent on every individual so to examine, as clearly to discover, his own real character; to inquire, whether he is at the same time sincerely mourning over his remaining disorders, and earnestly desiring and diligently cultivating a new vital principle of faith and holiness; or whether he has only been making a certain degree of improvement in this or that particular quality, while he continues both destitute and undesirous of this vital principle, which is the first seed of the Divine Life.

It should seem, that the term 'perfect,' as well in other parts of Scripture as in the writings of St. Paul, not only has not always the exact meaning which we assign to it, but has different meanings, according to the occasion on which it is employed. Sometimes this term expresses the aim rather than the acquisition, as in that injunction of our Saviour—'Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.' Sometimes it appears to imply, being furnished with needful instruction in all points, as in Paul's direction to Timothy,—'that the man of God may

* Romans, ch. vi.

be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' Often it means nearly the same with religious sincerity, as in Proverbs,—'for the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.' Sometimes it is used with a special reference to abhorrence of idolatry, as when the expression 'perfect heart' is applied to various kings of Judah. The meaning in Philippians, 'Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded,' seems to import only real earnestness. Perfection, in the precise notion of it, admits not of gradation, nor of advancement in the same quality.

The highest kind of perfection of which man is capable, is to 'love God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, with all his heart;' that is, so to love as to obey the laws of the one, while he rests on the merits of the other. Paul intimates that our happiness consists in the pardon of our sins, and our holiness in our conquest over them; and perhaps there is not a more dangerous delusion, than to separate the forgiveness from the subjugation: the pardon, indeed, is absolute, the conquest comparative. He places attainable perfection in the obedience of faith, in the labours of charity, in the purity of holiness; proving that to aspire after this perfection, all men, according to their respective advantages, are under equal obligation; and it is not too much to assert, that no one lives up to the dignity of man, who does not habitually aspire to the perfection of a Christian. For to come as near to God, that is, as near to perfection as our nature was intended to approach, is but to answer the end for which we were sent into the world.—And do we not defeat that end, while we are not only contented to live so much below our acknowledged standard, but while we rest satisfied, without even aspiring towards it?

While Paul strenuously endeavours to abate confidence, and beat down presumption he is equally careful, not by lowering the tone of perfection, to foster negligence, or to cherish indolence. He speaks as one who knew that sloth is an enemy, the more dangerous for being insidiously quiet. It saps the principle as effectually, if not as expeditiously, as other vices storm it. It is, indeed, in the power of this one inert sin, to perform the worst work of all the active ones—to destroy the soul. He admonishes us equally, by his writings and by his example, to carry all the liveliness of our feelings, and the vigour of our faculties, into our religion. He knew that a cold indifference, that a lifeless profession, would ill prepare us for that vital world, that real land of the living, that immortality which is all life, and soul, and spirit. He therefore prescribes for us patients who need to be stimulated, full as often as to be lowered, in our moral temperature; nay, whose *general* constitution of mind presents a large portion of languor to be invigorated, and of lethargy to be animated. 'A physician,' says bishop Jeremy Taylor, 'would have small employment on the Riphæan mountains, if he could cure nothing but calentures; dead palsies and consumptions are *their* diseases.

The apostle, however, intimates frequently that perfection does not consist in a higher heroic elevation in some particular point, which, as few could reach, so fewer would aim at it: but in a steady principle, an equable piety, a consistent practice, an unremitting progress. If the standard held up were singular, it would be unprofitable. An exhibition of character rather to be wondered at, than imitated, would be a useless perfection. A prodigy is not a model. It would be no duty to copy a miracle, but presumptuous to expect that a miracle would be wrought for us. To call on *all* to 'perfect holiness in the fear of God'—to exhort men to 'go unto perfection,' would be mocking human infirmity, if the apostle meant something which only a very few could attain.—'Pressing on unto perfection,' can mean little more than a perpetual improvement in piety and virtue.

Let us then be animated and encouraged by Scripture instances of excellence, and not deterred by them, as if they were too sublime for our imitation, as if exalted piety were to be limited to a few peculiar favourites of Heaven, were the exclusive prerogative of some distinguished servants of God, the rare effect of some miraculous gift. All grace is indeed a miracle, but it is not a singular, it is not an exclusive miracle. Whole churches, with exceptions no doubt, have been favoured with it. Saint Paul speaks of large communities, not universally, we presume, but generally, touched by divine grace, so as collectively to become 'the joy and crown of his rejoicing.' Hear him declare of his Roman converts, that they 'were full of all goodness, filled with all knowledge;' of the Corinthians—that they 'were enriched in every thing—that they abounded in all *faith* and *diligence*:' mark the connexion of these two attributes, 'faith' in one, nor in another, is not the slackener of duty, but in *all* the principle and spring of the same 'diligence.' These high commendations are not limited to Apollos, his associate in the ministry, nor to 'Timothy, his dearly beloved son;' nor to Titus, his 'own son after the common faith,' nor to any other of those distinguished saints 'who laboured with him in the Gospel.'

We may therefore fairly consider Saint Paul, not as an instructor nor as a model, exclusively for martyrs, and ministers, and missionaries. As the instruction of Christ's sermon on the mount, though primarily addressed to his disciples, was by no means restricted to them; so the exhortations of Paul are not confined to ecclesiastical teachers, though he had them much in view. The inclosure lies open to all; the entrance is left free; the possibility of salvation is universal, the invitation is as large as the benevolence of God, the persons invited as numerous as his whole rational creation.

It is a beautiful part of his character, and it is what contributes to make him so uniformly a pattern, that all his strength is not reserved for, nor expended entirely on, those great demands which so frequently occurred, to answer which he was always so fully prepared, and which he encountered with such unshaken fortitude.

His intervals were filled up with shades of the same colour: the same principle was set at work in all the common events of his daily life: the same dispositions which were ripening him for his final suffering, operated in the humble, ten-

der, forbearing habits, in which he was perpetually exercised. The Divine principle had resolved itself into a settled frame of mind. And it was in the hourly cultivation of that most amiable branch of it, Christian charity, that he acquired such maturity in the heroic virtue of enduring patience. To deny his own inclination to sustain the infirmities of the weak, to bear the burden of others, he considered, as indispensable in the followers of *Him*, whose lovely characteristic it was, that HE PLEASED NOT HIMSELF. In enjoining this temper on his Roman converts, he winds up his injunction, with ascribing to the Almighty the two attributes which render Him the fountain of grace, for the production of this very temper in all alike who call upon Him for it. He denominates Him *the God of patience and consolation.*

We must not therefore fancy that this eminent saint was not an example to private life, because his destination was higher, and his trials greater than ours. This superiority cannot disqualify him for a copy. We must aim at the highest point. It is easier to reduce a portrait than enlarge it. All *may* have the same grace; and some actually *have* great, if not equal trials. If Christians are not now called like him, to martyrdom, they are frequently called to bear the long protracted sufferings of sickness without mitigation, of penury without relief, of sorrows without redress. Some are called to bear them all, without even the comfort of witnesses, without the soothing of pity.

If the elevation of his conduct does not place this great apostle above our imitation, no more does the sublimity of his principles, as we find them exhibited in his writings. His piety in both is equally of a practical nature. We rise from perusing many a treatise of metaphysical morality, without clearly ascertaining its precise object; at least, without carrying away any one specific principle for the regulation of our own heart and life. We admire the ingenuity of the work, as we admire the contrivance of a labyrinth; it is curiously devised; but its intricacy, while it has amused, has embarrassed us. We feel that we might have made our way, and attained our end, more easily and more speedily, in a plain path, where less perplexity required no artificial clue. The direct morality of our apostle has none of this *Dædalian enginery.*

Saint Paul, in one sense, always writes like a man of the actual world. His is not a religion of theory, but of facts, of feelings, of principles; a religion exactly accommodated to the being for whom he prescribes. Our passions and our reason, our hopes and our fears, our infirmities and our supports, our lapse and our restoration, all find their place in his discussions. He consults every part of our nature; he writes for material and immaterial, for mortal and immortal man.

He does not abound in those desultory and random discussions, which distract the mind, and leave the reader at a loss what he is to think and what he is to do. He does not philosophize upon abstract truths, nor reason upon conjectural notions; but bears witness to what he has seen and known, and deduces practical instruction from actual events. He is therefore distinct in his exposition of doctrines and duties; explicit in his injunctions and reproofs; and this because truth is absolute. We can scarcely peruse a sentence in his writings, without finding something to bring away from them for our own use, something which belongs to ourselves, something which would have been seasonably addressed to us, had he been our personal correspondent.

He knew mankind too well, not to know the necessity of speaking out: he knew, that if any opening was left, they would interpret it in their own favour; that they would slip out of every thing which was not precisely explained and definitely enjoined. He was aware that the reason why men profit so little by scripture instruction is because, in applying it, they are disposed to think only of other people, and are apt to forget themselves. He knew it was not easy to lower the world's good opinion of itself. That the quicksightedness of certain persons, errs, not in misunderstanding the justness of a reproof, but only in mistaking its object; and that, by directing the censure to others, they turn away the point of the weapon from their own bosoms. Yet he makes charitable allowance for the capacities, the exigencies, and the temptations of a world so diversely circumstanced. Like his blessed Master, he would have all men every where to be saved; and, like him, left no means unessayed, which might promote this great end.

We must not imagine that Christianity is not precisely the same thing now, as it was when our Apostle published it, because its external marks are not so completely identified. A more animated zeal in religion might have been visible and legitimate in the first ages of the Church, than commonly in the present. The astonishing change then effected in the minds of men, was rapid, and often instantaneous. In our day, it is usually gradual. It is no wonder that persons should have been overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, at being suddenly rescued from the darkness of Pagan idolatry, a being delivered from the bondage of the Jewish ritual, and translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The total revolution in the mind, and in the principles, would certainly produce a sensible alteration in the external habits and visible practice of the Gentile convert; whose morals, if he were indeed a convert, would be as different from what they had previously been, as his faith; and he as different from his former self, as any two men from each other. This, consequently, would make the change more obvious than in the renovated character of a nominal Christian, now brought to embrace vital Christianity; in whose outward observances, antecedent and subsequent to his change, there might probably be no *very* apparent alteration.

In the days of the apostle, the holy sacrament of baptism was likely to be, in the very highest sense of the word, regeneration. It was not only the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; but it was also, for the most part, an actual evidence that such grace had been effectually received unto eternal salvation. The convert then was an adult, and received baptism as his explicit confession and

open adoption of the new faith. To bring men 'to believe with the heart, and to confess with the tongue,' the Divinity of the Redeemer, was to bring them to be truly converted. 'No man could say that Jesus was the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' As the Apostles had neither reputation to influence, nor authority to compel, nor riches to bribe, so it is obvious that there was nothing to attract men to Christianity, except their full conviction of its divine truth. It was hostile to their secular advancement, to their interests, their reputation, their safety. Hypocrisy was consequently a rare, when it was a losing sin. A hypocrite was not likely to embrace a faith by which he was sure to gain nothing in this world, if it were false; and nothing till after his death, if it were true. Christians were such optionally, or not at all.

It was not then probable, that he who was baptized under such circumstances, would be merely an external convert. According to all human means of judging, that 'faith' existed, which is said by an article to be 'confirmed' in baptism; and this holy Sacrament became not only an initiatory, but a confirmatory rite.

There were at that time no hereditary professors; there was no such thing as Christianity by transmission. There was therefore a broad line to step over, whenever the new faith was adopted. There was no gradual introduction into it by education, no slipping into it by habit, no wearing its badge by fashion.

But if the novelty attending the early introduction to Christianity has ceased; if living in a land where it is universally professed, being educated in some acquaintance with the Christian faith, finding easy access into the Temples in which it is preached, habitually attending on its services, living under laws which are imbued with its spirit; if all this takes off the apparent effect, if it lessens the surprise, if it moderates the joy and wonder, which a total change in external circumstances was calculated to excite; if it even lessens in a degree the *visible* alteration produced in hearts awakened by it; if this change was more obvious in the conversion of those who were before wallowing in the grossest abominations, or sunk in the most degrading superstitions, than in those who are conversant with the decencies of life, who had previously observed the forms of religion, and practised many of the social virtues; yet, in the views and in the feelings, in the heart and in the spirit, in the principle of the mind, and in the motive of the conduct, the change in the one case has a very near affinity to the change in the other. The difference of circumstances diminishes nothing of the real power of Divine grace; it does not alter the nature of the change inwardly effected; it does not manifest now, less than it did then, the pitifulness of God's great mercy in delivering, those who are tied and bound with the chain of their sins.

Had Saint Paul been a profligate or immoral man, we apprehend that his conversion would, as an example have lost much of its power. The two extremes of character might in that case, indeed, more forcibly strike the superficial inquirer. But to show the turpitude of gross vice, a miracle is not necessary; Christianity is not necessary. The thing was self-evident; Antoninus and Epictetus could have shown it. But for a man who had previously such strong claims to respect from others, such pretensions on which to value himself,—his Hebrew descent; his early initiation into the distinguishing Jewish rite; his Pharisaic exactness, an exactness not hypocritical, but conscientious; his unquestionable morals, his blameless righteousness in all that pertained to the law, his correctness of demeanour, his strict observance of religious forms; that *such* a man should need the further subjugation of his passions, his pride, his bigotry, and uncharitableness; that, in short, *he* should require a total and radical renovation of the character and of the soul,—this was indeed a wonder worthy of Divine inspiration to declare, as well as of Divine grace to accomplish; and this change, when really effected, afforded an appeal for the truth of the doctrine, both to the heart and to the understanding, more powerful than volumes of arguments.

Saint Paul was aware, that there is frequently more danger where there is less scandal; that some fancy they are reformed, because they have exchanged the sensual for the spiritual vices; that in truth, men oftener change their sins than their nature, put pride into their correctness, and violence into their zeal, and uncharitableness into their sobriety, and covetousness into their prudence, and censoriousness into their abstinence. Among the better disposed, he knew there were many who, after they are brought to embrace religion, think they have nothing more to do. They were, perhaps, sincere in their inquiries, and their convictions were strong, But having once obtained a confidence in their acceptance, they conclude that all is well. They live upon their capital, if we may be allowed the expression; and so depend upon their assurance, as if their personal work was done. To both of these classes he directs the warning voice, *Go on unto perfection.* To both he virtually represents, that if the transformation were real, it would animate them to increased earnestness; while their desires would be more fervent, their piety would not evaporate in desires, their constant fear of relaxing would quicken their progress.

It is worth remarking, that throughout the Holy Scriptures, and especially thoughout the writings of the Apostle—*striving with principalities and power, putting on the whole armour of God, continuing instant in prayer, seeking those things which are above, mortifying your members, avoiding inordinate affections and covetousness, which is idolatry,* are not applied to the profane, or even to the careless, but to those who had made a great proficiency in religion; not to novices, but to saints. These are continually cautioned against sitting down at ease in their religious possessions; they are exhorted, on the contrary, to augment them. It is not, as an able writer says, 'longing after great discoveries, nor after great tastes of the love of God, nor longing to be in Heaven, nor longing to die, that are such distinguishing marks of a perfect Christian, as longing after a more holy heart, and living a more holy life.'*

* Dr. Owen on the Holy Spirit

The apostle shows that we must not sit down satisfied even in the habitual *desire*, even in the general *tendency* to what is right. He frequently stirs up the reader to actual exercise, to quickening exertions: without such movements, he knew that desire might sink into unproductive wishes; that good tendencies might come short of their aim. This brief, but comprehensive hint—*not as though I had already attained*—frequently recollected and acted upon, will serve to keep up in the mind, that we are capable of much higher things than we have yet achieved—and that, while we are diligently ascending by each progressive step, we must still stretch forward our view to the culminating point.

If, then, even the most conspicuous converts of Saint Paul required to be confirmed by incessant admonition; if he did not think the most heroic Christians so established as to be arrived at their ultimate state; if he did not think the most advanced so secure as to be trusted to go alone, so complete in themselves as to lose sight of their dependence; if *they* required to be exhorted *to go on unto perfection; to be renewed from day to day; to stand fast; to quit themselves like men; to be strong in the Lord*, and in the power of his might *to stand against the wiles of the Devil; and having done all, to stand*—'Let us not be high minded, but fear.' If we believe that the Spirit was poured out in more abundant measures in the incipient state, than on us in the more established position of the Church; yet we see their superiority, in this respect, neither lessened the necessity of caution in the instructor, nor of diligence in the hearer.

CHAP. XXI.

On the superior advantages of the present period, for the attainment of Knowledge, Religion, and Happiness.

We have heard of a Royal infidel, who was impious enough to declare, that had the Maker of the universe consulted him at the Creation, he could have given him hints for the improvement of his plan. Many, who do not go so far as to regret that their advice was not asked when the world was made, practically intimate that they could improve upon the scheme of Providence in carrying it on. We have met with persons, who, not fully satisfied with the evidences of Christianity, at least not quite firm in the practical adoption of its truths, have expressed a wish, that for the more complete confirmation of their faith, their lot had been cast in this, or in that particular age, in which they might have cleared up their doubts, and removed their difficulties.

Now, though it is not permitted to indulge any wish contrary to the appointment of Him who fixes the bounds of our habitation, and ordains our whole lot in life; yet it should seem that we, in this age and country, have the most abundant reason, not only to be peculiarly grateful that it has fallen at this precise period. Who, that reflects at all will maintain, that any æra in the history of the world, whether antecedent or subsequent, to the institution of Christianity, could have afforded clearer lights or higher aids than the present? or would have conduced to make us wiser, better, or happier? Let us be assured, that if we do not see truth with sufficient distinctness, it is not our own position, nor that of the object, which is in fault, but the organ itself.

It is not to our present purpose to insist on the internal evidence of Christianity; on that witness within—that conviction of the Christian's own mind, arguing so strongly the truth of Revelation from its correspondence to his own wants—because this is an evidence equally accessible to the believer of every period. We shall, therefore, only offer a few observations on the superior advantages which we at present enjoy, as well from other causes, as from the fulness of the external evidence which has been undeniably established upon the profoundest knowledge and closest examination of the Sacred Records, by so many of our wisest and soundest divines.

We have, for our assistance in religious knowledge, the collective wisdom of sacred antiquity; and for our furtherance in piety, its precepts, its monitions, its examples. It is also the peculiar honour of our apostle, that from his life and writings *alone*, a new confirmation of the truth of the Gospel which he preached, has been recently and completely made out. In addition to the fullest general evidence of the authenticity of the New Testament, two of our own contemporaries—men of different rank, habits, education, and turn of mind,—have extracted from the writings of Saint Paul *exclusively*, particular and collateral evidence of a most interesting and important nature. We refer, in the first instance, to a small but valuable work of a noble author,* himself a convert of no common order, in which he lays down, and substantially proves the truth of his position, that *the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered, is, of itself, a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a Divine Revelation.* Into these circumstances, which it is probable powerfully assisted his own convictions, he has with great diligence examined; and has with irresistible strength proposed them for the conviction of others.

In the other instance, we refer to that exquisite work, the 'Horæ Paulinæ,' of Doctor Paley; a work which exhibits a species of evidence as original as it is incontrovertible. It is a corroboration of the truth of the New Testament, derived from the incidental but close correspondence of numberless passages in the life and travels of Saint Paul, related in the Acts, with his own repeated reference, in his Epistles, to the same circumstances, persons, places, and events; together with their most correct geographical agreement;—the respective authors of both writings uniformly and consistently though unintentionally, throwing light on each other.

This interesting work, in a more especial manner, adds weight to facts which were already

* Lord Littleton

fully established, and strength to that 'truth' which was before 'barred up with ribs of iron.' We cannot too highly estimate this subsidiary evidence to the Christian revelation, derived as it were casually and incidentally from our apostle, from him to whom we were already unspeakably indebted for so much direct spiritual and practical instruction. It is a species of evidence so ingenious, yet so solid, so clear and so decisive, that the author must have carried his point in any court of judicature before which the cause might have been brought.

If it were not the very genius of scepticism to shrink its 'shrivelled essence' down to the minutest point, when it wishes to work itself an entrance where no visible opening seems previously to have been left, we should think, that, after the able defences of Revelation which have been made on general grounds, the addition of these partial and subordinate, but not less convincing proofs, had not left even the smallest crevice through which Unbelief could force, or even Doubt insinuate its way.

But to quit this more limited channel of conviction for the broad current of general Scripture, let us examine what period would have been more favourable, not only for the confirmation of our belief, but for our moral, our intellectual and spiritual improvement. Let us institute an inquiry, (if a few cursory and superficial remarks may be so called,) whether all those whose supposed superior opportunities of religious improvement we are disposed to envy, really possessed more advantages than ourselves; and whether many among them were induced, in consequence of their peculiar situation to make the best use of those which they actually did possess.

How very few of those who were not only countrymen, but contemporaries of our blessed Redeemer, believed in him, or at least persevered in their belief! Even of his immediate disciples, even of his select friends, of the favoured few who beheld the beautiful consistency of his daily life, who were more intimately privileged to hear the gracious words which proceeded from his lips: we pass by the Son of Perdition:—one had not courage so much as to acknowledge that he knew him; another doubted his identity after his resurrection. In the moment of exquisite distress, *they all forsook him.* His own 'familiar friends' abandoned him, 'and of the people there was none with him.'

Where then were the peculiar, the enviable advantages, of that situation, placed in which, the fervent Peter, who declared that though all men should forsake him, yet would not he; yet Peter forgot his oath, and forfeited his fidelity! Can we affirm, that we have stronger or more tender religious attachments, than 'the disciple whom Jesus loved?' Yet was he one of that *all* who forsook him. Are we sure that it is a superiority in our faith, rather than in our circumstances, which makes us to differ from those affectionate but troubled companions, who, after his crucifixion, sunk into the most hopeless despondency:—'We *trusted* that this should have been He who should have redeemed Israel.' Cannot we, on the contrary, exultingly say, We *know* that this was He who has redeemed, not Israel only, but every penitent believer, of every people, and kindred, and nation, to the end of the world. After the truth of our Lord's divine mission had been ratified by his resurrection from the dead, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, how many who heard the preaching, and beheld the miracles of his apostles, remained hardened in incredulity! In the ages immediately succeeding the promulgation of the Gospel, even while its verities were new, and the sense of its blessings fresh, many of its professors fell into gross errors; some tainted its purity by infusions of their own; others incorporated with it the corruptions of Paganism. Many became heretics, some became apostates, not a few renounced Christianity, and more perhaps dishonoured it.

Does not Saint Paul, after his incessant labours, even after his apparent success in one quarter of the globe, sorrowfully exclaim to his friend, 'Thou knowest that *all* they which are in Asia be turned away from me.' He then proceeds to enumerate individuals, of whom, it may be presumed, that he once entertained better hopes. While, therefore, we possess the works of this great apostle, and still many continue to receive so little benefit from them, let not any deceive themselves with the notion, that they would have derived infallible sanctification from his personal preaching; but let them remember, that all proconsular Asia,* who enjoyed that blessing, deserted both him and the Gospel. May not even the advantage, considered in some points of view, be reckoned on our side? If we may trust his own humble report of himself, 'his letters,' he says, 'were allowed to be more weighty and powerful than his bodily presence.'

If so many were perverted, who had the privilege of standing the nearest to the fountain of light, who even drank immediately from the living spring itself, shall we look for a more luminous exhibition or more privileged exercise, or more sincere 'obedience' of Christian 'faith,' in the middle ages, when, in truth, religion was in a good measure extinguished; when the Christian world had sunk into almost primeval darkness; 'when Christianity,' to borrow the words of Melancthon, 'was become a mere compound of philosophy and superstition;' when what religion did survive, was confined to a few, was immured in cloisters, was exhausted in quibbles, was wasted in unprofitable subtleties, was exhibited with little speculative clearness, and less practical influence?

Even when literature and religion awoke together from their long slumber, when Christianity was renovated and purified, the glorious beams of the Reformation did not diffuse universal illumination. Even by better disposed but partially enlightened minds, contention was too frequently mistaken for piety, and debate substituted for devotion.

Of how different a spirit from these wrangling Polemics was Saint Paul! Though he repeatedly exhorts his friends, especially Timothy, in instructing his people, to watch particularly 'over their doctrine,' the grand foundation on

* 2 Timothy, ch. i.

which all preaching must be built, yet he ever shows himself an enemy to controversy, to frivolous disputes, and idle contention. He directs his converts, not to waste the time and strength, which should be reserved for great occasions, *about words to no profit, but subverting the hearers.* And, perhaps, there has seldom been less genuine piety in the church than when intricate and theoretical points in theology have been most pertinaciously discussed. This is not 'contending for the faith once delivered to the saints,' but diverting the attention from faith, and alienating the heart from charity.

We do not mean to censure a spirit of enquiry, nor to repress earnestness, in the solution of difficulties. It is indeed the very essence of an inquiring mind freely to start doubts, as it is of a learned and enlightened age rationally to solve them. On this point we are quite of the opinion of a good old Divine, that 'nothing is so certain as that which is certain after doubts.' But compared even with the latter period of religious light and information, how far superior is our own? We who have the happiness to live in the present age, live, when truth has had time to force its way through all the obscurities which had been raised about it, to prevent its access to the understanding. If we rightly appreciate our advantages, we shall truly find that no country, in any age, was ever placed in a fairer position for improvement in wisdom, in piety, and happiness. A black cloud indeed, charged with sulphureous matter, for a long time was suspended over our heads; but, providentially directed, it passed on, and bursting, spread conflagration over other lands. By the most exact retributive justice, those very countries in which the modern Titans first assaulted Heaven, became the first scene of total desolation.—In other places we have seen experiments tried, new in their nature, terrible in their progress, and worse than fruitless in their results. We have seen a great nation endeavouring to show the world that they could do without God. We have seen them exclude the Maker from his own creation! and to complete the opposition between their own government and His whom they gloried in dethroning, they used their impiously assumed power for the extermination of the species which he had created, for the destruction of the souls whom he had sent his Son to redeem.

If, however, in our own age, and perhaps our own country, Christianity has not only been boldly opposed, but audaciously villified, it has been only so much the more seriously examined, so much the more vigorously defended. If its truth has been questioned by some, and denied by others, it has been only the more carefully sifted, the more satisfactorily cleared. The clouds in which sophistry had sought to envelope it, are dispersed; the charges which scepticism had brought against it are repelled. The facts, arch-like, have been strengthened by being trampled upon. Infidelity has done its worst, and by the energy of its efforts, and the failure of its attempts, has shown how little it could do. Wit, and ingenuity, and argument have contributed each its quota to confirm the truths which wit, and ingenuity, and argument, had undertaken to subvert. Talents on the wrong side have elicited superior talents on the right, and the champions of the Gospel have beaten its assailants with their own weapons. Phyrrhonism has been beneficial, for by propagating its doubts it has caused them to be obviated. Even Atheism itself has not been without its uses, for by obtruding its impieties, it has brought defeat on the objections, and abhorrence on their abettors. Thus the enemies of our faith have done service to our cause, for they have not advanced a single charge against it, which has not been followed by complete refutation; the shaking of the torch has caused it to diffuse a clearer and stronger light.

Let us once more resume the comparison of our advantages, and the use we make of them, with the advantages and the conduct of these ancient servants of God, in considering whom, perhaps, we mingle envy with our admiration. How fervently did these saints of the Old Testament pant for that full blaze of light under which we live, and for which we are so little thankful!—'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!' was the heart-felt apostrophe of a devout patriarch. The aged saint who 'waited for the consolation of Israel, and rapturously sung his *Nunc dimittis*,'—the ancient propheteess, who departed not from the temple, who desisted not from prayer day or night;—the father of the Baptist, who 'blessed the Lord God of Israel that he had visited and redeemed his people;'* —how small were their advantages compared with ours.' How weak is our faith, how freezing our gratitude compared with theirs! † They only beheld in their Saviour a feeble infant;—they had not heard, as we have heard, from the most undeniable authority, the perfections of his life, nor the miracles of his power, nor the works of his mercy, nor his triumph over death, nor his ascension into Heaven, nor the descent of the Comforter. They had witnessed a large portion of the globe brought within the Christian pale by the preaching of that Gospel, the dawn of which so exhilirated their overflowing hearts. If full beatitude is promised to them who have not seen, and yet have believed; what will be the state of those who virtually *have* seen, and yet have not believed?

Had any patriarch, or saint, who was permitted only some rare and transient glimpses of the promised blessing, being allowed in prophetic vision to penetrate through the long vista of ages, which lay in remote futurity before him—had he been asked whether, if his power concurred with his choice, in what age and in what nation he would have wished his lot assigned him—is it not more than probable that he would have replied—IN GREAT BRITAIN, IN THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

May we not venture to assert, that there are, at this moment, on the whole, more helps and fewer hindrances to the operation of Christian piety, than at any preceding period? May we not assert, that at no time has the genuine religion of the Gospel been more precisely defined, more completely stript of human inventions, more purified from philosophical infusions on

* Luke, ch. i. † Luke, ch. ii

one hand, and on the other more cleared from superstitious perversions, fanatical intemperance, and debasing associations? That there still exist among us philosophists and fanatics, not a few, we are far from denying; but neither is the distortion of faith in the one party, nor its subversion in the other, the prevailing character; good sense and right mindedness predominate in our general views of Christianity.

If it be objected that there is a very powerful aid wanting to the confirmation of *our* faith, which the age of the apostles presented—that of miraculous gifts—the obvious answer is, that if they have ceased, it is because they have fully answered the end for which they were conferred, and is not the withdrawing of these extraordinary endowments more than compensated by the fulfilment of so many of the prophecies of the New Testament, and the anticipation of the near approach of others, yet unaccomplished? In the mean time have we not the perpetual attestation of those living miracles, the unaltered state of the Jewish Church, and the frequent internal renovation of the human heart?

There is not a more striking feature in the character of the Royal Psalmist, than the fervent and reiterated expressions of his love and admiration of the Holy Scriptures. In what a variety of rapturous strains does he pour out the overflowings of his ardent soul! 'Oh! how I love thy law! Thy word is a lamp to my feet—Oh teach me thy statutes! Thy words have I hid within my heart—Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law!' To give a full view of his affectionate effusions, would be to transcribe the larger portion of the Psalms. To paraphrase his words, would be to dilute essential spirit.

Let us pause a moment, and while we admire this holy fervency, let us blush at our own ingratitude for advantages so superior: let us lament our own want of spiritual sensibility. Let us be humbled at the reflection, how very small was the portion of Scripture with which David was acquainted! How comparatively little did he know of that divine book, yet what holy transport was kindled by that little! He knew scarcely more than the Pentateuch, and one or two contemporary prophets. Then let us turn our eyes to the full revelation under which we live, and be grateful for the meridian splendour.

Had David seen, as we see, the predictions of the late prophetical writers, those of Isaiah especially, to say nothing of his own, fulfilled—had he seen, as we have seen their glorious accomplishment in the New Testament—the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, the plenary gift of the Holy Spirit, the fulfilment of types, the substantiation of shadows, the solution of figures, the destruction of Jerusalem, the wide propagation of the everlasting Gospel, and that in far more tongues than were heard on the day of Pentecost,—had he seen a Bible in every cottage—a little seminary of Christian institution in every village—had he beheld the firm establishment of the Christian Church, no longer opposed, but supported by secular powers, after having conquered opposition by weapons purely spiritual—had he seen a standing ministry continued in a regular succession from the age of the apostles to the present hour—had he seen, in addition to these *domestic* blessings, England emancipating Africa and evangelizing India, commerce spreading her sails to promote civilization, and Christianity elevating civilization and sanctifying commerce—had the Royal Saint witnessed this combination of mercies in one single country, what had his feelings been?

He who so passionately exclaimed, 'Oh how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of Hosts.—my soul hath a desire and a longing to enter into the courts of the Lord—blessed are they that dwell in thine house—one day in thy courts is better than a thousand—one thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple'—this conqueror of the heathen, this denouncer of false gods, this chosen monarch of the chosen people, this fervent lover of the devotions of the Sanctuary, this hallowed poet of Sion, this noble contributor to *our* public worship, this man after God's own heart, was not permitted to build one single church—we in this island only, possess ten thousand.

But some may say, the apostles had supernatural supports, which are withheld from us. Their supports were doubtless proportioned to the fervency of their faith, and to the extraordinary emergencies on which they were called to act. But as we had occasion to remark in a former chapter, these assistances seem to have been reserved for occasions to which we are not called; and to be dispensed to them for others rather than for themselves. We do not find that they who could cure diseases, were exempted from suffering them; that they who could raise others from the dead, escaped a violent death themselves. We do not find that the aids afforded them, were given to extinguish their natural feelings, to lighten their burdens, to rescue them from the vicissitudes of a painful life, from poverty or sorrows, from calumny or disgrace. Though Saint Paul converted the jailor, he had nevertheless been his prisoner; though he had been the instrument of making 'saints even in Cæsar's household,' he was not delivered from perishing by Cæsar's sword.

It does not appear that in their ordinary transactions they had the assistance of more than the ordinary operations of the Spirit. These, blessed be Almighty Goodness! are not limited to prophets or apostles, but promised to all sincere believers to the end of the world: communicated in a measure proportioned to their faith, and accommodated to their exigencies. The treasures of grace, unlike all other treasures, are not to be exhausted by using; but like the multiplication of loaves, more is left to be gathered up after the gift is used, than was imparted in the first instance.

CHAP. XXII.

Conclusion.—Cursory inquiry into some of the causes which impeded General Improvement.

If we, in this favourite country, and at this

favoured period, are not as internally happy as we are outwardly prosperous; if we do not reach that elevation in piety; if we do not exhibit that consistency of character, which, from the advantages of our position, might be expected; if innumerable providential distinctions are conferred without being proportionally improved; if we are rejoicing for public blessings, without so profiting by them as to make advancement in private virtue and personal religion;—should we not diligently inquire in what particulars our deficiencies chiefly consist, and what are the obstructions which especially impede our progress?

That middle course which the luke-warm istian takes, he takes partly because it seems carry with it many present advantages, which the genuine Christian loses. This measured conduct obtains for him that general popularity, the desire of which is his main spring of action. He secures the friendship of worldly men, because he can accommodate his taste to their conversation, and bend his views to their practices. As he is not profligate, the pious who are naturally candid, judge him favourably, and entertain hopes of his becoming all they wish; so that he unites the credit of their good opinion with the pleasure derived from the society of the others. A neutral character thus converts every thing to his own profit, avoids the suspicion attached to saints, and the disgrace inseparable from sinners. To disoblige the world, is, upon his principles, a price almost too high for the purchase of heaven itself. Is it not doubtful, whether he who accounts it so easy a matter to be a Christian, *is* a Christian in reality? To such an one, indeed, it is as easy as it is pleasant to reckon upon heaven; but can any, without faith and without patience, be followers of them, who, 'through faith and patience inherit the promises?'

The truth is, mere men of the world do not conceive a very formidable opinion of the real evil of sin: they think slightly of it because it is so common; they even think almost favourably, at least they think charitably of it, when they see that even good men are not altogether exempt from it. From carelessness, or an erroneous kindness, they entertain a tender opinion of what they perceive to be a constant attendant on human nature: they plead, in its vindication, the mercy of God, the weakness of man, the power of temptation; and are apt to construe a strict judgment on the thing into an uncharitable harshness on the man. For this forbearance they expect to be paid in kind, to be paid with interest; for their very charity is usurious. The least religious however, often resent keenly those crimes which offend against society; of sins which affect their own interest, they are the most forward to seek legal redress. But they do not feel that some of the worst corruptions are of a spiritual nature; and to those which only offend God, they never show themselves tenderly alive.

But if they were brought to entertain just notions of the glorious majesty of God, they would soon learn to see how sin dishonours it; nor could an adequate view of his unspeakable holiness fail of leading them to a thorough hatred of every thing which is in direct opposition to it. If, however, their own impure vision prevents them from perceiving how deeply sin must offend the infinite purity of God, they might at least be awfully convinced of its malignant nature, by contemplating the wide and lasting ravages it has made among the human race. That can be no inconsiderable evil, which has been perpetuating itself, and entailing misery on its perpetrators for nearly six thousand years.

Many are too much disposed to confound a confident feeling of security with religious peace. Conscience, whose suggestions were perhaps once clamorous, may, from long neglect, have become gradually less and less audible. The more obtuse the feelings grow, the less disturbance they give. This moral deadness assumes the name of tranquillity and, as Galgacus said of the Roman conquerors, in his noble speech on the Grampian hills, 'when they have laid all waste, they call the desolation Peace.'

Is there not a growing appearance, that many are substituting for the integrity of Christian doctrine, as taught in the Gospel, a religion compounded chiefly of the purer elements of Deism, amalgamated with some of the more popular attributes of Christianity! If the apostle, after all his high attainments, 'was determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' shall a deteriorated, or, as it is pleased to call itself, a liberal Christianity, lead its votaries to be satisfied with knowing every thing except him; that is, to be satisfied without knowing him in such a manner, as at once to believe in him as a prophet, and to be ruled by him as a king; at once to obey him as a teacher, and trust in him as a Saviour?

On the other hand, let us remember, that we may be correct in our creed without possessing a living faith. We may be right in our opinions, without any cordial concurrence of the heart, or any obedient subjugation of the will. We may be regular in the forms of devotion, and irregular in our passions. We may be temperate in what regards the animal appetites, and intemperate in the indulgence of evil tempers. We may be proud of our own orthodoxy, while we ridicule a serious spirit in another professor of the same opinions. We may maintain a customary habit of prayer, while we are destitute of that spirit, without which prayer is unavailable. May not some pray without invoking the mediation of the great Intercessor? May he not say to some now, as he said to his disciples, *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name?* We do not mean so invoking him, as to round the closing period with his name, but so regarding him, as to make him the general medium of our intercourse with heaven.

And is it not an increasing evil, that there seems to prevail among some, a habit, so to speak, of generalizing religion, of melting down the peculiar principles of Christianity, till its grand truths are blended in the fusion, and come out of the crucible without any distinctive character? A fundamental doctrine of our religion is, with many, grown not only into disuse, but discredit. But unless a man can seriously say that his natural powers are fully effectual for his practical duties; that he is uniformly able

of himself to pursue the right which he approves, and to avoid the wrong which he condemns, and to surmount the evil which he laments, and to resist the temptations which he feels, it should seem that he ought in reason to be deeply thankful for that divine aid which the Gospel promises, and on which Saint Paul descants with such perpetual emphasis; that he ought gladly to implore its communication by the means prescribed by this great apostle.

If a man does not set up on his own strength; if he cannot live upon his own resources, if he finds that his good intentions are often frustrated, his firmest purposes forgotten, his best resolutions broken; if he feels that he cannot change his own heart; if he believes that there is a real spiritual assistance offered, and that the communication of this aid is promised to fervent prayer; it should seem to follow, as a necessary consequence, that this interior sentiment would lower his opinion of himself, change his notions of the Divine character, diminish his feeling of self-dependence, loosen his attachment to sense, make him more indifferent to human opinion, and more solicitous for the favour of God. This humbling, yet elevating intercourse with heaven, would seem to convince him feelingly, that of himself he can do nothing; that human estimation can confer no intrinsic value, because it cannot make us what we are not; and that we *are*, in reality, only what we are in the sight of God.

There is another cause which hurts the interests of religion. Injurious names are reciprocally given to the most imperious duties; parties take different sides, and match them each against the other as if they were opposite interests. But no power of *words* can alter the nature of *things*. Good works are not Popery; nor is faith Methodism. Yet, is not a spiritual litigation vigorously carried on between two principles, both of which are of the very essence of the Gospel, and bound up therein in the most intimate and indissoluble union? Let us not reject a truth because it is misrepresented by those who do not understand it. We know that a learned bishop was condemned by an ignorant pope, for propagating no worse a heresy than that there were Antipodes.

Many, again, desire to be religious, but suffer the desire to die away without any effort to substantiate it; without any cordial adoption of the means which might produce the effect. Yet, with this inoperative desire, the languid Christian quiets conscience, and is satisfied with referring to this unproductive wish as an evidence of his sincerity. The effect is similar to that of a deceitful anodyne, which lulls pain without removing its cause. There are those who may be said to swallow religion as something which they are told it is their duty to *take*, in order to do them good. They therefore receive it in the lump, and then dismiss it from their thoughts as a thing done. It is no wonder if the success is proportioned to the measure. But would the apostle have so strenuously insisted on the necessity of being, '*renewed from day to day*,' if there were any *definite* day in which it could be affirmed that the work had been accomplished? and can any thing short of such accomplishment, justify us in desisting to press forward after it?

If, then, we would embrace Christianity as a life-giving principle, we must examine it analytically; we must resolve it into the several parts of which it is compounded, instead of considering it as a nostrum the effect of which is to be produced by our ignorance of the ingredients of which it is made up. To subscribe articles of faith, without knowing what consequences they involve—to be satisfied with having them propounded, without entering into the spirit of our obligation to obey them—to acknowledge their truth, without examining our own interest in them, is not only to be an imperfect, but an irrational Christian.

While the political and moral improvement of the world around us seems, in many respects, to be constantaneously advancing, let not *us*, of this highly distinguished land, frustrate the grand objects which we have been the honoured instruments of establishing. Britain presents a spectacle, on which, if the world gazes with an admiring, it will gaze also with a scrutinizing eye. Those whom we have served and saved, will jealously inquire—for the obliged are not the least prying—Whether we live up to the high tone we assume?—Whether we obey the Gospel we extol?—Whether we are religious in person, or by proxy?—Whether all who disperse the Scriptures, read them?—May not the critical observer be inclined to parody the interrogatories of our apostle to the censorious Jews.* Thou that sayest another should not swear, art thou guilty of profane levity? Thou that sayest a man should keep the sixth and seventh commandments, dost thou shrink from duelling and libertinism? Thou, who holdest out a fair example in attending the solemnities of the Sunday morning's worship, dost thou attend likewise the unhallowed festivities of the evening? Thou that art valiant in the field, art thou also 'valiant for the truth?' Thou who, professing 'pure religion and undefiled,' visitest the fatherless and widow with thy purse, dost thou keep thyself 'unspotted from the world?' Let it be observed, that these are hypothetical questions, not rash accusations.

The public munificence and private bounties of this age and country have outgone all example. An almost boundless benevolence has annihilated all distinction of religion and of party, of country and of colour. No difference of opinion, no contrariety of feeling, has checked its astonishing operation, has chilled its ardent flame. No object is too vast for its grasp, none is too minute for its attention. The moral energies of the country have kept pace with the military and political. Charity, too, has been intimately connected with religion; and we may hope, it is to the growth of the latter principle, that we are to ascribe the former practical effect.

It remains with us to give substantial proof, that the right practice has flowed from the true principle. Let us never give occasion to the members of another church to infer, that even Protestants are not practically averse from the purchase of *indulgencies*. Let us not give them

* Roman, xxi. 22.

the slightest cause for imputing to any of our acts of beneficence a spirit of commutation. Let them not see, that sobriety, purity, and self-control, are considered by many of us as minor statutes in the Christian code. Let it not be said, that personal holiness is laid asleep by the soothing blandishments of liberal profession; by the misapplied tenderness of candid construction; by a toleration which justifies the doing much which is not right in ourselves, because we make large allowances for whatever is wrong in others. To judge charitably, is a Christian precept; but religion no more permits us to judge falsely, than to act censurably. To the affluent it is cheaper, and to the inconsiderate it is easier, to relieve others, than to deny ourselves. Let them remember, however, that though to give liberally is nobly right; yet to act consistently is indispensably requisite, if we would make that which is in itself right acceptable to God; and let even the most benevolent never fail to reflect, that nothing *can* swell the tide of charity to its full flow, but self-denial.

If some among us were to make their public bounties the measure of their domestic conduct, it would be setting up for themselves a high practical standard: yet it might be fair to make it so. Such liberal persons might do well to consider how far, in every subscription they pay, they do not give a sort of public pledge of their general practice; and how far, in order to be honest, they are not bound to redeem the deposit by their general correctness. Is it not a species of deceit to appear better than we are? And do we not virtually practice this deceit when our self-government is obviously not of a piece with our liberality?

Do we then undervalue charity? God forbid. Charity is a grace so peculiarly Christian, that it is said to have been practised in these countries only where Revelation has been enjoyed either by possession or tradition. Of the historians of ancient times, who have transmitted to us the fame of their military skill, their political glory, their literary talents, their public spirit, or domestic virtues, none have made any mention of their charitable institutions; none have made any mention of a great nation receiving into its bosom, in the moment of imminent danger, of foreign war, and pressing domestic distress, myriads of exiles from the enemy's country; of their receiving and supporting thousands upon thousands of the priesthood of a religion so hostile to their own, as scarcely to allow them to believe that there was salvation for their benefactors.

Benevolence is the most lovely associate of the other Christian virtues. We mistake only when we adopt her as their substitute. Excellence in this grand article is so far from procuring a dispensation from the other graces of picty, that she only raises the demand for their loftier exercise. In the Christian race, however, the fleeter virtue must not slacken her speed, lest her competitors should be distanced. No; the lagging attributes must quicken theirs.

We trust that we have not, in any part of this little work, attempted to degrade human reason. Is it degrading any quality or faculty, to assign to it its proper place, to ascribe to it its precise value? Reason and religion accord as completely in practice as in principle; and is it not a subject of gratitude to God, that as there is nothing in Christian belief, so there is nothing in Christian practice, but what is consonant to views purely rational. Every disorder, irregularity, and excess, which religion prohibits, is as contrary to our comfort, health, and happiness here, as it is fatal to our eternal interests; and should be equally avoided on the ground of natural and spiritual judgment. Nay, if Christians are accused by the infidel of selfish motives, in obeying God for their own interest; is there not more absurdity in disobeying Him, when, by so doing, we forfeit every thing which a well-directed self-love would show to be our highest advantage, and which common sense, human prudence, worldly wisdom, would teach us to pursue.

Saint Paul combats all those partialities of judgment which arise from the understanding submitting itself to the will, from conviction yielding to inclination. As it was the truth of the principle, the rectitude of the act, which determined his judgment, so we read him to little purpose, if the same qualities do not also determine ours. But men submit to unexamined predilections; they do not allow themselves to be convinced of any thing with which they are not first pleased. Practical errors are rarely adopted from conviction, but almost always from inclination.

Our apostle frequently includes 'lovers of their ownselves' in his catalogue of grievous offenders. He considers selfishness as a state of mind inconsistent with Christianity. No other religion, indeed, had ever shown that it was sinful; no other had ever taught its followers to resist it; no other had furnished arms against it, had enabled its disciples to conquer it. Yet, may we not venture to assert, that among the prominent faults of this our age, is a growing selfishness. We mean not that sullen selfishness which used to display itself in penurious habits, in shabby parsimony, and a sordid frugality, which received part of its punishment in the self-inflicted severities of its votary, and part in the discredit and contempt which attended it. But we mean, that luxurious selfishness which has its own grstification in the vanity it indulges; and its own reward in the envy it secretly awakens, in the admiration it openly excites.

The tide of an increasing dissipation, gorgeous, costly, and voluptuous beyond all precedent, has swept away the mounds and ramparts within which prudence in expense, and sobriety in manners, had heretofore confined it. Strange! that fashion and custom, and the example of others, are brought forward as a vindication by beings, who know they must be themselves individually responsible for the errors and the sins into which they are plunged by imitation, as well as by original evil. *Numbers* are pleaded as a valid apology for being carried headlong down the torrent. But have we ever heard that the plague was thought a slighter distemper from the greatness of the numbers infected? On the contrary, is not the extent of the ravage its most alarming symptom? and is not the weekly diminution in

the numbers publicly registered as the only signal of returning health?

God has blessed the late unparalleled exertions of this country with a proportionate success. Honour and glory crown our land. But honour and glory are not primary stars; they borrow their lustre from that immortal principle which is the fountain of all moral illumination. Let us bear in mind that to be prosperous without piety, or joyful without gratitude, or thankful without repentance, or penitent without amendment, is to forfeit the favour of HIM from whom all prosperity is derived. We are told in the oracles of God, that the corruptions of an irreligious nation converted blessings into sins, when 'pride and abundance of idleness' were the ungrateful returns for 'fulness of bread.'

Though we no longer perceive that open alienation from God, so apparent in the commencement of the French Revolution, yet do we perceive that return to Him which the restoration of our prosperity demands? Has the design of the Almighty, in visiting us with the calamities of a protracted war been answered by a renunciation of the sins for which it was sent? Has his goodness, in putting a happy period to these calamities, been practically acknowledged? acknowledged, not merely by the public recognition of a wisely appointed day, but by a visible reformation of our habits and manners?

We are now most imperatively called upon to give unequivocal proof, that our devotion, in the late twenty years succession of national fasts, had some meaning in it, beyond the bare compliance with authority, beyond the mere impulse of terror. Let it not be inferred, from any apparent slackness of principle, that ours was the prayer of nature for relief, more than of grace for pardon; the cry for escape from danger, rather than for deliverance from sin.

As God has abundantly granted us all the temporal blessings for which we then solicited, let us give full proof that our petitions were spiritual as well as political; as He, in pity, has withdrawn the anger of his chastisements, let us, in gratitude, take away the provocation, of our offences. He has long tried us with correction, he is now trying us with mercies. If, as we are told, when his judgments are abroad in the earth, we should learn righteousness, what should we *not* learn, what should we *not* practice, when blessings are accumulated upon us—blessings, more multiplied in their number, more ample in their extent, more valuable in their nature, more fraught with present advantages, more calculated for our eternal good, than ever were experienced by our ancestors in any period of our history?

Let us not triumphantly compare ourselves with worse nations, unless we know what use they would have made of mercies which we have neglected; let us not glory in our superiority to countries who have had to plead a bad government, and a worse religion. To be better than those who are bad, is a low superiority now, and will not be admitted as a reason for our acquittal hereafter. Corrupt Tyre, profligate Zidon, whose extinction the prophet Ezekiel had predicted in the most portentous menaces, were pronounced by *Infinite Compassion* to be far less criminal than the *instructed* people to whom the pathetic admonition was addressed. If blindness and ignorance might be offered as a plea for those heathen cities, what should extenuate the guilt of the enlightened regions of Galilee.

It was on the most solemn of all occasions that of a description of the general resurrection, that St. Paul breaks in on his own awful discussion, to suggest the 'corruption of manners' inseparable from 'evil communications.' Does it not give an alarming idea of his serious view of the subject, that he should so intimately connect it with the immmediate concerns of the eternal world? Can we safely separate a cause and a consequence which he has so indissolubly joined?

As the joy felt by the patriarchal family in the ark, when the bird of peace, with its symbol in her mouth, returned to this little remnant of an annihilated world; such, in its kind was the joy experienced when the voice of the charmer was recently heard on our shores, and throughout an almost desolated quarter of the globe. But let not our own country forget that this peace, so fervently desired, and so graciously accorded, may, by our neglecting to improve the blessing, become more fatally and irretrievably injurious, than that state of hostility which we have so long and so justly deplored. Let us not forget, that shutting the gates of the temple of Janus, by opening those of Paris, may only have changed the nature, while it has deteriorated the character, of the warfare.

What incantation is there in the name of Peace, that could, as by the touch of a magician's wand, produce, at once, a total revolution in the character of a people, and in our opinion of them? What charm is there in a *sound* that could so transform a great nation, abandoned for a quarter of a century to boundless vice, and avowed infidelity, as to render familiar intercourse with them profitable, or their society even safe; which could instantaneously convert this scene of alarm, into a scene of irresistible attraction; could cause, at once, this land of terror to be desired as impatiently, and sought as impetuously, as if it had been the Land of Promise?

Will the borrowed glory, or rather the stolen renown, arising from pilfered pictures, or plundered statues; will the splendour of public buildings, buildings cemented with the blood of millions; will all the works of art, however exquisite, atone for the degradation of the human, and it may be almost said the extinction of the Christian character? Will marbles, and paintings, and edifices, expiate the utter contempt of morality, and all the other still lingering effects of the legal abolition of Christianity and the public disavowal of God? Will the flower of England, the promising sons and blooming daughters of our nobles and our gentry reap a measure of improvement from these exhibitions of genius, which may be likely to compensate for the pernicious associations with which they may be accompanied?

Have we forgotten, that the mother of the fine arts, licentious Greece, injured Rome in her vital interests, her character, her honour, and her principles, more irretrievably, than all her losses

during her military conflict with them had done? that this great people, the England of antiquity, never lost sight of her grandeur, never sacrificed her superiority, but when she stooped to imitate the vices, to adopt the manners, and to import the philosophy of the vanquished enemy; and, in short, that Greece amply revenged herself on her conqueror by a contact, which communicated an inextinguishable moral contagion.

To revert to a remoter, and a higher source; did not the chosen people of God suffer more essentially in their most important interests, by their familiar communications, after their conquest, with the polluted Canaanites, than in their long and perilous warfare with them?

Let not these necessary inquiries be construed into the language of vulgar prejudice, into the unchristian wish to perpetuate an unjustifiable aversion to a nation, because they have been our political enemies. We feel no desire, like the Carthagenian father, to entail our own hatred on our offspring, to make our posterity vow interminable hostility to a people, because their predecessors have suffered by them. We have no wish to persist in personal alienation from any country, especially from one which Divine Providence has made our nearest neighbour.—God forbid!

But may we not venture, with all diffidence, to ask, should there not be a little space allowed them, after their deep pollution, to perform that quarantine, which even our ships are obliged to undergo, before we receive them on our own shores? May we not further ask, in the present instance, if by plunging into the infection on theirs, we do not fearfully aggravate the peril of the pestilence?

In these observations we are conscious of wandering into illimitable topics—topics which may appear irrelevant to our general object. It is fit we should resume that object, and draw to a close.

Let us observe, for our own imitation, that what Saint Paul might be called to do, or to suffer, in the intermediate stages to his final rest, he knew not, nor was he solicitous to know. Of one thing he was assured, that a day was coming, when, whatever now appeared mysterious, would be made clear.—While others only knew *Him* of whom they had *heard*, he knew *Him* in whom he *believed*. He desired no other ground of confidence. All those superior concerns, on which his heart was set, lay beyond the grave; lay in the hands of Him to whom he had trusted all which he accounted valuable. The soul which he had committed to his Saviour, he knew that this Saviour 'was able to preserve against that day.' Swallowed up in the grandeur of the thought, he disregards the common forms of speech, and leaves it to his friend to supply what was rather understood than expressed—*what day he meant.*

If it is astonishing that any should disbelieve a religion, which has such unparallcled attestations to its truth, as the religion which Saint Paul preached, is it not far more astonishing that, professing not to have any doubt of its truth, any should continue to live as if they believed it to be false; that any should live without habitual reference *to that day*, to which his writings so repeatedly point, without labouring after a practical conviction of that paramount doctrine on which he so unweariedly descants, the benefits of the death of Christ?

This doctrine our apostle has, beyond all other writers, irrefragably proved to be the only argument of real efficacy against our own fear of death. All the reasonings of philosophy, all the motives drawn from natural religion, all the self-complacent retrospection of our own virtues, afford no substantial support against it. This great doctrine, as the apostle also repeatedly proves, supplies the only principles which can set us above the sorrows of life. Mere morality often raises us above the grosser corruptions of sense, but it does not raise us above the entanglements of the world; it does not lift us above perplexing fears and anxious solicitudes; it does not raise us above the agitations of desire; it does not rescue us from the doubts and harassings of an unsettled mind; it does not deliver us from the pangs of an awakened conscience. A mere moral taste may sustain character and support credit, but it does not produce present holiness, nor peace, nor a hope full of immortality. It neither communicates strength to obey, nor power to resist, nor a heart to love, nor a will to serve.

Let us then study with holy Paul, that Gospel wherein the true secret of happiness, as well as the great mystery of godliness, is revealed. Our Divine Teacher does not say *read*, but *search* the Scriptures. Its doctrines are of everlasting interest. All the great objects of history lose their value, as through the lapse of time they recede farther from us; but those of the book of God are commensurate with the immortality of our nature. All existing circumstances, as they relate to this world merely, lose their importance as they lose their novelty; they even melt in air as they pass before us.

While we are discussing events they cease to be; while we are criticising customs they become obsolete; while we are adopting fashions they vanish; while we are condemning or defending parties, they change sides. While we are contemplating feuds, opposing factions, or deploring revolutions, they are extinct. Of created things, mutability is their character at the best, brevity their duration at the longest. But 'the word of the Lord endureth for ever.' All that the heart craves, that word supplies. *This* state of things is all instability; the Gospel points 'to a city which hath foundations.' *Here* we have, beyond any other age or people, seen the kingdoms of this world transferred, depopulated, destroyed: *there* we are promised a kingdom which cannot be moved.

With Holy Paul then let us take the Bible for the subject of our meditation, for the ground of our prayer, the rule of our conduct, the anchor of our hope, the standard of our faith. Let us seriously examine whether this faith is built on the same eternal basis with that of the apostle, whose character we have been contemplating, whether we are endeavouring to erect upon it a superstructure of practical goodness worthy of the broad and sure faundation?

Let us close our frequent reference to Saint Paul as a pattern for general imitation, by re-

peating one question illustrative of those opposite qualities which ought to meet in every Christian. If the most zealous advocate of *spiritual influences* were to select, from all the writers of sacred antiquity, the most distinguished champion of his great cause, on whom would he fix his choice? And if the most strenuous asserter of the duty of *personal activity in moral virtue* were to choose from all mankind the man who most completely exemplified this character in himself, where must he search? Would not the two antagonists, when they meet in the field of controversy, each in defence of his favourite tenet, find that they had fixed on the same man,—Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles? If then we propose him as our model, let us not rest till something of the same combination be formed in ourselves.

To this end let us diligently study his epistles, in which the great doctrines of Salvation are amply unfolded, and the mode of its attainment completely detailed. In contemplating the works of this great master of the human mind, we more than perceive, we *feel* their applicableness to all times, places, circumstances, and persons: and this, not only because the Word of Eternal Life is always the same; but because the human heart, which that word reveals to itself, is still the same also. We behold, as in a mirror, the fidelity, we had almost said the identity, of his representation,—face answering to face. We feel that we are personally interested in every feature he delineates. He lets us into the secrets of our own bosoms. He discloses to us the motives of our own conduct. He touches the true springs of right and wrong, lays bare the moral quality of actions, brings every object to the true point of comparison with each other, and all to the genuine standard of the unerring Gospel. By him we are clearly taught that the same deed done from the desire of pleasing God, or the desire of popular favour, becomes as different in the eye of religion, as any two actions in the eye of men.

There we shall see also, that Saint Paul evinced the sincerity of his eternal hopes by constantly preparing himself for their fruition. These hopes shaped his conduct, and moulded his spirit to a resemblance of the state he hoped for: and he best proved his belief that there really was such a state by labouring to acquire the dispositions which might qualify him for its enjoyment. Without this aim, without this effort, without this perseverance, his faith would have been fruitless, his hope delusive, his profession hypocrisy, and his 'preaching vain.'

Let us image to ourselves the Saviour of the world, holding up professing Christians as a living exemplification of his religion; of that religion which he taught by his doctrines, and ratified by his blood. Let us represent him to our imagination as referring to the lives of his followers for the truth of his word. Do we not tremble at such a responsibility? Do we not shrink from such a comparison? Are we not alarmed at the bare idea of bringing reproach on his Gospel, or dishonour on his name?

Christians! why would you wait till you arrive at heaven, before you contribute to the great end of every dispensation,—namely, *that God may be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe?* Even now, something of that assimilation should be taking place, which will be perfected when 'we shall see Him as He is,' and which will never take place if the resemblance begin not here. Beatification is only the finishing of the likenesss. Intuition will only complete the transformation.

CŒLEBS IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.

COMPREHENDING

OBSERVATIONS ON DOMESTIC HABITS AND MANNERS, RELIGION AND MORALS.

For not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom.—*Milton.*

PREFACE.

When I quitted home on a little excursion in the spring of this present year, 1808, a thought struck me, which I began to put into immediate execution. I determined to commit to paper any little circumstance that might arise, and any conversations in which I might be engaged, when the subject was at all important, though there might be nothing particularly new or interesting in the discussion thereof.

I fulfilled my intention as occasions arose to furnish me with materials, and on my return to the north, in the autumn of this same year, it was my amusement on my journey to look over and arrange these papers.

As soon as I arrived at my native place, I lent my manuscript to a confidential friend, as the shortest way of imparting to him whatever had occurred to me during our separation, together with my reflections on those occurrences. I took care to keep his expectations low, by apprizing him, that in a tour from my own house in Westmoreland, to the house of a friend in Hampshire,

he must not look for adventures, but content himself with the every day details of common life diversified only by the different habits and tempers of the persons with whom I had conversed

He brought back my manuscript in a few days, with an earnest wish that I would consent to its publication; assuring me that he was of opinion it might not be altogether useless, not only to young men engaged in the same pursuit with myself, but to the general reader. He obviated all objections arising from my want of leisure, during my present interesting engagements, by offering to undertake the whole business himself, and to release me from any further trouble, as he was just setting out for London, where he proposed passing more time than the printing would require.

Thus I am driven to the stale apology for publishing what perhaps it would have been more prudent to have withheld—*the importunity of friends;* an apology so commonly unfounded, and so repeatedly alleged, from the days of John Faustus to the publication of Cœlebs.

But whether my friend or my vanity had the largest share of influence, I am willing to indulge the hope that a better motive than either friendship or vanity was an operating ingredient in my consent. Be that as it may, I sent him my copy, "*with all its imperfections on its head.*" It was accompanied by a letter, of which the following extract shall conclude these short prefatory remarks:

"I here send you my manuscript, with permission to make what use of it you please. By publishing it I fear you will draw on me the particular censure of two classes of critics. The novel reader will reject it as dull. The religious may throw it aside as frivolous. The one will accuse it of excessive strictness; the other of censurable levity. Readers of the former description must be satisfied with the following brief and general answer—

"Had it been my leading object to have indulged in details that have amusement only for their end, it might not have been difficult to have produced a work more acceptable to the tastes accustomed to be gratified with such compositions. But to entertain that description of readers makes no part of my design.

"The persons with whom I have associated in my excursion, were, principally, though not exclusively, the family of a country gentleman, and a few of his friends—a narrow field, and unproductive of much variety! The generality of these characters move in the quiet and regular course of domestic life. I found them placed in no difficult situations. It was a scene rather favourable to reflection than description. Social intercourse, and not striking events, marked the daily progress of my visit. I had little of pathetic scenes or trying circumstances to work on my own feelings, or, by the relation of them, to work on the feelings of others. My friend's house resembled the reign of some pacific sovereigns. It was the pleasantest to live in, but its annals were not the most splendid to record. The periods which make life happy, do not always render history brilliant.

"Great passions, therefore, and great trials growing out of them, as I did not witness, I have not attempted to delineate. Love itself appears in these pages, not as an ungovernable impulse, but as a sentiment arising out of qualities calculated to inspire attachment in persons under the dominion of reason and religion, brought together by the ordinary course of occurrences, in a private family party.

"The familiar conversations of this little society comprehend a considerable portion of this slender work. The texture of the narrative is so slight, that it barely serves for a ground into which to weave the sentiments and observations which it was designed to introduce.

"It may not be unnecessary to anticipate an objection to which these conversations may sometimes be thought liable. In a few instances, the speeches may be charged with a degree of stiffness, and with a length not altogether consistent with familiar dialogue. I must apologize for this by observing, that when the subjects were serious, the dialogue would not, in every instance, bend to such facilities, nor break into such small parcels, as may easily be effected in the discussion of topics of gayer intercourse.

"But it is time to meet the objections of the more pious reader, if any such should condescend to peruse this little performance. If it be objected, that religious characters have been too industriously brought forward, and their faults somewhat too severely treated, let it be remembered, that while it is one of the principal objects of the work to animadvert on those very faults, it has never been done with the insidious design of depreciating the religion, but with the view, by exposing the fault, to correct the practice. Grossly vicious characters have seldom come in my way, but I had frequent occasion to observe the different shapes and shades of error in various descriptions of society, not only in those worldly persons who do not quite leave religion out of their scheme, but on the mistakes and inconsistencies of better characters, and even on the errors of some who would be astonished not to find themselves reckoned altogether religious. I have not so much animadverted on the unavoidable faults and frailties inseparable from humanity, even in the best characters, and which the best characters most sensibly feel, and most feelingly deplore, as on those errors which are often tolerated, justified, and in some instances systematized.

"If I have been altogether deceived in the ambitious hope that these pages may not be entirely useless; if I have failed in my endeavours to show how religion may be brought to mix with the concerns of ordinary life, without impairing its activity, lessening it cheerfulness, or diminishing its usefulness; if I have erred in fancying that material defects exist in fashionable education; if I have been wrong in supposing that females of the higher class may combine more domestic knowledge with more intellectual acquirement, that they may be at the same time more knowing and more useful, than has always been thought necessary or compatible; in short, if I shall be

found to have totally disappointed you, my friend, in your too sanguine opinion that some little benefit might arise from the publication, I shall rest satisfied with a low and negative merit. I must be contented with the humble hope that no part of these volumes will be found injurious to the important interests, which it was rather in my wish than in my ability to advance; that where I failed in effecting good, little evil has been done: that if my book has answered no valuable purpose, it has at least, not added to the number of those publications, which, by impairing the virtue, have diminished the happiness of mankind: that if I possessed not talents to promote the cause of Christian morals, I possessed an abhorrence of those principles which lead to their contamination.

"CŒLEBS."

CŒLEBS.

CHAP. I.

I HAVE been sometimes surprised, w en in conversation I have been expressing my admiration of the character of Eve in her state of innocence, as drawn from our immortal poet, to hear objections stated by those, from whom, of all critics, I should have least expected it—the ladies. I confess that, as the Sophia of Rousseau had her young imagination captivated by the character of Fenelon's Telemachus, so I early became enamoured of that of Milton's Eve. I never formed an idea of conjugal happiness, but my mind involuntarily adverted to the graces of that finished picture.

The ladies, in order to justify their censure, assert that Milton, a harsh domestic tyrant, must needs be a very inadequate judge, and, of course, a very unfair delineator of female accomplishments. These fair cavillers draw their inference from premises, from which I have always been accustomed to deduce a directly contrary conclusion. They insist that it is highly derogatory from the dignity of the sex, that the poet should affirm that it is the perfection of the character of a wife,

> "To study household good,
> And good works in her husband to promote."

Now according to my notion of 'household good,' which does not include one idea of drudgery or servility, but which involves a large and comprehensive scheme of excellence, I will venture to affirm, that let a woman know what she may, yet if she knows not this, she is ignorant of the most indispensable, the most appropriate branch of female knowledge. Without it, however, she may inspire admiration abroad, she will never excite esteem, nor of course durable affection at home, and will bring neither credit nor comfort to her ill-starred partner.

The domestic arrangements of such a woman as filled the capacious mind of the poet, resembles, if I may say it without profaneness, those of Providence, whose under-agent she was. Her wisdom is seen in its effect. Indeed it is rather felt than seen. It is sensibly acknowledged in the peace, the happiness, the virtue of the component parts; in the order, regularity and beauty of the whole system, of which she is the moving spring. The perfection of her character, as the divine poet intimates, does not arise from a prominent quality, or a showy talent, or a brilliant accomplishment; but it is the beautiful combination and result of them all. Her excellences consist not so much in acts as in habits, in

> Those thousand decencies which daily flow
> From all her words and actions.

A description more calculated than any I ever met with to convey an idea of the purest conduct resulting from the best principles. It gives an image of that tranquillity, smoothness, and quiet beauty, which is of the very essence of perfection in a wife; while the happily chosen verb *flow* takes away any impression of dulness, or stagnant torpor, which the *still* idea might otherwise suggest.

But the offence taken by the ladies against this uncourtly bard, is chiefly occasioned by his having presumed to intimate that conjugal obedience

> Is woman's highest honour and her praise.

This is so nice a point, that I, as a bachelor, dare only just hint, that on this delicate question the poet has not gone an inch farther than the apostle. Nay Paul is still more uncivilly explicit than Milton. If, however, I could hope to bring over to my side critics, who, being of the party, are too apt to prejudge the cause, I would point out to them, that the supposed harshness of the observation is quite done away by the recollection that this scruple 'obedience' is so far from implying degradation, that it is connected with the injunction to the woman 'to promote good works' in her husband; an injunction surely inferring a degree of influence that raises her condition, and restores her to all the dignity of equality; it makes her not only the associate, but the inspirer of his virtues.

But to return to the economical part of the character of Eve. And here she exhibits a consummate specimen and beautiful model of domestic skill and elegance. How exquisitely conceived is her reception and entertainment of Raphael! How modest, and yet how dignified! I am afraid I know some husbands who would have had to encounter very ungracious looks, not to say words, if they had brought home even an angel, *unexpectedly* to dinner Not so our general mother.

> 'Her despatchful looks.'
> Her hospitable thoughts, ——intent
> What choice to choose for delicacy best,

all indicate not only the 'prompt,' but the cheerful 'obedience.' Though her repast consisted only of the fruits of paradise

Whatever earth, all bearing mother, yields;

Yet of these, with a liberal hospitality,

She gathered tribute large, and on the board,
Heaps with unsparing hand.

The finest modern lady need not disdain the arrangement of her table, which was

So contrived as not to mix
Tastes not well join'd, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste, upheld by kindliest change.

It must, however, I fear, be conceded, by the way, that this 'taste *after* taste' rather holds out an encouragement to second courses.

When this unmatched trio had finished their repast, which, let it be observed, before they tasted, Adam acknowledged that

These bounties from our Nourisher are given,
From whom all perfect good descends,

Milton with great liberality to that sex, against which he is accused of so much severity, obligingly permitted Eve to sit much longer after dinner than most modern husbands would allow. She had attentively listened to all the historical and moral subjects so divinely discussed between the first Angel and the first Man; and perhaps there can scarcely be found a more beautiful trait of a delicately attentive wife, than she exhibits by withdrawing at the exact point of propriety. She does not retire in consequence of any look or gesture, any broad sign of impatience, much less any command or intimation of her husband; but with the ever watchful eye of vigilant affection and deep humility:

When by his countenance he seemed
Entering on thoughts abstruse,

instructed only by her own quick intuition of what was right and delicate, she withdrew. And here again how admirably does the poet sustain her intellectual dignity, softened by a most tender stroke of conjugal affection.

Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high—such pleasures she reserved,
Adam relating, she sole auditress———

On perusing, however, the *tete-a-tete*, which her absence occasioned, methinks I hear some sprightly lady, fresh from the Royal Institution, express her wonder why Eve should be banished by her husband from Raphael's fine lecture on astronomy, which follows: was not she as capable as Adam of understanding all he said, of

Cycle and Epicycle, Orb on Orb!

If, however, the imaginary fair objector will take the trouble to read to the end of the eighth book of this immortal work, it will raise in her estimation both the poet and the heroine, when she contemplates the just propriety of her being absent before Adam enters on the account of the formation, beauty, and attractions of his wife, and of his own love and admiration. She will farther observe, in her progress through this divine poem, that the author is so far from making Eve a mere domestic drudge, an unpolished housewife, that he pays an invariable attention even to external elegance in his whole delineation, ascribing grace to her steps, and dignity to her gesture. He uniformly keeps up the same combination of intellectual worth and polished manners;

For softness she, and sweet attractive grace,

And her husband, so far from a churlish insensibility to her perfections, politely calls her

Daughter of God and man, *accomplished* Eve.

I will not, however, affirm that Adam, or even Milton, annexed to the term *accomplished* precisely the idea with which it is associated in the mind of a true modern-bred lady.

If it be objected to the poet's gallantry, that he remarks,

How beauty is excelled by manly grace,
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair;

let it be remembered, that the observation proceeds from the lips of Eve herself, and thus adds to her other graces, the crowning grace of humility.

But it is high time I should proceed from my criticism to myself. The connection, and of course the transition, will be found more natural than may appear, till developed by my slight narrative.

CHAP. II.

I am a young man, not quite four and twenty of an ancient and respectable family, and considerable estate in one of the northern counties. Soon after I had completed my studies in the University of Edinburgh, my father fell into a lingering illness. I attended him with an assiduity which was richly rewarded by the lessons of wisdom, and the example of piety which I daily received from him. After languishing about a year, I lost him, and in him the most affectionate father, the most enlightened companion, and the most Christian friend.

The grief of my mother was so poignant, so lasting, that I could never prevail on myself to leave her even for the sake of attaining those advantages, and enjoying those pleasures, which may be reaped by a wider range of observation, by a more extended survey of the multifarious tastes, habits, pursuits, and characters of general society. I felt with Mr. Gray, that we can never have but one mother, and postponed from time to time the moment of leaving home.

I was her only child, and thought it was now her sole remaining wish to see me happily married, yet I was desirous of first putting myself in a situation which might afford me a more extensive field of inquiry, before I ventured to take so irretrievable a step, a step which might perhaps affect my happiness in both worlds. But time did not hang heavy on my hands; if I had little society, I had many books. My father had left me a copious library, and I had learnt from

him to select whatever was most valuable in that best species of literature, which tends to form the principles, the understanding, the taste, and the character. My father had passed the early part of his life in the gay and busy world; and our domestic society in the country had been occasionally enlivened by visits from some of his London friends, men of some sense and learning, and some of them men of piety.

My mother, when she was in tolerable spirits, was now frequently describing the kind of woman, whom she wished me to marry. 'I am so firmly persuaded, Charles,' would she kindly say, 'of the justness of your taste, and the rectitude of your principles, that I am not much afraid of your being misled by the captivating exterior of any woman who is greatly deficient either in sense or conduct; but remember, my son, that there are many women against whose characters there lies nothing very objectionable, who are yet little calculated to taste, or to communicate rational happiness. Do not indulge romantic ideas of super-human excellence. Remember that the fairest creature is a fallen creature. Yet let not your standard be low. If it be absurd to expect perfection, it is not unreasonable to expect *consistency*. Do not suffer yourself to be caught by a shining quality, till you know it is not counteracted by the opposite defect. Be not taken in by strictness in one point, till you are assured there is no laxity in others. In character, as in architecture, proportion is beauty. The education of the present race of females is not very favourable to domestic happiness. For my own part, I call education, not that which smothers a woman with accomplishments, but that which tends to consolidate a firm and regular system of character; that which tends to form a friend, a companion, and a wife. I call education, not that which is made up of the shreds and patches of useless arts, but that which inculcates principles, polishes taste, regulates temper, cultivates reason, subdues the passions, directs the feelings, habituates the reflection, trains to self-denial, and, more especially, that which refers all actions, feelings, sentiments, tastes, and passions, to the love and fear of God.'

I as yet had little opportunity of contrasting the charms of my native place with the less wild and romantic beauties of the south. I was passionately fond of the scenery that surrounded me, which had never yet lost that power of pleasing, which it is commonly imagined that novelty can alone confer.

The Priory, a handsome Gothic mansion, stands in the middle of a park, not extensive, but beautifully varied. Behind are lofty mountains, the feet of which are covered with wood that descends almost to the house. On one side a narrow cultivated valley winds among the mountains; the bright variegated tints of its meadows and corn fields, with here and there a little white cottage, embosomed in trees, are finely contrasted with the awful and impassable fells which contain it.

An inconsiderable but impetuous river rushes from the mountains above, through this unadorned but enchanting little valley, and passes through the Park at the distance of about a hundred yards from the house. The ground falls beautifully down to it; and on the other side is a fine wood of birch over-hanging the river, which is here crossed by a small rustic bridge; after being enlarged by many streams from the neighbouring hills, it runs about half a mile to the lake below, which, from the front of the house, is seen in full beauty. It is a noble expanse of water. The mountains that surround it are some of them covered with wood, some skirted with cultivation, some rocky and barren to the water's edge; while the rugged summits of them all present every variety of fantastic outline. Towards the head of the lake a neat little village ornaments the banks, and wonderfully harmonizes with the simple beauty of the scene. At an opening among the hills, a view is caught of the distant country, a wide vale richly wooded, adorned every where with towns, villages, and gentlemen's houses, and backed by sublime mountains, rivalling in height, though not in their broken and Alpine forms, those that more immediately surround us.

While I was thus dividing my time between the enjoyment of this exquisite scenery, my books, the care of my affairs, my filial attention, and my religious duties, I was suddenly deprived of my inestimable mother. She died the death of the righteous.

Addison has finely touched on the singular sort of delicate and refined tenderness of a father for a daughter: but I am persuaded that there is no affection of the human heart more exquisitely pure, than that which is felt by a grateful son towards a mother, who fostered his infancy with fondness, watched over his childhood with anxiety, and his youth with an interest compounded of all that is tender, wise, and pious.

My retirement was now become solitude; the former is, I believe, the best state for the mind of man, the latter almost the worst. In complete solitude the eye wants objects, the heart wants attachments, the understanding wants reciprocation. The character loses its tenderness when it has nothing to love, its firmness when it has none to strengthen it, its sweetness when it has nothing to soothe it, its patience when it meets no contradiction, its humility when it is surrounded by dependants, and its delicacy in the conversation of the uninformed. Where the intercourse is very unequal, society is somewhat worse than solitude.

I had naturally a keen relish for domestic happiness: and this propensity had been cherished by what I had seen and enjoyed in my father's family. Home was the scene in which my imagination had pictured the only delights worthy of a rational, feeling, intellectual, immortal man;

> Sole bliss of Paradise
> Which has surviv'd the fall.

This inclination had been much increased by my father's turn of conversation. He often said to me, 'I know your domestic propensities; and I know, therefore, that the whole colour of your future life will be, in a particular manner, determined by the turn of mind of the woman you may marry.—Were you to live in the busy haunts of men; were you of any profession, or

likely to be engaged in public life, though I would still counsel you to be equally careful in your choice, yet your happiness would not so immediately, so exclusively depend on the individual society of a woman, as that of a retired country gentleman must do. A man of sense, who loves home, and lives at home, requires a wife who can and will be at half the expense of mind necessary for keeping up the cheerful, animated, elegant intercourse which forms so great a part of the bond of union between intellectual and well bred persons. Had your mother been a woman of an uninformed, inelegant mind, virtuous and pious as she is, what abatement must there have been in the blessings of my lot! The *exhibiting*, the *displaying* wife may entertain your company, but it is only the informed, the refined, the cultivated woman who can entertain yourself; and I presume whenever you marry you will marry primarily for yourself, and not for your friends; you will want a *companion*: an *artist* you may hire.

'But remember, Charles, that when I am insisting so much on mental delicacy, I am assuming that all is right in still more essential points. Do not be contented with this superstructure, till you have ascertained the solidity of the foundation. The ornaments which decorate do not support the edifice! Guarded as you are by Christian principles, and confirmed in virtuous habits, I trust you may safely look abroad in the world. Do not, however, irrevocably dispose of your affections till you have made the long promised visit to my earliest, wisest, and best friend, Mr. Stanley. I am far from desiring that your friend should direct your choice. It is what even your father would not do: but he will be the most faithful and most disinterested of counsellors.'

I resolved now for a few months to leave the Priory, the seat of my ancestors, to make a tour not only to London, but to Stanley Grove, in Hampshire, the residence of my father's friend; a visit I was about to make with him just before his last illness. He wished me to go alone, but I could not prevail on myself to desert his sick bed for any scheme of amusement.

I began to long earnestly for the pleasures of conversation, pleasures which, in our small, but social and select circle of cultivated friends, I had been accustomed to enjoy. I am aware that certain fine town-bred men would ridicule the bare mention of learned and polished conversation at a village in Westmoreland, or indeed at any place out of the precincts of the metropolis; just as a London physician, or lawyer, smiles superciliously at the suggested merits of a professional brother, in a provincial town. Good sense, however, is of all countries, and even knowledge is not altogether a mere local advantage. These, and not the topics of the hour, furnish the best raw materials for working up an improving intercourse.

It must be confessed, however, as I have since found, that to give a terseness and a polish to conversation; for rubbing out prejudices; for correcting egotism; for keeping self-importance out of sight, if not curing it; for bringing a man to condense what he has to say, if he intends to be listened to; for accustoming him to endure opposition; for teaching him not to think every man who differs from him in matters of taste, a fool, and in politics, a knave; for cutting down harangues; for guarding him from producing as novelties and invention what has been said a thousand times; for quickness of allusion, which brings the idea before you without detail or quotation; nothing is equal to the miscellaneous society of London.—The advantages too which it possesses, in being the seat of the court, the parliament, and the courts of law, as well as the common centre of arts and talents of every kind, all these raise it above every other scene of intellectual improvement, or colloquial pleasure, perhaps in the whole world.

But this was only the secondary motive of my intended migration. I connected with it the hope, that in a more extended survey, I might be more likely to select a deserving companion for life. 'In such a companion,' said I, as I drove along in my post-chaise, 'I do not want a Helen, a Saint Cecilia, or a Madame Dacier; yet she must be elegant, or I should not love her; sensible, or I should not respect her; prudent, or I could not confide in her; well informed, or she could not educate my children; well bred, or she could not entertain my friends; *consistent*, or I should offend the shade of my mother; pious, or I should not be happy with her, because the prime comfort in a companion for life is the delightful hope that she will be a companion for eternity.

After this soliloquy, I was frightened to reflect that so much was requisite; and yet when I began to consider in which article I could make any abatement, I was willing to persuade myself that my requisitions were moderate.

CHAP. III.

I had occasionally visited two or three families in our county, who were said to make a very genteel appearance on narrow fortunes. As I was known not to consider money as a principal consideration, it had often been intimated to me what excellent wives the daughters of these families would make, because on a very slender allowance their appearance was as elegant as that of women of ten times their expectations. I translated this respectable appearance into a language not the most favourable, as I instantly inferred, and afterwards was convinced, that this personal figure was made by the sacrifice of their whole time to those decorations which procured them credit, by putting their outward figure on a par with the most affluent. If a girl with a thousand pounds rivals in her dress one with ten thousand, is it not obvious, that not only all her time must be employed, but all her money devoted to this one object? Nothing but the clippings and parings from her personal adornments could enable her to supply the demands of charity; and these sacrifices, it is evident she is not disposed to make.

Another inducement suggested to me was, that these young ladies would make better wives,

because they had never been corrupted by the expensive pleasures of London, and had not been spoilt by the gay scenes of dissipation which it afforded. This argument would have weighed powerfully with me, had I not observed that they never abstained from any amusement in the country that came within their reach.

I naturally inferred, that she who eagerly grasped at every petty provincial dissipation, would with increased alacrity have plunged into the more alluring gaieties of the metropolis, had it been in her power. I thought she had even less apology to plead than the town lady; the fault was equal, while the temptation was less; and she who was as dissipated as her limited bounds permitted, where there was little to attract, would, I feared, be as dissipated as she possibly could be, when her temptations were multiplied, and her facilities increased.

I had met with several young ladies of a higher description, daughters of our country gentlemen, a class which furnishes a number of valuable and elegant women. Some of these, whom I knew, seemed unexceptionable in manner and mind. They had seen something of the world, without having been spoilt by it; had read with advantage; and acquitted themselves well in the duties which they had been called to practise. But I was withheld from cultivating that degree of intimacy which would have enabled me to take an exact measure of their minds, by the injunction of my father, that I would never attach myself to any woman till I had seen and consulted Mr. Stanley. This direction, which, like all his wishes was a law to me, operated as a sort of sedative in the slight intercourse I had had with ladies; and resolving to postpone all such intimacy as might have led to attachment, I did not allow myself to come near enough to feel with interest, or to judge with decision.

As soon as I got to town, I visited some of my father's friends. I was kindly received for his sake, and at their houses soon enlarged the sphere of my acquaintance. I was concerned to remark that two or three gentlemen, whom I had observed to be very regular in their attendance on public worship in the country, seldom went to church in London; in the afternoon never. 'Religion,' they said, by way of apology, 'was entirely a thing of example, it was of great political importance; society was held together by the restraints it imposed on the lower orders. When they were in the country it was highly proper that their tenants and workmen should have the benefit of their example, but in London the case was different. When there were so many churches, no one knew whether you went or not, and where no scandal was given, no harm was done. As this was a logic which had not found its way into my father's religion, I was not convinced by it. I remember Mr. Burke, speaking of the English, who were so humane at home, and whom he unjustly accused of wanting humanity in India, says, 'that the humanity of Britain is a humanity of points and parallels.' Surely the religion of the gentlemen in question is not a less geographical distinction.

This error, I conceive, arises from religion being too much considered as an institution of decorum, of convention, of society; and not as an institution founded on the condition of human nature, a covenant of mercy for repairing the evils which sin has produced. It springs from the want of a conviction that Christianity is an individual as well as general concern; that religion is a personal thing, previous to its being a matter of example; that a man is not infallibly saved or lost as a portion of any family, or any church, or any community; but that, as he is individually responsible, he must be individually brought to a deep and humbling sense of his own personal wants, without taking any refuge in the piety he may see around him, of which he will have no benefit if he be no partaker.

I regretted, even for inferior reasons, the little distinction which was paid to this sacred day. To say nothing of the elevating views which the soul acquires from devoting itself to its proper object; the man of business, methinks, should rejoice in its return; the politician should welcome its appearance, not only as a rest from anxiety and labour, but as an occasion of cooling and quieting the mind, of softening its irritation, of allaying its ferment, and thus restoring the repaired faculties of invigorated spirits to the demands of the succeeding week, in a frame of increased aptitude for meeting its difficulties and encountering its duties.

The first person whom I visited was a good natured, friendly man, whom I had occasionally seen in the north. As I had no reason to believe that he was religious in the true sense of the word, I had no intention of looking for a wife in his family. I, however, thought it not amiss to associate a little with persons of different descriptions, that by a wider range I might learn to correct my general judgment, as well as to guide my particular pursuit. Nothing, it is true, would tempt me to select a woman on whose pious disposition I could not form a reasonable dependance; yet to come at the reality of those dispositions was no easy matter.

I had heard my father remark, that he had, more than once, known a right-minded girl, who seemed to have been first taught of heaven, and afterwards supported in herChristian course, under almost every human disadvantage; who boldly, but meekly, maintained her own principles, under all the hourly temptations and opposition of a worldly and irreligious family, and who had given the best evidences of her piety towards God, by her patient forbearance towards her erring friends. Such women had made admirable wives when they were afterwards transplanted into families where their virtues were understood, and their piety cherished. While, on the other hand, he had known others, who accustomed from childhood to the sober habits of family religion, under pious but injudicious parents, had fallen in mechanically with the domestic practices, without having ever been instructed in Christian principles, or having ever manifested any religious tendencies. The implantation of a new principle never having been inculcated, the religious habit has degenerated into a mere form, the parents acting as if they thought that religion must come by nature or

infection in a religious family. The girls having never had their own hearts impressed, nor their own characters distinctly considered nor individually cultivated, but being taken out as a portion from the mass, have afterwards taken the cast and colour of any society into which they have happened to be thrown; and they who had lived religiously with the religious, have afterwards assimilated with the gay and dissipated, when thus thrown into their company, as cordially as if they had never been habituated to better things.

At dinner there appeared two pretty looking young ladies, daughters of my friend, who had been sometime a widower. I placed myself between them, for the purpose of prying a little into their minds, while the rest of the company were conversing on indifferent subjects. Having formerly heard this gentleman's deceased wife extolled as the mirror of managers, and the arrangements of his table highly commended, I was surprised to see it so ill appointed, and every thing wearing marks of palpable inelegance. Though no epicure, I could not forbear observing that many of the dishes were out of season, ill chosen, and ill dressed.

While I was puzzling my head for a solution, I recollected that I had lately read in a most respectable periodical work, a paper (composed, I believe, however, by a raw recruit of that well disciplined corps) which insisted that nothing tended to make the ladies so useless and inefficient in the *menage* as the study of the dead languages. I jumped to the conclusion, and was in an instant persuaded that my young hostesses must not only be perfect mistresses of Latin, but the *tout ensemble* was so ill arranged as to induce me to give them credit for Greek also.

Finding, therefore, that my appetite was baulked, I took comfort in the certainty that my understanding would be well regaled; and after secretly regretting that learning should so effectually destroy usefulness, I was resolved to derive intellectual comfort from this too classical repast. Turning suddenly to the eldest lady, I asked her at once if she did not think Virgil the finest poet in the world. She blushed, and thus confirmed me in the opinion that her modesty was equal to her erudition. I repeated my question with a little circumlocution. She stared, and said she had never heard of the person I mentioned, but that she had read Tears of Sensibility, and Rosa Matilda, and Sympathy of Souls, and Too Civil by Half, and the Sorrows of Werter, and the Stranger, and the Orphan of Snowden.

'Yes, Sir,' joined in the younger sister, who did not rise to so high a pitch of literature, 'and we have read Perfidy Punished, and Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy, and the Fortunate Footman, and the Illustrious Chambermaid.' I blushed and stared in my turn; and here the conversation, through the difficulty of our being intelligible to each other, dropped; and I am persuaded that I sunk much lower in their esteem for not being acquainted with their favourite authors, than they did in mine for never having heard of Virgil.

I arose from the table with a full conviction that it is very possible for a woman to be totally ignorant of the ordinary but indispensable duties of common life, without knowing one word of Latin; and that her being a bad companion is no infallible proof of her being a good economist.

I am afraid the poor father saw something of my disappointment in my countenance, for when we were alone in the evening, he observed that a heavy addition to his other causes of regret for the loss of his wife, was her excellent management of his family. I found afterwards that though she had brought him a great fortune, she had a very low education. Her father, a coarse country Squire, to whom the pleasures of the table were the only pleasures for which he had any relish, had no other ambition for his daughter but that she should be the most famous housewife in the country. He gloried in her culinary perfections, which he understood; of the deficiencies of her mind he had not the least perception. Money and good eating, he owned, were the only things in life, which had a real intrinsic value; the value of all other things, he declared, existed in the imagination only.

The poor lady, when she became a mother, and was brought out into the world, felt keenly the deficiencies of her own education. The dread of Scylla, as is usual, wrecked her on Charybdis. Her first resolution, as soon as she had daughters, was that they should *learn every thing*. All the masters who teach things of little intrinsic use were extravagantly paid for supernumerary attendance; and as no one in the family was capable of judging of their improvements, their progress was but slow. Though they were taught much they learnt but little, even of these unnecessary things; and of things necessary they learnt nothing. The well-intentioned mother was not aware that her daughter's education was almost as much calculated to gratify the senses, though in a different way, and with more apparent refinement, as her own had been; and that *mind* is left nearly as much out of the question in making an ordinary artist as in making a good cook.

CHAP. IV.

From my fondness for conversation, my imagination had been early fired with Dr. Johnson's remark that there is no pleasure on earth comparable to the *fine full flow of London talk*. I, who, since I had quitted college, had seldom had my mind refreshed, but with the petty rills and penurious streams of knowledge which country society afforded, now expected to meet it in a strong and rapid current, fertilizing wherever it flowed, producing in abundance the rich fruits of argument, and the gay flowers of rhetoric. I look for an uninterrupted course of profit and delight. I flattered myself that every dinner would add to my stock of images; that every debate would clear up some difficulty, every discussion elucidate some truth; that every allusion would be purely classical, every

sentence abound with instruction, and every period be pointed with wit.

On the tiptoe of expectation I went to dine with Sir John Belfield, in Cavendish-square. I looked at my watch fifty times. I thought it would never be six o'clock. I did not care to show my country-breeding, by going too early to incommode my friend, nor my town-breeding, by going too late and spoiling his dinner. Sir John is a valuable, elegant minded man, and, next to Mr. Stanley, stood highest in my father's esteem for his mental accomplishments and correct morals. As I knew he was remarkable for assembling at his table men of sense, taste, and learning, my expectations of pleasure were very high. 'Here at least,' said I, as I heard the name of one clever man announced after another, 'here, at least, I cannot fail to find.

The feast of reason and the flow of soul:

Here at least all the energies of my mind will be brought into exercise. From this society I shall carry away documents for the improvement of my taste; I shall treasure up hints to enrich my understanding, and collect aphorisms for the conduct of life.'

At first there was no fair opportunity to introduce any conversation beyond the topics of the day, and to those, it must be confessed, this eventful period gives a new and powerful interest. I should have been much pleased to have had my country politics rectified, and any prejudices, which I might have contracted, removed, or softened, could the discussion have been carried on without the frequent interruption of the youngest man in the company. This gentleman broke in on every remark, by descanting successively on the merits of the various dishes; and if it be true that experience only can determine the judgment, he gave proof of that best right to peremptory decision, by not trusting to delusive theory, but by actually eating of every dish at table.

His animadversions were uttered with the gravity of a German philosopher, and the science of a French cook. If any of his opinions happened to be controverted, he quoted, in confirmation of his own judgment, *l' Almanac des Gourmands*, which he assured us was the most valuable work that had appeared in France since the Revolution.—The author of this book he seemed to consider of as high authority in the science of eating, as Coke or Hale in that of jurisprudence, or Quintilian in the art of criticism. To the credit of the company, however, be it spoken, he had the whole of this topic to himself. The rest of the party were, in general of quite a different caliber, and as little acquainted with his favourite author, as he probably was with theirs.

The lady of the house was perfectly amiable and well bred. Her dinner was excellent; and every thing about her had an air of elegance and splendour: of course she completely escaped the disgrace of being thought a scholar, but not the suspicion of having a very good taste. I longed for the removal of the cloth, and was eagerly anticipating the pleasure and improvement which awaited me.

As soon as the servants were beginning to withdraw, we got into a sort of attitude of conversation; all except the eulogist of l'Almanac des Gourmands, who, wrapping himself up in the comfortable consciousness of his own superior judgment, and a little piqued that he had found neither support nor opposition, (the next best thing to a profound talker,) he seemed to have a perfect indifference to all topics except that on which he has shown so much eloquence, with so little effect.

The last tray was now carried out, the last lingering servant had retired. I was beginning to listen with all my powers of attention to an ingenious gentleman who was about to give an interesting account of Egypt, where he had spent a year, and from whence he was lately returned. He was just got to the catacombs,

When on a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,

the mahogany folding doors, and in at once, struggling who should be first, rushed half a dozen children, lovely, fresh, gay, and noisy. This sudden and violent irruption of the pretty barbarians necessarily caused a total interruption of conversation. The sprightly creatures ran round the table to choose where they would sit. At length this great difficulty of courts and cabinets, *the choice of places*, was settled. The little things were jostled in between the ladies, who all contended who should get possession of the *little beauties*. One was in raptures with the rosy cheeks of a sweet little girl she held in her lap. A second exclaimed aloud at the beautiful lace with which the frock of another was trimmed, and which she was sure mamma had given her for being good. A profitable, and doubtless a lasting and inseparable association, was thus formed in the child's mind between lace and goodness. A third cried out, 'Look at the pretty angel!—do but observe—her bracelets are as blue as her eyes. Did you ever see a match?' 'Surely, lady Bedfield,' cried a fourth, 'you carried the eyes to the shop, or there must have been a shade of difference.' I myself, who am passionately fond of children, eyed the sweet little rebels with complacency, notwithstanding the unseasonableness of their interruption.

At last, when they were all disposed of, I resumed my inquiries about the resting place of the mummies. But the grand dispute, who should have oranges, and who should have almonds and raisins, soon raised such a clamour that it was impossible to hear my Egyptian friend. This great contest was, however, at length settled, and I was returning to the antiquities of Memphis, when the important point, who should have red wine, and who should have white, who should have half a glass, and who a whole one, set us again in an uproar. Sir John was visibly uneasy, and commanded silence. During this interval of peace, I gave up the catacombs, and took refuge in the pyramids. But I had no sooner proposed my question about the serpent said to be found in one of them, than the son and heir, a fine little fellow, just six years old, reaching out his arm to dart an apple across the table at his sister, roguishly intending to overset her glass, unluckily over

threw his own, brimful of port wine. The whole contents were discharged on the elegant drapery of a white robed nymph.

All was now agitation and distress, and disturbance and confusion; the gentlemen ringing for napkins, the ladies assisting the dripping fair one; each vying with the other who should recommend the most approved specific of getting out the stain of red wine, and comforting the sufferer by stories of similar misfortunes. The poor little culprit was dismissed, and all difficulties and disasters seemed at last surmounted. But you cannot heat up again an interest which has been so often cooled. The thread of conversation had been so frequently broken, that I despaired of seeing it tied together again. I sorrowfully gave up catacombs, pyramids, and serpents, and was obliged to content myself with a little desultory chat with my next neighbour; sorry and disappointed to glean only a few scattered ears, where I had expected so abundant a harvest; and the day from which I had promised myself so much benefit and delight, passed away with a very slender acquisition of either.

CHAP. V.

I WENT almost immediately after, at the invitation of Mr. Ranby, to pass a few days at his villa at Hampstead. Mr. and Mrs. Ranby were esteemed pious persons, but having risen to great affluence by a sudden turn of fortune in a commercial engagement, they had a little self-sufficiency, and not a little disposition to ascribe an undue importance to wealth. This I should have thought more pardonable under their circumstances, had I not expected that religion would in this respect have more than supplied the deficiencies of education. Their religion, however, consisted almost exclusively in a disproportionate zeal for a very few doctrines. And though they were far from being immoral in their own practice, yet, in their discourse, they affected to undervalue morality.

This was, indeed, more particularly the case with the lady, whose chief object of discourse seemed to be, to convince me of her great superiority to her husband in polemical skill. Her chaste conversation certainly was not coupled with fear. In one respect she was the very reverse of those Pharisees who were scrupulously exact about their petty observances. Mrs. Ranby was, on the contrary, anxious about a very few important particulars, and exonerated herself from the necessity of all inferior attentions. She was strongly attached to one or two preachers, and discovered little candour for all others, or for those who attended them. Nay, she somewhat doubted of the soundness of the faith of her friends and acquaintance, who would not incur great inconvenience to attend one or other of her favourites.

Mrs. Ranby's table was 'more than hospitably good.' There was not the least suspicion of Latin here. The eulogist of female ignorance might have dined in comfortable security against the intrusion and vanity of erudition. She had three daughters, not unpleasing young women. But I was much concerned to observe, that they were not only dressed to the very extremity of the fashion, but their drapery was as transparent, as short, and as scanty; there was as sedulous a disclosure of their persons, and as great a redundancy of ornaments, as I had seen in the gayest circles.

'Expect not perfection,' said my good mother, 'but look for *consistency*.' This principle my parents had not only taught me in the closet, but had illustrated by their deportment in the family and in the world. They observed a uniform correctness in their general demeanor. They were not over anxious about character for its own sake, but they were tenderly vigilant not to bring any reproach on the Christian name by imprudence, negligence, or inconsistency, even in small things. 'Custom,' said my mother, 'can never alter the immutable nature of right; fashion can never justify any practice which is improper in itself; and to dress indecently is as great an offence against purity and modesty, when it is the fashion, as when it is obsolete. There should be a line of demarcation somewhere. In the article of dress and appearance, Christian mothers should make a stand. They should not be so unreasonable as to expect that a young girl will of herself have courage to oppose the united temptations of fashion without, and the secret prevalence of corruption within; and authority should be called in where admonition fails.'

The conversation after dinner took a religious turn. Mrs. Ranby was not unacquainted with the subject, and expressed herself with energy on many serious points. I could have been glad, however, to have seen her views a little more practical, and her spirit a little less censorious. I saw she took the lead in debate, and that Mr. Ranby submitted to act as subaltern; but whether his meekness was the effect of piety or fear, I could not at that time determine. She protested vehemently against all dissipation, in which I cordially joined her, though I hope with something less intemperance of manner, and less acrimony against those who pursued it. I began, however, to lose sight of the errors of the daughters' dress in the pleasure I felt at conversing with so pious a mother of a family. For pious she really was, though her piety was a little debased by coarseness, and not a little disfigured by asperity.

I was sorry to observe that the young ladies not only took no part in the conversation, but that they did not even seem to know what was going on; and I must confess the *manner* in which it was conducted was not calculated to make the subject interesting. The girls sat jogging and whispering each other, and got away as fast as they could.

As soon as they were withdrawn—'There, sir,' said the mother, 'are three girls who will make excellent wives.—They never were at a ball or a play in their lives; and yet, though I say it, who should not say it, they are as highly accomplished as any ladies at St. James's.' I cordially approved the former part of her assertion, and bowed in silence to the latter.

I took this opportunity of inquiring what had been her mode of religious instruction for her

daughters; but though I put the question with much caution and deference, she looked displeased, and said that she did not think it necessary to do a great deal in that way; all these things must come from above; it was not human endeavours, but divine grace which made Christians. I observed, that the truth appeared to be, that divine grace *blessing* human endeavours, seemed most likely to accomplish that great end. She replied, that experience was not on my side, for that the children of religious parents were not always religious. I allowed that it was too true. I knew she drew her instances from two or three of her own friends, who, while they discovered much earnestness about their own spiritual interests, had almost totally neglected the religious cultivation of their children; the daughters in particular had been suffered to follow their own devices, and to waste their days in company of their own choosing, and in the most frivolous manner. 'What do ye more than others?' is an interrogation which this negligence has frequently suggested. Nay, professing serious piety, if ye do not more than those who profess it not, ye do less.

I took the liberty to remark, that though there was no such thing as hereditary holiness, no entail of goodness; yet the Almighty had promised in the scriptures many blessings to the offspring of the righteous. He never meant, however, that religion was to be transferred arbitrarily like an heir-loom; but the promise was accompanied with conditions and injunctions. The directions were express and frequent, to inculcate early and late the great truths of religion; nay, it was enforced with all the minuteness of detail, 'precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little'—at all times and seasons, 'walking by the way, and sitting in the house.' I hazarded the assertion, that it would *generally* be found that where the children of pious parents turned out ill, there had been some mistake, some neglect, or some fault on the part of the parents; that they had not used the right methods. I observed that I thought it did not at all derogate from the sovereignty of the Almighty, that he appointed certain means to accomplish certain ends; and that the adopting these in conformity to his appointment, and dependence on his blessing, seemed to be one of the cases in which we should prove our faith by our obedience.

I found I had gone too far—she said, with some warmth, that she was not wanting in any duty to her daughters; she set them a good example, and she prayed daily for their conversion. I highly commended her for both, but risked the observation, 'that praying without instilling principles, might be as inefficacious as instruction without prayer. That it was like a husbandman, who should expect that praying for sunshine, should produce a crop of corn in a field where not one grain had been sown. God, indeed, *could* effect this, but he does not do it; and the means being of his own appointment, his omnipotence is not less exerted, by his directing certain effects to follow certain causes, than it would by any arbitrary act.' As it was evident that she did not choose to quarrel with me, she contented herself with saying coldly that she perceived I was a *legalist*, and had but a low view of divine things.

At tea I found the young ladies took no more interest in the conversation than they had done at dinner, but sat whispering and laughing, and netting white silk gloves, till they were summoned to the harpsichord. Despairing of getting on with them in company, I proposed a walk in the garden. I now found them as willing to talk, as destitute of any thing to say. Their conversation was vivid and frivolous. They laid great stress on small things. They seemed to have no shades in their understanding, but used the strongest terms for the commonest occasions, and admiration was excited by things hardly worthy to command attention. They were extremely glad and extremely sorry, on subjects not calculated to excite affections of any kind. They were animated about trifles, and indifferent on things of importance. They were, I must confess, frank and good-natured; but it was evident, that as they were too open, to have any thing to conceal, so they were too uninformed to have any thing to produce; and I was resolved not to risk my happiness with a woman who could not contribute her full share towards spending a wet winter cheerfully in the country.

The next day, all the hours from breakfast to dinner were devoted to the harp. I had the vanity to think that this sacrifice of time was made in compliment to me, as I had professed to like music; till I found that all their mornings were spent in the same manner; and the only fruit of their education, which seemed to be used to any purpose, was, that after their family devotions in the evening, they sung and played a hymn. This was almost the only sign they gave of intellectual or spiritual life. They attended morning prayers, if they were dressed before the bell rang. One morning when they did not appear till late, they were reproved by their father; Mrs. Ranby said, 'she should be more angry with them for their irregularity, were it not that Mr. Ranby obstinately persisted in reading a printed form, which she was persuaded could not do any body much good.' The poor man, who was really well disposed, very properly defended himself, by saying, that he hoped his own heart went along with every word he read; and as to his family, he thought it much more beneficial for them to join in an excellent composition of a judicious divine, than to attend to any such crude rhapsody as he should be able to produce, whose education had not qualified him to lead the devotions of others. I had never heard him venture to make use of his understanding before; and I continued to find it much better than I had at first given him credit for. The lady observed, with some asperity, that where there were *gifts* and *graces*, it superseded the necessity of learning.

In vindication of my own good breeding, I should observe that, in my little debates with Mrs. Ranby, to which I am always challenged by her, I never lost sight of that becoming example of the son of Cato, who, when about to deliver sentiments which might be thought too assuming in so young a man, introduced his admonitions with this modest preface,

Remember what our *father* oft has taught us.

I, without quoting the son of the sage of Utica, constantly adduced the paternal authority for opinions, which might savour too much of arrogance without such a sanction.

I observed in the course of my visit, that self-denial made no part of Mrs. Ranby's religious plan. She fancied, I believe, that it savoured of works, and of works she was evidently afraid. She talked as if activity were useless, and exertion unnecessary, and as if, like inanimate matter, we had nothing to do but to sit still and be shone upon.

I assured her that though I depended on the mercy of God, through the merits of his Son, for salvation, as entirely as she could do, yet I thought that Almighty grace, so far from setting aside diligent exertion, was the principle which promoted it. That salvation is in no part of scripture represented as attainable by the indolent Christian, if I might couple such contradictory terms. That I had been often awfully struck with the plain declarations, 'that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence'—'strive to enter in at the strait gate'—'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'—'give diligence to make your calling sure'—'work out your own salvation.'—To this labour, this watchfulness, this sedulity of endeavour, the crown of life is expressly promised, and salvation is not less the free gift of God, because he has annexed certain conditions to our obtaining it.

The more I argued, the more I found my reputation decline; yet to argue she compelled me. I really believed she was sincere, but she was ill-informed, governed by feelings and impulses, rather than by the plain express rule of scripture. It was not that she did not read scripture, but she interpreted it in her own way; built opinions on insulated texts; did not compare scripture with scripture, except as it concurred to strengthen her bias. She considered with a disproportionate fondness, those passages which supported her preconceived opinions, instead of being uniformly governed by the general tenor and spirit of the sacred page. She had far less reverence for the preceptive than for the doctrinal parts, because she did not sufficiently consider faith as an operative influential principle; nor did she conceive that the sublimest doctrines involve deep practical consequences. She did not consider the government of the tongue, nor the command of her passions, as forming any material part of the Christian character. Her zeal was fiery, because her temper was so; and her charity was cold, because it was an expensive propensity to keep warm. Among the perfections of the Redeemer's character, she did not consider his being 'meek and lowly' as an example, the influence of which was to extend to her. She considered it indeed as *admirable*, but not as *imitable*: a distinction she was very apt to make in all her practical dissertations, and in her interpretation of scripture.

In the evening Mrs. Ranby was lamenting, in general and rather customary terms, her own exceeding sinfulness. Mr. Ranby said, 'You accuse yourself rather too heavily, my dear; 'you have sins, to be sure.' 'And pray what sins have I, Mr. Ranby?' said she, turning upon him with so much quickness that the poor man started. 'Nay,' said he, meekly; 'I did not mean to offend you; so far from it, that hearing you condemn yourself so grievously, I intended to comfort you, and to say that, except a few faults———' 'And pray what faults?' interrupted she, continuing to speak however, lest he should catch an interval to tell them. 'I defy you, Mr. Ranby, to produce one.' 'My dear,' replied he, 'as you charged yourself with all, I thought it would be letting you off cheaply by naming only two or three, such as———.' Here, fearing matters would go too far, I interposed, and softening things as much as I could for the lady, said, 'I conceived that Mr. Ranby meant, that though she partook of the general corruption———' Here Ranby interrupting me with more spirit than I thought he possessed, said, 'General corruption, Sir, must be a source of particular corruption. I did not mean that my wife was worse than other women.' 'Worse, Mr. Ranby, worse?' cried she. Ranby for the first time in his life, not minding her, went on, 'As she is always insisting that the whole species is corrupt, she cannot help allowing that she herself has not quite escaped the infection. Now, to be a sinner in the gross, and a saint in the detail; that is, to have all sins and no faults, is a thing I do not quite comprehend.'

After he had left the room, which he did as the shortest way of allaying the storm, she apologized for him, and said, 'he was a well meaning man, and acted up to the little light he had;' but added, 'that he was unacquainted with religious feelings, and knew little of the nature of conversion.'

Mrs. Ranby, I found, seems to consider Christianity, as a kind of free-masonry, and therefore thinks it superfluous to speak on serious subjects to any but the initiated. If they do not *return the sign*, she gives them up as blind and dead.—She thinks she can only make herself intelligible to those to whom certain peculiar phrases are familiar; and though her friends may be correct, devout, and both doctrinally and practically pious, yet if they cannot catch a certain mystic meaning, if there is not a sympathy of intelligence between her and them, if they do not fully conceive of impressions, and cannot respond to mysterious communications, she holds them unworthy of intercourse with her. She does not so much insist on high moral excellence as the criterion of their worth, as on their own account of their internal feelings.

She holds very cheap that gradual growth in piety which is in reality no less the effect of divine grace, than those instantaneous conversions which she believes to be so common. She cannot be persuaded that, of every advance in piety, of every improvement in virtue, of every illumination of the understanding, of every amendment in the heart, of every ratification of the will, the Spirit of God is no less the author because it is progressive, than if it were sudden It is true, Omnipotence can, when he pleases, still produce these instantaneous effects, as he has sometimes done; but as it is not his established or common mode of operation, it seem

vain and rash, presumptuously to wait for these miraculous interferences. An implicit dependence, however, on such interferences is certainly more gratifying to the genius of enthusiasm, than the anxious vigilance, the fervent prayer, the daily struggle, the sometimes scarcely perceptible, though constant progress of the sober-minded Christian. Such a Christian is fully aware that his heart requires as much watching in the more advanced as in the earliest stages of his religious course. He is cheerful in a well-grounded hope, and looks not for ecstacies, till that hope be swallowed up in fruition. Thankful if he feel in his heart a growing love of God, and an increasing submission to his will, though he is unconscious of visions, and unacquainted with any revelation but that which God has made in his word. He remembers, and he derives consolation from the remembrance, that his Saviour, in his most gracious and soothing invitation to the 'heavy laden,' has mercifully promised 'rest,' but he has no where promised rapture.

CHAP. VI.

But to return to Mrs. Ranby's daughters. Is this *consistency*, said I to myself, when I compared the inanity of the life with the seriousness of the discourse; and contrasted the vacant way in which the day was spent, with the decent and devout manner, in which it was begun and ended? I recollected that under the early though imperfect sacred institution, the fire of the morning and evening sacrifice was never suffered to be extinguished during the day.

Though Mrs. Ranby would have thought it a little heathenish to have had her daughters instructed in polite literature, and to have filled a leisure hour in reading to her a useful book, that was not professedly religious, she felt no compunction at their waste of time, or the trifling pursuits in which the day was suffered to spend itself. The pianoforte, when they were weary of the harp, copying some different drawings, gilding a set of flower pots, and netting white gloves and veils, seemed to fill up the whole business of these immortal beings, of these Christians, for whom it had been solemnly engaged that they should manfully fight under Christ's banner.

On a further acquaintance, I was much more inclined to lay the blame on their education than their dispositions. I found them not only good humoured, but charitably disposed; but their charities were small and casual, often ill applied, and always without a plan. They knew nothing of the state, character, or wants of the neighbouring poor; and it had never been pointed out to them that the instruction of the young and ignorant made any part of the duty of the rich towards them.

When I once ventured to drop a hint on this subject to Mrs. Ranby, she drily said there were many other ways of doing good to the poor, besides exposing her daughters to the probability of catching diseases, and the certainty of getting dirt by such visits. Her subscription was never wanting when she was *quite sure* that the object was deserving. As I suspected that she a little overrated her own charity, I could not forbear observing, that I did not think it demanded a combination of all the virtues to entitle a poor sick wretch to a dinner. And though I durst not quote so light an author as Hamlet to her, I could not help saying to myself, *give every man his due and who shall 'scape whipping?* O! if God dealt so rigidly with us; if he waited to bestow his ordinary blessings till we were good enough to deserve them, who would be clothed? who would be fed? who would have a roof to shelter him?

It was not that she gave nothing away, but she had a great dislike to relieve any but those of her own religious persuasion.—Though her Redeemer laid down his life for all people, nations, and languages, she will only lay down her money for a very limited number of a very limited class. To be religious is not claim sufficient on her bounty; they must be religious in a particular way.

The Miss Ranbys had not been habituated to make any systematic provision for regular charity, or for any of those accidental calamities, for which the purse of the affluent should always be provided: and being very expensive in their persons, they had often not a six-pence to bestow, when the most deserving case presented itself. This must frequently happen when there is no specific fund for charity which should be included in the general arrangement of expenses: and the exercise of benevolence, not be left to depend on the accidental state of the purse. If no new trinket happened to be wanted, these young ladies were liberal to any application, though always without judging of its merits by their own eyes and ears. But if there was a competition between a sick family and a new brooch, the brooch was sure to carry the day. This would not have been the case, had they been habituated to visit themselves the abodes of penury and woe. Their flexible young hearts would have been wrought upon by the actual sight of miseries, the impression of which was feeble when it reached their ears at a distance, surrounded as they were with all the softnesses and accommodations of luxurious life. 'They would do what they could. They hoped it was not so bad as it was represented.' They fell into the usual way of pacifying their consciences by their regrets; and brought themselves to believe that their sympathy with the suffering was an atonement for their not relieving it.

I observed, with concern, during my visit, how little the Christian temper seemed to be considered as a part of the Christian religion. This appeared in the daily concerns of this high professor. An opinion contradicted, a person of different religious views commended, the smallest opposition to her will, the intrusion of an unseasonable visitor, even an imperfection in the dressing of some dish at table: such trifles not only discomposed her, but the discomposure was manifested with a vehemence, which she was not aware was a fault; nor did she seem at all sensible that her religion was ever to be resorted to but on great occasions, forgetting that great occasions but rarely occur in

common life, and that these small passes, at which the enemy is perpetually entering, the true Christian will vigilantly guard.

I observed in Mrs. Ranby one striking inconsistency. While she considered it as forming a complete line of separation from the world, that she and her daughters abstained from public places, she had no objection to their indemnifying themselves for this forbearance, by devoting so monstrous a disproportion of their time to that very amusement which constitutes so principal a part of diversion abroad. The time which is redeemed from what is wrong, is of little value, if not dedicated to what is right; and it is not enough that the doctrines of the gospel furnish a subject for discussion, if they do not furnish a principle of action.

One of the most obvious defects which struck me in this, and two or three other families, whom I afterwards visited, was the want of companionableness in the daughters. They did not seem to form a part of the family compact; but made a kind of distinct branch of themselves. Surely, when only the parents and a few select friends are met together, in a family way, the daughters should contribute their portion to enliven the domestic circle. They were always ready to sing and to play, but did not take the pains to produce themselves in conversation; but seemed to carry on a distinct intercourse, by herding, and whispering, and laughing together.

In some women who seemed to be possessed of good ingredients, they were so ill mixed up together as not to produce an elegant, interesting companion. It appeared to me that three of the grand inducements in the choice of a wife, are, that a man may have a directress for his family, a preceptress for his children, and a companion for himself. Can it be honestly affirmed that the present habits of domestic life are generally favourable to the union of these three essentials? Yet which of them can a man of sense and principle consent to relinquish in his conjugal prospects?

CHAP. VII.

I RETURNED to town at the end of a few days. To a speculative stranger, a *London day* presents every variety of circumstance in every conceivable shape of which human life is susceptible. When you trace the solicitude of the morning countenance, the anxious exploring of the morning paper, the eager interrogation of the morning guest—when you hear the dismal enumeration of losses by land, and perils by sea—taxes trebling, dangers multiplying, commerce annihilating, war protracted, invasion threatening, destruction impending—your mind catches and communicates the terror, and you feel yourself 'falling with a falling state.'

But when, in the course of the very same day, you meet these gloomy prognosticators at the sumptuous, not 'dinner, but hecatomb,' at the gorgeous fete, the splendid spectacle; when you hear the frivolous discourse, witness the luxurious dissipation, contemplate the boundless indulgence, and observe the ruinous gaming you would be ready to exclaim, 'Am I not supping in the Antipodes of that land in which I breakfasted? Surely this is a country of different men, different characters, and different circumstances. This is at least a place in which there is neither fear nor danger, nor want, nor misery, nor war.

If you observe the overflowing subscriptions raised, the innumerable societies formed, the committees appointed, the agents employed, the royal patrons engaged, the noble presidents provided, the palace-like structures erected; and all this to alleviate, to cure, and even to prevent every calamity, which the indigent can suffer, or the affluent conceive; to remove not only want but ignorance; to suppress not only misery but vice, would you not exclaim with Hamlet, 'What a piece of work is man? How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In action how like an angel! In compassion, how like a God!'

If you look into the whole comet-like eccentric orb of the human character; if you compared all the struggling contrariety of principle and of passion; the clashing of opinion and of action, of resolution and of performance; the victories of evil over the propensities to good; if you contrasted the splendid virtue with the disorderly vice; the exalted generosity with the selfish narrowness; the provident bounty with the thoughtless prodigality; the extremes of all that is dignified, with the excesses of all that is abject, would you not exclaim in the very spirit of Pascal, 'O! the grandeur and the littleness, the excellence and the corruption, the majesty and the meanness of man!

If you attended the debates in our great deliberative assemblies; if you heard the argument and the eloquence, 'the wisdom and the wit,' the public spirit and the disinterestedness; Curtius's devotedness to his country, and Regulus's disdain of self, expressed with all the logic which reason can suggest, and embellished with all the rhetoric which fancy can supply, would you not rapturously cry out, this is

Above all Greek, above all Roman fame?

But if you discern the bitter personality, the incurable prejudice, the cutting retort, the suspicious implication, the recriminating sneer, the cherished animosity; if you beheld the interests of an empire standing still, the business of the civilized globe suspended, while two intellectual gladiators are thrusting each to give the other a fall, and to show his own strength; would you not lament the littleness of the great, the infirmities of the good, and the weaknesses of the wise? Would you not, soaring a flight far above Hamlet or Pascal, apostrophize with the Royal Psalmist, 'Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou regardest him?'

But to descend to my individual concerns.—Among my acquaintance I visited two separate families, where the daughters were remarkably attractive, and more than usually endowed with beauty, sense, and elegance; but I was deterred from following up the acquaintance, by observing in each family, practices which

though very different, almost equally revolted me.

In one, where the young ladies had large fortunes, they insinuated themselves into the admiration, and invited the familiarity of young men, by attentions the most flattering, and civilities the most alluring. When they had made sure of their aim, and the admirers were encouraged to make proposals, the ladies burst into a loud laugh, wondered what the man could mean; they never dreamt of any thing more than common politeness; then petrified them with distant looks, and turned about to practice the same arts on others.

The other family, in which I thought I had secured an agreeable intimacy, I instantly deserted on observing the gracious and engaging reception given by the ladies to more than one libertine of the most notorious profligacy. The men were handsome, and elegant, and fashionable, and had figured in newspapers and courts of justice. This degrading popularity rather attracted than repelled attention; and while the guilty associates in their crime were shunned with abhorrence by these very ladies, the specious undoers were not only received with complaisance, but there was a sort of competition who should be most strenuous in their endeavours to attract them. Surely women of fashion can hardly make a more corrupt use of influence, a talent for which they will be peculiarly accountable. Surely, mere personal purity can hardly deserve the name of virtue in those who can sanction notoriously vicious characters, which their reprobation, if it could not reform, would at least degrade.

On a further acquaintance, I found Sir John and Lady Belfield to be persons of much worth. —They were candid, generous and sincere. They saw the errors of the world in which they lived, but had not resolution to emancipate themselves from its shackels. They partook, indeed, very sparingly of its diversions, not so much because they suspected their evil tendency, as because they had better resources in themselves.

Indeed, it is wonderful that more people, from mere good sense and just taste, without the operation of any religious consideration, do not, when the first ardour is cooled, perceive the futility of what is called pleasure, and decline it as the man declines the amusements of the child. But fashionable society produces few persons who, like the ex-courtier of King David, assign their four-score years as a reason for no longer 'delighting in the voice of singing men and singing women.'

Sir John and Lady Belfield, however, kept up a large and general acquaintance; and it is not easy to continue to associate with the world, without retaining something of its spirit. Their standard of morals was high, compared with that of those with whom they lived; but when the standard of the gospel was suggested they drew in a little, and thought *things might be carried too far*. There was nothing in their practice which made it their interest to hope that Christianity might not be true. They both assented to its doctrines, and lived in a kind of general hope of its final promises. But their views were neither correct nor elevated. They were contented to generalize the doctrines of scripture, and though they venerated its awful truths in the aggregate, they rather took them upon trust than laboured to understand them, or to imbue their minds with a spirit of them Many a high professor, however, might have blushed to see how carefully they exercised not a few Christian dispositions; how kind and patient they were! how favourable in their constructions of the actions of others! how charitable to the necessitous! how exact in veracity! and how tender of the reputation of their neighbour!

Sir John had been early hurt by living so much with men of the world, with wits, politicians, and philosophers. This, though he had escaped the contagion of false principles, had kept back the growth of such as were true. Men versed in the world, and abstracted from all religious society, begin, in time, a little to suspect whether their own religious opinions may not possibly be wrong, or at least rigid, when they see them so opposite to those of persons to whose judgment they are accustomed to look up in other points. He found, too, that in the society in which he lived, the reputation of religion detracted much from that of talents, and a man does not care to have his understanding questioned by those in whose opinion he wishes to stand well. This apprehension did not, indeed, drive him to renounce his principles, but it led him to conceal them; and that piety which is forcibly kept out of sight, which has nothing to fortify, and every thing to repel it, is too apt to decline.

His marriage with an amiable woman, whose virtues and graces attached him to his own home, drew him off from the most dangerous of his prior connexions. This union had at once improved his character and augmented his happiness. If Lady Belfield erred, it was through excess of kindness and candour. Her kindness led to the too great indulgence of her children; and her candour to the too favourable construction of the errors of her acquaintance. She was the very reverse of my Hampstead friend. Whereas Mrs. Ranby thought hardly any body would be saved, Lady Belfield comforted herself that hardly any body was in danger. This opinion was not taken up as a palliative to quiet her conscience, on account of the sins of her own conduct, for her conduct was remarkably correct; but it sprung from a natural sweetness of temper, joined to a mind not sufficiently informed and guided by scripture truth. She was candid and teachable, but as she could not help seeing that she had more religion than most of her acquaintance, she felt a secret complaceney in observing how far her principles rose above theirs, instead of an humbling conviction of how far her own fell below the requisitions of the gospel.

The fundamental error was, that she had no distinct view of the corruption of human nature. She often lamented the weaknesses and vices of individuals, but thought all vice an incidental not a radical mischief, the effect of thoughtlessness and casual temptation. She talked with discrimination of the faults of some of her chil-

dren; but while she rejoiced in the happier dispositions of others, she never suspected that they had all brought into the world with them a natural tendency to evil; and thought it cruel to suppose that such innocent little things, had any such wrong propensities as education would not effectually cure. In every thing the complete contrast of Mrs. Ranby—as the latter thought education could do nothing, Lady Belfield thought it would do every thing; that there was no good tendency which it would not bring to perfection, and no corruption which it could not completely eradicate. On the operation of a higher influence she placed too little dependence; while Mrs. Ranby rested in an unreasonable trust on an interference not warranted by scripture.

In regard to her children, Lady Belfield was led by the strength of her affection to extreme indulgence. She encouraged no vice in them, but she did not sufficiently check those indications which are the seeds of vice. She reproved the actual fault, but never thought of implanting a principle which might extirpate the evil from whence the fault sprung; so that the individual error and the individual correction were continually recurring.

As Mrs. Ranby, I had observed, seldom quoted any sacred writer but St. Paul, I remarked that Lady Belfield admired almost exclusively Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the historical books of the Bible. Of the Epistles, that of St. James was her favourite; the others she thought chiefly, if not entirely applicable to the circumstances of the Jews and Pagans, to the converts from among whom they were addressed. If she entertained rather an awful reverence for the doctrinal parts, than an earnest wish to study them, it arose from the common mistake of believing that they were purely speculative, without being aware of their deep importance. But if these two ladies were diametrically opposite to each other in certain points, both were frequently right in what they assumed, and both wrong only in what they rejected. Each contended for one half of that which will not save, when disjoined from the other, but which, when united to it, makes up the complete Christian character.

Lady Belfield, who was, if I may so speak, constitutionally charitable, almost thought that heaven might be purchased by charity. She inverted the valuable superstructure of good works, and laid them as her foundation; and while Mrs. Ranby would not perhaps much have blamed Moses for breaking the tables of the law, had he only demolished the second, Lady Belfield would have saved the second as the more important of the two.

Lady Belfield had less vanity than any woman I ever knew, who was not governed by a very strict religious principle. Her modesty never courted the admiration of the world, but her timidity too much dreaded its censure. She would not do a wrong thing to obtain any applause, but she omitted some right ones from the dread of blame.

CHAP. VIII.

The house of Sir John Belfield was become a pleasant kind of home to me. He and his lady seldom went out in an evening. Happy in each other and in their children, though they lived much with the rational, they associated as little as they thought possible with the racketing world. Yet being known to be generally at home, they were exposed to the inroads of certain invaders, called fine ladies, who, always afraid of being too early for their parties, are constantly on the watch, how to disburden themselves, for the intermediate hour, of the heavy commodity *time*; a raw material, which as they seldom work up at home, they are always willing to truck against the time of their more domestic acquaintance. Now, as these last *have* always something to do, it is an unfair traffic; 'all the reciprocity is on one side,' to borrow the expression of an illustrious statesman; and the barter is as disadvantageous to the sober home trader, as that of the honest negroes, who exchange their gold dust and ivory for the beads and bits of glass of the wily English.

These nightly irruptions, though sometimes inconvenient to my friends, were of use to me, as they enabled me to see and judge more of the gay world, than I could have done without going in search of it; a risk, which I thought bore no proportion to the gain. It was like learning the language of the enemy's country at home.

One evening, when we were sitting happily alone in the library. Lady Belfield, working at her embroidery, cheerfully joining in our little discussions, and comparing our peaceful pleasures with those pursued by the occupiers of the countless carriages which were tearing up the 'wheel-worn streets,' or jostling each other at the door of the next house, where a grand assembly was collecting its myriads—Sir John asked what should be the evening book. Then rising, he took down from the shelf Akenside's Pleasures of Imagination.

'Is it,' said he, as soon as he sat down, 'the rage for novelty, or a real degeneracy of taste, that we now so seldom hear of a poet, who, when I was a boy, was the admiration of every man who had a relish for true genius? I cannot defend his principles, since in a work, of which *Man* is professedly the object, he has overlooked his *immortality*; a subject, which one wonders did not force itself upon him, as so congenial to the sublimity of his genius, whatever his religious views might have been. But to speak of him only as a poet; a work, which abounds in a richer profusion of images, and a more variegated luxuriance of expression than the Pleasures of Imagination, cannot easily be found. The flimsy metre of our day seems to add fresh value to his sinewy verse. We have no happier master of poetic numbers, none who better knew

To build the lofty rhyme.

The condensed vigour, so indispensable to blank verse, the skilful variation of the pause, the masterly structure of the period, and all the occult mysteries of the art, can perhaps be best learnt from Akenside. If he could have conveyed to Thompson his melody and rhythm, and Thompson would have paid him back in perspicuity and transparency of meaning, how they might have enriched each other!'

'I confess,' said I, 'in reading Akenside, I have now and then found the same passage at once enchanting and unintelligible. As it happens to many frequenters of the Opera, the music always transports, but the words are not always understood.' I then desired my friend to gratify us with the first book of the Pleasures of Imagination.

Sir John is a passionate lover of poetry, in which he has a fine taste. He read it with much spirit and feeling, especially these truly classical lines.

Mind, mind alone, bear witness earth and heaven,
The living fountains in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime: here hand in hand
Sit paramount the graces; here enthron'd,
Celestial Venus, with divinest airs
Invites the soul to never-fading joy.

'The reputation of this exquisite passage,' said he, laying down the book, 'is established by the consenting suffrage of all men of taste, though by the critical countenance you are beginning to put on, you look as if you had a mind to attack it.'

'So far from it,' said I, 'that I know nothing more splendid in the whole mass of our poetry. And I feel almost guilty of high treason against the majesty of the sublimer Muses, in the remark I am going to hazard, on the celebrated lines which follow. The Poet's object, through this and the two following pages, is to establish the infinite superiority of mind over unconscious matter, even in its fairest forms. The idea is as just as the execution is beautiful: so also is his supreme elevation of intellect, over

Greatness of bulk, or symmetry of parts.

Nothing again can be finer than his subsequent preference of

The powers of genius and design,

over even the stupendous range

Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres.

He proceeds to ransack the stores of the mental and the moral world, as he had done the world of matter, and with a pen dipped in Hippocrene, opposes to the latter

The charms of virtuous friendship, &c.
* * * * *
The candid blush
Of him who strives with fortune to be just.
* * * * *
All the wild majesty of private life.
* * * * *
The graceful tear that streams from others' woes.

'Why, Charles,' said Sir John, 'I am glad to find you the enthusiastic eulogist of the passage of which I suspected you were about to be the saucy censurer.'

'Censure,' replied I, 'is perhaps too strong a term for any part, especially the most admired part of this fine poem. I need not repeat the lines on which I was going to risk a slight observation; they live in the mind and memory of every lover of the Muses.'

'I will read the next passage, however,' said Sir John, 'that I may be better able to controvert your criticism.'

Look then abroad through nature to the range
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres.
Wheeling unshaken through the void immense,
And speak, oh man! does this capacious scene
With half that kindling majesty dilate
Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose
Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate
Amid the crowd of patriots, and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country hail;
For lo! the tyrant prostrate in the dust,
And Rome again is free!

'What a grand and powerful passage!' said Sir John.

'I acknowledge it,' said I, 'but is it as just as it is grand? *Le vrai est le seul beau.* It is a fair and direct opposition between mind and matter! The poet could not have expressed the image more nobly; but might he not, out of the abundant treasures of his opulent mind, have chosen it with more felicity? Is an act of murder, even of an usurper, as happily contrasted with the organization of matter, as the other beautiful instances I named, and which he goes on to select? The superiority of mental beauty is the point he is establishing, and his elaborate preparation leads you to expect all his other instances to be drawn from pure mental excellence. His other exemplifications are general, this is particular. They are a class, this is only a variety. I question if Milton, who was at least as ardent a champion for liberty, and as much of a party man as Akenside, would have used this illustration. Milton, though he often insinuates a political stroke in his great poem, always, I think, generalizes. Whatever had been his principles, or at whatever period he had written, I question, when he wanted to describe the overthrow of authority by the rebel angels, if he would have illustrated it by Cromwell's seizing the mace, or the decapitation of Charles; much less, if he would have selected these two instances as the triumph of mind over matter.'

'But,' said Sir John, 'you forget that Akenside professedly adopts the language of Cicero in his second philippic.' He then read the note beginning with, Cæsare interfecto, &c.

'True,' said I, 'I am not arguing the matter as a point of fact, but as a point of just application. I pass over the comparison of Brutus with Jove, which by the way would have become Tully better than Akenside, but which Tully would have perhaps thought too bold. Cicero adorns his oration with this magnificent description. He relates it as an event, the other uses it as an illustration of that to which I humbly conceive it does not exactly apply. The orator paints the violent death of a hero; the poet adopts the description of this violent death, or rather of the stroke which caused it, to illustrate the perfection of intellectual grandeur.—After all, it is as much a party question as a poetical one. A question on which the critic will be apt to be guided in his decision, by his politics rather than by his taste. The splendour of the passage, however, will inevitably dazzle the feeling reader, till it produce the common effect of ex

cessive brightness, that of somewhat blinding the beholder.

CHAP. IX.

While we were thus pleasantly engaged, the servant announced Mrs. Fentham; and a fashionable looking woman, about the middle of life, rather youthfully drest, and not far from handsome, made her appearance. Instead of breaking forth into the usual modish jargon, she politely entered into the subject in which she found us engaged; envied lady Belfield the happiness of elegant quiet, which she herself might have been equally enjoying at her own house, and professed herself a warm admirer of poetry. She would probably have professed an equal fondness for metaphysics, geometry, military tactics, or the Arabic language, if she had happened to have found us employed in the study of either.

From poetry the transition to painting was easy and natural. Mrs. Fentham possessed all the phraseology of connoisseurship, and asked me if I was fond of pictures. I professed the delight I took in them in strong, that is, in true terms. She politely said, that Mr. Fentham had a very tolerable collection of the best masters, and particularly a Titian, which she would be happy to have the honour of showing me the next morning. I bowed my thankful assent; she appointed the hour, and soon after, looking at her watch, said she was afraid she must leave the delights of such a select and interesting society for a far less agreeable party.

When she was gone, I expressed my obligations to her politeness, and anticipated the pleasure I should have in seeing her pictures. 'She is much more anxious that you should see her *Originals*,' said Lady Belfield, smiling; 'the kindness is not *quite* disinterested; take care of your heart.' Sir, John, rather gravely, said, 'It is with reluctance that I ever say any thing to the prejudice of any body that I receive into my house; but as the son of my valued friend, I think it fair to tell you that this vigilant matron keeps a keen look-out after all young men of fortune. This is not the first time that that Titian has been made the bait to catch a promising acquaintance. Indeed, it is now grown so stale, that had you not been a new man, she would hardly have risked it. If you had happened not to like painting, some book would have been offered you. The return of a book naturally brings on a visit. But all these devices have not yet answered. The damsels still remain, like Shakespeare's plaintive maid, 'in single blessedness.'—They do not, however, like her, spend gloomy nights

> Chaunting cold hymns to the pale, lifeless moon,

but in singing sprightlier roundelays to livelier auditors.'

I punctually attended the invitation, effectually shielded from danger by the friendly intimation, and a still more infallible Ægis, the charge of my father never to embark in any engagement till I had made my visit to Mr. Stanley. My veneration for his memory operated as a complete defence.

I saw and admired the pictures. The pictures brought on an invitation to dinner. I found Mrs. Fentham to be in her conversation, a sensible, correct, knowing woman. Her daughters were elegant in their figures, well instructed in the usual accomplishments, well bred and apparently well tempered. Mr. Fentham was a man of business, and of the world. He had a great income from a place under government, out of which the expenses of his family permitted him to save nothing. Private fortune he had little or none. His employment engaged him almost entirely, so that he interfered but little with domestic affairs. A general air of elegance, almost amounting to magnificence, pervaded the whole establishment.

I at first saw but little to excite any suspicion of the artificial character of the lady of the house. The first gleam of light which let in the truth was the expressions most frequent in Mrs. Fentham's mouth—'What will the world say?' 'What will people think?' 'How will such a thing appear?' 'Will it have a good look?' 'The world is of opinion.' 'Won't such a thing be censured?' On a little acquaintance I discovered that human applause was the motive of all she said, and reputation her great object in all she did. Opinion was the idol to which she sacrificed. Decorum was the inspirer of her duties, and praise the reward of them. The standard of the world was the standard by which she weighed actions. She had no higher principle of conduct. She adopted the forms of religion, because she saw that, carried to a certain degree, they rather produce credit than censure. While her husband adjusted his accounts on the Sunday morning, she regularly carried her daughters to church, except a head-ache had been caught at the Saturday's opera; and as regularly exhibited herself and them afterwards in Hyde Park. As she said it was Mr. Fentham's leisure day, she complimented him with always having a great dinner on Sundays, but alleged her piety as a reason for not having cards in the evening at home, though she had no scruple to make one at a private party at a friend's house; soberly conditioning, however, that there should not be more than *three tables;* the right or wrong, the decorum or impropriety, the gaiety or gravity always being made specifically to depend on the number of tables.

She was, in general, extremely severe against women who had lost their reputation; though she had no hesitation in visiting a few of the most dishonourable, if they were of high rank, or belonged to a certain set. In that case, she excused herself by saying, 'that as fashionable people continued to countenance them, it was not for her to be scrupulous—One must sail with the stream—I can't set my face against the world.' But if an unhappy girl had been drawn aside, or one who had not rank to bear her out had erred, that altered the case, and she then expressed the most virtuous indignation. When modesty happened to be in repute, not the necks of Queen Elizabeth and her courtly virgins were more entrenched in ruffs and shrouded in tuck

ers, than those of Mrs. Fentham and her daughters; but when *display* became the order of the day, the Grecian Venus was scarcely more unconscious of a veil.

With a very good understanding she never allowed herself one original thought, or one spontaneous action. Her ideas, her language, and her conduct, were entirely regulated by the ideas, language, and conduct of those who stood well with the world. Vanity in her was a steady, inward, but powerfully pervading principle. It did not evaporate in levity or indiscretion, but was the hidden though forcible spring of her whole course of action. She had all the gratification which vanity affords in secret, and all the credit which its prudent operation procures in public. She was apparently guilty of no excess of any kind. She had a sober scale of creditable vices, and never allowed herself to exceed a few stated degrees in any of them. She reprobated gaming, but could not exist without cards. Masquerades she censured as highly extravagant and dangerous, but when given by ladies of high quality, at their own houses, she thought them an elegant and proper amusement. Though she sometimes went to the play, she did not care for what passed on the stage, for she confessed the chief pleasure the theatre afforded, was to reckon up, when she came home, how many dutchesses and countesses had bowed to her across the house.

A complete despot at home, her arbitrariness is so veiled by correctness of manner, and studied good breeding, that she obtains the credit of great mildness and moderation. She is said not to love her daughters who come too near her in age, and go too much beyond her in beauty to be forgiven; yet like a consummate politician, she is ever labouring for their advancement. She has generally several schemes in hand, and always one scheme under another, the under plot ready to be brought forward if the principal one fails. Though she encourages pretenders, yet she is afraid to accept of a tolerable proposal, lest a better should present itself: but if the loftier hope fails, she then contrives to lure back the inferior offer. She can balance to a nicety, in the calculation of chances, the advantages or disadvantages of a higher possibility against a lower probability.

Though she neither wants reading nor taste, her mind is never sufficiently disengaged to make her an agreeable companion. Her head is always at work, conjecturing the event of every fresh ball and every new acquaintance. She cannot even

> Take her tea without a stratagem.

She set out in life with a very slender acquaintance, and clung for a while to one or two damaged peeresses, who were not received by women of their own rank. But I am told it was curious to see with what adroitness she could extricate herself from a disreputable acquaintance, when a more honourable one stepped in to fill the niche. She made her way rapidly by insinuating to one person of note how intimate she was with another, and to both what handsome things each said of the other. By constant attentions, petty offices, and measured flattery, she has got footing into almost every house of distinction. Her decorum is invariable. She boasts that she was never guilty of the indecency of violent passion. Poor woman! she fancies there is no violent passion but that of anger. Little does she think that ambition, vanity, the hunger of applause, a rage for being universally known, are all violent passions, however modified by discretion, or varnished by art. She suffers too, all that 'vexation of spirit' which treads on the heels of 'vanity.' Disappointment and jealousy poison the days devoted to pleasure. The party does not answer. The wrong people never stay away, and the right ones never come. The guest for whom the fete is made is sure to fail. Her party is thin, while that of her competitor overflows; or there is a plenty of dowagers and a paucity of young men. When the costly and elaborate supper is on the table, excuses arrive: even if the supper is crowded the daughters remain upon hands. How strikingly does she exemplify the strong expression of—'labouring in the fire for very vanity'—'of giving her money for that which is not bread, and her labour for that which satisfieth not!'

After spending the day at Mrs. Fentham's I went to sup with my friends in Cavendish square. Lady Belfield was impatient for my history of the dinner. But Sir John said, laughing, 'You shall not say a word, Charles—I can tell how it was as exactly as if I had been there. Charlotte, who has the best voice, was brought out to sing, but was placed a little behind, as her person is not quite perfect; Maria, who is the most picturesque figure, was put to *attitudinize* at the harp, arrayed in the costume, and assuming the fascinating graces of Marmion's Lady Heron:

> Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
> The strings her fingers flew.

Then, Charles, was the moment of peril! then, according to your favourite Milton's most incongruous image,

> You took in sounds that might create a soul
> Under the ribs of death.

For fear, however, that your heart of adamant should hold out against all these perilous assaults, its vulnerability was tried in other quarters. The Titian would naturally lead to Lavinia's drawings. A beautiful sketch of the lakes would be produced, with a gentle intimation, what a sweet place Westmoreland must be to live in! When you had exhausted all proper raptures on the art and on the artist, it would be recollected, that as Westmoreland was so near Scotland, you would naturally be fond of a reel. The reel of course succeeded.' Then, putting himself into an attitude, and speaking theatrically, he continued

> 'Then universal Pan,
> Knit with the graces and the hours in dance—,

Oh! no, I forget, universal Pan could not join' but he could admire. Then all the perfections of all the nymphs burst on you in full blaze.

Such a concentration of attractions you could never resist! You are *but* a man, and now doubtless a lost man.' Here he stopped to finish his laugh, and I was driven reluctantly to acknowledge that his picture, though a carricature, was, notwithstanding, a resemblance.

'And so,' said Sir John, 'you were brought under no power of incantation, by this dangerous visit. You will be driven, like the tempted Ithican, to tie yourself to a mast, or flee for safety from the enchantment of these Syrens.'

While we were at supper, with more gravity, he said, 'Among the various objects of ambition, there are few in life which brings less accession to its comfort, than an unceasing struggle to rise to an elevation in society very much above the level of our own condition, without being aided by any stronger ascending power than mere vanity. Great talents, of whatever kind, have a natural tendency to rise, and to lift their possessor. The flame, in mounting, does but obey its impulse. But when there is no energy more powerful than the passion to be great, destitute of the gifts which confer greatness, the painful efforts of ambition are like water, forced above its level by mechanical powers. It requires constant exertions of art, to keep up what art at first set a-going. Poor Mrs. Fentham's head is perpetually at work to maintain the elevation she has reached. And how little, after all, is she considered by those on whose caresses her happiness depends! She has lost the esteem of her original circle, where she might have been respected, without gaining that of her high associates, who, though they receive her, still refuse her claims of equality. She is not considered as of their *establishment*, it is but *toleration* at best.'

At Mrs. Fentham's I encountered Lady Bab Lawless, a renowned modish dowager, famous for laying siege to the heart of every distinguished man, with the united artillery of her own wit and her daughter's beauty. How many ways there are of being wrong! She was of a character diametrically opposite to that of Mrs. Fentham. She had the same end in view, but the means she used to accomplish it were of a bolder strain. Lady Bab affected no delicacy, she laughed at reserve, she had shaken hands with decorum.

She held the *noisy* tenor of her way,

with no assumed refinement; and, so far from shielding her designs behind the mask of decency, she disdained the obsolete expedient. Her plans succeeded the more infallibly, because her frankness defeated all suspicion. A man could never divine that such gay and open assaults could have their foundation in design, and he gave her full credit for artless simplicity, at the moment she was catching him in her toils. If she now and then had gone too far, and by a momentary oversight or excessive levity had betrayed too much, with infinite address she would make a crane-neck turn, and fall to discussing, not without ability, some moral or theological topic. Thus she affected to establish the character of a woman thoughtless through wit, indiscreet through simplicity, but religious on principle.

As there is no part of the appendage to a wife, which I have ever more dreaded than a Machiavelian mother, I should have been deaf to wit and blind to beauty, and dead to advances, had their united batteries been directed against me. But I had not the ambition to aspire to that honour. I was much too low a mark for her lofty aim. She had a natural antipathy to every name that could not be found in the red book. She equally shrunk from untitled opulence and indigent nobility. She knew by instinct if a younger son was in the room, and by a petrifying look checked his most distant approaches; while with her powerful spells, she never failed to draw within her magic circle the splendid heir, and charm him to her purpose.

Highly born herself, she had early been married to a rich man of inferior rank, for the sake of a large settlement. Her plan was, that her daughters (who, by the way, are modest and estimable) should find in the man they married, still higher birth than her own, and more riches than her husband's.

It was a curious speculation to compare these two friends, and to observe how much less the refined manœuvres of Mrs. Fentham answered, than the open assaults of the intrepid Lady Bab. All the intricacies and labyrinths which the former had been so skilful and so patient in weaving, have not yet enthralled one captive; while the composed effrontery, the affecting to take for granted the offer which was never meant to be made, and treating that as concluded, which was never so much as intended, drew the unconscious victim of the other into the trap, before he knew it was set; the depth of her plot consisting in not appearing to have any. It was a novelty in intrigue. An originality which defied all competition, and in which no imitator has any chance of success.

CHAP. X.

Sir John carried me one morning to call on Lady Denham, a dowager of fashion, who had grown old in the trammels of the world. Though she seems resolved to die in the harness, yet she piques herself on being very religious, and no one inveighs against infidelity or impiety with more pointed censure. 'She has a grand-daughter,' said Sir John, 'who lives with her, and whom she has trained to walk precisely in her own steps, and which, she thinks, *is the way she should go.* 'The girl,' added he, smiling, 'is well looking, and will have a handsome fortune, and I am persuaded that, as my friend, I could procure you a good reception.'

We were shown into her dressing-room, where we found her with a book lying open before her. From a glance which I caught of the large black letter, I saw it was a *Week's Preparation.* This book it seems constantly lay open before her from breakfast till dinner, at this season. It was Passion week. But as this is the room in which she sees all her morning visitors, to none of whom is she ever denied, even at this period of retreat, she could only pick up momentary snatches of reading in the short intervals between one person bowing out

and another courtseying in. Miss Denham sat by, painting flowers.

Sir John asked her Ladyship if she would go and dine in a family way with Lady Belfield. She drew up, looked grave, and said, with much solemnity, that she should never think of dining abroad at this holy season. Sir John said, 'as we have neither cards nor company, I thought you might as well have eaten your chicken in my house as in your own.' But though she thought it a sin to dine with a sober family, she made herself amends for the sacrifice, by letting us see that her heart was brimful of the world, pressed down and running over. She indemnified herself for her abstinence from its diversions, by indulging in the only pleasures which she thought compatible with the sanctity of the season, uncharitable gossip, and unbounded calumny. She would not touch a card for the world, but played over to Sir John the whole game of the preceding Saturday night; told him by what a shameful inattention her partner had lost the odd trick; and that she should not have been beaten after all, had not her adversary, she verily believed, contrived to look over her hand.

Sir John seized the only minute in which we were alone, to ask her to add a guinea to a little sum he was collecting for a poor tradesman with a large family, who had been burnt out a few nights ago. 'His wife,' added he, 'was your favourite maid Dixon, and both are deserving people.'—'Ah, poor Dixon! she was always unlucky,' replied the Lady. 'How could they be so careless? Surely they might have put the fire out sooner. They should not have let it get ahead. I wonder people are not more active.'—'It is too late to inquire about that,' said Sir John; 'the question now is, not how their loss might have been prevented, but how it may be repaired.'—'I am really quite sorry,' said she, 'that I can give you nothing. I have had so many calls lately, that my charity-purse is completely exhausted—and that abominable Property-tax makes me quite a beggar.'

While she was speaking, I glanced on the open leaf at, 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they be ready to give;' and directing my eye further, it fell on, 'Be not deceived. God is not mocked.' These were the awful passages which formed a part of her *preparation*, and this was the practical use she made of them!

A dozen persons of both sexes 'had their exits and their entrances' during our stay; for the scene was so strange, and the character so new to me, that I felt unwilling to stir. Among other visitors was Signor Squallini, a favourite opera singer, whom she patronized. Her face was lighted up with joy at sight of him. He brought her an admired new air, in which he was preparing himself, and sung a few notes, that she might say she heard it the first. She felt all the dignity of the privilege, and extolled the air with all the phrases, cant, and rapture of *dilettanteism*.

After this, she drew a paper from between the leaves of her still opened book, which she showed him. It contained a list of all the company she had engaged to attend his benefit. 'I will call on some others,' said she, 'to-morrow after prayers; I am sorry this is a week in which I cannot see my friends at their assemblies, but on Sunday you know it will be over, and I shall have my house full in the evening. Next Monday will be Easter, and I shall be at our dear Dutchess's private masquerade, and then I hope to see and engage, the whole world. 'Here are ten guineas,' said she in a half whisper to the obsequious Signor, 'you may mention what I gave for *my* ticket, and it may set the fashion going.' She then pressed a ticket on Sir John and another on me. He declined, saying with great *sang froid*, 'You know we are *Handelians*.' What excuse I made I do not well know; I only know that I saved my ten guineas with a very bad grace, but felt bound in conscience to add them to what I had before subscribed to poor Dixon.

Hitherto I had never seen the gnat-strainer, and the camel-swallower, so strikingly exemplified.—And it is observable how forcibly the truth of Scripture is often illustrated by those who live in the boldest opposition to it. If you have any doubt while you are reading, go into the world, and your belief will be confirmed.

As we took our leave, she followed us to the door, I hoped it was with the guinea for the fire; but she only whispered Sir John, though he did not go himself, to prevail on such and such ladies to go to Squallini's benefit. 'Pray do,' said she, 'it will be charity. Poor fellow! he is sadly out at elbows, he has a fine liberal spirit, and can hardly make his large income do.

When we got into the street we admired the splendid chariot and laced liveries of this *indigent* professor, for whom our charity had been just solicited, and whose 'liberal spirit,' my friend assured me, consisted in sumptuous living, and the indulgence of every fashionable vice.

I could not restrain my exclamations as soon as we got out of hearing. To Sir John the scene was amusing, but to him it had lost the interest of novelty. 'I have known her ladyship about twelve years,' said he, 'and of course have witnessed a dozen of these annual paroxysms of devotion. I am persuaded that she is a gainer by them on her own principle, that is, in the article of pleasure. This short periodical abstinence whets her appetite to a keener relish for suspended enjoyment; and while she fasts from amusements, her blinded conscience enjoys a feast of self-gratulation. She feeds on the remembrance of her self-denial, even after she has returned to those delights which she thinks her retreat has fairly purchased. She considers religion as a system of pains and penalties, by the voluntary enduring of which, for a short time, she shall compound for all the indulgencies of the year.—She is persuaded that something must be annually forborne, in order to make her peace. After these periodical atonements, the Almighty being in her debt, will be obliged at least to pay her with heaven. This composition, which rather brings her in on the creditor side, not only quiets her conscience for the past, but enables her joyfully to enter on a new score.'

I asked Sir John, how Lady Belfield *could* associate with a woman of a character so opposite to her own? 'What can we do?' said he; 'we cannot be singular. We must conform

ittle to the world in which we live.' Trusting to his extreme good nature, and fired at the scene to which I had been a witness, I ventured to observe that non-conformity to such a world as that of which this lady was a specimen, was the very criterion of the religion taught by Him who had declared by way of pre-eminent distinction, that his kingdom was not of this world.'

'You are a young man,' answered he, mildly, 'and this delicacy and these prejudices would soon wear off, if you were to live some time in the world.'—'My dear Sir John,' said I, warmly, 'by the grace of God, I never *will* live in the world; at least, I will never associate with that part of it, whose society would be sure to wear off that delicacy and remove those prejudices. Why this is retaining all the worst part of popery.—Here is the abstinence without the devotion; the outward observance without the interior humiliation; the suspending of sin, not only without any design of forsaking it, but with a fixed resolution of returning to it, and of increasing the gust by the forbearance. Nay the sins she retains in order to mitigate the horrors of forbearance, are as bad as those she lays down. A postponed sin, which is fully intended to be resumed, is as much worse than a sin persisted in, as deliberate hypocrisy is worse than the impulse of passion. I desire not a more explicit comment on a text, which I was once almost tempted to think unjust; I mean, the greater facility of the entrance of gross and notorious offenders into heaven than of these formalists. No! if Miss Denham were sole heiress to Crœsus, and joined the beauty of Cleopatra to the wit of Sappho, I never would connect myself with a disciple of that school.'

'How many ways there are of being unhappy!' said Sir John, as we returned one day from a ride we had taken some miles out of town, to call on a friend of his. 'Mr. Stanhope, whom we have just quitted, is a man of great elegance of mind. His early life was passed in liberal studies, and in the best company. But his fair prospects were blasted by a disproportionate marriage. He was drawn in by a vanity too natural to young men, that of fancying himself preferred by a woman who had no one recommendation but beauty. To be admired by her whom all his acquaintance admired, gratified his *amour propre*. He was overcome by her marked attentions so far as to declare himself, without knowing her real disposition. It was some time before his prepossession allowed him to discover that she was weak and ill-informed, selfish and bad tempered. What she wanted in understanding, she made up in spirit. The more she exacted, the more he submitted; and her demands grew in proportion to his sacrifices. My friend, with patient affection, struggled for a long time to raise her character, and to enlighten her mind; but finding that she pouted whenever he took up a book, and that she even hid the newspaper before he had read it, complaining that he preferred any thing to her company; the softness of his temper and his habitual indolence at length prevailed. His better judgment sunk in the hopeless contest. For a quiet life, he has submitted to a disgraceful life. The compromise has not answered. He has incurred the degradation which, by a more spirited conduct, he might have avoided, and has missed the quiet which he sacrificed his dignity to purchase. He compassionates her folly, and continues to translate her wearisome interruptions into the flattering language of affection.

In compliment to her, no less than in justification of his own choice, he has persuaded himself that all women are pretty much alike. That in point of capacity, disposition, and knowledge, he has but drawn the common lot, with the balance in his favour, of strong affection and unsullied virtue. He hardly ever sees his fine library, which is the object of her supreme aversion, but wastes his days in listless idleness, and his evenings at cards, the only thing in which she takes a lively interest.—His fine mind is, I fear, growing mean and disingenuous. The gentleness of his temper leads him not only to sacrifice his peace, but to infringe on his veracity in order to keep her quiet.

'All the entertainment he finds at dinner, is a recapitulation of the faults of her maids, or the impertinence of her footmen, or the negligence of her gardener. If to please her he joins in the censure, she turns suddenly about, and defends them. If he vindicates them, she insists on their immediate dismission; and no sooner are they irrevocably discharged, than she is continually dwelling on their perfection, and then it is only their successors who have any faults.

He is now so afraid of her driving out his few remaining old servants, if she sees his partiality for them, that in order to conceal it, he affects to reprimand them as the only means for them to secure her favour. Thus the integrity of his heart is giving way to a petty duplicity, and the openness of his temper to shabby artifices. He could submit to the loss of his comfort, but sensibly feels the diminution of his credit. The loss of his usefulness too is a constant source of regret. She will not even suffer him to act as a magistrate, lest her doors should be beset with vagabonds, and her house dirtied by men of business. If he chance to commend a dish he has tasted at a friend's house—Yes, every body's things are good but her's—she can never please; he had better always dine abroad, if nothing is fit to be eaten at home.

'Though poor Stanhope's conduct is so correct, and his attachment to his wife so notorious, he never ventures to commend any thing that is said or done by another woman. She has, indeed, no definite object of jealousy, but feels an uneasy, vague sensation of envy at any thing or person he admires. I believe she would be jealous of a fine day, if her husband praised it.

'If a tale reaches her ears of a wife who has failed of her duty, or if the public papers record a divorce, then she awakens her husband to a sense of his superior happiness, and her own irreproachable virtue. O Charles, the woman who, reposing on the laurels of her boasted virtue, allows herself to be a disobliging, a peevish, a gloomy, a discontented companion, defeats one great end of the institution, which is happiness. The wife who violates the marriage vow, is indeed more criminal; but the very magnitude of her crime emancipates her husband; while she who makes him not dishonourable, but wretched,

fastens on him a misery for life, from which no laws can free him, and under which religion alone can support him.'

We continued talking till we reached home, on the multitude of marriages in which the parties are 'joined, not matched,' and where the term *union* is a miserable misnomer. I endeavoured to turn all these new acquaintances to account, and considered myself at every visit I made, as taking a lesson for my own conduct. I beheld the miscarriages of others, not only with concern for the individual, but as beacons to light me on the way. It was no breach of charity to use the aberrations of my acquaintance for the purpose of making my own course more direct. I took care, however, never to lose sight of the humbling consideration that my own deviations were equally liable to become the object of their animadversion, if the same motive had led them to the same scrutiny.

I remained some weeks longer in town indulging myself in all its safe sights, and all its sober pleasures. I examined whatever was new in art, or curious in science. I found out the best pictures, saw the best statues, explored the best museums, heard the best speakers in the courts of law, the best preachers in the church, and the best orators in parliament; attended the best lectures, and visited the best company, in the most correct, though not always the most fashionable sense of the term. I associated with many learned, sensible, and some pious men, commodities with which London, with all its faults abounds, perhaps, more than any other place on the habitable globe. I became acquainted with many agreeable, well-informed valuable women, with a few who even seemed in a good measure to live above the world while they were living in it.

There is a large class of excellent female characters, who, on account of that very excellence, are little known, because to be known is not their object. Their ambition has a better taste. They pass through life honoured and respected in their own small, but not unimportant sphere, and approved by him, 'whose they are, and whom they serve,' though their faces are hardly known in promiscuous society. If they occasion little sensation abroad, they produce much happiness at home. And when once a woman who has all 'appliances and means to get it,' *can* withstand the intoxication of the flatterer, and the adoration of the fashionable; *can* conquer the fondness for public distinction, *can* resist the temptations of that magic circle to which she is courted, and in which she is qualified to shine—this is indeed a trial of firmness; a trial in which those who have never been called to resist themselves, can hardly judge of the merit of resistance in others.

These are the women who bless, dignify, and truly adorn society. The painter indeed does not make his fortune by their sitting to him; the jeweller is neither brought into vogue by furnishing their diamonds, nor undone by not being paid for them; the prosperity of the milliner does not depend on affixing their name to a cap or a colour; the poet does not celebrate them; the novelist does not dedicate to them; but they possess the affection of their husbands, the attachment of their children, the esteem of the wise and good, and, above all, they possess *his* favour, 'whom to know is life eternal.' Among these I doubt not I might have found objects highly deserving of my heart, but the injunction of my father was a sort of panoply which guarded it.

I am persuaded that such women compose a larger portion of the sex than is generally allowed. It is not the number, but the noise which makes a sensation, and a set of fair dependent young creatures who are every night forced, some of them reluctantly, upon the public eye; and a bevy of faded matrons rouged and repaired for an ungrateful public, dead to their blandishments, do not compose the whole female world! I repeat it—a hundred amiable women, who are living in the quiet practice of their duties, and the modest exertion of their talents, do not fill the public eye, or reach the public ear, like one aspiring leader, who, hungering for observation, and disdaining censure, dreads not abuse, but oblivion: who thinks it more glorious to head a little phalanx of fashionable followers, than to hold out, as from her commanding eminence, and imposing talents she might have done, a shining example of all that is great, and good, and dignified in woman. These self-appointed queens maintain an absolute but ephemeral empire over that little *fantastic aristocracy* which they call the world—Admiration besets them, crowds attend them, conquests follow them, inferiors imitate them, rivals envy them, newspapers extol them, sonnets deify them. A few ostentatious charities are opposed as a large atonement for a *few amiable weaknesses*, while the unpaid tradesman is exposed to ruin by their vengeance, if he refuse to trust them, and to a gaol if he continue to do it.

CHAP. XI.

The three days previous to my leaving London were passed with Sir John and Lady Belfield. Knowing I was on the wing for Hampshire they promised to make their long intended visit to Stanley Grove during my stay there.

On the first of these days we were agreeably surprised at the appearance of Dr. Barlow, an old friend of Sir John, and the excellent Rector of Mr. Stanley's parish.—Being obliged to come to town on urgent business for a couple of days, he was charged to assure me of the cordial welcome which awaited me at the Grove. I was glad to make this early acquaintance with this highly respectable divine. I made a thousand inquiries about his neighbours, and expressed my impatience to know more of a family, in whose characters I already felt a more than common interest.

'Sir,' said he, 'if you set me talking of Mr. Stanley, you must abide by the consequences of your indiscretion, and bear with the loquacity of which that subject never fails to make me guilty. He is a greater blessing to me as a friend, and to my parish as an example and a benefactor than I can describe. I assured him that he could not be too minute in speaking of a man,

whom I had been early taught to admire, by that exact judge of merit, my late father.

'Mr. Stanley,' said the worthy Doctor, 'is about six and forty; his admirable wife is about six or seven years younger. He passed the early part of his life in London, in the best society. His commerce with the world, was to a mind like his, all pure gain: for he brought away from it all the good it had to give, without exchanging for it one particle of his own integrity He acquired the air, manners, and sentiments of a gentleman, without any sacrifice of his sincerity. Indeed he may be said to have turned his knowledge of the world to a religious account, for it has enabled him to recommend religion to those who do not like it well enough to forgive, for its sake, the least awkwardness of gesture, or inelegance of manner.

'When I became acquainted with the family,' continued he, 'I told Mrs. Stanley that I was afraid her husband hurt religion in one sense, as much as he recommended it in another; for that some men who would forgive him his piety for the sake of his agreeableness, would be led to dislike religion more than ever in other men, in whom the jewel was not so well set. 'We should like your religious men well enough,' will they say, 'if they all resembled Stanley.'—Whereas, the truth is, they do not so much *like* Mr. Stanley's religion as *bear* with it for the pleasure which his other qualities afford them. She assured me, that this was not altogether the case, for that his other qualities having pioneer'd his way, and hewed down the prejudices which the reputation of piety naturally raises, his endeavours to be useful to them were much facilitated, and he not only kept the ground he had gained, but was often able to turn this influence over his friends to a better account than they had intended. He converted their admiration of him into arms against their own errors.

'He possesses, in perfection,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'that sure criterion of abilities, a great power over the minds of his acquaintance, and has in a high degree that rare talent, the art of conciliation without the aid of flattery. I have seen more men brought over to his opinion by a management derived from his knowledge of mankind, and by a principle which forbade his ever using this knowledge but for good purposes, than I ever observed in any other instance; and this without the slightest deviation from his scrupulous probity.

'He is master of one great advantage in conversation, that of not only knowing *what* to say that may be useful, but exactly *when* to say it; in knowing when to press a point and when to forbear; in his sparing the self-love of a vain man, whom he wishes to reclaim by contriving to make him feel himself wrong without making him appear ridiculous. The former he knows is easily pardoned, the latter never. He has studied the human heart long enough to know that to wound pride is not the way to cure, but to inflame it; and that exasperating self-conceit, will never subdue it. He seldom, I believe, goes into company without an earnest desire to be useful to some one in it: but if circumstances are adverse; if the *mollia tempora fandi* does not present itself, he knows he should lose more than they would gain, by trying to make the occasion when he does not find it. And I have often heard him say, that when he cannot benefit others, or be benefitted by them, he endeavours to benefit himself by the disappointment, which does his own mind as much good by humbling him with the sense of his own uselessness, as the subject he wished to have introduced might have done them.

'The death of his only son, about six years ago, who had just entered his eighth year, is the only interruption his family have had to a felicity so unbroken, that I told Mr. Stanley some such calamity was necessary to convince him that he was not to be put off with so poor a portion as this world has to give. I added, that I should have been tempted to doubt his being in the favour of God, if he had totally escaped chastisement. A circumstance which to many parents would have greatly aggravated the blow, rather lightened it to him. The boy, had he lived to be of age, was to have had a large independent fortune from a distant relation, which will now go to a remote branch, unless there should be another son. 'This wealth,' said he to me, 'might have proved the boy's snare, and this independence his destruction. He who does all things well, has afflicted the parents, but he has saved the child.' The loss of an only son, however, sat heavy on his heart; but it was the means of enabling him to glorify God by his submission, I should rather say by his acquiescence. Submission is only yielding to what we cannot help. Acquiescence is a more sublime kind of resignation. It is a conviction that the divine will is holy, just, and good. He one day said to me, 'We were too fond of the mercy, but not sufficiently grateful for it. We loved him so passionately that we might have forgotten who bestowed him. To preserve us from this temptation, God in great mercy withdrew him. Let us turn our eyes from the one blessing we have lost, to the countless mercies which are continued to us, and especially to the hand which confers them; to the hand which, if we continue to murmur, may strip us of our remaining blessings.'

'I cannot,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'make a higher eulogium of Mrs. Stanley than to say, that she is every way worthy of the husband whose happiness she makes. They have a large family of lovely daughters of all ages. Lucilla, the eldest, is near nineteen; you would think me too poetical were I to say she adorns every virtue with every grace; and yet I should only speak the simple truth. Phœbe, who is just turned of fifteen, has not less vivacity and sweetness than her sister, but, from her extreme naivete and warm-heartedness, she has somewhat less discretion; and her father says, that her education has afforded him not less pleasure, but more trouble, for the branches shot so fast as to call for more pruning.'

Before I had time to thank the good Doctor for his interesting little narrative, a loud rap announced company. It was Lady Bab Lawless. With her usual versatility she plunged at once into every subject with every body. She talked to Lady Belfield of the news and her nursery, of poetry, with Sir John, of politics with

me, and religion with Dr. Barlow. She talked well upon most of these points, and not ill upon any of them: for she had the talent of embellishing subjects of which she knew but little, and a kind of conjectural sagacity and rash dexterity, which prevented her from appearing ignorant, even when she knew nothing. She thought that a full confidence in her own powers was the sure way to raise them in the estimation of others, and it generally succeeded.

Turning suddenly to Lady Belfield, she said, 'Pray, my dear, look at my flowers.' 'They are beautiful roses, indeed,' said Lady Belfield, and as exquisitely exact as if they were artificial.'—'Which in truth they are,' replied Lady Bab. 'Your mistake is a high compliment to them, but not higher than they deserve. Look especially at these roses in my cap. You positively shall go and get some at the same place.'—'Indeed,' said Lady Belfield, 'I am thinking of laying aside flowers, though my children are hardly old enough to take them.' 'What affectation!' replied Lady Bab; 'why you are not above two or three and thirty; I am almost as old again, and yet I don't think of giving up flowers to my children, or my grand-children, who will be soon wanting them. Indeed, I only now wear *white* roses.' I discovered by this, that white roses made the same approximation to sobriety in dress, that three tables made to it in cards. 'Seriously though,' continued Lady Bab, 'you must and shall go and buy some of Fanny's flowers. I need only tell you, it will be the greatest charity you ever did, and then I know you won't rest till you have been. A beautiful girl maintains her dying mother by making and selling flowers. 'Here is her direction,' throwing a card on the table.—'Oh no, this is not it. I have forgot the name, but it is within two doors of your hair-dresser, in what d'ye call the lane, just out of Oxford street. It is a poor miserable hole, but her roses are as bright as if they grew in the gardens of Armida.' She now rung the bell violently, saying she had overstayed her time, though she had not been in the house ten minutes.

Next morning I attended Lady Belfield to the exhibition. In driving home through one of the narrow passages near Oxford-street, I observed that we were in the street where the poor flower-maker lived. Lady Belfield directed her footman to inquire for the house. We went into it, and in a small but clean room, up three pair of stairs, we found a very pretty and very genteel young girl at work on her gay manufacture. The young woman presented her elegant performances with an air of uncommon grace and modesty.

She was the more interesting because the delicacy of her appearance seemed to proceed from ill health, and a tear stood in her eye while she exhibited her works. 'You do not seem well, my dear,' said Lady Belfield, with a kindness which was natural to her. 'I never care about my own health, Madam,' replied she, 'but I fear my dear mother is dying.' She stopped, and the tears which she had endeavoured to restrain now flowed plentifully down her cheeks. 'Where is your mother, child?' said Lady Belfield. 'In the next room, Madam.' 'Let us see her,' said her Ladyship, 'if it won't too much disturb her.' So saying, she led the way, and I followed her.

We found the sick woman lying on a little poor, but clean bed, pale and emaciated, but she did not seem so near her end, as Fanny's affection had made her apprehend. After some kind expressions of concern, Lady Belfield inquired into their circumstances, which she found were deplorable. 'But for that dear girl, Madam, I should have perished with want, said the good woman; 'since our misfortunes I have had nothing to support me but what she earns by making these flowers. She has ruined her own health, by sitting up the greatest part of the night to procure me necessaries, while she herself lives on a crust.'

I was so affected with this scene, that I drew Lady Belfield into the next room: 'If we cannot preserve the mother, at least let us save the daughter from destruction,' said I; 'you may command my purse.'—'I was thinking of the same thing,' she replied. 'Pray, my good girl, what sort of education have you had?'—'O, Madam,' said she, 'one much too high for my situation. But my parents, intending to qualify me for a governness, as the safest way of providing for me, have had me taught every thing necessary for that employment. I have had the best masters, and I hope I have not misemployed my time.'—'How comes it then,' said I, 'that you were not placed out in some family?'—'What, Sir! and leave my dear mother helpless and forlorn? I had rather live only on my tea and dry bread, which, indeed I have done for many months, and supply her little wants, than enjoy all the luxuries in the world at a distance from her.'

'What were your misfortunes occasioned by?' said I, while Lady Belfield was talking with the mother. 'One trouble followed another, Sir,' said she, 'but what most completely ruined us, and sent my father to prison, and brought a paralytic stroke on my mother, was his being arrested for a debt of seven hundred pounds. This sum, which he had promised to pay, was long due to him for laces, and to my mother for millinary and fancy dresses, from a lady who has not paid it to this moment, and my father is dead, and my mother dying! this sum would have saved them both!'

She was turning away to conceal the excess of her grief, when a venerable clergyman entered the room. It was the rector of the parish who came frequently to administer spiritual consolation to the poor woman. Lady Belfield knew him slightly, and highly respected his character. She took him aside and questioned him as to the disposition and conduct of these people, especially the young woman. His testimony was highly satisfactory. The girl, he said, had not only had an excellent education, but her understanding and principles were equally good. He added, that he reckoned her beauty among her misfortunes. It made good people afraid to take her into the house, and exposed her to danger from those of the opposite description.

I put my purse into Lady Belfield's hands, declining to make any present myself, lest after

the remark he had just made, I should incur the suspicions of the worthy clergyman.

We promised to call again the next day, and took our leave, but not till we had possessed ourselves of as many flowers as she could spare. I begged that we might stop and send some medical assistance to the sick woman, for though it was evident that all relief was hopeless, yet it would be a comfort to the affectionate girl's heart to know that nothing was omitted which might restore her mother

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CHAP. XII.

In the evening we talked over our little adventure with Sir John, who entered warmly into the distresses of Fanny, and was inclined to adopt our opinion, that if her character and attainments stood the test of a strict inquiry, she might hereafter probably be transplanted into their family as governess. We were interrupted in the formation of this plan by a visit from Lady Melbury, the acknowledged queen of beauty and of ton. I had long been acquainted with her character, for her charms and her accomplishments were the theme of every man of fashion, and the envy of every modish woman.

She is one of those admired but pitiable characters, who, sent by Providence as an example to their sex, degrade themselves into a warning. —Warm-hearted, feeling, liberal on the one hand; on the other vain, sentimental, romantic, extravagantly addicted to dissipation and expense, and with that union of contrarieties which distinguishes her, equally devoted to poetry and gaming, to liberality and injustice. She is too handsome to be envious, and too generous to have any relish for detraction, but she gives to excess into the opposite fault. As Lady Denham can detect blemishes in the most perfect, Lady Melbury finds perfections in the most depraved. From a judgment which cannot discriminate, a temper which will not censure, and a hunger for popularity, which can feed on the coarsest applause, she flatters egregiously and universally, on the principle of being paid back usuriously in the same coin. Prodigal of her beauty, she exists but on the homage paid to it from the drawing-room at St. James's to the mob at an election. Candour in her is as mischievous as calumny in others, for it buoys up characters which ought to sink. Not content with being blind to the bad qualities of her favourites, she invents good ones for them, and you would suppose her corrupt 'little senate' was a choir of seraphims.

A recent circumstance related by Sir John was quite characteristical. Her favourite maid was dangerously ill, and earnestly begged to see her lady who always had loaded her with favours. To all company she talked of the virtues of the poor Toinette, for whom she not only expressed but felt real compassion. Instead of one apothecary who would have sufficed, two physicians were sent for; and she herself resolved to go up and visit her, as soon as she had finished setting to music an elegy on the death of her Java Sparrow. Just as she had completed it, she received a fresh entreaty to see her maid and was actually got to the door in order to go up stairs, when the milliner came in with such a distracting variety of beautiful new things, that there was no possibility of letting them go till she had tried every thing on, one after the other. This took up no little time. To determine which she should keep and which return, where all was so attractive, took up still more. After numberless vicissitudes and fluctuations of racking thought, it was at length decided she should take the whole. The milliner withdrew; the lady went up—Toinette had just expired.

I found her manners no less fascinating than her person. With all her modish graces, there was a tincture of romance and an appearance of softness and sensibility which gave her the variety of two characters. She was the enchanting woman of fashion, and the elegiac muse.

Lady Belfield had taken care to cover her work table with Fanny's flowers, with a view to attract any chance visitor. Lady Melbury admired them excessively. 'You must do more than admire them,' said Lady Belfield, 'you must buy and recommend.' She then told her the affecting scene we had witnessed, and described the amiable girl who supported the dying mother by making these flowers. 'It is quite enchanting,' continued she, resolving to attack Lady Melbury in her own sentimental way, 'to see the sweet girl twisting rose buds, and forming hyacinths into bouquets.' 'Dear, how charming!' exclaimed Lady Melbury; 'it is really quite touching. I will make a subscription for her, and write at the head of the list a melting description of her case. She shall bring me all her flowers and as many more as she can make. But no, we will make a party, and go and see her. You shall carry me. How interesting to see a beautiful creature making roses and hyacinths! her delicate hands and fair complexion must be amazingly set off by the contrast of the bright flowers. If it were a coarse looking girl, spinning hemp, to be sure one should pity her, but it would not be half so moving. It will be delightful. I will call on you to-morrow, exactly at two, and carry you all. Perhaps,' whispered she to Lady Belfield, 'I may work up the circumstance into a sonnet. Do think of a striking title for it. On second thoughts, the sonnet shall be sent about with the subscription, and I'll get a pretty vignette to suit it.'

'The fine creature,' said Sir John, in an accent of compassion, as she went out, 'was made for nobler purposes. How grievously does she fall short of the high expectations her early youth had raised! Oh! what a sad return does she make to Providence for his rich and varied bounties! Vain of her beauty, lavish of her money, careless of her reputation; associating with the worst company, yet formed for the best; living on the adulation of parasites, whose understanding she despises! I grieve to compare what she is with what she might have been, had she married a man of spirit, who would prudently have guided and tenderly have restrained her. He has ruined her and himself by his indifference and easiness of temper. Satisfied

with knowing how much she is admired and he envied, he never thought of reproving or restricting her. He is proud of her, but has no particular delight in her company; and trusting to her honour, lets her follow her own devices, while he follows his. She is a striking instance of the eccentricity of that bounty which springs from mere sympathy and feeling. Her charity requires stage effect; objects that have novelty, and circumstances which, as Mr. Bayes says, 'elevate and surprise.' She lost, when an infant, her mother, a woman of sense and piety; who, had she lived, would have formed the ductile mind of the daughter, turned her various talents into other channels, and raised her character to the elevation it was meant to reach.'

'How melancholy a consideration is it,' said I, 'that so superior a woman should live so much below her high destination! She is doubtless utterly destitute of any thought of religion.'

'You are much mistaken,' replied Sir John, 'I will not indeed venture to pronounce that she entertains much *thought* about it; but she by no means denies its truths, nor neglects occasionally to exhibit its outward and visible signs. She has yet not completely forgotten

All that the nurse and all the priest have taught.

I do not think that, like Lady Denham, she considers it as a commutation, but she preserves it as a habit. A religious exercise, however, never interferes with a worldly one. They are taken up in succession, but with this distinction, the worldly business is to be done, the religious one is not altogether to be left undone. She has a moral chemistry which excels in the amalgamation of contradictory ingredients. On a Sunday, at Melbury castle, if by any strange accident she and her lord happen to be there together, she first reads him a sermon, and plays at cribbage with him the rest of the evening. In town one Sunday when she had a cold, she wrote a tract on the sacrament, for her maids, and then set up all night at deep play. She declared if she had been successful she would have given her winnings to charity; but as she lost some hundreds, she said, she could now with a safe conscience borrow that sum from her charity purse, which she had hoped to add to it, to pay her debt of honour.'

Next day, within two hours of her appointed time, she came, and was complimented by Sir John, on her punctuality. 'Indeed,' said she, 'I *am* rather late, but I met with such a fascinating German novel, that it positively chained me to my bed till past three. I assure you I never lost time by not rising. In the course of a few winters I have exhausted half Hookman's catalogue, before some of my acquaintance are awake, or myself out of bed.'

We soon stopped at the humble door of which we were in search. Sir John conducted Lady Melbury up the little winding stairs. I assisted Lady Belfield. We reached the room, where Fanny was just finishing a beautiful bunch of jonquils. 'How picturesque,' whispered Lady Melbury to me—'Do lend me your pencil; I must take a sketch of that sweet girl with the jonquils in her hand. My dear creature,' continued she, 'you must not only let me have these, but you must make me twelve dozen more flowers as fast as possible, and be sure let me have a great many sprigs of jessamine and myrtle. Then snatching up a wreath of various coloured geraniums—'I must try this on my head by the glass.' So saying, she run into an adjoining room, the door of which was open; Lady Belfield having before stolen into it to speak to the poor invalid.

As soon as Lady Melbury got into the room, she uttered a loud shriek. Sir John and I ran in, and were shocked to find her near fainting. 'Oh, Belfield,' said she, 'this is a trick, and a most cruel one! Why did you not tell me where you were bringing me? Why did you not tell me the people's name?'—'I have never heard it myself,' said Sir John; 'on my honour I do not understand you.—You know as much of the woman as I know,' said Lady Belfield. 'Alas! much more,' cried she, as fast as her tears would give her leave to speak. She retired to the window for air, wringing her hands, and calling for a glass of water to keep her from fainting. I turned to the sick woman for an explanation; I saw her countenance much changed.

'This, Sir,' said she, 'is the lady, whose debt of seven hundred pounds ruined me, and was the death of my husband.' I was thunderstruck, but went to assist Lady Melbury, who implored Sir John to go home with her instantly, saying her coach should come back for us. 'But, dea. Lady Belfield, do lend me twenty guineas, I have not a shilling about me.'—'Then, my dear Lady Melbury,' said Lady Belfield, 'how *could* you order twelve dozen expensive flowers?' 'Oh,' said she, 'I did not mean to have paid for them till next year.' 'And how,' replied Lady Belfield, 'could the debt which was not to have been paid for a twelvemonth have relieved the pressing wants of a creature, who must pay ready money for her materials? However, as you are distressed, we will contrive to do without your money.' 'I would pawn my diamond necklace directly,' returned she, but speaking lower, 'to own the truth, it is already in the jeweller's hands, and I wear a paste necklace of the same form.'

Sir John knowing I had been at my banker's that morning, gave me such a significant look, as restrained my hand, which was already on my pocket-book. In great seeming anguish she gave Sir John her hand, who conducted her to her coach. As he was leading her down stairs, she solemnly declared she would never again run in debt, never order more things than she wanted, and above all would never play while she lived. She was miserable because she durst not ask Lord Melbury to pay this woman, he having already given her money three times for the purpose, which she had lost at faro. Then retracting, she protested, if ever she *did* touch a card again, it should be for the sole purpose of getting something to discharge this debt. Sir John earnestly conjured her not to lay 'that flattering unction to her soul,' but to convert the present vexation into an occasion of felicity, by making it the memorable and happy æra of abandoning a practice, which injured her fortune, her fame, her principles, and her peace. 'Poor thing,' said Sir John, when he repeated to us,

Each will recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

'In an interval of weeping, she told me,' added he, 'that she was to be at the opera to-night. To the opera, faro will succeed, and to-morrow probably the diamond ear-rings will go to Grey's in pursuit of the necklace.'

Lady Belfield inquired of Fanny how it happened that Lady Melbury, who talked with *her* without surprise or emotion, discovered so much of both at the bare sight of her mother. The girl explained this by saying, that she had never been in the way while they lived in Bond-street, when her Ladyship used to come, having been always employed in an upper room, or attending her master.

Before we parted, effectual measures were taken for the comfortable subsistence of the sick mother, and for alleviating the sorrows, and lightening the labours of the daughter; and next morning I set out on my journey for Stanley Grove, Sir John and Lady Belfield promising to follow me in a few weeks.

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As soon as I got into my post-chaise, and fairly turned my back on London, I fell into a variety of reflections on the persons with whom I had been living. In this soliloquy, I was particularly struck with that descrepancy of characters, all of which are yet included under the broad comprehensive appellation of *Christians*. I found that though all differed widely from each other, they differed still more widely from that rule by which they professed to walk. Yet not one of these characters was considered as disreputable. There was not one that was profane or profligate. Not one who would not in conversation have defended Christianity if its truth had been attacked. Not one who derided or even neglected its forms; and who in her own class would not have passed for religious. Yet how little had any one of them adorned the profession she adopted! Of Mrs. Ranby, Mrs. Fentham, Lady Bab Lawless, Lady Denham, Lady Melbury, which of them would not have been startled had her Christianity been called in question? Yet how merely speculative was the religion of even the most serious among them! How superficial, or inconsistent, or mistaken, or hollow, or hypocritical, or self-deceiving was that of all the others! Had either of them been asked from what source she drew her religion, she would indignantly have answered, from the bible. Yet if we compare the copy with the model, the Christian with Christianity, how little can we trace the resemblance! In what particular did their lives imitate the life of Him *who pleased not himself*, who *did the will of his Father:* who *went about doing good?* How irreconcileable is their faith with the principles which He taught! How dissimilar their practice with the precepts He delivered! How inconsistent their lives with the example which he bequeathed! How unfounded their hope of heaven, if an entrance into heaven be restricted to those who are *like minded with Christ!*

CHAP. XIII

My father had been in early life intimately connected with the family of Mr. Stanley. Though this gentleman was his junior by several years, yet there subsisted between them such a similarity of tastes, sentiments, views and principles, that they lived in the closest friendship; and both their families having in the early part of their lives resided in London, the occasions of that thorough mutual knowledge that grows out of familiar intercourse, were much facilitated. I remembered Mr. Stanley, when I was a very little boy, paying an annual visit to my father at the Priory, and I had retained an imperfect but pleasing impression of his countenance and engaging manners.

Having had a large estate left him in Hampshire, he settled there on his marriage; an intercourse of letters had kept up the mutual attachment between him and my father. On the death of each parent, I had received a cordial invitation to come and soothe my sorrows in his society. My father enjoined me that one of my first visits after his death should be to the Grove; and, in truth, I now considered my Hampshire engagement as the *bonne bouche* of my southern excursion.

I reached Stanley Grove before dinner. I found a spacious mansion, suited to the ample fortune and liberal spirit of its possessor, I was highly gratified with the fine forest scenery in the approach to the park. The house had a noble appearance without; and within it was at once commodious and elegant. It stood on the south side of a hill, nearer the bottom than the summit, and was sheltered on the north-east by a fine old wood. The park, though it was not very extensive, was striking from the beautiful inequality of the ground, which was richly clothed with the most picturesque oaks I ever saw, interspered with stately beeches. The grounds were laid out in good taste, but though the hand of modern improvement was visible, the owner had in one instance spared

'The obsolete prolixity of shade,'

for which the most interesting of poets so pathetically pleads. The poet's plea had saved the avenue.

I was cordially welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Stanley; and by that powerful and instantaneous impression which fine sense and good breeding, joined to high previous veneration of character, produce on the feelings of the guest, I at once felt myself at home. All the preliminaries of gradual acquaintance were in a manner superseded, and I soon experienced that warm and affectionate esteem, which seemed scarcely to require intercourse to strengthen, or time to confirm it. Mr. Stanley had only a few minutes to present me to his lady and two lovely daughters, before we were summoned to dinner, to which a considerable party had been invited; for the neighbourhood was populous and rather polished.

The conversation after dinner was rational, animated, and instructive. I observed that Mr Stanley lost no opportunity which fairly offered,

for suggesting useful reflections. But what chiefly struck me in his manner of conversing was, that without ever pressing religion unseasonably into the service, he had the talent of making the most ordinary topics subservient to instruction, and of extracting some profitable hint, or striking out some important light, from subjects which in ordinary hands would have been unproductive of improvement. It was evident that piety was the predominating principle of his mind, and that he was consulting its interests as carefully when prudence made him forbear to press it, as when propriety allowed him to introduce it. This piety was rather visible in the sentiment than the phrase. He was of opinion that bad taste could never advance the interests of Christianity. And he gave less offence to worldly men, than most religious people I have known, because though he would on no human consideration, abate one atom of zeal, or lower any doctrine, nor disguise any truth, nor palliate, nor trim, nor compromise, yet he never contended for words or trifling distinctions. He thought it detracted from no man's piety to bring all his elegance of expression, his correctness of taste, and his accuracy of reasoning to the service of that cause, which lies the nearest to the heart of every Christian, and demands the best exertion of his best faculties.

He was also forward to promote subjects of practical use in the affairs of common life suited to the several circumstances and pursuits of his guests. But he particularly rejoiced that there was so broad, and safe, and unenclosed a field as general literature. This, he observed, always supplies men of education with an ample refuge from all vulgar, and dangerous, and unproductive topics. 'If we cannot,' said he, 'by friendly intercourse, always raise our principles, we may always keep our understandings in exercise; and those authors who supply so peaceable a creature as man, with subjects of elegant and innocent discussion, I do not reckon among the lowest benefactors of mankind.'

In my further acquaintance with Mr. Stanley, I have sometimes observed with what address he has converted a merely moral passage to a religious purpose. I have known him, when conversing with a man who would not have relished a more sacred authority, seize on a sentiment in Tully's Offices, for the lowest degree in his scale of morals, and then, gradually ascending, trace and exalt the same thought through Paley or Johnson, or Addison, or Bacon, till he has unexpectedly landed his opponent in the pure ethics of the gospel, and surprised him into the adoption of a Christian principle.

As I had heard there was a fine little flock of children, I was surprised, and almost disappointed every time the door opened, not to see them appear, for I had already began to take an interest in all that related to this most engaging family. The ladies having, to our gratification, sat longer than is usual at most tables, at length obeyed the signal of the mistress of the house. They withdrew, followed by the Miss Stanleys,

> With grace
> Which won who saw to wish their stay.

After their departure, the conversation was not changed. There was no occasion; it could not become more rational, and we did not desire that it should become less pure. Mrs. Stanley and her fair friends had taken their share in it with a good sense and delicacy which raised the tone of our society; and we did not give them to understand by a loud laugh before they were out of hearing, that we rejoiced in being emancipated from the restraint of their presence.

Mrs. Stanley is a graceful and elegant woman. Among a thousand other excellencies, she is distinguished for her judgment in adapting her discourse to the character of her guests, and for being singularly skilful in selecting her topics of conversation. I never saw a lady who possessed the talent of diffusing at her table so much pleasure to those around her without the smallest deviation from her own dignified purity. She asks such questions as strangers may be likely to gain, at least not to lose credit by answering: and she suits her interrogations to the kind of knowledge they may be supposed likely to possess. By this, two ends are answered: while she gives her guest an occasion of appearing to advantage, she puts herself in the way of gaining some information. From want of this discernment, I have known ladies ask a gentleman just arrived from the East Indies, questions about America; and others, from the absence of that true delicacy, which, where it exists, shows itself on the smallest occasions, who have inquired of a person, how he liked such a book, though she knew that in the nature of things, there was no probability of his ever having heard of it; thus assuming an ungenerous superiority herself, and mortifying another by a sense of his own comparative ignorance. If there is any one at table, who, from his station, has least claim to attention, he is sure to be treated with particular kindness by Mrs. Stanley, and the diffident never fail to be encouraged, and the modest to be brought forward, by the kindness and refinement of her attentions.

When we were summoned to the drawing room I was delighted to see four beautiful children, fresh as health, and gay as youth could make them, busily engaged with the ladies. One was romping; another singing; a third was showing some drawings of birds, the natural history of which she seemed to understand a fourth had spread a dissected map on the carpet, and had pulled down her eldest sister on thy floor to show her Copenhagen. It was an animating scene. I could have devoured the sweet creatures. I got credit with the little singer by helping her to a line which she had forgotten, and with the geographer by my superior acquaintance with the shores of the Baltic.

In the evening, when the company had left us, I asked Mrs. Stanley how she came so far to deviate from established custom as not to produce her children immediately after dinner? 'You must ask me,' said Mr. Stanley, smiling, for it was I who first ventured to suggest this bold innovation. I love my children fondly, but my children I have always at home; I have my friends but seldom; and I do not choose that any portion of the time that I wish to dedicate

to intellectual and social enjoyment should be broken in upon by another, and an interfering pleasure, which I have always within my reach. At the same time I like my children to see my friends. Company amuses, improves, and polishes them. I therefore consulted with Mrs. Stanley, how we could so manage, as to enjoy our friends without locking up our children. She recommended this expedient. The time, she said, spent by the ladies from their leaving the dining-room till the gentlemen came in to tea, was often a little heavy, it was rather an interval of anticipation than of enjoyment; those ladies who had not much *mind*, had soon exhausted their admiration of each others' worked muslins, and lace sleeves, and those who *had*, would be glad to rest it so agreeably. She therefore proposed to enliven that dull period by introducing the children.

'This little change has not only succeeded in our own family, but has been adopted by many of our neighbours. For ourselves, it has answered a double purpose. It not only delights the little things, but it delights them with less injury than the usual season of their appearance. Our children have always as much fruit as they like after their own dinner; they do not therefore want or desire the fruits, the sweetmeats, the cakes and the wine with which the guests, in order to please mamma, are too apt to cram them. Besides, poor little dears, it mixes too much selfishness with the natural delight that they have in seeing company, by connecting with it the idea of the good things they shall get. But by this alteration, we do all in our power to infuse a little disinterestedness into the pleasure they have in coming to us. We love them too tenderly to crib their little enjoyments, so we give them two pleasures instead of one, for they have their desert and our company in succession.'

Though I do not approve of too great familiarity with servants, yet I think that to an old and faithful domestic, superior consideration is due. My attendant on my present tour had lived in our family from his youth, and had the care of me before I can remember. His fidelity and good sense, and I may add his piety, had obtained for him the privilege of free speaking. 'Oh, Sir,' said he, when he came to attend me next morning, 'we are got into the right house at last.—Such a family! so godly! so sober! so charitable! 'Tis all of a piece here, Sir, Mrs. Comfit, the housekeeper, tells me that her master and mistress are the example of all the rich, and the refuge of all the poor in the neighbourhood. And as to Miss Lucilla, if the blessing of them that are ready to perish can send any body to heaven, she will go there sure enough.'

This rhapsody of honest Edwards warmed my heart, and put me in mind, that I had neglected to enquire after this worthy housekeeper, who had lived with my grand-father, and was at his death transplanted into the family of Mr. Stanley. I paid a visit, the first opportunity, to the good woman in her room, eager to learn more of a family who so much resembled my own parents, and for whom I had already conceived something more tender than mere respect.

I congratulated Mrs. Comfit on the happiness of living in so valuable a family. In return, she was even eloquent in their praises. 'Her mistress,' she said, 'was a pattern for ladies, so strict, and yet so kind! but now indeed Miss Lucilla has taken almost all the family cares from her mamma. The day she was sixteen, Sir, that is about two years and a half ago, she began to inspect the household affairs a little, and as her knowledge increased, she took more and more upon her. Miss Phœbe will very soon be old enough to relieve her sister; but my mistress won't let her daughters have any thing to do with family affairs, till they are almost women grown, both for fear it should take them off from their learning, and also give them a low turn about eating and caring for niceties, and lead them into vulgar gossip and familiarity with servants. It is time enough, she says, when their characters are a little formed; they will then gain all the good, and escape all the danger.'

Seeing me listen with the most eager and delighted attention, the worthy woman proceeded. 'In summer, Sir, Miss Stanley rises at six, and spends two hours in her closet, which is stored with the best books. At eight she consults me on the state of provisions, and other family matters, and gives me a bill of fare, subject to the inspection of her mamma. The cook has great pleasure in acting under her direction, because she allows that Miss understands when things are well done, and never finds fault in the wrong place; which, she says, is a great mortification in serving ignorant ladies, who praise or find fault by chance: not according to the cook's performance, but their own humour. She looks over my accounts every week, which being kept so short give her but little trouble; and once a month she settles every thing with her mother.

''Tis a pleasure, Sir, to see how skilful she is in accounts! One can't impose upon her a farthing if one would; and yet she is so mild and so reasonable! and so quick at distinguishing what are mistakes, and what are wilful faults! Then she is so compassionate! It will be a heart-breaking day at the Grove, Sir, whenever Miss marries.—When my master is sick, she writes his letters, reads to him, and assists her mamma in nursing him.

'After her morning's work, Sir, does she come into company, tired and cross, as ladies do who have done nothing, or are but just up? No, she comes in to make breakfast for her parents, as fresh as a rose, and as gay as a lark. An hour after breakfast, she and my master read some learned books together. She then assists in teaching her little sisters, and never were children better instructed. One day in the week, she sets aside both for them and herself to work for the poor, whom she also regularly visits at their own cottages, two evenings in the week, for she says it would be troublesome and look ostentatious to have her father's doors crowded with poor people; neither could she get at their wants and their characters half so well as by going herself to their own houses. My dear mistress has given her a small room as a store-house for clothing and books for her indigent neighbours. In this room each of the younger daughters, the day she is seven years old, has her own drawer,

with her name written on it; and almost the only competition among them is, whose shall be soonest filled with caps, aprons, and handkerchiefs. The working day is commonly concluded by one of these charitable visits. The dear creatures are loaded with their little work baskets, crammed with necessaries. This, Sir, is the day,—and it is always looked forward to with pleasure by them all. Even little Celia, the youngest, who is but just turned of five, will come to me and beg for something good to put in her basket for poor Mary or Betty such a one. I wonder I do not see any thing of the little darlings; it is about the time they used to pay me a visit.

'On Sundays before church they attend the village school; when the week's pocket money, which has been carefully hoarded for the purpose, is produced for rewards to the most deserving scholars. And yet, Sir, with all this, you may be in the house a month without hearing a word of the matter; it is all done so quietly; and when they meet at their meals they are more cheerful and gay than if they had been ever so idle.'

Here Mrs. Comfit stopped, for just then two sweet little cherry cheeked figures presented themselves at the door, swinging a straw basket between them, and crying out in a little begging voice, 'Pray Mrs. Comfit bestow your charity, —we want something coarse for the hungry, and something nice for the sick,—poor Dame Alice and her little grand daughter!' They were going on, but spying me, they coloured up to the ears, and ran away as fast as they could, though I did all in my power to detain them.

CHAP. XIV.

When Miss Stanley came in to make breakfast, she beautifully exemplified the worthy house-keeper's description. I have sometimes seen young women, whose simplicity was destitute of elegance, and others in whom a too elaborate polish had nearly effaced their native graces: Lucilla appeared to unite the simplicity of nature to the refinement of good breeding. It was thus she struck me at first sight. I forbore to form a decided opinion, till I had leisure to observe whether her mind fulfilled all that her looks promised.

Lucilla Stanley is rather perfectly elegant than perfectly beautiful. I have seen women as striking, but I never saw one so interesting. Her beauty is countenance: it is the stamp of mind intelligibly printed on the face. It is not so much the symmetry of features, as the joint triumph of intellect and sweet temper. A fine old poet has well described her:

> Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one could almost say her body thought.

Her conversation, like her countenance, is compounded of liveliness, sensibility, and delicacy. She does not say things to be quoted, but the effect of her conversation is, that it leaves an impression of pleasure on the mind, and a love of goodness on the heart. She enlivens without dazzling, and entertains without overpowering Contented to please, she has no ambition to shine.—There is nothing like effort in her expression, or vanity in her manner. She has rather a playful gaiety than a pointed wit. Of repartee she has little, and dislikes it in others: yet I have seldom met with a truer taste for inoffensive wit. Taste is indeed the predominating quality of her mind; and she may rather be said to be a nice judge of the genius of others, than to be a genius herself. She has a quick perception of whatever is beautiful or defective in composition or in character. The same true taste pervades her writing, her conversation, her dress, her domestic arrangements, and her gardening, for which last she has both a passion and a talent. Though she has a correct ear, she neither sings nor plays; and her taste is so exact in drawing, that she really seems to have *le compass dans l'œuil;* yet I never saw a pencil in her fingers, except to sketch a seat or a bower for the pleasure ground.—Her notions are too just to allow her to be satisfied with mediocrity in many things, and for perfection in any thing, she thinks that life is too short, and its duties too various and important. Having five younger sisters to assist, has induced her to neglect some acquisitions which she would have liked. Had she been an only daughter, she owns that she would have indulged a little more in the garnish and decoration of life.

At her early age, the soundness of her judgment on persons and things cannot be derived from experience; she owes it to a *tact* so fine as to enable her to seize on the strong feature, the prominent circumstance, the leading point, instead of confusing her mind and dissipating her attention, on the inferior parts of a character, a book, or a business. This justness of thinking teaches her to rate things according to their worth, and to arrange them according to their place. Her manner of speaking adds to the effect of her words, and the tone of her voice expresses with singular felicity, gaiety or kindness as her feelings direct, and the occasion demands. This manner is so natural, and her sentiments spring so spontaneously from the occasion, that it is obvious that display is never in her head, nor an eagerness for praise in her heart. I never heard her utter a word which I could have wished unsaid, or a sentiment I would have wished unthought.

As to her dress it reminds me of what Dr. Johnson once said to an acquaintance of mine, of a lady who was celebrated for dressing well. 'The best evidence that I can give you of her perfection in this respect is, that one can never remember what she had on.' The dress of Lucilla is not neglected, and it is not studied. She is as neat as the strictest delicacy *demands*, and as fashionable as the strictest delicacy *permits;* and her nymph-like form does not appear to less advantage for being veiled with scrupulous modesty.

Oh! if women in general knew what was their real interest! if they could guess with what a charm even the *appearance* of modesty invests its possessor, they would dress decorously from mere self-love, if not from principle. The designing would assume modesty as an artifice,

the coquet adopt it as an allurement, the pure as her appropriate attraction, and the voluptuous as the most infallible art of seduction.

What I admire in Miss Stanley, and what I have sometimes regretted the want of in some other women is, that I am told she is so lively, so playful, so desirous of amusing her father and mother when alone, that they are seldom so gay as in their family party. It is then that her talents are all unfolded, and that her liveliness is without restraint. She was rather silent the two or three first days after my arrival, yet it was evidently not the silence of reserve or inattention, but of delicate propriety. Her gentle frankness and undesigning temper gradually got the better of this little shyness, and she soon began to treat me as the son of her father's friend. I very early found that though a stranger might behold her without admiration, it was impossible to converse with her with indifference. Before I had been a week at the Grove, my precautions vanished, my panoply was gone, and yet I had not consulted Mr. Stanley.

In contemplating the captivating figure, and the delicate mind of this charming girl, I felt that imagination which misleads so many youthful hearts had preserved mine. The image my fancy had framed, and which had been suggested by Milton's heroine, had been refined indeed, but it had not been romantic. I had early formed an ideal standard in my mind; too high, perhaps; but its very elevation had rescued me from the common dangers attending the society of the sex. I was continually comparing the women with whom I conversed with the fair conception which filled my mind. The comparison might be unfair to them: I am sure it was not unfavourable to myself, for it preserved me from the fascination of mere personal beauty, the allurements of factitious character, and the attractions of ordinary merit.

I am aware that love is apt to throw a radiance around the being it prefers, till it becomes dazzled, less, perhaps, with the brightness of the object itself, than with the beams with which imagination has invested it. But religion, though it had not subdued my imagination, had chastised it. It had sobered the splendours of fancy, without obscuring them. It had not extinguished the passions, but it had taught me to regulate them. I now seemed to have found the being of whom I had been in search. My mind felt her excellences, my heart acknowledged its conqueror. I struggled, however, not to abandon myself to its impulses. I endeavoured to keep my own feelings in order, till I had time to appreciate a character, which appeared as artless as it was correct. And I did not allow myself to make this slight sketch of Lucilla, and of the effect she produced on my heart, till more intimate acquaintance had justified my prepossession.

But let me not forget that Mr. Stanley had another daughter. If Lucilla's character is more elevated, Phœbe's is not less amiable. Her face is equally handsome, but her figure is somewhat less delicate. She has a fine temper, and strong virtues. The little faults she has, seem to flow from the excess of her good qualities. Her susceptibility is extreme, and to guide and guard it, finds employment for her mother's fondness, and her father's prudence. Her heart overflows with gratitude for the smallest service. This warmth of her tenderness keeps her affections in more lively exercise than her judgment; it leads her to over-rate the merit of those she loves, and to estimate their excellences, less by their own worth than by their kindness to her. She soon behaved to me with the most engaging frankness, and her innocent vivacity encouraged, in turn, that affectionate freedom with which one treats a beloved sister.

The other children are gay, lovely, interesting, and sweet tempered. Their several acquisitions, for I detest the term *accomplishments*, since it has been warped from the true meaning in which Milton used it, seem to be so many individual contributions brought in to enrich the common stock of domestic delight. Their talents are never put into exercise by artificial excitements. Habitual industry, quiet exertion, successive employments, affectionate intercourse, and gay and animated relaxation make up the round of their cheerful day.

I could not forbear admiring in this happy family the graceful union of piety with cheerfulness; strictness of principle embellished, but never relaxed, by gaiety of manners; a gaiety, not such as requires turbulent pleasures to stimulate it, but evidently the serene, yet animated result of well-regulated minds; of minds actuated by a tenderness of conscience, habitually alive to the perception of the smallest sin, and kindling into holy gratitude at the smallest mercy.

I often called to mind that my father, in order to prevent my being deceived, and run away with by persons who appeared lively at first sight, had early accustomed me to discriminate carefully, whether it was not the *animal* only that was lively, and the man dull. I have found this caution of no small use in my observations on the other sex. I had frequently remarked, that the musical and the dancing ladies, and those who were most admired for modish attainments, had little *intellectual* gaiety. In numerous instances I found that the mind was the only part which was not kept in action; and no wonder, for it was the only part which had received no previous forming, no preparatory moulding.

When I mentioned this to Mr. Stanley, 'the education,' replied he, 'which now prevails, is a Mahometan education. It consists entirely in making woman an object of attraction. There are, however, a few reasonable people left, who, while they retain the object, improve upon the plan. They too would make woman attractive; but it is by sedulously labouring to make the understanding, the temper, the mind, and the manners, of their daughters as engaging as these Circassian parents endeavour to make the person.

CHAP. XV

The friendly rector frequently visited at Stanley Grove, and for my father's sake, honoured me with his particular kindness. Dr. Barlow

filled up all my ideas of a country clergyman of the higher class. There is an uniform consistency runs through his whole life and character, which often brings to my mind, allowing for the revolution in habits that almost two hundred years have necessarily produced, the incomparable *country parson* of the ingenious Mr. George Herbert.*

'I never saw *zeal without innovation*,' said Mr. Stanley, 'more exemplified than in Barlow. His piety is as enlightened as it is sincere. No errors in religion escape him through ignorance of their existence, or through carelessness in their detection, or through inactivity in opposing them. He is too honest not to attack the prevailing evil, whatever shape it may assume; too correct to excite in the wise any fears that his zeal may mislead his judgment, and too upright to be afraid of the censures which active piety must ever have to encounter from the worldly and the indifferent, from cold hearts and unfurnished heads.

'From his affectionate warmth, however, and his unremitting application, arising from the vast importance he attaches to the worth of souls, the man of the world might honour him with the title of enthusiast; while his prudence, sober-mindedness, and regularity, would draw on him from the fanatic, the appellation of formalist. Though he is far from being 'content to *dwell* in decencies,' he is careful never to neglect them. He is a clergyman all the week as well as on Sunday; for he says, if he did not spend much of the intermediate time in pastoral visits, there could not be kept up that mutual intercourse of kindness which so much facilitates his own labours, and his people's improvement. They listen to him because they love him, and they understand him, because he has familiarized them by private discourse to the great truths which he delivers from the pulpit.

Dr. Barlow has greatly diminished the growth of innovation in his parishes, by attacking the innovator with his own weapons. Not indeed by stooping to the same disorderly practices, but by opposing an enlightened earnestness to an eccentric earnestness; a zeal *with* knowledge to a zeal *without* it. He is of opinion that activity does more good than invective, and that the latter is too often resorted to, because it is the cheaper substitute.

'His charity, however, is large, and his spirit truly catholic. He honours all his truly pious brethren, who are earnest in doing good, though they may differ from him as to the manner of doing it. Yet his candour never intrenches on his firmness; and while he will not dispute with others about shades of difference, he maintains his own opinions with the steadiness of one who embraced them on the fullest conviction.

'He is a 'scholar, and being a good ripe one,' it sets him above aiming at the paltry reputation to be acquired by those false embellishments of style, those difficult and uncommon words, and that laboured inversion of sentences, by which some injudicious clergymen make themselves unacceptable to the higher, and unintelligible to the lower, and of course, the larger part of their audience. He always bears in mind that the common people are not foolish, they are only ignorant. To meet the one he preaches good sense, to suit the other, plain language. But while he seldom shoots over the heads of the uninformed, he never offends the judicious. He considers the advice of Polonius to his son to be as applicable to preachers as to travellers—

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

In his pulpit he is no wrangling polemic, but a genuine Bible Christian, deeply impressed himself, with the momentous truths he so earnestly presses upon others. His mind is so imbued, so saturated, if I may hazard the expression, with scriptural knowledge, that from that rich storehouse, he is ever ready to bring forth *treasures, new and old*, and to apply them wisely, temperately, and seasonably.

'Though he carefully inculcates universal holiness in all his discourses, yet his practical instructions are constantly deduced from those fundamental principles of Christianity which are the root, and life, and spirit of all goodness. Next to a solid piety, and a deep acquaintance with the Bible, he considers it of prime importance to a clergyman to be thoroughly acquainted with human nature in general, and with the state of his own parish in particular. The knowledge of both will alone preserve him from preaching too personally so as to hurt, or too generally so as not to touch.

'He is careful not to hurry over the prayers in so cold, inattentive, and careless a manner, as to make the audience suspect he is saving himself, that he may make a greater figure in delivering the sermon. Instead of this, the devout, reverential, and impressive manner in which he pronounces the various parts of the Liturgy, best prepares his own heart, and the hearts of his people, to receive benefit from his discourse. His petitions are delivered with such sober fervour, his exhortations with such humble dignity, his thanksgivings with such holy animation as carry the soul of the hearer along with him. When he ascends the pulpit, he never throws the liturgical service into the back ground by a long elaborate composition of his own, delivered with superior force and emphasis. And he pronounces the Lord's prayer with a solemnity which shows that he recollects its importance and its author.

'In preaching, he is careful to be distinctly heard, even by his remotest auditors, and by constant attention to this important article, he has brought his voice, which was not strong, to be particularly audible. He affixes so much importance to a distinct delivery, that he smilingly told me, he suspected the grammatical definition

* See Herbert's Country Parson, under the heads of the parson in his house, the parson praying, the parson preaching, the parson comforting, the parson's church, the parson catechising, the parson in mirth, &c. &c. The term parson has now, indeed, a vulgar and disrespectful sound, but in Herbert's time it was used in its true sense, *persona ecclesiæ*. I would recommend to those who have not seen it, this sketch of the ancient clerical life. As Mr. Herbert was a man of quality, he knew what became the more opulent of his function; as he was eminently pious, he practised all that he recommended. 'This appellation of parson,' says Judge Blackstone, 'however depreciated by clownish and familiar use, is the most legal, most beneficial, and most honourable title which a parish priest can enjoy.—*Vide Blackstone's Commentaries.*

of a substantive was originally meant for a clergyman, whose great object it was, if possible, *to be seen*, but indispensibly to be *heard, felt and understood.*

'His whole performance is distinguished by a grave and majestic simplicity, as far removed from the careless reader of a common story, as from the declamation of an actor. His hearers leave the church not so much in raptures with the preacher, as affected with the truths he has delivered. He says, he always finds he has done most good when he has been least praised, and that he feels most humbled when he receives the warmest commendation, because men generally extol most the sermons which have probed them least; whereas those which really do good, being often such as make them most uneasy, are consequently the least likely to attract panegyric.—'*They* only bear true testimony to the excellence of a discourse,' added he, 'not who commend the composition or the delivery, but they who are led by it to examine their own hearts, to search out its corruptions and to reform their lives. Reformation is the flattery I covet.'

'He is aware that the generality of hearers like to retire from a sermon with the comfortable belief, that little is to be done on *their* parts. Such hearers he always disappoints, by leaving on their minds at the close some impressive precept, deduced from, and growing out of, the preparatory doctrine. He does not press any one truth to the exclusion of all others. He proposes no subtilties, but labours to excite seriousness, to alarm the careless, to quicken the supine, to comfirm the doubting. He presses eternal things as things near at hand; as things in which every living man has an equal interest.'

Mr. Stanley says, that 'though Dr. Barlow was considered at Cambridge as a correct young man, who carefully avoided vice and even irregularity, yet being cheerful, and addicted to good society, he had a disposition to innocent conviviality, which might, unsuspectedly, have led him into the errors he abhorred. He was struck with a passage in a letter from Dr. Johnson to a young man who had just taken orders, in which, among other wholesome counsel, he advises him 'to acquire the courage to refuse *sometimes* invitations to dinner.' It is inconceivable what a degree of force and independence his mind acquired by the occasional adoption of this single hint. 'He is not only,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'the spiritual director, but the father, the counsellor, the arbitrator, and the friend of those whom Providence has placed under his instruction.

'He is happy in an excellent wife, who, by bringing him a considerable fortune, has greatly enlarged his power of doing good. But still more essentially has she increased his happiness, and raised his character by her piety and prudence. By the large part she takes in his affairs, he is enabled to give himself wholly up to the duties of his profession. She is as attentive to the bodies, as her husband is to the souls of his people, and educates her own family as sedulously as he instructs his parish.

'One day when I had been congratulating Dr. Barlow on the excellence of his wife's character, the conversation fell by a sudden transition, on the celibacy of the Roman clergy. He smiled and said, 'Let us ministers of the Reformation be careful never to provoke the people to wish for the restoration of that part of popery. I often reflect how peculiarly incumbent it is on us, to select such partners as shall never cause our emancipation from the old restrictions to be regretted. And we ourselves ought, by improving the character of our wives, to repay the debt we owe to the ecclesiastical laws of protestantism for the privilege of possessing them.'

'Will it be thought too trifling to add, how carefully this valuable pair carry their consistency into the most minute details of their family arrangements? Their daughters are no less patterns of decorum and modesty in their dress and appearance, than in the more important parts of their conduct. The Doctor says, that the most distant and inconsiderable appendages to the temple of God, should have something of purity and decency. Besides,' added he, 'with what face could I censure improprieties from the pulpit, if the appearance of my own family in the pew below were to set my precepts at defiance, by giving an example of extravagance and vanity to the parish, and thus by making the preacher ridiculous, make his expostulations worse than ineffectual?'

'So conscientious a rector,' added Mr. Stanley, 'could not fail to be particularly careful in the choice of a curate; and a more humble, pious, diligent assistant than Mr. Jackson could not easily be found. He is always a welcome guest at my table. But this valuable man, who was about as good a judge of the world as the great Hooker, made just such another indiscreet marriage. He was drawn in to choose his wife, the daughter of a poor tradesman in the next town, because he concluded that a woman bred in humble and active life, would necessarily be humble and active herself. *Her* reason for accepting *him* was because she thought that as every clergyman was a *gentleman*, she of course, as his wife, should be a *gentlewoman*, and fit company for any body.

'He instructs my parish admirably,' said Dr. Barlow, 'but his own little family he cannot manage. His wife is continually reproaching him, that though he may know the way to heaven, he does not know how to push his way in the world. His daughter is the finest lady in the parish, and outdoes them all, not only in the extremity, but the immodesty of the fashion. It is her mother's great ambition that she should excel the Miss Stanley's and my daughters in music, while her good father's linen betrays sad marks of negligence. I once ventured to tell Mrs. Jackson, that there was only one reason which could excuse the education she had given her daughter, which was, that I presumed she intended to qualify her for getting her bread; and that if she would correct the improprieties of the girl's dress, and get her instructed in useful knowledge, I would look out for a good situation for her. This roused her indignation. She refused my offer with scorn, saying, that when she asked my charity, she would take my advice; and desired I would re-

member that one clergyman's daughter was as good as another. I told her that there was indeed a sense in which one clergyman was as good as another, because the profession dignified the lowest of the order, if, like her husband, he was a credit to that order. Yet still there were gradations in the church as well as in the state. But between the *wives* and *daughters* of the higher and lower clergy, there was the same distinction which riches and poverty have established between those of the higher and lower orders of the laity; and that rank and independence in the one case confer the same outward superiority with rank and independence in the other.'

CHAP. XVI.

Among the visiters at Stanley Grove, there was a family of ladies, who, though not particularly brilliant, were singularly engaging from their modesty, gentleness, and good sense. One day when they had just left us, Mr. Stanley obliged me with the following little relation: Mrs. Stanley and Lucilla only being present.

'Lady Aston has been a widow almost seven years. On the death of Sir George, she retired into this neighbourhood with her daughters, the eldest of whom is about the age of Lucilla. She herself had a pious but a very narrow education. Her excessive grief for the loss of her husband augmented her natural love of retirement, which she cultivated, not to the purpose of improvement, but to indulgence of melancholy. Soon after she settled here, we heard how much good she did, and in how exemplary a manner she lived, before we saw her. She was not very easy of access even to us; and after we had made our way to her, we were the only visiters she admitted for a long time. We soon learnt to admire her deadness to the world, and her unaffected humility. Our esteem for her increased with our closer intercourse, which, however, enabled us also to observe some considerable mistakes in her judgment, especially in the mode in which she was training up her daughters.—These errors we regretted, and with all possible tenderness ventured to point out to her. The girls were the prettiest demure little nuns you ever saw, mute and timid, cheerless and inactive, but kind, good and gentle.

'Their pious mother, who was naturally of a fearful and doubting mind, had had this pensive turn increased by several early domestic losses, which, even previous to Sir George's death, had contributed to fix something of a too tender and hopeless melancholy on her whole character. There are two refuges for the afflicted; two diametrically opposite ways of getting out of sorrow—religion and the world. Lady Aston had wisely chosen the former. But her scrupulous spirit had made the narrow way narrower than religion required. She read the scriptures diligently, and she prayed over them devoutly; but she had no judicious friend to direct her in these important studies. As your Mrs. Ranby attended only to the doctrines, and our friend Lady Belfield trusted indefinitely to the promises, so poor Lady Aston's broken spirit was too exclusively carried to dwell on the threatenings; together with the rigid performance of those duties which she earnestly hoped might enable her to escape them. This round of duty, of watchfulness and prayer, she invariably performed with almost the sanctity of an Apostle, but with a little too much of the scrupulosity of an ascetic. While too many are rejoicing with unfounded confidence in those animating passages of scripture, which the tenor of their lives demonstrates not to belong to them, she trembled at those denunciations which she could not fairly apply to herself. And the promises from which she might have derived reasonable consolation, she overlooked as designed for others.

'Her piety, though sincere, was a little tinctured with superstition. If any petty strictness was omitted, she tormented herself with causeless remorse. If any little rule was broken, she repaired the failure with treble diligence the following day; and laboured to retrieve her perplexed accounts with the comfortless anxiety of a person who is working out a heavy debt. I endeavoured to convince her, that an inferior duty which clashed with one of a higher order might be safely postponed at least, if not omitted.

'A diary has been found useful to many pious Christians, as a record of their sins, and of their mercies. But this poor lady spent so much time in weighing the offences of one day against those of another, that before the scruple was settled, the time for action was past. She brought herself into so much perplexity by reading over this journal of her infirmities, that her difficulties were augmented by the very means she had employed to remove them; and her conscience was disturbed by the method she had taken to quiet it. This plan, however, though distressing to a troubled mind, is wholesome to one of a contrary cast.

'*My* family, as you have seen, are rather exact in the distribution of their time, but we do not distress ourselves at interruptions which are unavoidable: but *her* arrangements were carried on with a rigour which made her consider the smallest deviation as a sin that required severe repentance. Her alms were expiations, her self-denial penances. She was rather a disciple of the mortified Baptist, than of the merciful Redeemer. Her devotions were sincere, but discouraging. They consisted much in contrition, but little in praise; much in sorrow for sin, but little in hope of its pardon. She did not sufficiently cast her care and confidence on the great propitiation. She firmly believed all that her Saviour had done and suffered, but she had not the comfort of practically appropriating the sacrifice. While she was painfully working out her salvation with fear and trembling, she indulged the most unfounded apprehensions of the divine displeasure. At Aston Hall the Almighty was literally feared, but he was not glorified. It was the obedience of a slave, not the reverential affection of a child.

'When I saw her denying herself and her daughters the most innocent enjoyments, and suspecting sin in the most lawful indulgences,

I took the liberty to tell her how little acceptable uncommanded austerities and arbitrary impositions were to the God of mercies. I observed to her, that the world, that human life, that our own sins and weaknesscs found us daily and hourly occasions of exercising patience and self-denial; that life is not entirely made up of great evils or heavy trials, but that the perpetual recurrence of petty evils and small trials is the ordinary and appointed exercise of the Christian graces. To bear with the failings of those about us with their infirmities, their bad judgment, their ill-breeding, their perverse tempers; to endure neglect where we feel we have deserved attention, and ingratitude where we expected thanks; to bear with the company of disagreeable people, whom Providence has placed in our way, and whom He has perhaps provided on purpose for the trial of our virtue: these are the best exercises; and the better, because not chosen by ourselves. To bear with vexations in business, with disappointments in our expectations, with interruptions of our retirement, with folly, intrusion, disturbance, in short, with whatever opposes our will and contradicts our humour; this habitual acquiescence appears to be more of the essence of self denial than any little rigours or inflictions of our own imposing. These constant, inevitable, but inferior evils, properly improved, furnish a good moral discipline, and might well, in the days of ignorance, have superseded pilgrimage and penance. It has this advantage too over the other, that it sweetens the temper and promotes humility, while the former gives rigidness instead of strength, and inflexibility instead of firmness.

'I have often thought,' said I, when Mr. Stanley made a pause, 'that we are apt to mistake our vocation by looking out of the way for occasions to exercise great and rare virtues, and by stepping over those ordinary ones which lie directly in the road before us. When we read, we fancy we could be martyrs, and when we come to act, we cannot bear even a provoking word.'

Miss Stanley looked pleased at my remark, and in a modest tone observed, that 'in no one instance did we deceive ourselves more than in fancying we could do great things well, which we were never likely to be called to do at all; while, if we were honest, we could not avoid owning how negligently we performed our own little appointed duties, and how sedulously we avoided the petty inconveniences which these duties involved.'

'By kindness,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'we gradually gained Lady Aston's confidence, and of that confidence we have availed ourselves to give something of a new face to the family. Her daughters, good as they were dutiful, by living in a solitude unenlivened by books, and unvaried by improving company, had acquired a manner rather resembling fearfulness than delicacy. Religious they were, but they had contracted gloomy views of religion. They considered it as something that must be endured in order to avoid punishment, rather than as a principle of peace, and trust, and comfort; as a task to be gone through, rather than as a privilege to be enjoyed. They were tempted to consider the Almighty as a hard master, whom however they were resolved to serve, rather than as a gracious father, who was not only loving but *love* in the abstract.—Their mother was afraid to encourage a cheerful look, lest it might lead to levity; or a sprightly thought for fear it might have a wrong tendency. She forgot, or rather she did not know, that young women were not formed for contemplative life. She forgot that in all our plans and operations we should still bear in mind that there are two worlds. As it is the fault of too many to leave the *next* out of their calculation, it was the error of Lady Aston, in forming the minds of her children, to leave out *this*. She justly considered heaven as their great aim and end; but neglected to qualify them for the present temporal life, on the due use and employment of which so obviously depends the happiness of that which is eternal.

'Her charities were very extensive, but of these charities her sweet daughters were not made the active dispensers, because an old servant, who governed not only the family, but her lady also, chose that office herself. Thus the bounty being made to flow in partial channels, the woman's relations and favourites almost entirely engrossing it, it did little comparative good.

'With fair understandings the Miss Astons had acquired very little knowledge: their mother's scrupulous mind found something dangerous in every author, who did not professedly write on religious subjects. If there were one exceptionable page in a book, otherwise valuable, instead of suppressing the page, she suppressed the book. And indeed, my dear Charles, grieved am I to think how few authors of the more entertaining kind we *can* consider as perfectly pure, and put without caution, restriction, or mutilation into the hands of our daughters. I am, however, of opinion, that as they will not always have their parents for tasters, and as they will every where, even in the most select libraries, meet with these mixed works, in which, though there is much to admire, yet there is something to expunge, it is the safest way to accustom them early to hear read the most unexceptionable parts of these books. Read them yourself to them without any air of mystery; tell them that what you omit is not worth reading, and then the omissions will not excite but stifle curiosity. The books to which I allude are those where the principle is sound and the tendency blameless, and where the few faults consist rather in coarseness than in corruption.

'But to return; she fancied that these inexperienced creatures, who have never tried the world, and whose young imaginations had perhaps painted it in all the brilliant colours with which erring fancy gilds the scenes it has never beheld, and the pleasure it has never tried, could renounce it as completely as herself, who had exhausted what it has to give and was weary of it. She thought they could live contentedly in their closets, without considering that she had neglected to furnish their minds with that knowledge which may make the closet a place of enjoyment, by supplying the intervals of devotional with entertaining reading.

'We carried Lucilla and Phœbe to visit them'

I believe she was a little afraid of their gay countenances. I talked to her of the necessity of literature to inform her daughters, and of pleasures to enliven them. The term pleasure alarmed her still more than that of literature. 'What pleasures were allowed to religious people? She would make her daughters as happy as she dared without offending her Maker.' I quoted the devout but liberal Hooker, who exhorts us not to regard the Almighty as a captious sophist, but as a merciful Father.

'During this conversation, we were sitting under the fine spreading oak on my lawn in front of that rich bank of flowers which you so much admire. It was a lovely evening in the end of June; the setting sun was all mild radiance, the sky all azure, the air all fragrance. —The birds were in full song. The children, sitting on the grass before us, were weaving chaplets of wild flowers.

It looked like nature in the world's first spring.

'My heart was touched with joy and gratitude. 'Look, Madam,' said I, 'at the bountiful provision which a beneficent Father makes, not only for the necessities, but for the pleasures of his children;

——————not content
With every food of life to nourish man,
He makes all nature beauty to his eye,
And music to his ear.

'These flowers are of so little apparent use, that it might be thought profuseness in any economy short of that which is divine, to gratify us at once with such forms, and such hues, and such fragrance. It is a gratification not necessary, yet exquisite, which lies somewhere between the pleasures of sense and intellect, and in a measure partakes of both. It elevates while it exhilirates, and lifts the soul from the gift to the giver. God has not left his goodness to be *inferred* from abstract speculation, from the conclusions of reason, from deduction and argument; we not only collect it from observation, but we have palpable evidences of his bounty, we feel it with our senses. Were God a hard master, might he not withhold these superfluities of goodness? Do you think he makes such rich provision for us, that we should shut our eyes and close our ears to them? Does he present such gifts with one hand, and hold in the other a stern interdict of 'touch not, taste not, handle not?' And can you believe he is less munificent in the economy of grace, than in that of nature? Do you imagine that he provides such abundant supplies for our appetites and senses here, without providing more substantial pleasures for our future enjoyment? Is not what we see a prelude to what we hope for, a pledge of what we may expect? A specimen of larger, higher, richer bounty, an encouraging cluster from the land of promise? If from his works we turn to his word, we shall find the same inexhaustible goodness exercised to still nobler purposes. Must we not hope then, even by analogy, that he has in store blessings exalted in their nature, and eternal in their duration, for all those who love and serve him in the Gospel of his Son?'

'We now got on fast. She was delighted with my wife, and grew less and less afraid of my girls. I believe, however, that we should have made a quicker progress in gaining her confidence if we had looked less happy. I suggested to her to endeavour to raise the tone of her daughters' piety, to make their habits less monastic, their tempers more cheerful, their virtues more active; to render their lives more useful, by making them the immediate instruments of her charity; to take them out of themselves, and teach them to compare their factitious distresses with real substantial misery, and to make them feel grateful for the power and the privilege of relieving it.

'As Dr. Barlow has two parishes which join, and we had pre-occupied the ground in our own, I advised them to found a school in the next, for the instruction of the young, and a friendly society for the aged of their own sex. We prevailed on them to be themselves not the nominal but the active patronesses; to take the measure of all the wants and all the merit of their immediate neighbourhood; to do every thing under the advice and superintendence of Dr. Barlow, and to make him their 'guide, philosopher, and friend.' By adopting this plan, they now see the poverty of which they only used to hear, and know personally the dependants whom they protect.

'Dr. Barlow took infinite pains to correct Lady Aston's views of religion. 'Let your notions of God' said he, 'be founded, not on your own gloomy apprehensions, and visionary imaginations, but what is revealed in his word, else the very intenseness of your feelings, the very sincerity of your devotion, may betray you into enthusiasm, into error, into superstition, into despair. Spiritual notions which are not grounded on scriptural truth, and directed and guarded by a close adherence to it, mislead tender hearts and warm imaginations. But while you rest on the sure unperverted foundation of the word of God, and pray for his Spirit to assist you in the use of his word, you will have little cause to dread that you shall fear him too much, or serve him too well. I earnestly exhort you,' continued he, 'not to take the measure of your spiritual state from circumstances which have nothing to do with it. Be not dismayed at an incidental depression which may depend on the state of your health, or your spirits, or your affairs. Look not for sensible communications. Do not consider rapturous feelings as any criterion of the favour of your Maker, nor the absence of them as any indication of his displeasure. An increasing desire to know him more, and serve him better; an increasing desire to do, and to suffer his whole will; a growing resignation to his providential dispensations, is a much surer, a much more unequivocal test.'

'I next,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'carried our worthy curate, Mr. Jackson, to visit her, and proposed that she should engage him to spend a few hours every week with the young ladies. I recommended that after he had read with them a portion of Scripture, of which he would give them a sound and plain exposition, he should convince them he had not the worse taste for being religious, by reading with them some

books of general instruction, history, travels, and polite literature. This would imbue their minds with useful knowledge, form their taste, and fill up profitably and pleasantly that time which now lay heavy on their hands; and, without intrenching on any of their duties, would qualify them to discharge them more cheerfully.

'I next suggested that they should study gardening; and that they should put themselves under the tuition of Lucilla, who is become the little Repton of the valley. To add to the interest, I requested that a fresh piece of ground might be given them, that they might not only exercise their taste, but be animated with seeing the complete effect of their own exertions; as a creation of their own would be likely to afford them more amusement, than improving on the labours of another.

'I had soon the gratification of seeing my little Carmelites, who used when they walked in the garden, to look as if they came to dig a daily portion of their own graves, now enjoying it, embellishing it, and delighted by watching its progress; and their excellent mother, who, like Spenser's Despair, used to look 'as if she never dined,' now enjoying the company of her select friends. The mother is become almost cheerful and the daughters almost gay. Their dormant faculties are awakened. Time is no longer a burden, but a blessing: the day is too short for their duties, which are performed with alacrity since they have been converted into pleasures. You will believe I did not hazard all these terrible innovations as rapidly as I recount them, but gradually, as they were able to bear it.

'This happy change in themselves has had the happiest consequences. Their friends had conceived the strongest prejudices against religion, from the gloomy garb in which they had seen it arrayed at Aston Hall. The uncle, who was also the guardian, had threatened to remove the girls before they were quite moped to death; the young baronet was actually forbidden to come home at the holidays; but now the uncle is quite reconciled to *them*, and almost to *religion*. He has resumed his fondness for the daughters; and their brother, a fine youth at Cambridge, is happy in spending his vacations with his family, to whom he is become tenderly attached. He has had his own principles and character much raised by the conversation and example of Dr. Barlow, who contrives to be at Aston Hall as much as possible when Sir George is there. He is daily expected to make his mother a visit, when I shall recommend him to your particular notice and acquaintance.'

Lucilla, blushing, said, she thought her father had too exclusively recommended the *brother* to my friendship; she would venture to say the *sisters* were equally worthy of my regard, adding, in an affectionate tone, 'they are every thing that is amiable and kind. The more you know them, Sir, the more you will admire them; for their good qualities are kept back, by the best quality of all, their modesty.' This candid and liberal praise did not sink the fair eulogist herself in my esteem.

CHAP. XVII.

I HAD now been near three weeks at the Grove. Ever since my arrival I had contracted the habit of pouring out my heart to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, with grateful affection and filial confidence. I still continued to do it on all subjects except one.

The more I saw of Lucilla, the more difficult I found it to resist her numberless attractions. I could not persuade myself that either prudence or duty demanded that I should guard my heart against such a combination of amiable virtues and gentle graces: virtues and graces, which, as I observed before, my mind had long been combining as a delightful idea, and which I now saw realized in a form more engaging than even my own imagination had allowed itself to picture.

I did not feel courage sufficient to risk the happiness I actually enjoyed, by aspiring too suddenly to a happiness more perfect. I dared not yet avow to the parents, or the daughter, feelings, which my fears told me, might possibly be discouraged, and which, if discouraged, would at once dash to the ground a fabric of felicity that my heart, not my fancy, had erected, and which my taste, my judgment, and my principles equally approved, and delighted to contemplate.

The great critic of antiquity, in his treatise on the drama, observes that the introduction of a new person is of the next importance to a new incident. Whether the introduction of two interlocutors is equal in importance to two incidents, Aristotle has forgotten to establish. This dramatic rule was illustrated by the arrival of Sir John and Lady Belfield, who, though not new to the reader or the writer, were new at Stanley Grove.

The early friendship of the two gentlemen had suffered little diminution from absence, though their intercourse had been much interrupted; Sir John, who was a few years younger than his friend, since his marriage, having lived as entirely in the town, as Mr. Stanley had done in the country. Mrs. Stanley had indeed seen Lady Belfield a few times in Cavendish Square, but her ladyship had never before been introduced to the other inhabitants of the Grove.

The guests were received with cordial affection, and easily fell into the family habits, which they did not wish to interrupt, but from the observation of which they hoped to improve their own. They were charmed with the interesting variety of characters in the lovely young family, who in return were delighted with the politeness, kindness, and cheerfulness of their father's guests.

Shall I avow my own meanness? Cordially as I loved the Belfields, I am afraid I saw them arrive with a slight tincture of jealousy. They would, I thought, by enlarging the family circle, throw me at a farther distance from the being whom I wished to contemplate nearly. They would, by dividing her attention, diminish my proportion. I had been hitherto the sole guest, I was now to be one of several. This was the first discovery I made that love is a narrower of the heart. I tried to subdue the ungenerous

feeling, and to meet my valuable friends with a warmth adequate to that which they so kindly manifested. I found that a wrong feeling at which one has virtue enough left to blush, is seldom lasting, and shame soon expelled it.

The first day was passed in mutual inquiries and mutual communications. Lady Belfield told me that the amiable Fanny, after having wept over the grave of her mother, was removed to the house of the benevolent clergyman, who had kindly promised her an asylum, till Lady Belfield's return to town, when it was intended she should be received into her family; that worthy man and his wife having taken on themselves a full responsibility for her character and disposition, and generously promised that they would exert themselves to advance her progress in knowledge during the interval. Lady Belfield added that every inquiry respecting Fanny, whom we must now call Miss Stokes, had been attended with the most satisfactory result, her principles being as unquestionable as her talents.

After dinner I observed that whenever the door opened, Lady Belfield's eye was always turned towards it, in expectation of seeing the children. Her affectionate heart felt disappointed on finding that they did not appear, and she could not forbear whispering me, who sat next her, 'that she was afraid the piety of our good friends was a little tinctured with severity. For her part she saw no reason why religion should diminish one's affection for one's children, and rob them of their innocent pleasures.' I assured her gravely I thought so too; but forbore telling her how totally inapposite her application was to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. She seemed glad to find me of her opinion, and gave up all hopes of seeing the 'little melancholy recluses,' as she called them, 'unless,' she said, laughing, 'she might be permitted to look at them through the grate of their cells.' I smiled, but did not undeceive her, and affected to join in her compassion. When we went to attend the ladies in the drawing room, I was delighted to find Lady Belfield sitting on a low stool, the whole gay groupe at play round her. A blush mixed itself with her good natured smile, as we interchanged a significant look. She was questioning one of the elder ones, while the youngest sat on her lap singing. Sir John entered, with that kindness and good humour so natural to him, into the sports of the others, who, though wild with health and spirits, were always gentle and docile. He had a thousand pleasant things to entertain them with. He too, it seems, had not been without his misgivings.

'Are not these poor miserable recluses?' whispered I maliciously to her Ladyship; 'and are not these rueful looks proof positive that religion diminishes our affection for our children? and is it not abridging their innocent pleasures, to give them their full range in a fresh airy apartment, instead of cramming them into an eating room, of which the air is made almost fœtid by the fumes of the dinner and a crowded table? and is it not better that they should spoil the pleasure of the company, though the mischief they do is bought by the sacrifice of their own liberty?' 'I make my *amende*,' said she, 'I never will be so forward again to suspect piety of ill nature.' 'So far from it, Caroline,' said sir John, 'that we will adopt the practice we were so forward to blame; and I shall not do it,' said he, 'more from regard to the company, than to the children, who I am sure will be gainers in point of enjoyment; liberty I perceive is to them positive pleasure, and paramount to any which our false epicurism can contrive for them.'

'Well, Charles,' said Sir John, as soon as he saw me alone, 'now tell us about this Lucilla, this paragon, this nonpariel of Dr. Barlow's. Tell me what is she? or rather what is she not?'

'First,' replied I, 'I will, as you desire, define her by negatives—she is *not* a professed beauty, she is *not* a professed genius, she is *not* a professed philosopher, she is *not* a professed wit, she is *not* a professed any thing; and, I thank my stars, she is *not* an artist!' 'Bravo, Charles; now as to what she is!' 'She is,' replied I, 'from nature—a woman, gentle, feeling, animated, modest. She is, by education, elegant, informed, enlightened. She is, from religion, pious, humble, candid, charitable.'

'What a refreshment will it be,' said sir John, 'to see a girl of fine sense, more cultivated than accomplished,—the creature, not of fiddlers and dancing masters, but of nature, of books, and of good company! If there is the same mixture of spirit and delicacy in her character, that there is of softness and animation in her countenance, she is a dangerous girl, Charles.'

'She certainly does,' said I, 'possess the essential charm of beauty where it exists; and the most effectual substitute for it, where it does not; the power of prepossessing the beholder, by her look and manner, in favour of her understanding and temper.'

This prepossession, I afterwards found confirmed, not only by her own share in the conversation, but by its effect on myself; I always feel that our intercourse unfolds not only her powers but my own. In conversing with such a woman, I am apt to fancy that I have more understanding, because her animating presence brings it more into exercise.

After breakfast, next day, the conversation happened to turn on the indispensable importance of unbounded confidence to the happiness of married persons. Mr. Stanley expressed his regret, that though it was one of the grand ingredients of domestic comfort, yet it was sometimes unavoidably prevented by an unhappy inequality of mind between the parties, by violence, or imprudence, or imbecility on one side, which almost compelled the other to a degree of reserve, as incompatible with the design of the union, as with the frankness of the individual.

'We have had an instance among our own friends,' replied Sir John, 'of this evil being produced, not by any of the faults to which you have adverted, but by an excess of misapplied sensibility, in two persons of near equality as to merit, and in both of whom the utmost purity of mind, and exactness of conduct, rendered all concealment superfluous. Our worthy friends Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton married from motives of affection, and with an high opinion of each other's merit, which their long and intimate

connection has rather contributed to exalt than to lower; and yet, now at the end of seven years, they are only beginning to be happy. They contrived to make each other as comfortable by an excess of tenderness, as some married pairs are rendered by want of it. A mistaken sensibility has intrenched not only on their comfort, but on their sincerity. Their resolution never to give each other pain, has led them to live in a constant state of petty concealment. They are neither of them remarkably healthy, and to hide from each other every little indisposition, has kept up a continual vigilance to conceal illness on the one part, and to detect it on the other, till it became a trial of skill which could make the other most unhappy; each suffering much more by suspicion when there was no occasion for it, than they could have done by the acknowledgment of slight complaints, when they actually existed.

'This valuable pair, after seven years apprenticeship to a petty martyrdom, have at last found out, that it is better to submit to the inevitable ills of life cheerfully and in concert, and to comfort each other under them cordially, than alternately to suffer and inflict the pain of perpetual disingenuousness. They have at last discovered that uninterrupted prosperity is not the lot of man.—Each is happier now with knowing that the other is sometimes sick, than they used to be with suspecting they were always so. The physician is now no longer secretly sent for to one, when the other is known to be from home. The apothecary is at last allowed to walk boldly up the public stair-case, fearless of detection.

'These amiable persons have at length attained all that was wanting to their felicity, that of each believing the other to be well, when they *say* they are so. They have found out that unreserved communication is the lawful commerce of conjugal affection, and that all concealment is contraband.'

'Surely,' said I, when Sir John had done speaking, 'it is a false compliment to the objects of our affection, if, for the sake of sparing them a transient uneasiness, we rob them of the comfort to which they are entitled, of mitigating our suffering by partaking it. All dissimulation is disloyalty to love. Besides, it appears to me to be an introduction to wider evils; and I should fear, both for the woman I loved and for myself, that if once we allowed ourselves concealment in one point, where we thought the motive excused us, we might learn to adopt it in others, where the principle was more evidently wrong.'

'Besides,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'it argues a lamentable ignorance of human life, to set out with an expectation of health without interruption, and of happiness without alloy. When young persons marry with the fairest prospects, they should never forget that infirmity is inseparably bound up with their very nature, and that in bearing one another's burthens, they fulfil one of the highest duties of the union.'

CHAP. XVIII.

After supper, when only the family party were present, the conversation turned on the unhappy effects of misguided passion. Mrs. Stanley lamented that novels, with a very few admirable exceptions, had done infinite mischief by so completely establishing the omnipotence of love, that the young reader was almost systematically taught an unresisting submission to a feeling, because the feeling was commonly represented as irresistible.

'Young ladies,' said Sir John, smiling, 'in their blind submission to this imaginary omnipotence, are apt to be necessarians. When they *fall* in love, as it is so justly called, they then obey their *fate;* but in their stout opposition to prudence and duty, they most manfully exert their *free will;* so that they want nothing but the *knowledge absolute*, of the miseries attendant on an indiscreet attachment, completely to exemplify the occupation assigned by Milton to a class of beings to whom it would not be gallant to resemble young ladies.'

Mrs. Stanley continued to assert, that ill-placed affection only became invincible, because its supposed invincibility had been first erected into a principle. She then adverted to the power of religion in subduing the passions, that of love among the rest.

I ventured to ask Lucilla, who was sitting next me, (a happiness which by some means or other, I generally contrived to enjoy,) what were her sentiments on this point? With a little confusion, she said, 'to conquer an ill-placed attachment, I conceive may be effected by motives inferior to Religion. Reason, the humbling conviction of having made an unworthy choice, for I will not resort to so bad a motive as pride, may easily accomplish it. But to conquer a well founded affection, a justifiable attachment, I should imagine, requires the powerful principle of Christian piety; and what cannot that effect?' She stopped, and blushed, as fearing she had said too much.

Lady Belfield observed, that she believed a virtuous attachment might possibly be subdued by the principle Miss Stanley had mentioned; yet she doubted if it were in the power of religion itself, to enable the heart to conquer aversion, much less to establish affection for an object for whom dislike had been entertained.

'I believe,' said Mr. Stanley, 'the example is rare, and the exertion difficult; but that which is difficult to us, is not impossible to Him who has the hearts of all men in his hand. And I am happy to resolve Lady Belfield's doubt by a case in point.

'You cannot, Sir John, have forgotten our old London acquaintance, Carlton?'—'No,' replied he, 'nor can I ever forget what I have since heard, of his ungenerous treatment to that most amiable woman, his wife. I suppose he has long ago broken her heart.'

'You know,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'they married not only without any inclination on either side, but on her part, with something more than indifference, with a preference for another person. *She* married through an implicit obedience to her mother's will, which she had never in any instance opposed: *He*, because his father had threatened to disinherit him if he married any other woman; for as they were

distant relations, there was no other way of securing the estate in the family.'

'What a motive for a union so sacred and so indissoluble!' exclaimed I, with an ardour which raised a smile in the whole party. I asked pardon for my involuntary interruption, and Mr. Stanley proceeded.

'She had long entertained a partiality for a most deserving young clergyman, much her inferior in rank and fortune. But though her high sense of filial duty led her to sacrifice this innocent inclination, and though she resolved never to see him again, and had even prevailed on him to quit the country and settle in a distant place, yet Carlton was ungenerous and inconsistent enough to be jealous of her without loving her. He was guilty of great irregularities, while Mrs. Carlton set about acquitting herself of the duties of a wife, with the most meek and humble patience, burying her sorrows in her own bosom, and not allowing herself even the consolation of complaining.

'Among the many reasons for his dislike, her piety was the principal. He said, religion was of no use, but to disqualify people for the business of life; that it taught them to make a merit of despising their duties, and hating their relations; and that pride, ill-humour, opposition, and contempt for the rest of the world, were the meat and drink of all those who pretended to religion.

'At first she nearly sunk under his unkindness; her health declined, and her spirits failed. In this distress she applied to the only sure refuge of the unhappy, and took comfort in the consideration that her trials were appointed by a merciful Father to detach her from a world which she might have loved too fondly, had it not been thus stripped of its delights.

'When Mrs. Stanley, who was her confidential friend, expressed the tenderest sympathy in her sufferings, she meekly replied, 'Remember who are they whose robes are washed white in the kingdom of glory, *it is they who come out of great tribulation.* I endeavour to strengthen my faith with a view of what the best Christians have suffered, and my hope with meditating on the shortness of all suffering. I will confess my weakness,' added she: 'of the various motives to patience under all the ills of life, which the Bible presents, though my reason and religion acknowledges them all, there is not one that comes home so powerfully to my feelings as this,—*the time is short.*'

'Another time Mrs. Stanley, who had heard of some recent irregularities of Carlton, called upon her, and lamented the solitude to which she was often left for days together, advised her to have a female friend in her house, that her mind might not be left to prey upon itself by living so much alone. She thanked her for the kind suggestion, but said she felt it was wiser and better not to have a confidential friend always at hand, 'for of what subject should we talk,' said she, 'but of my husband's faults? Ought I to allow myself in such a practice? It would lead me to indulge a habit of complaint which I am labouring to subdue. The compassion of my friend would only sharpen my feelings which I wish to blunt. Giving vent to a flame only makes it rage the more; if suppressing cannot subdue it, at least the consciousness that I am doing my duty will enable me to support it. When we feel,' added she, 'that we are *doing* wrong, the opening of our heart, may strengthen our virtue; but when we are *suffering* wrong, the mind demands another sort of strength; it wants higher support than friendship has to impart. It pours out its sorrows in prayer with fuller confidence, knowing that he who sees can sustain; that he who hears will recompense; that he will judge, not our weakness but our effort to conquer it; not our success but our endeavours; with him endeavour is victory.

'The grace I most want,' added she, 'is humility. A partial friend, in order to support my spirits, would flatter my conduct; gratified with her soothing, I should, perhaps, not so entirely cast myself for comfort on God. Contented with human praise, I might rest in it. Besides having endured the smart, I would not willingly endure it in vain. We know who has said, 'If you suffer with me, you shall also reign with me.' It is not, however, to mere suffering that the promise is addressed, but to suffering for his sake, and in his spirit.' Then turning to the Bible which lay before her, and pointing to the sublime passage of St. Paul, which she had just been reading, 'our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'—'Pray,' said she, 'read this in connection with the next verse, which is not always done. *When* is it that it works for us this weight of glory? *Only* 'while we are looking at the things which are not seen.' Do admire the beauty of this position, and how the good is weighed against the evil, like two scales differently filled; the affliction is light, and but for a moment; the glory is a *weight*, and it is for *ever*. 'Tis a feather against lead, a grain of sand against the universe, a moment against eternity. Oh! how the scale which contains this world's light trouble kicks the beam when weighed against the glory which shall be revealed.'

'At the end of two years she had a little girl; this opened to her a new scene of duties, and a fresh source of consolation. Her religion proved itself to be of the right stamp, by making her temper still more sweet, and diffusing the happiest effects through her whole character and conversation. When her husband had staid out late, or even all night, she never reproached him. When he was at home, she received his friends with as much civility as if she had liked them. He found that his house was conducted with the utmost prudence, and that while she maintained his credit at his table, her personal expenses were almost nothing; indeed, self seemed nearly annihilated in her. He sometimes felt disappointed, because he had no cause of complaint, and was angry that he had nothing to condemn.

'As he has a very fine understanding, he was the more provoked, because he could not help seeing that her blameless conduct put him continually in the wrong. All this puzzled him.—He never suspected that there was a principle,

out of which such consequences could grow, and was ready to attribute to insensibility, that patience which nothing short of Christian piety could have inspired. He had conceived of religion, as a visionary system of words and phrases, and concluded that from so unsubstantial a theory, it would be a folly to look for practical effects.

'Sometimes when he saw her nursing his child, of whom he was very fond, he was almost tempted to admire the mother, who is a most pleasing figure; and now and then, when his heart was thus softened for a moment, he would ask himself, what reasonable ground of objection there was either to her mind or person?

'Mrs. Carlton, knowing that his affairs must necessarily be embarrassed by the extraordinary expenses he had incurred, when the steward brought her usual year's allowance, she refused to take more than half, and ordered him to employ the remainder on his master's account. The faithful old man was ready to weep, and could not forbear saying, 'Madam, you could not do more for a kind husband. Besides, it is but a drop of water in the ocean.'—'That drop,' said she, 'it is my duty to contribute.' When the steward communicated this to Carlton, he was deeply affected, refused to take the money, and again was driven to resort to the wonderful principle, from which such right but difficult actions could proceed.'

Here I interrupted Mr. Stanley. 'I am quite of the steward's opinion,' said I. 'That a woman should do this, and much more for the man who loved her, and whom she loved, is quite intelligible to every being who has a heart. But for a cruel, unfeeling tyrant! I do not comprehend it. What say you, Miss Stanley?

'Under the circumstances you suppose,' said she, blushing, 'I think the woman would have no shadow of merit; her conduct would be a mere gratification, an entire indulgence of her own feelings. The triumph of affection would have been cheap: Mrs. Carlton's was the triumph of religion; of a principle which could subdue an attachment to a worthy object, and act with such generosity towards an unworthy one.'

Mr. Stanley went on. 'Mrs. Carlton frequently set up late reading such books as might qualify her for the education of her child, but always retired before she had reason to expect Mr. Carlton, lest he might construe it into upbraiding.' One night, as he was not expected to come home at all, she sat later than usual, and had indulged herself with taking her child to pass the night in her bed. With her usual earnestness she knelt down and offered up her devotions by her bed-side, and in a manner particularly solemn and affecting prayed for her husband. Her heart was deeply touched, and she dwelt on these petitions in a strain peculiarly fervent. She prayed for his welfare in both worlds, and earnestly implored that she might be made the humble instrument of his happiness. She meekly acknowledged her own many offences; of his she said nothing.

'Thinking herself secure from interruption, her petitions were uttered aloud; her voice often faltering, and her eyes streaming with tears. Little did she think that the object of her prayers was within hearing of them. He had returned home unexpectedly, and coming softly into the room, heard her pious aspirations. He was inexpressibly affected. He wept and sighed bitterly. The light from the candles on the table fell on the blooming face of his sleeping infant, and on that of his weeping wife. It was too much for him. But he had not the virtuous courage to give way to his feelings. He had not the generosity to come forward and express the admiration he felt. He withdrew unperceived and passed the remainder of the night in great perturbation of spirit. Shame, remorse, and confusion, raised such a conflict in his mind, as prevented him from closing his eyes; while she slept in quiet, and awoke in peace.

'The next morning, during a very short interview, he behaved to her with a kindness which she had never before experienced. He had not resolution to breakfast with her, but promised, with affection in his words and manner to return to dinner. The truth was, he never quitted home, but wandered about his woods to compose and strengthen his mind. This self-examination was the first he had practised; its effects were salutary.

'A day or two previous to this they had dined at our house. He had always been much addicted to the pleasures of the table. He expressed high approbation of a particular dish, and mentioned again when he got home how much he liked it. The next morning Mrs. Carlton wrote to Lucilla to beg the receipt for making this ragout; and this day, when he returned from his solitary ramble and 'compunctious visitings,' the favourite dish, most exquisitely dressed was produced at his dinner. He thanked her for this obliging attention, and turning to the butler, directed him to tell the cook that no dish was ever so well dressed. Mrs. Carlton blushed when the honest butler said, 'Sir, it was my mistress dressed it with her own hands, because she knew your honour was fond of it.'

'Tears of gratitude rushed into Carlton's eyes, and tears of joy overflowed those of the old domestic, when his master, rising from the table, tenderly embraced his wife, and declared he was unworthy of such a treasure. 'I have been guilty of a public wrong, Johnson,' said he to his servant, 'and my reparation shall be as public. I can never deserve her, but my life shall be spent in endeavouring to do so.'

'The little girl was brought in, and her presence seemed to cement this new formed union. An augmented cheerfulness on the part of Mrs. Carlton invited an increased tenderness on that of her husband. He began every day to discover new excellences in his wife, which he readily acknowledged to herself, and to the world. The conviction of her worth had gradually been producing esteem, esteem now ripened into affection, and his affection for his wife was mingled with a blind sort of admiration of that piety which had produced such effects. He now began to think home the pleasantest place, and his wife the pleasantest companion.

'A gentle censure from him on the excessive frugality of her dress, mixed with admiration

of the purity of its motive, was an intimation to her to be more elegant. He happened to admire a gown worn by a lady whom they had visited. She not only sent for the same materials but had it made by the same pattern. A little attention, of which he felt the delicacy.

'He not only saw, but in no long time acknowledged, that a religion which produced such admirable effects, could not be so mischievous a principle as he had supposed, nor could it be an inert principle. Her prudence has accomplished what her piety began. She always watched the turn of his eye, to see how far she might venture, and changed the discourse when the look was not encouraging. She never tired him with lectures, never intruded serious discourse unseasonably, nor prolonged it improperly. His early love of reading, which had for some years given way to more turbulent pleasures, he has resumed; and frequently insists, that the books he reads to her shall be of her own choosing. In this choice she exercises the nicest discretion, selecting such as may gently lead his mind to higher pursuits, but which at the same time are so elegantly written, as not to disgust his taste. In all this Mrs. Stanley is her friend and counsellor.

'While Mrs. Carlton is advancing her husband's relish for books of piety, he is forming her's to polite literature. She herself often proposes an amusing book, that he may not suspect her of a wish to abridge his innocent gratifications; and by this complaisance she gains more than she loses, for, not to be outdone in generosity, he often proposes some pious one in return. Thus their mutual sacrifices are mutual benefits. She has found out that he has a highly cultivated understanding, and he has discovered that she has a mind remarkably susceptible of cultivation. He has by degrees dropt most of his former associates, and has entirely renounced the diversions into which they led him. He is become a frequent and welcome visitor here. His conduct is uniformly respectable, and I look forward with hope to his becoming even a shining character. There is, however, a pertinacity, I may say a sincerity, in his temper, which somewhat keeps him back. He will never adopt any principle without the most complete conviction of his own mind; nor profess any truth, of which he himself does not actually feel the force.'

Lady Belfield, after thanking Mr. Stanley for his interesting little narrative, earnestly requested that Sir John would renew his acquaintance with Mr. Carlton, that she herself might be enabled to profit by such an affecting example of the power of genuine religion as his wife exhibited; confessing that one such living instance would weigh more with her than a hundred arguments. Mrs. Stanley obligingly promised to invite them to dinner the first leisure day.

Mr. Stanley now informed us that Sir George Aston was arrived from Cambridge on a visit to his mother and sisters; that he was a youth of great promise, whom he begged to introduce to us as a young man in whose welfare he took a lively concern, and on the right formation of whose character much would depend, as he had a large estate, and the family interest in the country would give him a very considerable influence; to this influence it was, therefore, of great importance to give a right direction. We next morning took a ride to Aston Hall, and I commenced an acquaintance with the engaging young baronet, which I doubt not, from what I saw and heard, will hereafter ripen into friendship.

CHAP. XIX.

The good rector joined the party at dinner. The conversation afterwards happened to turn on the value of human opinion, and Sir John Belfield made the hackneyed observation, that the desire of obtaining it should never be discouraged, it being highly useful as a motive of action.

'Yes,' said Dr. Barlow, 'it certainly has its uses in a world, the affairs of which must be chiefly carried on by worldly men; a world which is itself governed by low motives. But human applause is not a Christian principle of action; nay, it is so adverse to Christianity, that our Saviour himself assigns it as a powerful cause of men's not believing, or at least not confessing him, *because they loved the praise of men.* The eager desire of fame is a sort of separation line between Paganism and Christianity. The ancient philosophers have left us many shining examples of moderation in earthly things, and of the contempt of riches. So far the light of reason, and a noble self-denial carried them; and many a Christian may blush at these instances of their superiority; but of an indifference to fame, of a deadness to human applause, except as founded on a loftiness of spirit, disdain of their judges, and self-sufficient pride, I do not recollect any instance.'

'And yet,' said Sir John, 'I remember Seneca says in one of his epistles, that no man expresses such a respect and devotion to virtue, as he who forfeits the *repute* of being a good man, that he may not forfeit the *conscience* of being such.'

'They might,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'incidentally express some such sentiment, in a well turned period, to give antithesis to an expression, or weight to an apothegm; they might declaim against it in a fit of disappointment, in the burst of indignation excited by a recent loss of popularity; but I question if they ever once acted upon it. I question if Marius himself, sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage, actually felt it. Seldom, if ever, does it seem to have been inculcated as a principle, or enforced as a rule of action: nor could it.....it was 'against the canon law of their foundation.'

Sir John. 'Yet a good man struggling with adversity is, I think, represented by one of their authors, as an object worthy of the attention of the gods.'

Stanley. 'Yes—but the divine approbation alone was never proposed as the standard of right, or the reward of actions, except by divine revelation.'

'Nothing seems more difficult,' said I, 'to settle than the standard of right. Every man has a standard of his own, which he considers as of universal application. One makes his own

tastes, desires and appetites, his rule of right; another the example of certain individuals, fallible like himself; a third, and indeed the generality, the maxims, habits, and manners of the fashionable part of the world.'

Sir John. 'But since it is so difficult to discriminate between allowable indulgence and criminal conformity, the life of a conscientious man, if he be not constitutionally temperate, or habitually firm, must be poisoned with solicitude, and perpetually racked with the fear of exceeding his limits.'

Stanley. 'My dear Belfield, the peace and security of a Christian, we well know, are not left to depend on constitutional temperance, or habitual firmness. These are, as the young Numidian says,

Perfections that are placed in bones and nerves.

There is a higher and surer way to prevent the solicitude which, by correcting the principle; to get the heart set right; to be jealous over ourselves; to be careful never to venture to the edge of our lawful limits; in short, and that is the only infallible standard, to live in the conscientious practice of measuring all we say, and do, and think, by the unerring rule of God's word.'

Sir John. 'The impossibility of reaching the perfection which that rule requires, sometimes discourages well meaning men, as if the attempt were hopeless.

Dr. Barlow. 'That is, Sir, because they take up with a kind of hearsay Christianity. Its reputed pains and penalties drive them off from inquiring for themselves. They rest on the surface.—If they would go deeper they would see that the Spirit which dictated the Scripture is a Spirit of power as well as a Spirit of promise. All that he requires us to do, he enables us to perform. He does not prescribe 'rules' without furnishing us with arms.'

In answer to some further remarks of Sir John, who spoke with due abhorrence of any instance of actual vice, but who seemed to have no just idea of its root and principle. Dr. Barlow observed: 'While every one agrees in reprobating wicked actions, few, comparatively, are aware of the natural and habitual evil which lurks in the heart. To this the Bible particularly directs our attention. In describing a bad character, it does not say that his *actions* are flagitious, but that 'God is not in all his *thoughts*.' This is the description of a thoroughly worldly man. Those who are given up completely to the world, to its maxims, its principles, its cares, or its pleasures, cannot entertain thoughts of God. And to be unmindful of his providence, to be regardless of his presence, to be insensible to his mercies, must be nearly as offensive to Him as to deny his existence. Excesssive dissipation, a supreme love of money, or an entire devotedness to ambition, drinks up that spirit, swallows up that affection, exhausts that vigour, starves that zeal, with which a Christian should devote himself to serve his Maker.

'Pray observe,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'that I am not speaking of avowed profligates, but of decent characters; men who, while they are pursuing, with keen intenseness, the great objects of their attachment, do not deride or even totally neglect religious observances; yet think they do much and well, by affording some old scraps of refuse time to a few wary prayers and sleepy thoughts, from a mind worn down with engagements of pleasure, or projects of accumulation, or schemes of ambition. In all these several pursuits, there may be nothing which, to the gross perceptions of the world, would appear to be moral turpitude. The pleasure may not be profligacy, the wealth so cherished may not have been fraudulently obtained, the ambition, in human estimation, may not be dishonourable; but an alienation from God, an indifference to eternal things, a spirit incompatible with the spirit of the gospel, will be found at the bottom of all these restless pursuits.'

'I am entirely of your opinion, Doctor,' said Mr. Stanley,' 'it is taking up with something short of real Christianity; it is an apostacy from the doctrines of the Bible, it is the substitution of a spurious and popular religion, for that which was revealed from heaven; it is a departure from the faith once delivered to the saints that has so fatally sunk our morality, and given countenance to that low standard of practical virtue which prevails. If we lower the principle, if we obscure the light, if we reject, the influence, if we sully the purity, if we abridge the strictness of the divine law, there will remain no ascending power in the soul, no stirring spirit, no quickening aspiration after perfection, no stretching forward after that holiness to which the beatific vision is specifically promised. It is in vain to expect that the practice will rise higher than the principle which inspires it; that the habits will be superior to the motives which govern them.'

Dr. Barlow. 'Selfishness, security, and sensuality are predicted by our Saviour as the character of the last times. In alluding to the antediluvian world, and the cause of its destruction, eating, drinking, and marrying, could not be named in the Gospel as things censurable in themselves, they being necessary to the very existence of that world, which the abuse of them was tending to destroy. Our Saviour does not describe criminality by the excess, but by the spirit of the act. He speaks of eating, not gluttony; of drinking, not intoxication; of marriage, not licentious intercourse. This seems a plain intimation, that carrying on the transactions of the world in the spirit of the world, and that habitual deadness to the concerns of eternity, in being so alive to the pleasures or the interests of the present moment, do not indicate a state of safety, even where gross acts of vice may be rare.'

Stanley. 'It is not by a few, or even many instances of excessive wickedness that the moral state of a country is to be judged, but by a general averseness and indifference to *real* religion. A few examples of glaring impiety may furnish more subject for declamation, but are not near so deadly a symptom. It is no new remark, that more men are undone by an excessive indulgence in things permitted, than by the commission of avowed sins.'

Sir John. 'How happy are those, who, by their faith and piety are delivered from these difficulties!'

Stanley. 'My dear Belfield where are those privileged beings? It is one sad proof of human infirmity, that the best men have continually these things to struggle with. What makes the difference is, that those whom we call good men struggle on to the end, while the others, not seeing the danger do not struggle at all.'

'Christians,' said Dr. Barlow, 'who would strictly keep within the bounds prescribed by their religion, should imitate the ancient Romans, who carefully watched that their god Terminus, who defined their limits, should never recede; the first step of his retreat, they said, would be the destruction of their security.'

Sir John. 'But, Doctor, pray what remedy do you recommend against this natural, I had almost said this invincible propensity to overvalue the world? I do not mean a propensity merely to overrate its pleasures and its honours, but a disposition to yield to its domination over the mind, to indulge a too earnest desire of standing well with it, to cherish a too anxious regard for its good opinion!'

Dr. Barlow. 'The knowledge of the disease should precede the application of the remedy.—Human applause is by a worldly man reckoned not only among the luxuries of life, but among articles of the first necessity. An undue desire to obtain it, has certainly its foundation in vanity; and it is one of our grand errors to reckon vanity a trivial fault. And over estimation of character, and an anxious wish to conciliate all suffrages, is an infirmity from which even worthy men are not exempt; nay, it is a weakness from which, if they are not governed by a strict religious principle, worthy men are in most danger. Reputation being in itself so very desirable a good, those who actually possess it, and in some sense deserve to possess it, are apt to make it their standard, and to rest in it as their supreme aim and end.'

Sir John. 'You have exposed the latent principle, it remains that you suggest its cure.'

Dr. Barlow. 'I believe the most effectual remedy would be, to excite in the mind frequent thoughts of our divine Redeemer, and of *his* estimate of that world on which we so fondly set our affections, and whose approbation we are too apt to make the chief object of our ambition.'

Sir John. 'I allow it to have been necessary, that Christ in the great end which he had to accomplish, should have been poor, and neglected and contemned, and that he should have trampled on the great things of this world, human applause among the rest; but I do not conceive that this obligation extends to his followers, nor that we are called upon to partake the poverty which he preferred, or to renounce the wealth and grandeur which he set at nought, or to imitate him in making himself of no reputation.'

Dr. Barlow. 'We are not indeed called to resemble him in his external circumstances. It is not our bounden duty to be necessarily exposed to the same contempt; nor are we obliged to embrace the same ignominy. Yet it seems a natural consequence of our Christian profession, that the things which he despised, we should not venerate; the vanities he trampled on, we should not admire; the world which he censured, we ought not to idolize; the ease which he renounced, we should not rate too highly; the fame which he set at nought, we ought not anxiously to covet.—Surely the followers of him who was 'despised and rejected of men,' should not seek their highest gratification from the flattery and applause of men. The truth is, in all discourses on this subject, we are compelled continually to revert to the observation that Christianity is a religion of the *heart.* And though we are not called upon to partake the poverty and meanness of his situation, yet the precept is clear and direct, respecting the temper by which we should be governed.

'Let the same *mind* be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' If, therefore, we happen to possess that wealth and grandeur which he disdained, we should *possess them as though we possessed them not.* We have a fair and liberal permission to use them as his gift, and to his glory, but not to erect them into the supreme objects of our attachment. In the same manner in every other point, it is still the spirit of the act, the temper of the mind to which we are to look. For instance, I do not think that I am obliged to show my faith by sacrificing my son, nor my obedience, by selling all that I have to give to the poor; but I think I am bound by the spirit of these two powerful commands, to practice a cheerful acquiescence in the whole will of God, in suffering and renouncing, as well as in doing, when I know what is really his will.'

CHAP. XX.

The pleasant reflections excited by the interesting conversation of the evening were cruelly interrupted by my faithful Edwards. 'Sir,' said he, when he came to attend me, 'do you know that all the talk of the Hall to night at supper was, that Miss Stanley is going to be married to young Lord Staunton? He is a cousin of Mrs. Carlton's, and Mrs. Stanley's coach man brought home the news from thence yesterday. I could not get at the very truth, because Mrs. Comfit was out of the way; but all the servants agree, that though he is a lord, and rich, and handsome, he is not half good enough for her. Indeed, Sir, they say he is no better than he should be.'

I was thunderstruck at this intelligence. It was a trial I had not suspected. 'Does he visit here then, Edwards,' said I, 'for I had neither seen nor heard of him.'—'No Sir,' said he, 'but Miss meets him at Mr. Carlton's.' This shocked me beyond expression. Lucilla meet a man at another house! Lucilla carry on a clandestine engagement! Can Mrs. Carlton be capable of conniving at it! Yet if it were not clandestine, why should he not visit the Grove?'

These tormenting reflections kept me awake the whole night. To acquit Lucilla, Edward's story made difficult; to condemn her, my heart found impossible. One moment I blamed my own foolish timidity, which had kept me back from making any proposal, and the next, I was glad that the delay would enable me to sift the

truth, and to probe her character. 'If I do not find consistency here,' said I, 'I shall renounce all confidence in human virtue.'

I arose early and went to indulge my meditations in the garden. I saw Mr. Stanley sitting under the favourite oak. I was instantly tempted to go and open my heart to him, but seeing a book in his hand, I feared to interrupt him; and was turning into another walk, till I had acquired more composure—He called after me, and invited me to sit down.

How violent were my fluctuations! How inconsistent were my feelings! How much at variance was my reason with my heart! The man on earth with whom I wished to confer invited me to a conference. With a mind under the dominion of a passion which I was eager to declare, yet agitated with an uncertainty which I had as much reason to fear might be painfully as pleasantly removed; I stood doubtful whether to seize or to decline the occasion which thus presented itself to me. A moment's reflection, however convinced me that the opportunity was too inviting to be neglected. My impatience for an eclaircissement on Lord Staunton's subject was too powerful to be any longer resisted.

At length with the most unfeigned diffidence, and a hesitation which I feared would render my words unintelligible, I ventured to express my tender admiration of Miss Stanley, and implored permission to address her.

My application did not seem to surprise him. He only gravely said, 'We will talk of this some future day.' This cold and laconic reply instantly sunk my spirits. I was shocked and visibly confused. 'It is too late,' said I to myself. 'Happy Lord Staunton!' He saw my distress, and taking my hand with the utmost kindness of voice and manner, said, My dear young friend, content yourself for the present with the assurance of my entire esteem and affection. This is a very early declaration. You are scarcely acquainted with Lucilla; you do not yet know,' added he, smiling, 'half her faults.'

'Only tell me, My dear Sir,' said I, a little re-assured, and grasping his hand, 'that when you know all mine, you will not reject me. Only tell me that you feel no repugnance—that you have no other views—that Miss Stanley has no other——' here I stopt, my voice failed—the excess of my emotion prevented me from finishing my sentence.—He encouragingly said, 'I know not that Lucilla has any attachment. For myself, I have no views hostile to your wishes. You have a double interest in my heart. You are endeared to me by your personal merit, and by my tender friendship for your beloved father. But be not impetuous. Form no sudden resolution. Try to assure yourself of my daughter's affection, before you ask it of her. Remain here another month as my welcome guest, as the son of my friend. Take that month to examine your own heart, and to endeavour to obtain an interest in her's; we will then resume the subject.'

'But, my dear Sir,' said I, 'is not Lord Staunton—' 'Set your heart at rest,' said he. 'Though we are both a little aristocratic in our political principles, yet when the competition is for the happiness of life, and the interests of virtue, both Lucilla and her father think with Dumont that

'A lord
'Opposed against a man, is but a man.'

So saying, he quitted me; but with a benignity in his countenance and manner that infused not only consolation, but joy into my heart. My spirits were at once elated. To be allowed to think of Lucilla! To be permitted to attach myself to her! To be sure her heart was not engaged! To be invited to remain a month longer under the same roof with her—to see her—to hear her—to talk to her—all this was a happiness so great that I did not allow myself to repine, because it was not all I had wished to obtain.

I met Mrs. Stanley soon after. I perceived by her illuminated countenance, that my proposal had been already communicated to her. I ventured to take her hand, and with the most respectful earnestness entreated her friendship—her good offices. 'I dare not trust myself with you just now,' said she, with an affectionate smile; 'Mr. Stanley will think I abet rebellion, if through my encouragement you should violate your engagements with him. 'But,' added she, kindly pressing my hand, 'you need not be much afraid of *me*. Mr. Stanley's sentiments on this point, as on all others, are exactly my own. We have but one heart and mind, and that heart and mind are not unfavourable to your wishes.' With a tear in her eyes, and affection in her looks, she tore herself away, evidently afraid of giving way to her feelings.

I did not think myself bound by any point of honour to conceal the state of my heart from Sir John Belfield, who with his lady joined me soon after in the garden. I was astonished to find my passion for Miss Stanley was no secret to either of them.—Their penetration had left me nothing to disclose. Sir John however looked serious, and affected an air of mystery which a little alarmed me. 'I own,' said he, 'there is some danger of your success.' I eagerly enquired what he thought I had to fear?—'You have every thing to fear,' replied he in a tone of grave irony, 'which a man not four and twenty, of an honourable family, with a clear estate of four thousand a year, a person that all the ladies admire, a mind which all the men esteem, and a temper which endears you to men, women, and children, *can* fear from a little country girl, whose heart is as free as a bird, and who, if I may judge by her smiles and blushes whenever you are talking to her, would have no mortal objection to sing in the same cage with you.'

'It will be a sad dull novel however,' said Lady Belfield—'all is likely to go on so smoothly that we shall flag for want of incident. No difficulties, nor adventures to heighten the interest. No cruel step-dame, no tyrant father, no capricious mistress, no moated castle, no intriguing confidante, no treacherous spy, no formidable rival, not so much as a duel or even a challenge, I fear, to give variety to the monotonous scene.'

I mentioned Edward's report respecting Lord

Staunton, and owned how much it had disturbed me. 'That he admires her,' said Lady Belfield, 'is notorious. That his addresses have not been encouraged, I have also heard, but not from the family. As to Lucilla, she is the last girl that would ever insinuate even to me, to whom she is so unreserved, that she had rejected so great an offer. I have heard her express herself with an indignation, foreign to her general mildness, against women who are guilty of this fashionable, this dishonourable indelicacy.'

'Well, but Charles,' said Sir John, 'you must positively assume a little dejection, to diversify the business. It will give interest to your countenance, and pathos to your manner, and tenderness to your accent.—And you must forget all attentions, and neglect all civilities. And you must appear absent, and *distrait* and *reveur;* especially while your fate hangs in some suspense.—And you must read Petrarch, and repeat Tibullus, and write sonnets. And when you are spoken to, you must not listen. And you must wander in the grove by moon-shine, and talk to the Oreads, and the Dryads, and the Naiads—Oh! no, unfortunately, I am afraid there are no Naiads within hearing.—You must make the woods vocal with the name of Lucilla; luckily 'tis such a poetical name that echo won't be ashamed to repeat it. I have gone through it all, Charles, and know every high way and bye way in the map of love. I will, however, be serious for one moment, and tell you for your comfort, that though at your age I was full as much in for it as you are now, yet after ten years union, Lady Belfield has enabled me to declare

How much the wife is dearer than the bride.'

A tear glistened in her soft eyes at this tender compliment.

Just at that moment Lucilla happened to cross the lawn at a distance. At sight of her, I could not, as I pointed to her, forbear exclaiming, in the words of Sir John's favourite poet,

There doth beauty dwell,
There most conspicuous, even in outward shape,
Where dawns the high expression of a *mind.*

'This is very fine,' said Sir John, sarcastically; 'I admire all you young enthusiastic philosophers, with your intellectual refinement You pretend to be captivated only with *mind.* I observe, however, that previous to your raptures, you always take care to get this mind lodged in a fair and youthful form. This mental beauty is always prudently enshrined in some elegant corporeal frame before it is worshipped. I should be glad to see some of these intellectual adorers in love with the mind of an old or ugly woman. I never heard any of you fall into ecstacies in descanting on the mind of your grand-mother.' After some further irony, they left me to indulge my meditations, in the nature of which a single hour had made so pleasant a revolution.

CHAP. XXI.

The conversation of two men bred at the same school or college, when they happen to meet afterwards, is commonly uninteresting, not to say tiresome, to a third person, as involving local circumstances in which he has no concern But this was not always the case since the meeting of my two friends.—Something was generally to be gained by their communications even on these unpromising topics.

At breakfast, Mr. Stanley said, 'Sir John, you will see here at dinner to morrow our old college acqaintance, Ned Tyrrel. Though he does not commonly live at the family house in this neighbourhood, but at a little place he has in Buckinghamshire, he comes among us periodically to receive his rents. He always invites himself, for his society is not the most engaging.'

'I heard,' replied Sir John, 'that he became a notorious profligate after he left Cambridge, though I have lost sight of him ever since we parted there. But I was glad to learn lately that he has become quite a reformed man.'

'He is so far reformed,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that he is no longer grossly licentious. But in laying down the vices of youth, he has taken up successively those which he thought better suited to the successive stages of his progress. As he withdrew himself from his loose habits and connections, ambition became his governing passion; he courted public favour, thirsted for place and distinction, and laboured by certain obliquities and some little sacrifices of principle to obtain promotion. Finding it did not answer, and all his hopes failing, he now rails at ambition, wonders men will wound their consciences and renounce their peace for vain applause and 'the bubble reputation.—His sole delight at present, I hear, is in amassing money and reading controversial divinity. Avarice has supplanted ambition, just as ambition expelled profligacy.

'In the interval in which he was passing from one of these stages to the other, in a very uneasy state of mind, he dropped in by accident where a famous irregular preacher was disseminating his Antinomian doctrines. Caught by his vehement but coarse eloquence, and captivated by an alluring doctrine, which promised much while it required little, he adopted the soothing but fallacious tenet. It is true, I hear he is become a more respectable man in his conduct, but I doubt, though I have not lately seen him, if his present state may not be rather worse than his former ones.

'In the two previous stages, he was disturbed and dissatisfied. Here he has taken up his rest. Out of this strong hold it is not probable that any subsequent vice will ever drive him, or true religion draw him. He sometimes attends public worship, but as he thinks no part of it but the sermon of much value, it is only when he likes the preacher. He has little notion of the respect due to established institutions, and does not heartily like any precomposed forms of prayer, not even our incomparable Liturgy. He reads such religious books only as tend to establish his own opinions, and talks and disputes loudly on certain doctrinal points. But an accumulating Christian, and a Christian who, for the purpose of accumulation, is said to be uncharitable, and even somewhat oppressive, is paradox which I cannot solve, and an anomaly

which I cannot comprehend. Covetousness is, as I said, a more creditable vice than Ned's former ones, but, for that very reason more dangerous.'

'From this sober vice,' said I, 'proceeded the blackest crime ever perpetrated by human wickedness: for it does not appear that Judas, in his direful treason, was instigated by malice. It is observable, that when our Saviour names this sin, it is with an emphatical warning, as knowing its mischief to be greater because its scandal was less. Not content with a single caution, he doubles his exhortation, '*Take heed* and *beware* of covetousness.'

After some remarks of Sir John which I do not recollect, Mr. Stanley said, 'I did not intend making a philippic against covetousness, a sin to which I believe no one here is addicted. Let us not, however, plume ourselves in not being guilty of a vice, to which, as we have no natural bias, so in not committing it, we resist no temptation. What I meant to insist on was, that exchanging a turbulent for a quiet sin, or a scandalous for an orderly one, is not reformation; or if you will allow me the strong word, is not conversion.'

Mr. Tyrrel, according to his appointment, came to dinner, and brought with him his nephew, Mr. Edward Tyrrel, whom he had lately entered at the university, with a design to prepare him for holy orders. He was a well-disposed young man, but his previous education was said to have been very much neglected, and he was rather deficient in the necessary learning. Mr. Stanley had heard that Tyrrel had two reasons for breeding him to the church. In the first place, he fancied it was the cheapest profession, and in the next, he had laboured to infuse into him some particular opinions of his own, which he wished to disseminate through his nephew. Sir George Aston having accidentally called, he was prevailed on to stay, and Dr. Barlow was of the party.

Mr. Tyrrel, by his observations, soon enabled us to discover that his religion had altered nothing but his language. He seemed evidently more fond of controversy than of truth, and the whole turn of his conversation indicated that he derived his religious security rather from the adoption of a party than from the implantation of a new principle. 'His discourse is altered,' said Mr. Stanley to me afterwards, 'but I greatly fear his heart and affections remain unchanged.'

Mr. Stanley contrived, for the sake of his two academical guests, particularly young Tyrrel, to divert the conversation to the subject of learning, more especially clerical learning.

In answer to a remark of mine on the satisfaction I had felt in seeing such a happy union of learning and piety in two clergymen who had lately dined at the Grove, Mr. Stanley said, 'Literature is an excellent thing, when it is not the best thing a man has. It cannot surely be an offence to our Maker to cultivate carefully his highest natural gift, our reason. In pious men it is peculiarly important, as the neglect of such cultivation, in certain individuals, has led to much error in religion, and given much just offence to the irreligious, who are very sharp-sighted to the faults of pious characters. I, therefore truly rejoice to see a higher tone of literature now prevailing, especially in so many of our pious young divines; the deficiency of learning in some of their well-meaning predecessors having served to bring not only themselves, but religion also into contempt, especially with men who have only learning.

Tyrrel. 'I say nothing against the necessity of learning in a lawyer, because it may help him to lead a judge, and to mislead a jury; nor in a physician, because it may advance his credit by enabling him to conceal the deficiencies of his art; nor in a private gentleman, because it may keep him out of worse mischief. But I see no use of learning in the clergy. There is my friend Dr. Barlow. I would willingly give up all his learning, if he would go a little deeper into the doctrines he professes to preach.'

Mr. Stanley. 'I should indeed think Dr. Barlow's various knowledge of little value, did he exhibit the smallest deficiency in the great points to which you allude. But when I am persuaded that his learning is so far from detracting from his piety, that it enables him to render it more extensively useful, I cannot wish him dispossessed of that knowledge which adorns his religion without diminishing its good effects.'

Tyrrel. 'You will allow that those first great publishers of Christianity, the Apostles, had none of this vain learning.'

Stanley. 'It is frequently pleaded by the despisers of learning, that the Apostles were illiterate. The fact is too notorious, and the answer too obvious to require to be dwelt upon. But it is unfortunately adduced to illustrate a position to which it can never apply, the vindication of an unlettered clergy. It is a hacknied remark, but not the less true for being old, that the wisdom of God chose to accomplish the first promulgation of the gospel by illiterate men, to prove that the work was his own, and that the success depended not on the instruments employed, but on the divinity of the truth itself. But if the Almighty chose to establish his religion by miracles, he chooses to carry it on by other means. And he no more sends an ignorant peasant or fisherman to instruct men in Christianity now, than he appointed a Socrates or a Plato to be its publishers at first. As, however, there is a great difference in the situations, so there may be a proportionable difference allowed in the attainments of the clergy. I do not say it is necessary for every village curate to be a profound scholar; but as he may not always remain in obscurity, there is no necessity for his being a contemptible one.'

Sir John. 'What has been said of those who affect to despise birth has been applied also to those who decry learning; neither is ever undervalued except by men who are destitute of them: and it is worthy of observation, that as literature and religion both sunk together in the dark ages, so both emerged at the same auspicious æra.

Mr. Stanley, finding that Dr. Barlow was not forward to embark in a subject which he considered as rather personal, said, 'Is it presumptuous to observe, that though the Apostles were unlettered men, yet those instruments who were

to be employed in services singularly difficult, the Almighty condescended partly to fit for their peculiar work by great human attainments? The Apostle of the Gentiles was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and Moses, who was destined to the high office of a great legislator, was instructed in all the wisdom of the most learned nation then existing. The Jewish law-giver, though under the guidance of inspiration itself, did not fill his station the worse for this preparatory instruction. To how important a use the Apostle converted *his* erudition, we may infer from his conduct in the most learned and polished assembly in the world. He did not unnecessarily exasperate the polite Athenians by coarse upbraiding, or illiterate clamour, but he attacked them on their own ground. With what discriminating wisdom, with what powerful reasoning did he unfold to them that God whom they ignorantly worshipped! With what temper, with what elegance did he expose their shallow theology! Had he been as unacquainted with *their* religion, as they were with *his*, he had wanted the appropriate ground on which to build his instruction. He seized on the inscription of their own pagan altar, as a text from which to preach the doctrines of Christianity. From his knowledge of their errors, he was enabled to advance the cause of truth. He made their poetry, which he quoted, and their mythology which he would not have been able to explode if he had not understood it, a thesis from which to deduce the doctrine of the Resurrection: thus softening their prejudices and letting them see the infinite superiority of that Christianity which he enforced, to the mere learning and mental cultivation on which they so highly valued themselves. By the same sober discretion, accurate reasoning, and graceful elegance, he afterwards obtained a patient hearing, and a favourable judgment from king Agrippa.'

Dr. Barlow. 'It has always appeared to me, that a strong reason why the younger part of a clergyman's life should be in a good measure devoted to learning is, that he may afterwards discover its comparative vanity. It would have been a less difficult sacrifice for St. Paul to profess that he renounced all things for religion, if he had had nothing to renounce; and to count all things as dross in the comparison, if he had had no gold to put in the empty scale. Gregory Nazianzen, one of the most accomplished masters of Greek literature, declared that the chief value which he set upon it was, that in possessing it he had something of worth in itself to esteem as nothing in comparison of Christian truth. And it is delightful to hear Selden and Grotius, and Pascal and Salmasius, whom I may be allowed to quote, without being suspected of professional prejudice, as none of them were clergymen, while they warmly recommended to others, that learning, of which they themselves were the most astonishing examples, at the same time dedicating their lives to the advancement of religion. It is delightful, I say, to hear them acknowledge that their learning was only valuable as it put it in their power to promote Christianity, and to have something to sacrifice for its sake.'

Tyrrel. 'I can willingly allow that a poet, a dramatic poet especially, may study the works of the great critics of antiquity with some profit; but that a Christian writer of sermons can have any just ground for studying a Pagan critic, is to me quite inconceivable.'

Stanley. 'And yet, Mr. Tyrrel, a sermon is a work which demands regularity of plan, as well as a poem. It requires too, something of the same unity, arrangement, divisions and lucid order as a tragedy; something of the exordium and the peroration which belong to the composition of the orator. I do not mean that he is constantly to exhibit all this, but he should always understand it. And a discreet clergyman, especially one who is to preach before auditors of the higher rank, and who, in order to obtain respect from them, wishes to excel in the art of composition, will scarcely be less attentive to form his judgment by some acquaintance with Longinus and Quintilian than a dramatic poet. A writer of verse, it is true, may please to a certain degree by the force of mere genius, and a writer of sermons will instruct by the mere power of his piety; but neither the one nor the other will ever write well, if they do not possess the principles of good writing, and form themselves on the models of good writers.'

'Writing,' said Sir John, 'to a certain degree is an art, or, if you please, a trade. And as no man is allowed to set up in an ordinary trade till he has served a long apprenticeship to its *mysteries*, (the word, I think, used in indentures,) so no man should set up for a writer, till he knows somewhat of the mysteries of the art he is about to practice. He may, after all, if he wants talents, produce a vapid and inefficient book; but possess what talents he may, he will without knowledge, produce a crude and indigested one.'

Tyrrel. 'Still I insist upon it, that in a Christian minister the lustre of learning is tinsel, and human wisdom folly.'

Stanley. 'I am entirely of your opinion, if he rests in his learning as an *end* instead of using it as a *means;* if the fame, or the pleasure, or even the human profit of learning be his ultimate object. Learning in a clergyman without religion is dross, is nothing; not so religion without learning. I am persuaded that much good is done by men who, though deficient in this respect, are abundant in zeal and piety; but the good they do arises from the exertion of their piety, and not from the deficiency of their learning. Their labours are beneficial from the talent they exercise, and not from their want of another talent. The Spirit of God can work, and often does work by feeble instruments; and divine truth by its own omnipotent energy, can effect its own purposes. But particular instances do not go to prove that the instrument ought not to be fitted and polished, and sharpened for its allotted work. Every student should be emulously watchful that he does not diminish the stock of professional credit by his idleness: he should be stimulated to individual exertion, by bearing in mind that the English clergy have always been allowed by foreigners to be the most learned body in the world.'

Dr. Barlow. 'What Mr. Stanley has said of

the value of knowledge, does not at all militate against such fundamental prime truths—'This is eternal life to *know* God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent—I desire to *know* nothing, save Jesus Christ.—The natural man cannot *know* the things of the Spirit of God,' and a hundred other such passages.'

Tyrrel. 'Aye, Doctor, now you talk a little more like a Christian minister. But from the greater part of what has been asserted, you are all of you such advocates for human reason and human learning, as to give an air of paganism to your sentiments.'

Stanley. 'It does not diminish the utility, though it abases the pride of learning, that Christianity did not come into the world by human discovery, or the disquisitions of reason, but by immediate revelation. Those who adopt your way of thinking, Mr. Tyrrel, should bear in mind, that the work of God, in changing the heart, is not intended to supply the place of the human faculties. God expects, in his most highly favoured servants, the diligent exercise of their natural powers; and if any human being has a stronger call for the exercise of wisdom and judgment than another, it is a religious clergyman. Christianity does not supersede the use of natural gifts, but turns them into their proper channel.

'One distinction has often struck me. The enemy of mankind seizes on the soul through the medium of the passions and senses; the divine friend of man addresses him through his rational powers—*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened*, says the Apostle.'

Here I ventured to observe, that the highest panegyric bestowed on one of the brightest luminaries of our church, is that his name is seldom mentioned without the epithet *judicious* being prefixed to it. Yet does Hooker want fervour?—Does Hooker want zeal?—Does Hooker want courage in declaring the whole counsel of God?

Sir John. 'I hope we have now no clergyman to whom we may apply the biting sarcasm of Dr. South, on some of the popular but illiterate preachers of the opposite party in his day, that there was all the confusion of Babel, without the gift of tongues.'

Stanley. 'And yet that party produced some great scholars, and many eminently pious men. But look back to that day, and especially to the period a little antecedent to it, at those prodigies of erudition, the old Bishops and other divines of our Church. They were, perhaps, somewhat too profuse of their learning in their discourses, or rather they were so brimful, that they involuntarily overflowed. A juster taste, in our time, avoids that lavish display, which then not only crowded the margin, but forced itself into every part of the body of the work. The display of erudition might be wrong, but one thing is clear, it proved they had it, and as Dryden said, when he was accused of having too much wit, 'after all, it is a good crime.'

'We may justly,' said Dr. Barlow, 'in the refinement of modern taste, censure their prolixity, and ridicule their redundancies; we may smile at their divisions, which are numberless; and at their sub-divisions, which are endless: we may allow that this labour for perspicuity sometimes produced perplexity. But let us confess they always went to the bottom of whatever they embarked in. They ransacked the stores of ancient learning, and the treasures of modern science, not to indulge their vanity by obtruding their acquirements, but to prove, to adorn, and to illustrate the doctrine they delivered. How incredible must their industry have been, when the bare transcript of their voluminous folios seems alone sufficient to have occupied a long life!'

'The method,' said I, 'which they adopted of saying every thing that could be said on all topics, and exhausting them to the very dregs, though it may and does tire the patience of the reader, yet it never leaves him ignorant; and, of two evils, had not an author better be tedious than superficial? From an overflowing vessel you may gather more indeed than you want, but from an empty one you can gather nothing.'

Tyrrel. 'It appears to me that you wish to make a clergyman every thing but a Christian, and to bestow upon him every requisite except faith.'

Stanley. 'God forbid that I should make any comparison between human learning and Christian principle; the one is indeed lighter than the dust of the balance, when weighed against the other. All I contend for is, that they are not incompatible, and that human knowledge, used only in subserviency to that of the Scriptures, may advance the interests of religion. For the better elucidation of those scriptures a clergyman should know not a little of ancient languages. Without some insight into remote history and antiquities, especially the Jewish, he will be unable to explain many of the manners and customs recorded in the sacred volume. Ignorance in some of these points, has drawn many attacks on our religion from sceptical writers. As to a thorough knowledge of ecclesiastical history, it would be superfluous to recommend that, it being the history of his own immediate profession. It is therefore requisite, not only for the general purposes of instruction, but that he may be enabled to guard against modern innovation, by knowing the origin and progress of the various heresies with which the Church in all ages has been infested.

Tyrrel. 'But he may be thoroughly acquainted with all this, and not have one spark of light.'

Dr. Barlow. 'He may indeed with deep concern I allow it. I will go further. The pride of learning, when not subdued by religion may help to extinguish that spark.—Reason has been too much decried by one party, and too much deified by the other. The difference between reason and revelation seems to be the same as between the eye and the light; the one is the organ of vision, the other the source of illumination.'

Tyrrel. 'Take notice, Stanley, that if I can help it, I'll never attend your accomplished clergyman.'

Stanley. (Smiling) 'I have not yet completed the circle of his accomplishment.—Besides what we call book learning, there is another species of knowledge in which some truly good men are sadly deficient; I mean an acquaintance

with human nature. The knowledge of the world, and of Him who made it; the study of the heart of man, and of him, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, enables a minister to excel in the art of instruction; one kind of knowledge reflecting light upon the other. The knowledge of mankind, then, I may venture to assert, is, next to religion, one of the first requisites of a preacher; and I cannot help ascribing the little success which has sometimes attended the ministry of even worthy men, to their want of this grand ingredient. It will diminish the use they might make of the great doctrines of our religion, if they are ignorant of the various modifications of the human character to which those doctrines are to be addressed.

'As no man ever made a true poet without this talent, one may venture to say, that few without it have ever made eminent preachers. Destitute of this, the most elaborate addresses will be only random shot, which if they hit, will be more owing to chance than to skill. Without this knowledge, warned by Christian affection, guided by Christian judgment, and tempered with Christian meekness, a clergyman will not be able in the pulpit to accommodate himself to the various wants of his hearers; without this knowledge, in his private spiritual visits, he will resemble those empirics in medicine who have but one method of treatment for all diseases, and who apply indiscriminately the same pill and the same drop to the various distempers of all ages, sexes, and constitutions. This spirit of accommodation does not consist in falsifying, or abridging, or softening, or disguising, any truth; but in applying truth in every form, communicating it in every direction, and diverting it into every channel. Some good men seem sadly to forget that precept—*making a difference*—for they act as if all characters were exactly alike.'

Tyrrel. 'You talk as if you would wish clergymen to depart from the singleness of truth, and preach two gospels.'

Stanley. 'Far from it. But though truth is single, the human character is multiplied almost to infinity, and cannot be addressed with advantage if it be not well understood. I am ashamed of having said so much on such a subject in presence of Dr. Barlow, who is silent through delicacy. I will only add, that a learned young clergyman is not driven for necessary relaxation to improper amusements. His mind will be too highly set, to be satisfied with those light diversions which purloin time without affording the necessary renovation to the body and spirits, which is the true and lawful end of all amusement. In all circumstances, learning confers dignity on his character. It enables him to raise the tone of general conversation, and is a safe kind of medium with persons of a higher class who are not religious; and it will always put it in his power to keep the standard of intercourse above the degrading topics of diversion, sports and vulgar gossip.'

Dr. Barlow. 'You see, Mr. Tyrrel, that a prudent combatant thinks only of defending himself on that side where he is assaulted. If Mr. Stanley's antagonist had been a vehement advocate for clerical learning as the great essential of his profession, he would have been the first to caution him against the pride and inflation which often attend learning, when not governed by religion.—Learning not so governed might injure Christian humility, and thus become a far more formidable enemy to religion than that which it was called in to oppose.'

Sir John said, smiling, 'I will not apply to the clergy, what Rasselas says to Imlac, after he had been enumerating the numberless qualities necessary to the perfection of the poetic art—'Thou hast convinced me that no man can be a poet;'—but if all Stanley says be just, I will venture to assert that no common share of industry and zeal will qualify a young student for that sacred profession. I have indeed no experience on the subject, as it relates to the clerical order; but I conceive in general, that learning is the best human preservative of virtue; that it safely fills up leisure, and honourably adorns life, even where it does not form the business of it.'

'Learning too,' said I, 'has this strong recommendation, that it is the offspring of a most valuable virtue, I mean industry; a quality on which I am ashamed to see Pagans frequently set a higher value than we seem to do.'

'I believe indeed,' replied Sir John, 'that the ancients had a higher idea of industry and severe application than we have. Tully calls them the *imperatoriæ virtutes*, and Alexander said that slaves might indulge in sloth, but that it was a most royal thing to labour.'

Stanley. 'It has been the error of sensible men of the world, to erect talents and learning into idols, which they would have universally and exclusively worshipped.—This has perhaps driven some religious men into such a fear of over cultivating learning, that they do not cultivate it at all. Hence the intervals between their religious employments, and intervals there must be while we are vested with these frail bodies, are languid and insipid, wasted in trifling and sauntering. Nay, it is well if this disoccupation of the intellect do not lead from sloth to improper indulges.'

'You are perfectly right,' said Sir John; 'our worthy friend Thompson is a living illustration of your remark. He was at college with us; he brought from thence a competent share of knowledge; has a fair understanding, and the manners of a gentleman. For several years past he has not only adopted a religious character, but is truly pious. As he is much in earnest, he very properly assigns a considerable portion of his time to religious reading. But as he is of no profession, the intermediate hours often hang heavy on his hands. He continues to live in some measure in the world, without the inconsistency of entering into its pursuits; but having renounced the study of human learning, and yet accustoming himself to mix occasionally with general society, he has few subjects in common with his company, but is dull and silent in all rational conversation, of which religion is not the professed object. He takes so little interest in any literary or political discussion, however useful, that it is evident nothing but his good breeding prevents his falling asleep. At the same time he scruples not to violate con-

sistency in another respect, for his table is so elaborately luxurious, that it seems as if he were willing to add to the pleasures of sense, what he deducts from those of intellect.'

'I have often thought,' said Mr. Stanley, 'of sending him Dr. Barrow's *three sermons on industry in our calling as Christians, industry as gentlemen, and industry as scholars;* which sermons, by the way, I intended to have made my son read at least once a year, had he lived, that he might see the consistency, the compatability, nay, the analogy of the two latter with the former. I wish the spirit of these three discourses was infused into every gentleman, every scholar, and every Christian through the land. For my own part I should have sedulously laboured to make my son a sound scholar while I should have laboured still more sedulously to convince him that the value of learning depends solely on the purposes to which it is devoted. I would have a Christian gentleman able to beat the world at its own weapons, and convince it, that it is not from penury of mind, nor inability to distinguish himself in other matters, that he applies himself to seek that wisdom which is from above: that he does not fly to religion as a shelter from the ignominy of ignorance, but from a deep conviction of the comparative vanity of that very learning, which he yet is so assiduous to acquire.'

During this conversation, it was amusing to observe the different impressions made on the minds of our two college guests. Young Tyrrel, who, with moderate parts and slender application, had been taught to adopt some of his uncle's dogmas, as the cheapest way of being wise, greedily swallowed his eulogium of clerical ignorance, which the young man seemed to feel as a vindication of his own neglected studies, and an encouragement to his own mediocrity of intellect. While the interesting young baronet, though silent through modesty, discovered in his intelligent eyes, evident marks of satisfaction, in hearing that literature, for which he was every day acquiring a higher relish, warmly recommended as the best pursuit of a gentlemen, by the two men in the world, for whose judgment he entertained the highest reverence. At the same time it raised his veneration for Christian piety when he saw it so sedulously practised by these advocates for human learning

CHAP. XXII.

During these conversations, I remarked that Lucilla, though she commonly observed the most profound silence, had her attention always riveted on the speaker. If that speaker was Dr. Barlow, or her father, or any one whom she thought entitled to particular respect, she gently laid down her work, and as quietly resumed it when they had done speaking.

I observed to Sir John Belfield, afterwards, as we were walking together, how modestly flattering her manner was when any of us were reading! How intelligent her silence! How well-bred her attention!

'I have often contrasted it,' replied he, 'with the manner of some other ladies of my acquaintance, who are sometimes of our quiet evening party. When one is reading history, or any ordinary book aloud to them, I am always pleased that they should pursue their little employments. It amuses themselves and gives ease and familiarity to the social circle. But while I have been reading, as has sometimes happened, a passage of the highest sublimity, or most tender interest, I own I feel a little indignant to see the shuttle plied with as eager assiduity, as if the destinies themselves were weaving the thread. I have known a lady take up the candlestick to search for her netting-pin, in the midst of Cato's soliloquy; or stoop to pick up her scissars while Hamlet says to the ghost, 'I'll go no farther.' I remember another who would whisper across the table to borrow thread while Lear has been raving in the storm, or Macbeth starting at the spirit of Banquo; and make signs for a thread-paper, while cardinal Beaufort 'dies, and makes no sign.' Nay, once I remember when I was with much agitation hurrying through the gazette of the battle of Trafalgar, while I pronounced almost agonized, the last memorable words of the immortal Nelson, I heard one lady whisper to another, that she had broke her needle.'

'It would be difficult to determine, replied I, whether this inattention most betrays want of sense, of feeling, or of good breeding. The habit of attention should be carefully formed in early life, and then the mere force of custom would teach these ill-bred women 'to assume the virtue if they have it not.'

The family at the Grove was, with us, an inexhaustible topic whenever we met. I observed to Sir John, 'that I had sometimes observed in charitable families a display, a bustle, a kind of animal restlessness, a sort of mechanical *besoin* to be charitably busy. That though they fulfilled conscientiously one part of the Apostolic injunction, that of 'giving,' yet they failed in the other clause, that of doing it 'with simplicity.' 'Yes,' replied he, 'I visit a charitable lady in town, who almost puts me out of love with benevolence. Her own bounties form the entire subject of her conversation. As soon as the breakfast is removed, the table is always regularly covered with plans, and proposals, and subscription papers. This display conveniently performs the three-fold office of publishing her own charities, furnishing subjects of altercation, and raising contributions on the visitor. Her narratives really cost me more than my subscription. She is so full of debate, and detail, and opposition; she makes you read so many papers of her own drawing up, and so many answers to the schemes of other people, and she has so many objections to every other person's mode of doing good, and so many arguments to prove that her own is the best, that she appears less like a benevolent lady than a chicaning attorney.'

'Nothing,' said I, 'corrects this bustling bounty so completely, as when it is mixed up with religion; I should rather say, as when it flows from religion. This motive, so far from diminishing the energy, augments it; but it

cures the display, and converts the irritation into a principle. It transfers the activity from the tongue to the heart. It is the only sort of charity which 'blesses twice.' All charity, indeed, blesses the receiver; but the blessing promised to the giver, I have sometimes trembled to think, may be forfeited even by a generous mind, from ostentation and parade in the manner, and want of purity in the motive.'

'In Stanley's family,' replied he, in a more serious tone, 'I have met with a complete refutation of that favourite maxim of the world, that religion is a dull thing itself, and makes its professors gloomy and morose. Charles! I have often frequented houses where pleasure was the avowed object of idolatry. But to see the votaries of the 'reeling goddess,' after successive nights passed in her temples! to see the languor, the listlessness, the discontent—you would rather have taken them for her victims than her worshippers. So little mental vivacity, so little gayety of the heart! In short, after no careless observation, I am compelled to declare, that I never saw two forms less alike than those of Pleasure and Happiness.'

'Your testimony, Sir John,' said I, 'is of great weight in a case of which you are so experienced a judge. What a different scene do we now contemplate! Mr. Stanley seems to have diffused his own spirit through the whole family. What makes his example of such efficacy is, that he considers the Christian *temper* as so considerable a part of Christianity. This temper seems to imbue his whole soul, pervade his whole conduct, and influence his whole conversation. I see every day some fresh occasion to admire his candour, his humility, his constant reference, not as a topic of discourse, but as a principle of conduct, to the gospel, as the standard by which actions are weighed. His conscientious strictness of speech, his serious reproof of calumnies, his charitable construction of every case which has two sides; 'his simplicity and godly sincerity;' his rule of referring all events to providential direction, and his invariable habit of vindicating the divine goodness under dispensations apparantly the most unfavourable.'

Here Sir John left me, and I could not forbear pursuing the subject in soliloquy as I proceeded in my walk.—I reflected with admiration that Mr. Stanley in his religious conversation, rendered himself so useful, because instead of the uniform nostrum of *the drop and the pill*, he applied a different class of arguments as the case required, to objectors to the different parts of Christianity; to ill informed persons who adopted a partial gospel without understanding it as a scheme, or embracing it as a whole.—To those who allow its truth merely on the same ground of evidence that establishes the truth of any other well authenticated history; and who, satisfied with this external evidence, not only do not feel its power on their own heart, but deny that it has any such influence on the hearts of others;—to those who believe the gospel to be a mere code of ethics;—to their antipodes who assert that Christ has lowered the requisitions of the law;—to Lady Belfield who rests on her charities,—Sir John on his correctness,—Lady Aston on her austerities;—to this man who values himself solely on the stoutness of his orthodoxy; to another on the firmness of his integrity; to a third on the peculiarities of his party, he addresses himself with a particular view to their individual errors. This he does with such a discriminating application to the case, as might lead the ill informed to suspect that he was not equally earnest in those other points, which not being attacked he does not feel himself called on to defend, but which, had they been attacked, he would then have defended with equal zeal as relative to the discussion. To crown all, I contemplated that affectionate warmth of heart, that sympathizing kindness, that tenderness of feeling, of which the gay and the thoughtless fancy that they themselves possess the monopoly, while they make over harshness, austerity, and want of charity to religious men, as their inseparable characteristics.

These qualities excite in my heart a feeling compounded of veneration, and of love. And oh! how impossible it is, even in religion itself, to be disinterested! All these excellencies I contemplate with a more heart-felt delight from the presumptuous hope that I may one day have the felicity of connecting myself still more intimately with them.

CHAP. XXIII.

Some days after, while we were conversing over our tea, we heard the noise of a carriage; and Mr. Stanley looking out from a bow window in which he and I were sitting, said, it was Lady and Miss Rattle driving up the avenue. He had just time to add, 'these are our *fine* neighbours. They always make us a visit as soon as they come down, while all the gloss and lustre of London is fresh upon them. We have always our regular routine of conversation. While her Ladyship is pouring the fashions into Mrs. Stanley's ear, Miss Rattle, who is about Phœbe's age, entertains my daughters and me with the history of her own talents and acquirements.'

Here they entered. After a few compliments, Lady Rattle seated herself between Lady Belfield and Mrs. Stanley, at the upper end of the room; while the fine, sprightly, boisterous girl of fifteen or sixteen threw herself back on the sofa at nearly her full length, between Mr. Stanley and me, the Miss Stanleys and Sir John sitting near us, within hearing of her lively loquacity.

'Well, Miss Amelia,' said Mr. Stanley, 'I dare say you have made good use of your time this winter; I suppose you have ere now completed the whole circle of the arts. Now let me hear what you have been doing, and tell me your whole achievements, as frankly as you used to do when you were a very little girl.'

'Indeed,' replied she, 'I have not been idle, if I must speak the truth. One has so many things to learn you know. I have gone on with my French and Italian of course, and I am beginning German. Then comes my drawing-master, he teaches me to paint flowers and shells, and

to draw ruins and buildings, and to take views. He is a good soul, and is finishing a set of pictures, and half a dozen fire screens which I began for mamma. He *does* help me to be sure, but indeed, I do some of it myself, don't I, mamma?' calling out to her mother, who was too much absorbed in her own narratives to attend to her daughter.

'And then,' pursued the young prattler, 'I learn varnishing, and gilding, and japanning. And next winter I shall learn modelling, and etching, and engraving in mezzotinto and aquatinta, for Lady Di. Dash learns etching, and mamma says, as I shall have a better fortune than Lady Di, she vows I shall learn every thing she does. Then I have a dancing-master, who teaches me the Scotch and Irish steps; and another who teaches me attitudes, and I shall soon learn the waltz, and I can stand longer on one leg already than Lady Di. Then I have a singing-master, and another who teaches me the harp, and another for the piano-forte. And what little time I can spare from these *principal* things, I give by odd minutes to ancient and modern history, and geography, and astronomy, and grammar, and botany. Then I attend lectures on chemistry, and experimental philosophy, for as I am not yet come out, I have not much to do in the evenings; and mamma says, there is nothing in the world that money can pay for, but what I shall learn. And I run so delightfully fast from one thing to another that I am never tired. What makes it so pleasant is, as soon as I am fairly set in with one master, another arrives. I should hate to be long at the same thing. But I shan't have a great while to work so hard, for as soon as I come out, I shall give it all up, except music and dancing.'

All this time Lucilla sat listening with a smile, behind the complacency of which she tried to conceal her astonishment. Phœbe, who had less self-controul, was on the very verge of a broad laugh. Sir John, who had long lived in a soil where this species is indigenous, had been too long accustomed to all its varieties, to feel much astonishment at this specimen, which, however, he sat contemplating with philosophical, but discriminating coolness.

For my own part, my mind was wholly absorbed in contrasting the coarse manners of this voluble and intrepid, but good humoured girl, with the quiet cheerful, and unassuming elegance of Lucilla.

'I should be afraid, Miss Rattle,' said Mr. Stanley, 'if you did not look in such blooming health, that with all these incessant labours, you did not allow yourself time for rest. Surely you never sleep?'

'Oh yes, that I do, and eat too,' said she; 'my life is not quite so hard and moping as you fancy. What between shopping and morning visits with mamma, and seeing sights, and the park, and the gardens, (which, by the way, I hate, except on a Sunday when they are crowded,) and our young balls, which are four or five in a week after Easter, and mamma's music parties at home, I contrive to enjoy myself tolerably; though after I have been presented, I shall be a thousand time better off, for then I shan't have a moment to myself. Won't that be delightful?' said she, twitching my arm, rather roughly, by way of recalling my attention, which however had seldom wandered.

As she had now run out her London materials, the news of the neighbourhood next furnished a subject for her volubility. After she had mentioned in detail one or two stories of low village gossip; while I was wondering how she should come at them, she struck me dumb by quoting the coachman as her authority This enigma was soon explained. The mother and daughter having exhausted their different topics of discourse nearly at the same time, they took their leave, in order to enrich every family in the neighbourhood, on whom they were going to call, with the same valuable knowledge which they had imparted to us.

Mr. Stanley conducted Lady Rattle, and led her daughter; but as I offered to hand her into the carriage, she started back with a sprightly motion, and screamed out, 'Oh no, not in the inside, pray help me up to the *Dickey*. I always protest I never *will* ride with any body but the coachman, if we go ever so far.' So saying, with a spring which showed how much she despised my assistance, the little hoyden was seated in a moment, nodding familiarly at me, as if I had been an old friend.

Then with a voice, emulating that which, when passing by Charing-Cross, I have heard issued from an over stuffed stage vehicle, when a robust sailor has thrust his body out at the window, the fair creature vociferated, 'Drive on, coachman!' He obeyed, and turning round her whole person, she continued nodding at me till they were out of sight.

'Here is a mass of accomplishments,' said I, 'without one particle of mind, one ray of common sense, or one shade of delicacy!—Surely somewhat less time, and less money might have sufficed to qualify a companion for the coachman!'

'What poor creatures are we men,' said I to Mr. Stanley as soon as he came in! 'We think it very well, if after much labour and long application we can attain to one or two of the innumerable acquirements of this gay little girl. Nor is this I find the rare achievement of one happy genius. There is a whole class of these miraculous females.—Miss Rattle

> 'Is knight o' th' shire, and represents them all.'

'It is only young ladies,' replied he, 'whose vast abilities, whose mighty grasp of mind, can take in every thing. Among men, learned men, talents are commonly directed into some one channel, and fortunate is he, who in that one attains to excellence. The linguist is rarely a painter, nor is the mathematician often a poet. Even in one profession there are divisions and subdivisions.—The same lawyer never thinks of presiding both in the King's Bench, and in the Court of Chancery. The science of healing is not only divided into its three distinct branches, but in the profession of Surgery only, how many are the subdivisions! One professor undertakes the eye, another the ear, and a third the teeth. But woman, ambitious, aspiring, universal, triumphant, glorious woman, even at the age of a school boy, encounters the whole

range of arts, attacks the whole circle of sciences!'

'A mighty maze, and *quite* without a plan,' replied Sir John, laughing. 'But the truth is, the misfortune does not so much consist in their learning every thing as in their knowing nothing; I mean nothing well. When gold is beaten out so wide, the lamina must needs be very thin. And you may observe, the more valuable attainments, though they are not to be left out of the modish plan, are kept in the back ground; and are to be picked up out of the odd remnants of that time, the sum of which is devoted to frivolous accomplishments. All this gay confusion of acquirements, these holiday splendours, this superfluity of enterprize, enumerated in the first part of her catalogue, is the *real business* of education; the latter part is incidental, and if taught is not learnt.

'As to the lectures so boastfully mentioned, they may doubtless be made very useful subsidiaries to instruction. They most happily illustrate book-knowledge; but if the pupil's instruction in private do not precede, and keep pace, with these useful public exhibitions, her knowledge will be only presumptuous ignorance. She may learn to talk of oxygen and hydrogen, and deflagration, and trituration, but she will know nothing of the science except the terms. It is not knowing the name of his tools that makes an artist; and I should be afraid of the vanity which such superficial information would communicate to a mind, not previously prepared, nor exercised at home in corresponding studies. But as Miss Rattle honestly confessed, as soon as she *comes out* all these things will die away of themselves, and dancing and music will be almost all which will survive her multifarious pursuits.'

'I look upon the great predominance of music in female education,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to be the source of more mischief than is suspected; not from any evil in the thing itself, but from its being such a gulph of time, as really to leave little room for solid acquisitions. I love music, and were it only cultivated as an amusement, should commend it. But the monstrous proportion, or rather disproportion of life which it swallows up, even in many religious families, and this is the chief subject of my regret, has converted an innocent diversion into a positive sin. I question if many gay men devote more hours in a day to idle purposes, than the daughters of many pious parents spend in this amusement. All these hours the mind lies fallow, improvement is at a stand, if even it does not retrogade. Nor is the shreds and scraps of time, stolen in the intervals of better things, that is so devoted; but it is the morning, the prime, the profitable, the active hours, when the mind is vigorous, the spirits light, the intellect awake and fresh, and the whole being wound up by the refreshment of sleep, and animated by the return of light and life, for nobler services.'

'If,' said Sir John, music were cultivated to embellish retirement, to be practised where pleasures are scarce, and good performers are not to be had, it would quite alter the case. But the truth is, these highly taught ladies are not only living in public where they constantly hear the most exquisite professors, but they have them also at their own houses. Now one of these two things must happen; Either the performance of the lady will be so inferior as not to be worth hearing on the comparison, or so good that she will fancy herself the rival, instead of the admirer of the performer, whom she had better pay and praise than fruitlessly emulate.'

'This anxious struggle to reach the unattainable excellence of the professor,' said Mr. Stanley, 'often brings to my mind the contest for victory between the ambitious nightingale and the angry lunatist in the beautiful Prolusion of Strada.'

'It is to the predominance of this talent,' replied I, 'that I ascribe that want of companionableness of which I complain. The excellence of musical performance is a decorated screen, behind which all defects in domestic knowledge, in taste, judgment and literature, and the talents which make an elegant companion, are credibly concealed.

I have made,' said Sir John, 'another remark. Young ladies, who from apparent shyness do not join in the conversation of a small select party, are always ready enough to entertain them with music on the slightest hint. Surely it is equally modest to *say* as to *sing*, especially to sing those melting strains we sometimes hear sung, and which we should be ashamed to hear said. After all, how few hours are there in a week, in which a man engaged in the pursuits of life, and a woman in the duties of a family wish to employ in music. I am fond of it myself, and Lady Belfield plays admirably; but with the cares inseparable from the conscientious discharge of her duty with so many children, how little time has she to play, or I to listen! But there is no day, no hour, no meal in which I do not enjoy in her the ever ready pleasure of an elegant and interesting companion. A man of sense, when all goes smoothly, wants to be entertained; under vexation to be soothed; in difficulties to be counselled; in sorrow to be comforted. In a mere artist can he reasonably look for these resources?'

'Only figure to yourself,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'my six girls daily playing their four hours a piece, which is now a moderate allowance! As we have but one instrument they must be at it in succession, day and night, to keep pace with their neighbours. If I may compare light things with serious ones, it would resemble,' added he, smiling, 'the perpetual psalmody of good Mr. Nicholas Ferrar, who had relays of musicians every six hours to sing the whole Psalter through every day and night! I mean not to ridicule that holy man; but my girls thus keeping their useless vigils in turn, we should only have the melody without any of the piety. No, my friend! I will have but two or three singing birds to cheer my little grove. If all the world are performers, there will soon be no hearers. Now, as I am resolved in my own family that some shall listen, I will have but few to perform.'

'It must be confessed,' said Sir John, 'that Miss Rattle is no servile imitator of the vapid tribe of the superficially accomplished. Her violent animal spirits prevent her from growing

smooth by attrition. She is as rough and angular as rusticity itself could have made her. Where strength of character, however, is only marked by the worst concomitant of strength, which is coarseness, I should almost prefer insanity itself.'

'I should a little fear,' said I, 'that I lay too much stress on companionableness, on the *positive duty of being agreeable at home*, had I not early learnt the doctrine from my father, and seen it exemplified so happily in the practice of my mother.'

'I entirely agree with you, Charles,' said Mr. Stanley, 'as to the absolute *morality* of being agreeable, and even entertaining in one's own family circle. Nothing so soon and so certainly wears out the happiness of married persons, as that too common bad effect of familiarity, the sinking down into dulness and insipidity; neglecting to keep alive the flame by the delicacy which first kindled it; want of vigilance in keeping the temper cheerful by Christian discipline, and the faculties bright by constant use. Mutual affection decays of itself, even where there is no great moral turpitude, without mutual endeavours, not only to improve, but to amuse.

'This,' continued he, 'is one of the great arts of *home enjoyment*. That it is so little practised accounts in a good measure for the undomestic turn of too many married persons. The man meets abroad with amusement, and the woman with attentions, to which they are not accustomed at home. Whereas a capacity to please, on the one part, and a disposition to be pleased on the other, in their own house, would make most visits appear dull. But then the disposition and the capacity must be cultivated antecedent to marriage. A woman whose whole education has been rehearsal, will always be dull, except she lives on the stage, constantly displaying what she has been sedulously acquiring. Books, on the contrary, well chosen books, do not lead to exhibition. The knowledge a woman acquires in private desires no witnesses; the possession is the pleasure. It improves herself, it embellishes her family society, it entertains her husband, it informs her children. The gratification is cheap, is safe, is always to be had at home.'

'It is superfluous,' said Sir John, 'to decorate women so highly for early youth; youth is itself a decoration. We mistakenly adorn most that part of life which least requires it, and neglect to provide for that which will want it most. It is for that sober period, when life has lost its freshness, the passions their intenseness, and the spirits their hilarity, that we should be preparing. Our wisdom would be to anticipate the wants of middle life, to lay in a store of notions, ideas, principles, and habits, which may preserve, or transfer to the mind that affection, which was at first partly attracted by the person. But to add a vacant mind to a form which has ceased to please; to provide no subsidiary aid to beauty while it lasts, and especially no substitute when it is departed, is to render life comfortless, and marriage dreary.'

'The reading of a cultivated woman,' said Mr. Stanley, 'commonly occupies less time than the music of a musical woman, or the idleness of an indolent woman, or the dress of a vain woman, or the dissipation of a fluttering woman, she is therefore likely to have more leisure for her duties, as well as more inclination, and a sounder judgment for performing them. But, pray observe, that I assume my reading woman to be a religious woman; and I will not answer for the effect of a literary vanity, more than for that of any other vanity, in a mind not habitually disciplined by Christian principle, the only safe and infallible antidote for knowledge of every kind.

Before we had finished our conversation, we were interrupted by the arrival of the post. Sir John eagerly opened the newspaper; but, instead of gratifying our impatience with the intelligence for which we panted from the glorious Spaniards, he read a paragraph which stated 'that Miss Denham had eloped with Signior Squallini, that they were on their way to Scotland, and that Lady Denham had been in fits ever since.'

Lady Belfield, with her usual kindness, was beginning to express how much she pitied her old acquaintance. 'My dear Caroline,' said Sir John, 'there is too much substantial and inevitable misery in the world, for you to waste much compassion on this foolish woman. Lady Denham has little reason to be surprised at an event which all reasonable people must have anticipated. Provoking and disgraceful as it is, what has she to blame but her own infatuation? This Italian was the associate of all her pleasures; the constant theme of her admiration. He was admitted when her friends were excluded. The girl was continually hearing that music was the best gift, and that Signior Squallini was the best gifted. 'Miss Denham,' added he laughing, 'had more wit than your Strada's nightingale. Instead of dropping down dead on the lute for envy, she thought it better to run away with the lutanist for love. I pity the poor girl, however, who has furnished such a commentary to our text, and who is rather the victim of a wretched education than of her own bad propensities.'

CHAP. XXIV.

I HAD generally found that a Sunday passed in a visit was so heavy a day, that I had been accustomed so to arrange my engagements, as commonly to exclude this from the days spent from home. I had often found that even where the week had been pleasantly occupied, the necessity of passing several hours of a season peculiarly designed for religious purposes, with people whose habits have little similarity with our own, either draws one into their relaxed mode of getting rid of the day, or drives one to a retirement, which having an unsociable appearance, is liable to the reproach of austerity and gloom.

The case was quite different at Stanley Grove. The seriousness was without severity, and the cheerfulness had no mixture of levity. The family seemed more than usually animated, and there was a variety in the religious pursuits of

the young people enlivened by intervals of cheerful and improving conversation, which peculiarly struck Lady Belfield. She observed to me that the difficulty of getting through the Sunday, without any mixture of worldly occupations or amusements on the one hand, or of disgust and weariness on the other, was among the many right things which she had never been able to accomplish in her own family.

As we walked from church on Sunday, Miss Stanley told me that her father does not approve the habit of criticising the sermon. He says that the custom of pointing out the faults cannot be maintained, without the custom of watching for them; that it gives the attention a wrong turn, and leads the hearer only to treasure up such passages as may serve for animadversion, and a display, not of Christian temper, but of critical skill. If the general tenor and principle be right, that is the main point they are to look to, and not to hunt for philological errors. That the hearer would do well to observe, whether it is not 'he that sleeps,' as often at least, as 'Homer nods:' a remark exemplified at church, as often as on the occasion which suggested it. That a critical spirit is the worst that can be brought out of church, being a symptom of an unhumbled mind, and an evidence, that whatever the sermon may have done for others, it has not benefitted the caviller.

Here Mr. Stanley joined us. I found he did not encourage his family to take down the sermon. 'It is no disparagement,' said he, 'to the discourse preached, to presume that there may be as good already printed. Why therefore not read the printed sermon at home in the evening, instead of that, by which you ought to have been improving while it was delivering? If it be true that *faith cometh by hearing*, an inferior sermon, 'coming warm and instant from the heart,' assisted by all the surrounding solemnities which make a sermon *heard* so different from one *read*, may strike more forcibly than an abler discourse coolly perused at home. In writing, the mechanical act must necessarily lessen the effect to the writer, and to the spectator it diminishes the dignity of the scene, and seems like short-hand writers taking down a trial.'

'But that my daughters may not plead this as an excuse for inattention,' continued he, 'I make it a part of their evening duty to repeat what they retain, separately to me in my library. The consciousness that this repetition will be required of them, stimulates their diligence; and the exercise itself not only strengthens the memory, but habituates to serious reflection.'

At tea, Phœbe, a charming warm-hearted creature, but who, now and then carried away by the impulse of the moment, forgets habits and prohibitions, said, 'I think, papa, Dr. Barlow was rather dull to-day. There was nothing new in the sermon.' 'My dear,' replied her father, 'we do not go to church to hear news. Christianity is no novelty; and though it is true that we go to be instructed, yet we require to be reminded full as much as to be taught. General truths are what we all acknowledge, and all forget. We acknowledge them, because a general assent of the understanding costs but little; and we forget them, because the remembrance would force upon the conscience a great deal of practical labour. To believe, and remember, and act upon, common, undisputed, general truths, is the most important part of religion. This, though in fact very difficult, is overlooked, on account of its being supposed very easy. To keep up in the heart a lively impression of a few plain momentous truths, is of more use than the ablest discussion of an hundred controverted points.

'Now tell me, Phœbe, do you really think that you have remembered and practised all the instructions that you have received from Dr. Barlow's sermons last year? If you have, though you will have a better right to be critical, you will be less disposed to be so. If you have not, do not complain that the sermon is not new, till you have made all possible use of the old ones; which if you had done, you would have acquired so much humility, that you would meekly listen even to what you already know. But however the discourse may have been superfluous to such deep divines as Miss Phœbe Stanley, it will be very useful to me, and to other hearers who are not so wise.'

Poor Phœbe blushed up to her ears; tears rushed into her eyes. She was so overcome with shame that, regardless of the company, she flew into her father's arms, and softly whispered that if he would forgive her foolish vanity, she would never again be above being taught. The fond, but not blind father, withdrew with her. Lucilla followed with looks of anxious love.

During their short absence, Mrs. Stanley said, 'Lucilla is so practically aware of the truth of her father's observation, that she often says she finds as much advantage as pleasure in teaching the children at her school. This elementary instruction obliges her continually to recur to first principles, to keep constantly uppermost in her mind those great truths contained in the articles of our belief, the commandments, and the prayer taught by our Redeemer. This perpetual simplifying of religion, she assures me, keeps her more humble, fixes her attention on the fundamental truths, and makes her more indifferent to controverted points.'

In a few minutes Mr. Stanley and his daughters returned cheerful and happy: Lucilla smiling like the angel of peace and love.

'If I were not afraid,' said Lady Belfield, 'of falling under the same censure with my friend Phœbe,' smiling on the sweeet girl, 'I should venture to say that I thought the sermon rather too severe.'

'Do not be afraid, Madam,' replied Mr. Stanley: 'though I disapprove that cheap and cruel criticism which makes a man *an offender for a word*, yet discussion does not necessarily involve censoriousness; so far from it, it is fair to discuss whatever seems to be doubtful, and I shall be glad to hear your Ladyship's objections.

'Well then,' replied she, in the most modest tone and accent, 'with all my reverence for Dr. Barlow, I thought him a little unreasonable in seeming to expect universal goodness from creatures whom he yet insisted were fallen creatures.'

'Perhaps, Madam,' said Mr. Stanley, 'you

mistook his meaning, for he appeared to me perfectly consistent, not only with himself, but with his invariable rule and guide, the Scriptures. Sanctification, will you allow me to use so serious a word, however imperfect, must be universal. It is not the improvement of any one faculty, or quality, or temper, which divines mean, when they say we are renewed in part, so much as that the change is not perfect, the holiness is not complete in *any* part, or power, or faculty, though progressive in all. He who earnestly desires an universal victory over sin, knows which of his evil dispositions or affections it is, that is yet unsubdued. This rebellious enemy he vigilantly sets himself to watch against, to struggle with, and, through divine grace, to conquer. The test of his sincerity does not so much consist in avoiding many faults to which he has no temptation, as in conquering that one to which his natural bent and bias forcibly impels him.'

Lady Belfield said, 'But is it not impossible to bring every part of our nature under this absolute dominion? Suppose a man is very passionate and yet very charitable; would you look upon that person to be in a dangerous state?'

'It is not my province, Madam, to decide,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'God,' as Bishop Sanderson says, 'reserves this *royalty* to himself, of being the searcher of hearts.' I cannot judge how far he resists anger, nor what are his secret struggles against it.—God, who expects not perfection, expects sincerity. Though complete, unmixed goodness is not to be attained in this imperfect state, yet the earnest desire after it is the only sure criterion of the sincerity we profess. If the man you allude to does not watch and pray, and strive against the passion of anger, which is his natural infirmity, I should doubt whether any of his affections were really renewed: and I should fear that his charity was rather a mere habitual feeling, though a most amiable one, than a Christian grace. He indulges in charity, because it is a constitutional bias, and costs him nothing. He indulges in passion because it is a natural bias also; and to set about a victory over it would cost him a great deal. This should put him on a strict self-examination; when he would probably find that, while he gives the uncontrolled reins to any one wrong inclination, his religion, even when he does right things, is questionable. True religion is seated in the heart: that is the centre from which all the lines of right practice must diverge. It is the great duty and chief business of a Christian to labour to make all his affections, with all their motives, tendencies, and operations, subservient to the word and will of God. His irregular passions, which are still apt to start out into disorder, will require vigilance to the end.—He must not think all is safe, because the more tractable ones are not rebellious; but he may entertain a cheerful hope, when those which were once rebellious are become tractable.'

'I feel the importance of what you say,' returned Lady Belfield; 'but I feel also my utter inability to set about it.'

'My dear Madam,' said Mr. Stanley, 'this is the best and most salutary feeling you can have. That very consciousness of inefficacy will, I trust, drive you to the fountain of all strength and power; it will quicken your faith and animate your prayer; faith which is the habitual principle of confidence in God; and prayer, which is the exercise of that principle toward Him who is the object of it.'

'But, Dr. Barlow,' said Lady Belfield, 'was so discouraging! He seemed to intimate, as if the conflict of a Christian with sin must be as lasting as his life; whereas I had hoped that victory once obtained, was obtained forever.'

'The *strait gate*,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'is only the entrance of religion; the *narrow way* is a continued course. The Christian life, my dear Lady Belfield, is not a point but a progress. It is precisely in the race of Christianity as in the race of human glory. Julius Cæsar and St. Paul describe their respective warfares in nearly the same terms.—*We should count nothing done, while any thing remains undone*,* says the Warrior.—*Not counting myself to have attained—forgetting the things which are behind, and pressing forward to those which are before*, says the Apostle. And it is worth remarking, that they both made the disqualifying observation after attainments almost incredible. As there was no being a hero by any idler way, so there is no being a Christian by any easier road. The necessity of pursuit is the same in both cases, though the objects pursued differ as widely as the vanities of time from the riches of eternity.

'Do not think, my dear Madam,' added Mr. Stanley, 'that I am erecting myself into a censor, much less into a model. The corruptions which I lament, I participate. The deficiencies which I deplore, I feel. Not only when I look abroad, am I persuaded of the general prevalence of evil by what I see; but when I look into my own heart, my conviction is confirmed by what I experience. I am conscious, not merely of frailties, but of sins. I will not hypocritically accuse myself of gross offences which I have not temptation to commit, and from the commission of which, motives inferior to religion would preserve me. But I am continually humbled in detecting mixed motives in almost all I do. Such strugglings of pride with my endeavours after humility! Such irresolution in my firmest purposes! So much imperfection in my best actions! So much want of simplicity in my purest designs! Such fresh shoots of selfishness where I had hoped the plant itself had been eradicated! Such frequent deadness in duty! Such coldness in my affections! Such infirmity of will! Such proneness to earth in my highest aspiration after heaven! All these you see would hardly make in the eyes of those who want Christian discernment, very gross sins; yet they prove demonstrably the root of sin in the heart, and the infection of nature tainting my best resolves.'

'The true Christian,' said I, when Mr. Stanley had done speaking, 'extracts humility from the very circumstance which raises pride in the irreligious. The sight of any enormity in another, makes the mere moralist proud that he is

* Nil actum reputans dum quod superesset agendum —Lucan.

exempt from it, while the religious man is humbled from a view of the sinfulness of that nature he partakes, a nature which admits of such excesses, and from which excesses he knows that he himself is preserved by divine grace alone. I have often observed that comparison is the aliment of pride in the worldly man, and of self-abasement in the Christian.'

Poor Lady Belfield looked comforted on finding that her friend Mr. Stanley was not quite so perfect as she had feared. 'Happy are those,' exclaimed she, looking at Lucilla, 'the innocence of whose lives recommends them to the divine favour.'

'Innocence,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'can never be pleaded as a ground of acceptance, because the thing does not exist. Innocence excludes the necessity of repentance; and where there is no sin, there can be no need of a Saviour. Whatever therefore we may be in comparison with others, innocence can afford no plea for our acceptance, without annulling the great plan of our redemption.'

'One thing puzzles me,' said Lady Belfield. 'The most worthless people I converse with deny the doctrine of human corruption, a doctrine the truth of which one should suppose their own feelings must confirm; while those few excellent persons who almost seem to have escaped it, insist the most peremptorily on its reality. But if it be really true, surely the mercies of God are so great, that he will overlook the frailties of such weak and erring mortals. So gracious a Saviour will not exact such rigorous obedience from creatures so infirm.'

'Let not what I am going to say, my dear Lady Belfield,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'offend you; the correctness of your conduct exempts you from any particular application. But there are too many Christians, who while they speak with reverence of Christ as the Saviour of sinners, do not enough consider him as a deliverer from sin. They regard him rather as having lowered the requisitions of the law, and exonerated his followers from the necessity of that strictness of life which they view as a burthensome part of their religion. From this burthen they flatter themselves it was the chief object of the gospel to deliver them; and from this supposed deliverance it is that they chiefly consider it as a merciful dispensation. A cheap Christianity, of which we can acquit ourselves by a general recognition, and a few stated observances, which require no sacrifices of the will, nor rectification of the life, is, I assure you, the prevailing system; the religion of that numerous class who like to save appearances, and to decline realities; who expect every thing hereafter while they resolve to give up nothing here; but who keep heaven in view as a snug reversion after they shall have squeezed out of this world, to the very last dregs and droppings, all it has to give.'

Lady Belfield, with great modesty, replied, 'Indeed I am ashamed to have said so much upon a topic on which I am unable, and unused to debate. Sir John only smiles, and looks resolved not to help me out. Believe me, however, my dear Sir, that what I have said proceeds not from presumption, but from an earnest desire of being set right. I will only venture to offer one more observation on the afternoon sermon. Dr. Barlow, to my great surprise, spoke of the death of Christ as exhibiting *practical* lessons. Now, though I have always considered it in a general way, as the cause of our salvation, yet its preceptive and moral benefits, I must confess, do not appear to me at all obvious.'

'I conceive,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'our deliverance from the punishment incurred by sin to be one great end and object of the death of our Redeemer; but I am very far from considering this as the only benefit attending it. I conceive it to be most abundant in instruction, and the strongest possible incentive to practical goodness; and that in a great variety of ways. The death of our Redeemer shows us the infinite value of our souls, by showing the inestimable price paid for them, and thus leads us to more diligence in securing their eternal felicity. It is calculated to inspire us with an unfeigned hatred of sin, and more especially to convince us of God's hatred to that, for the pardon of which such a sacrifice was deemed necessary. Now, if it actually produce such an effect, it consequently stimulates us to repentance, and to an increasing dread of violating those engagements which we have so often made to lead a better life. Then the contemplation of this stupendous circumstance will tend to fill our hearts with such a sense of gratitude and obedience, as will be likely to preserve us from relapsing into fresh offences. Again—can any motive operate so powerfully on us towards producing universal charity and forgiveness? Whatever promotes our love to God will dispose us to an increased love for our fellow-creatures. We cannot converse with any man, we cannot receive a kindness from any man, nay, we cannot receive an injury from any man, for whom the Redeemer has not died. The remembrance of the sufferings which procured pardon for the greatest offences, has a natural tendency to lead us to forgive small ones.'

Lady Belfield said, 'I had not indeed imagined there were any practical uses in an event to which I had been, however, accustomed to look with reverence as an atonement for sin.'

'Of these practical effects,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'I will only farther observe, that all human considerations put together, cannot so powerfully inspire us with an indifference to the vanities of life, and the allurements of unhallowed pleasures. No human motive can be so efficacious in sustaining the heart under trials, and reconciling it to afflictions. For what trials and afflictions do not sink into nothing in comparison with the sufferings attending that august event, from which we derive this support? The contemplation of this sacrifice also degrades wealth, debases power, annihilates ambition. We rise from this contemplation with a mind prepared to bear with the infirmities, to relieve the wants, to forgive the unkindness of men. We extract from it a more humbling sense of ourselves, a more subdued spirit, a more sober contempt of whatever the world calls great, than all the lectures of ancient philosophy, or the teachers of modern morals ever inspired.'

During this little debate Sir John maintained

the most invincible silence. His countenance bore not the least mark of ill-humour or impatience, but it was serious and thoughtful; except when his wife got into any little difficulty; he then encouraged her by an affectionate smile, but listened like a man who has not quite made up his mind, yet thinks the subject too important to be dismissed without a fair and candid hearing.

CHAP. XXV.

While we were at breakfast next morning, a sweet little girl flew into the room almost breathless with joy; and running to her mother, presented her with a beautiful nosegay.

'O, I see you were the industrious girl last week, Kate,' said Mrs. Stanley, embracing her, and admiring the flowers. Lady Belfield looked inquisitively. 'It is an invention of Lucilla's,' said the mother, 'that the little one who performs best in the school-room, instead of having any reward which may excite vanity or sensuality, shall be taught to gratify a better feeling, by being allowed to present her mother with a nosegay of the finest flowers, which it is reward enough to see worn at dinner, to which she is always admitted when there is no company; Oh! Pray do not consider us as company; pray let Kate dine with us to-day,' said Lady Belfield. Mrs. Stanley bowed her assent and went on. But this is not all.—The flowers they present, they also raise. I went rather too far, when I said that no vanity was excited; they are vain enough of their carnations, and each is eager to produce the largest. In this competition, however, the vanity is not personal. Lucilla has some skill in raising flowers, each girl has a subordinate post under her. Their father often treats them with half a day's work, and then they all treat me with tea and cakes in the honey-suckle arbour of their own planting, which is called Lucilla's bower. It would be hard to say whether parents or children most enjoy these happy holidays.'

At dinner Mrs. Stanley appeared with her nosegay in a large knot of ribbons, which was eyed with no small complacency by little Kate. I observed that Lucilla, who used to manifest much pleasure in the conversation after dinner, was beckoned out of the room by Phœbe, as soon as it was over. I felt uneasy at an absence to which I had not been accustomed; but the cause was explained, when at six o'clock, Kate who was the queen of the day, was sent to invite us to drink tea in Lucilla's bower. We instantly obeyed the summons.

'I knew nothing of this,' said the delighted mother, while we were all admiring the elegant arrangements of this little fete. The purple clematis twisting its flexible branches with those of the pale woodbine, formed a sweet and fragrant canopy to the arched bower, while the flowery tendrils hung down on all sides. Large bunches of roses, intermixed with the silver stars of the jessamine, were stuck into the moss on the inside as a temporary decoration only. The finest plants had been brought from the green-house for the occasion It was a delicious evening, and the little fairy festivity, together with the flitting about of the airy spirits which had prepared it, was absolutely enchanting. Sir John, always poetical, exclaimed in rapture,

> 'Hesperian fables true,'
> If true, here only.'

I needed not this quotation to bring the garden of Eden to my mind, for Lucilla presided. Phœbe was all alive. The other little ones had decorated Kate's flaxen hair with a wreath of woodbines. They sung two or three baby stanzas, which they had composed among themselves, in which Kate was complimented as queen of the fete. The youngest daughter of Lady Aston, who was about Kate's age, and two little girls of Dr. Barlow's were of the children's party on the green. The elder sisters of both families made part of the company within.

When we were all seated in our enchanting bower, and drinking our tea, at which we had no other attendants than the little Hebes themselves, I asked Kate how it happened that she seemed to be distinguished on this occasion from her little sisters. 'Oh Sir,' said she, 'it is because it is my birth-day. I am eight years old to-day. I gave up all my gilt books with pictures this day twelve-month, and to-day I give up all my little story books, I am now going to read such books as men and women read.'

She then ran to her companions, who ranged themselves round a turf seat at a little distance before us, to which were transferred a profusion of cakes and fruit from the bower. While they were devouring them, I turned to Mr. Stanley, and desired an explanation of Kate's speech.

'I make,' said he, 'the renouncing their baby books a kind of epocha, and by thus distinctly marking the period, they never think of returning back to them. We have in our domestic plan several of these artificial divisions of life. These little celebrations are æras, that we use as marking posts, from which we set out on some new course.'

'But as to Kate's books?' said Lady Belfield 'We have,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'too many elementary books. They are read too much and too long. The youthful mind, which was formerly sick from inanition, is now in danger from a plethora.'

'Much, however, will depend on capacity and disposition. A child of slower parts may be indulged till nine years old with books which a lively genius will look down upon at seven. A girl of talents *will* read. To *her* no excitement is wanting. The natural appetite is a sufficient incentive. The less brilliant child requires the allurement of lighter books. She wants encouragement as much as the other requires restraint.'

'But don't you think,' said Lady Belfield, that they are of great use in attracting children to love reading?' 'Doubtless they are,' said Mr. Stanley. 'The misfortune is, that the stimulants used to attract at first must be not only continued but heightened, to keep up the attraction. These books are novels in miniature, and the excess of them will lead to the want of novels at full length. The early use of savory dishes is not usually followed by an ap-

petite for plain food. To the taste thus pampered, history becomes dry, grammar laborious, and religion dull.

'My wife, who was left to travel through the wide expanse of universal history, and the dreary deserts of Rapin and Mezerai, is, I will venture to assert, more completely skilled in ancient French, and English history, than any of the girls who have been fed, or rather starved on extracts and abridgements. I mean not to recommend the two last named authors for very young people. They are dry and tedious, and children in our days have opportunities of acquiring the same knowledge with less labour. We have brighter, I wish I could say safer lights. Still fact, and not wit is the leading object of history.

'Mrs. Stanley says, that the very tediousness of her historians had a good effect: they were a ballast to her levity, and a discipline to her mind, of which she has felt the benefit in her subsequent life.

'But to return to the mass of children's books. The too great profusion of them protracts the imbecility of childhood; they arrest the understanding instead of advancing it; they give forwardness without strength; they hinder the mind from making vigorous shoots, teach it to stoop when it should soar, and to contract when it should expand; yet I allow that many of them are delightfully amusing and to a certain degree instructive; but they must not be used as the basis of instruction, but sparingly used at all as refreshment from labour.'

'They inculcate morality and good actions surely,' said Lady Belfield. 'It is true,' replied Mr. Stanley,' 'but they often inculcate them on a worldly principle, and rather teach the pride of virtue, and the profit of virtue, than point out the motive of virtue, and the principle of sin. They reprobate bad actions as evil and injurious to others, but not as an offence against the Almighty. Whereas the Bible comes with a plain, straight-forward, simple, but powerful principle—'How shall I do this great wickedness against *God?*' Against *Thee*, *Thee* only have I sinned, and done this evil in *thy* sight.'

'Even children should be taught that when a man has committed the greatest possible crime against his fellow creature, still the offence against God is what will strike a true penitent with the most deep remorse. All morality which is not drawn from this scriptural source is weak, defective, and hollow. These entertaining authors seldom ground their stories on any intimation that human nature is corrupt; that the young reader is helpless and wants assistance; that he is guilty and wants pardon.'

'Surely, my dear Mr. Stanley,' said Lady Belfield, 'though I do not object to the truth and reasonableness of any thing you have said, I cannot think that these things can possibly be made intelligible to children.'

'The framers of our catechism, Madam, thought otherwise,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'The catechism was written for children, and contains all the seeds and principles of Christianity for men. It evidently requires much explanation, much developement; still it furnishes a wide and important field for colloquial instruction, without which young persons can by no means understand a composition so amiable, but so condensed. The catechism speaks expressly of a 'death unto sin'—of 'a new birth unto righteousness'—of 'being born in sin'—of 'being the children of wrath'—of becoming 'the children of grace'—of 'forsaking sin by repentance'—of 'believing the promise of God by faith.' Now, while children are studying these great truths in the catechism, they are probably, at the same time, almost constantly reading some of those entertaining stories which are grounded and built on a quite opposite principle, and do not even imply the existence of any such fundamental truths.'

'Surely,' interrupted Lady Belfield, 'you would not have these serious doctrines brought forward in story books?'

'By no means, Madam,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'but I will venture to assert that even story books should not be found on a principle directly *contradictory* to them, nay, totally *subversive* of them. The Arabian Nights, and other oriental books of fable, though loose and faulty in many respects, yet have always a reference to the religion of the country. Nothing is introduced against the law of Mahomet: nothing subversive of the opinions of a Mussulman. I do not quarrel with books, for having *no* religion, but for having a *false* religion. A book which in nothing opposes the principle of the Bible, I would be far from calling a bad book, though the Bible was never named in it.'

Lady Belfield observed, 'That she was sorry to say her children found religious studies very dry and tiresome; though she took great pains, and made them learn by heart a multitude of questions and answers, a variety of catechisms and explanations, and the best abridgments of the Bible.'

'My dear Lady Belfield,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'you have fully accounted for the dryness and dulness of which you complain. Give them the *Bible itself*. I never yet knew a child who did not delight in the Bible histories, and who would not desire to hear them again and again. From the histories, Mrs. Stanley and I proceed with them to the parables; and from them to the miracles, and a few of the most striking prophecies. When they have acquired a good deal of this desultory knowledge, we begin to weave the parts into a whole. The little girl who had the honour of dining with you to-day, has begun this morning to read the Scriptures with her mother systematically. We shall soon open to her something of the *scheme* of Christianity, and explain how those miracles and prophecies confirm the truth of that religion in which she is to be more fully instructed.

'Upon their historical knowledge, which they acquired by picking out the most interesting stories, we endeavour to ground principles to enlighten their minds, and precepts to influence their conduct. With the genuine language of Scripture I have taken particular care they shall be well acquainted, by digging for the ore in its native bed. While they have been studying the stories, their minds have at the same time been imbued with the impressive phraseology of Scripture. I make a great point

of this, having often seen this useful impression effectually prevented by a multitude of subsidiary histories, and explanations, which too much supersede the use of the original text.

'Only observe,' continued he, 'what divine sentiments, what holy precepts, what devout ejaculations, what strokes of self-abasement, what flights of gratitude, what transports of praise, what touches of penitential sorrow, are found comprised in some one short sentence woven into almost every part of the historical scriptures! observe this, and then confess what a pity it is that children should be commonly set to read the history in a meagre abridgment, stripped of those gems with which the original is so richly inlaid! These histories and expositions become very useful afterwards to young people who are thoroughly conversant with the Bible itself.'

Sir John observed, that he had been struck with the remarkable *disinterestedness* of Mr. Stanley's daughters, and their indifference to things about which most children were so eager. 'Selfishness,' said Mr. Stanley, 'is the hydra we are perpetually combating; but the monster has so much vitality, that new heads spring up as fast as the old ones are cut off. *To counteract selfishness, that inborn, inbred mischief, I hold to be the great art of education.* Education therefore, cannot be adequately carried on, except by those who are deeply convinced of the doctrine of human corruption. This evil principle, as it shows itself early, must be early lopped, or the rapid shoots it makes will, as your favourite Eve observes,

'Soon mock our scant manuring.'

'This counteraction,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'is not like an art or a science, which is to be taken up at set times, and laid aside till the allotted period of instruction returns; but as the evil shows itself at all times, and in all shapes, the *whole force* of instruction is to be bent against it. Mrs. Stanley and I endeavour that not one reward we bestow, not one gratification we afford, shall be calculated to promote it. Gratifications children ought to have. The appetites and inclinations should be reasonably indulged. We are only cautious not to employ them as *the instruments of recompense*, which would look as if we valued them highly, and thought them a fit remuneration for merit. I would rather show a little indulgence to sensuality *as* sensuality, than make it the reward of goodness, which seems to be the common way. While I indulged the appetite of a child, I would never hold out that indulgence which I granted to the lowest, the animal part of his nature, as a payment for the exertion of his mental or moral faculties.'

'You have one great advantage,' said Sir John, 'and I thank God it is the same in Cavendish-square, that you and Mrs. Stanley draw evenly together. Nothing impedes domestic regulations so effectually as where parents, from difference of sentiment, ill-humour, or bad judgment, obstruct each other's plans, or where one parent makes the other insignificant in the eyes of their children.'

'Mr. Reynolds,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'a friend of mine in this neighbourhood, is in this very predicament. To the mother's weakness the father's temperate discipline seems cruelty. She is perpetually blaming him before the children for setting them to their books. Her attentions are divided between their health, which is perfect, and their pleasure, which is obstructed by her foolish zeal to promote it, far more than by his prudent restrictions. Whatever the father helps them to at table, the mother takes from them lest it should make them sick. What he forbids is always the very thing which is good for them. She is much more afraid, however, of overloading their memories than their stomachs. Reading, she says, will spoil the girls' eyes, stooping to write, will ruin their chests, and working will make them round shouldered. If the boys run, they will have fevers; if they jump, they will sprain their ankles; if they play at cricket, a blow may kill them; if they swim, they will be drowned, the shallowness of the stream is no argument of safety.

'Poor Reynolds's life is one continued struggle between his sense of duty to his children, and his complaisance to his wife. If he carries his point, it is at the expense of his peace; if he relaxes, as he commonly does, his children are the victims. He is at length brought to submit his excellent judgment to her feeble mind, lest his opposition should hurt her health: and he has the mortification of seeing his children trained as if they had nothing but bodies.

'To the wretched education of Mrs. Reynolds herself all this mischief may be attributed; for she is not a bad, though an ignorant woman; and having been harshly treated by her own parents, she fell into the vulgar error of vulgar minds, that of supposing the opposite of wrong must necessarily be right. As she found that being perpetually contradicted had made herself miserable, she concluded that never being contradicted at all would make her children happy. The event has answered as might have been foreseen. Never was a more discontented, disagreeing, troublesome family. The gratification of one want instantly creates a new one. And it is only when they are quite worn out with having done nothing, that they take refuge in their books, as less wearisome than idleness.'

Sir John, turning to Lady Belfield, said in a very tender tone, 'My dear Caroline, this story, in its principal feature, does not apply to us. We concur completely, it is true, but I fear we concur by being both wrong; we both err by excessive indulgence. As to the case in point, while children are young, they may perhaps lean to the parent who spoils them; but I have never yet seen an instance of young persons, where the parents differed, who did not afterwards discover a much stronger affection for the one who had reasonably restrained them, than for the other, whose blind indulgence had at once diminished her importance and their own reverence.'

I observed to Mr. Stanley, that as he had so noble a library, and wished to inspire his children with the love of literature, I was surprised to see their apartment so slenderly provided with books.

'This is the age of excess in every thing,' replied he; 'nothing is a gratification of which

the want has not been previously felt. The wishes of children are all so anticipated, that they never experience the pleasure excited by wanting and waiting. Of their initiatory books they *must* have a pretty copious supply. But as to books of entertainment or instruction of a higher kind, I never allow them to possess one of their own, till they have attentively read and improved by it; this gives them a kind of title to it; and that desire of property so natural to human creatures, I think stimulates them in despatching books which are in themselves a little dry. Expectation with them, as with men, quickens desire, while possession deadens it.'

By this time the children had exhausted all the refreshments set before them, and had retreated to a little farther distance, where, without disturbing us, they freely enjoyed their innocent gambols—playing, singing, laughing, dancing, reciting verses, trying which could puzzle the other in the name of plants, of which they pulled single leaves to increase the difficulty, all succeeded each other. Lady Belfield looking consciously at me, said, 'These are the creatures whom I foolishly suspected of being made miserable by restraint, and gloomy through want of indulgence.'

'After long experience,' said Mr. Stanley, 'I will venture to pronounce, that not all the anxious cutting out of pleasure, not all the costly indulgences which wealth can procure, not all the contrivances of inventive man for his darling youthful offspring, can find out an amusement so pure, so natural, so cheap, so rational, so healthful, I had almost said so religious, as that unbought pleasure connected with a garden.'

Kate and Celia, who had for some time been peeping into the bower in order to catch an interval in the conversation, as soon as they found our attention disengaged, stole in among us; each took the fond father by a hand, and led him to the turf seat. Phœbe presented him a book which he opened, and out of it read with infinite humour, grace and gaiety, *The diverting History of John Gilpin.* This it seems was a pleasure to which they had been led to look forward for some time, but which, in honour of Kate, had been purposely withheld till this memorable day. His little auditors, who grouped themselves round him on the grass, were nearly convulsed with laughter, nor were the tenants of the bower much less delighted.

As we walked into the house, Mr. Stanley said, 'Whenever I read to my children a light and gay composition, which I often do, I generally take care it shall be the work of some valuable author, to whose writings this shall be a pleasant and a tempting prelude. What child of spirit who hears John Gilpin, will not long to be thought old and wise enough to read the 'Task?' The remembrance of the infant rapture will give a predilection for the poet. Desiring to keep their standard high, I accustom them to none but good writers, in every sense of the word; by this means they will be less likely to stoop to ordinary ones when they shall hereafter come to choose for themselves.'

Lady Belfield regretted to me that she had not brought some of her children to the Grove: 'To confess a disgraceful truth,' said she, 'I was afraid they would have been moped to death, and to confess another truth still more disgraceful to my authority, my indulgence has been so injudicious, and I have maintained so little control, that I durst not bring some of them for fear of putting the rest out of humour; I am now in a school, where I trust I may learn to acquire firmness, without any diminution of fondness.'

CHAP. XXVI.

The next morning Mr. Stanley proposed that we should pay a visit to some of his neighbours. He and Sir John Belfield rode on horseback, and I had the honour of attending the ladies in the sociable. Lady Belfield, who was now become desirous of improving on her own too relaxed domestic system, by the experience of Mrs. Stanley, told her how much she admired the cheerful obedience of her children. She said, 'she did not so much wonder to see them so good, but she owned she was surprised to see them so happy.'

'I know not,' replied Mrs. Stanley, 'whether the increased insubordination of children is owing to the new school of philosophy and politics, but it seems to me to make part of the system. When I go sometimes to stay with a friend in town to do business, she is always making apologies that she cannot go out with me—'her daughters want the coach.' If I ask leave to see the friends who call on me in such a room, —'her daughters have company there, or they want the room for their music, or it is preparing for the children's ball in the evening.' If a messenger is required—'her daughters want the footman.' There certainly prevails a spirit of independence, a revolutionary spirit, a separation from the parent state. *It is the children's world.*'

'You remind me, Madam,' said I, 'of an old courtier, who being asked by Louis XV. which age he preferred, his own or the present, replied, 'Sire, I passed my youth in respecting old age, and I find I must now pass my old age in respecting children.'

'In some other houses,' said Mrs. Stanley, 'where we visit, besides that of poor Mr. Reynolds, the children seem to have all the accommodations; and I have observed that the convenience and comfort of the father is but a subordinate consideration. The respectful terms of address are nearly banished from the vocabulary of children, and the somewhat too orderly manner which once prevailed is superceded by an incivility, a roughness, a want of attention, which is surely not better than the harmless formality which it has driven out.'

Just as she had said this, we stopt at Mr. Reynolds' gate; neither he nor his lady were at home. Mr. Stanley, who wished to show us a fine reach of the river from the drawing-room window, desired the servant to show us into it. There we beheld a curious illustration of what we had heard. In the ample bow-window lay a confused heap of the glittering spoils of the most expensive toys.—Before the rich silk chairs knelt two of the children, in the act of rapidly

demolishing their fine painted play-things; 'others sat apart on *the floor* retired,' and more deliberately employed in picking to pieces their little gaudy works of art. A pretty girl who had a beautiful wax doll on her lap, almost as big as herself, was pulling out its eyes, that she might see how they were put in. Another, weary of this costly baby, was making a little doll of rags. A turbulent looking boy was tearing out the parchment from a handsome new drum, that he might see, as he told us, where the noise came from. These I forgave, they had meaning in their mischief.

Another, having kicked about a whole little gilt library, was sitting, with the decorated pages torn asunder at his feet, reading a little dirty penny book, which the kitchen maid had bought of a hawker at the door.—The Persian carpet was strewed with the broken limbs of a painted horse, almost as large as a poney, while the discontented little master was riding astride on a long rough stick. A bigger boy, after having broken the pannels of a fine gilt coach, we saw afterwards in the court-yard, nailing together a few dirty bits of ragged elm boards, to make himself a wheel-barrow.

'Not only the disciple of the fastidious Jean Jacques,' exclaimed I, 'but the sound votary of truth and reason, must triumph, at such an instance of the satiety of riches, and the weariness of ignorance and idleness.—One such practical instance of the insufficiency of affluence to *bestow* the pleasures which industry must *buy*;—one such actual exemplification of the folly of supposing that injudicious profusion and mistaken fondness can supply that pleasure which must be worked out before it can be enjoyed, is worth a whole folio of argument or exhortation.'—The ill-bred little flock paid no attention to us, and only returned a rude 'n—o' or 'yes' to our questions.'

'Caroline,' said Sir John; 'these painted ruins afford a good lesson for us. We must desire our rich uncles and our generous god-mothers to make an alteration in their presents, if they cannot be prevailed upon to withhold them.'

'It is a sad mistake,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to suppose that youth wants to be so incessantly amused. They want not pleasures to be chalked out for them. Lay a few cheap and coarse materials in their way, and let their own busy inventions be suffered to work. They have abundant pleasure in the mere freshness and novelty of life, its unbroken health, its elastic spirit, its versatile temper, and its ever new resources.'

'So it appears, Stanley,' said Sir John, 'when I look at your little group of girls, recluses as they are called. How many cheap yet lively pleasures do they seem to enjoy!—their successive occupations, their books, their animating exercise, their charitable rounds, their ardent friendships, the social table at which the elder ones are companions, not mutes; the ever-varying pleasures of their garden,

'Increasing virtue and approving heaven.'

While we were sitting with Lady Aston, on whom we next called, Mr. Stanley suddenly exclaimed, 'The Miss Flams are coming up the gravel walk!' Lady Aston looked vexed, but correcting herself, said Mr. Stanley, we ow this visit to you, or rather to your friend,' bowing to me; 'they saw your carriage stop here, or they would not have done so dull a thing as to have called on me.'

These new guests presented a new scene very uncongenial to the timid and tranquil spirit of the amiable hostess. There seemed to be a contest between the sisters, who should be most eloquent, most loud, or most inquisitive. They eagerly attacked me all at once, as supposing me to be overflowing with intelligence from the metropolis, a place which they not only believed to contain exclusively all that was worth seeing, but all that was worth hearing. The rest of the world they considered as a barren wilderness, of which the hungry inhabitants could only be kept from starving, by such meagre aliment as the occasional reports of its pleasures, fashions, and anecdotes, which might now and then be conveyed by some stray traveller, might furnish.

'It is so strange to us,' said Miss Bell, 'and so monstrously dull and vulgar, to be in the country at this time of the year, that we don't know what to do with ourselves.'

'As to the time of year, Madam,' said I, 'if ever one would wish to be in the country at all, surely this month is the point of perfection. The only immoral thing with which I could ever charge our excellent Sovereign is, that he was born in June, and has thus furnished his fashionable subjects with a loyal pretence for encountering 'the sin and sea-coal of London,' to borrow Will Honeycomb's phrase, in the finest month of the twelve. But where that is the real motive with one, it is the pretence of a thousand.'

'How can you be so shocking? said she; 'but papa is really grown so cross and so stingy, as to prevent our going to town at all these last two or three years; and for so mean a reason that I am ashamed to tell you.' Out of politeness I did not press to know; I needed not, for she was resolved I should 'not burst in ignorance.'

She went on—'Do you know he pretends that times are hard, and public difficulties increasing; and he declares that whatever privations we endure, government must be supported: so that he says, it is right to draw in, in the only way in which he can do it honestly; I am sure it is not doing it creditably. Did you ever hear any thing so shabby?' 'Shabby, Madam,' replied I; 'I honour a gentleman who has integrity enough to do a right thing, and good sense enough not to be ashamed to own it.'

'Yes, but papa need not. The steward declares, if he would only raise his tenants a very little, he would have more than enough; but papa is inflexible. He says my brother must do as he pleases when he comes to the estate, but that he himself promised, when he came into possession, that he would never raise the rents, and that he will never be worse than his word.' As I could not find it in my heart to join in abusing a gentleman for resolving never to be worse than his word, I was silent.

She then inquired, with more seriousness, if there were any prospect of peace. I was better pleased with this question, as it implied more anxiety for the lives of her fellow creatures, than I had given her credit for. 'I am anxiously looking into all the papers,' continued she, without giving me time to speak, 'because as soon as there is peace, papa has promised we shall go to town again. If it was not for that, I should not care if there was war till doomsday, for what with marching regiments, and militia, and volunteers, nothing can be pleasanter than it makes the country, I mean as far as the country *can* be pleasant.' They then ran over the names and respective merits of every opera singer, every dancer, and every actor, with incredible volubility; and I believe they were not a little shocked at my slender acquaintance with the nomenclature, and the little interest I took in the criticisms they built upon it.

Poor Lady Aston looked oppressed and fatigued, but inwardly rejoiced, as she afterwards owned to me, that her daughters were not within hearing. I was of a different opinion, upon the Spartan principle, of making their children sober, by the spectacle of the intoxicated Helots. Miss Bell's eloquence seemed to make but little impression on Sir George; or rather it produced an effect directly contrary to admiration. His good taste seemed to revolt at her flippancy. Every time I see this young man he rises in my esteem. His ingenuous temper and engaging modesty set off to advantage a very fair understanding.

In our way home we were accosted by Mr. Flam. After a rough but hearty salutation, and cordial invitation to come and dine with him, he galloped off, being engaged on business. 'This is an honest country 'squire of the old cut,' said Mr. Stanley afterwards. 'He has a very good estate, which he has so much delight in managing, that he has no pleasure in any thing else. He was prevailed on by his father to marry his present wife for no other reason than because her estate joined to his, and broke in a little on the *arrondissement;* but it was judged that both being united, all might be brought within a ring fence. This was thought a reason sufficiently powerful for the union of two immortal beings, whose happiness here and hereafter might be impeded or promoted by it. The felicity of the connection has been in exact proportion to the purity of the motive.'

I could not forbear interrupting Mr. Stanley, by observing that nothing had surprised or hurt me more in the little observation I had made on the subject of marriage, than the frequent indifference of parents to the moral, and especially to the religious character of the man who proposed himself. 'That family, fortune, and connections should have their full share in the business, I readily admit,' added I; 'but that it should ever form the chief, often the only ground of acceptance, has, I confess, lowered mankind in my esteem more completely, than almost any other instance of ambition, avarice, or worldliness. That a very young girl, who has not been carefully educated, should be captivated by personal advantages, and even infatuated by splendour, is less surprising, than that parents, who having themselves experienced the inefficiency of riches to happiness—that they should be eagerly impatient to part from a beloved daughter, reared with fondness at least, if not with wisdom, to a man of whose principles they have any doubt, and of whose mind they have a mean opinion, is a thing I cannot understand. And yet what proposal almost is rejected on this ground?' Lucilla's eyes at this moment shone with such expressive brightness, that I exultingly said to myself, 'Lord Staunton! I defy thee!'

'The mischief of this lax principle is of wide extent,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'When girls are continually hearing what an advantageous, what a desirable marriage such a young friend has made, with a man so rich, so splendid, so great; though they have been accustomed to hear this very man condemned for his profligacy, perhaps, at least they know him to be destitute of piety—when they hear that these things are not considered as any great objection to the union, what opinion must these girls form, not only of the maxims by which the world is governed, but of the truth of that religion which those persons profess?

'But to return to Mr. Flam. He passed through the usual course of education, but has profited so little by it, that though he has a certain natural shrewdness in his understanding, I believe he has scarcely read a book these twenty years, except Burn's Justice and 'The Agricultural Reports.' Yet when he wants to make a figure he now and then lards his discourse with a scrap of thread-bare Latin which he used to steal in his school boy exercises. He values himself on his integrity, and is not destitute of benevolence. These, he says, are the sum and substance of religion; and though I combat this mistaken notion as often as he puts it in my power, yet I must say that some who make more profession would do well to be as careful in these points. He often contrasts himself with his old friend Ned Tyrrel, and is proud of showing how much better a man he is without religion, than Ned is with all his pretensions to it. It is by thus comparing ourselves with worse men, that we grow vain, and with more fortunate men that we become discontented.

'All the concern he gives himself about his wife and daughters is, that they shall not run him in debt; and indeed he is so liberal, that he does not drive them to the necessity. In every thing else, they follow their own devices. They teazed him, however, to let them spend two or three winters in town, the mother hinting *that it would answer.* He was prevailed on to try it as a speculation, but the experiment failed. He now insists that they shall go no more till the times mend, to any of the advertising places, such as London, Brighton, or Bath: he says, that attending so many fairs and markets is very expensive, especially as the girls don't go off. He will now see what can be done by private contract at home, without the cost of journeys, with fresh keep and trimming, and docking into the bargain. They must now take their chance among country dealers; and provided they will give him a son-in-law, whose estate is free from incumbrances, who pays his

debts, lives within his income, does not rack his tenants, never drinks claret, hates the French, and loves field sports, he will ask no more questions.'

I could not but observe, how perferable the father's conduct, with all its faults, was to that of the rest of the family. 'I had imagined,' said I, 'that this coarse character was quite out of print. Though it is religiously bad, and of course morally defective, yet it is so politically valuable, that I should not be sorry to see a new edition of these obsolete squires, somewhat corrected, and better lettered.'

'All his good qualities,' said Mr. Stanley, 'for want of religion, have a flaw in them. His good nature is so little directed by judgment, that while it serves the individual, it injures the public. As a brother magistrate, I am obliged to act in almost constant opposition to him, and his indiscretions do more mischief, by being of a nature to increase his popularity. He is fully persuaded that occasional intoxication is the best reward for habitual industry; and insists that it is good old English kindness, to make the church ringers periodically tipsy at the holidays, though their families starve for it the whole week. He and I have a regular contest at the annual village fairs, because he insists that my refusing to let them begin on a Sunday is abridging their few rights, and robbing them of a day which they might add to their pleasure, without injury to their profit. He allows all the strolling players, mountebanks, and jugglers to exhibit, because he says, it is a charity. His charity, however, is so short-sighted, that he does not see, that while these vagabonds are supplying the wants of the day, their improvident habits suffer them to look no farther: that his own workmen are spending their hard-earned money in these illegal diversions, while the expense is the least mischief which their daughters incur.'

Our next visit was to Mr. Carlton, whom I had found in one or two previous interviews to be a man of excellent sense, and a perfect gentleman. Sir John renewed with pleasure his acquaintance with the husband, while Lady Belfield was charmed to be introduced to the wife, with whose character she was so enamoured, and whose gentle manners were calculated to confirm the affection which her little history had inspired.

CHAP. XXVII

In the morning Mr. Stanley, Sir John Belfield and I took a walk to call on our valuable rector. On our return home, amidst that sort of desultory conversation which a walk often produces, 'Since we left the parsonage, sir,' said I, addressing myself to Mr. Stanley, 'I have been thinking how little justice has been done to the clerical character in those popular works of imagination which are intended to exhibit a picture of living manners. There are, indeed, a very few happy exceptions. Yet I cannot but regret that so many fair occasions have been lost of advancing the interests of religion by personifying her amiable graces in the character of her ministers. I allude not to the attack of the open infidel, nor the sly insinuation of the concealed sceptic, nor do I advert to the broad assault of the enemy of good government, who falling foul of every established institution, would naturally be expected to show little favour to the ministers of the church. But I advert to those less prejudiced and less hostile writers, who having, as I would hope, no political or moral motive for undermining the order, would rather desire to be considered as among its friends and advocates.'

'I understand you,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'I believe that this is often done, not from any disrespect to the sacred function, not from any wish to depreciate an order which even common sense and common prudence, without the intervention of religion, tells us cannot be set in too respectable a light. I believe it commonly arises from a different cause. The writer himself having but a low idea of the requirements of Christianity, is consequently neither able nor willing to affix a very elevated standard for the character of its ministers. Some of these writers, however, describe a clergyman in general terms, as a paragon of piety, but they seldom make him act up to the description with which he sets out. He is represented, in the gross, as adorned with all the attributes of perfection, but when he comes to be drawn out in detail he is found to exhibit little of that superiority which had been ascribed to him in the lump. You are told how religious he is, but when you come to hear him converse you are not always quite certain whether he professes the religion of the Shaster or the Bible. You hear of his moral excellence, but you find him adopting the maxims of the world, and living in the pursuits of ordinary men. In short, you will find that he has little of a clergyman, except the name.'

'A sensible little work of fiction,' replied I, 'lately fell in my way. Among its characters was that of a grave divine. From the strain of panegyric bestowed on him, I expected to have met with a rival to the fathers of the primitive church. He is presented as a model, and, indeed, he counsels, he reproves, he instructs,—but he goes to a masquerade.'

'This assimilation of general piety,' said Mr. Stanley, 'with occasional conformity to the practice of the gay world, I should fear would produce two ill effects. It will lower the professional standard to the young reader while he is perusing the ideal character, and the comparison will dispose him to accuse of forbidding strictness the pious clergyman of real life After having been entertained with the mixture of religion and laxity in the imaginary divine, whom he has been following from the serious lecture to the scene of revelry, will he not be naturally disposed to accuse of moroseness the existing divine who blends no such contradiction?

'But the evil of which I more particularly complain,' continued he, 'because it exists in works universally read, and written, indeed, with a life and spirit which make them both admired and remembered, is found in the ingenious and popular novels of the witty class In some of these, even where the author intends

to give a favourable representation of a clergyman, he more frequently exhibits him for the purpose of merriment than for that of instruction.'

'I confess with shame,' said Sir John, 'that the spirit, fire, and knowledge of mankind, of the writers to whom you allude, have made me too generally indulgent to their gross pictures of life, and to the loose morals of their good men.'

'*Good men!*' said Mr. Stanley. 'After reading some of those works in the early part of my life, I amused myself with the idea that I should like to interweave the character of a *Christian* among the heroes of Fielding and Smollet as the shortest way of proving their *good men* to be worthless fellows: and to show how little their admired characters rise in point of morals, above the heroes of the Beggar's Opera.

'Knowledge of the world,' continued he, 'should always be used to mend the world. A writer employs his knowledge honestly when he points out the snares and pitfalls of vice. But when he covers those snares and pitfalls with flowers, when he fascinates in order that he may corrupt, when he engages the affections by polluting them, I know not how a man can do a deeper injury to society, or more fatally inflame his own future reckoning.'

'But to return to our more immediate subject,' said I, 'I cannot relish their singling out the person of a pious clergyman as a peculiarly proper vehicle for the display of humour. Why qualities which excite ridicule should be necessarily blended with such as command esteem, is what I never have been able to comprehend.'

'Even where the characters,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'have been so pleasingly delineated as to attract affection by their worth and benevolence, there is always a drawback from their respectability by some trait that is ludicrous, some situation that is unclerical, some incident that is absurd. There is a contrivance to expose them to some awkward distress; there is some palpable weakness to undo the effect of their general example, some impropriety of conduct, some gross error in judgment, some excess of simplicity, which, by infallibly diminishing the dignity, weakens the influence of the character, and of course lessens the veneration of the reader.'

'I have often,' replied I, 'felt, that though we may love the man we laugh at, we shall never reverence him. We may like him as a companion, but we shall never look up to him as an instructor.'

'I know no reason,' observed Mr. Stanley, 'why a pious divine may not have as much wit and humour as any other man. And we have it on the word of the wittiest of the whole body, Dr. South, that 'piety does not necessarily involve dulness.' An author may lawfully make his churchman as witty as he pleases, or rather as witty as he can: but he should never make him the butt of the wit of other men, which is, in fact, making him the butt of his own wit. What is meant to be a *comical parson* is no respectable or prudent exhibition; nor with the utmost stretch of candour, can I believe that the motive of the exhibitor is always of the purest kind.

'How far,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'authors have found it necessary to add these diverting appendages in order to qualify piety, how far they have been obliged to dilute religion, so as to make it palatable and pardonable, I will not pretend to decide. But whether such a mixture be not calculated to leave a lasting effect on the mind, unfavonrable to the clerical character whether these associations are not injurious even to religion itself, let those declare, if they will speak honestly who have been accustomed to be excessively delighted with such combinations.'

'I am a little afraid,' returned Sir John, 'that I have formerly in some degree fallen under this censure. But surely, Stanley, you would not think it right to lavish *undue* praise, even on characters of a better stamp; you would not commend ordinary merit highly, and above all you would not, I presume screen the faults of the worthless?'

'I am as far from insisting,' replied he, 'on the universal piety of the clergy, as for bespeaking reverence for the unworthy individual: all that I contend for is, that no arts should ever be employed to discredit the *order*. The abettors of revolutionary principles, a few years ago, had the acuteness to perceive, that so to discredit it was one of the most powerful engines. Had not that spirit been providently extinguished, they would have done more mischief to religion by their artful mode of introducing degrading pictures of our national instructors, in their popular tracts, than the Hobbes and the Bolingbrokes had done by blending irreligion with their philosophy, or the Voltaires and the Gibbons by interweaving it into their history. Whatever is mixed up with our amusements is swallowed with more danger, because with more pleasure, and less suspicion than any thing which comes under a graver name, and more serious shape.'

'I presume,' said Sir John, 'you do not mean to involve in your censure the exquisitely keen satires of Erasmus on the ecclesiastics of his day: and I remember that you yourself could never read without delight, the pointed wit of Boileau against the spiritual voluptuaries of his time, in his admirable *Lutrin*. Perhaps you are not disposed to give the same quarter to the pleasant ridicule of Le Sage?'

'We justify ourselves as good protestants,' rejoined Mr. Stanley, 'for pardoning the severe but just attacks of the reformer and the poet on the vices of a corrupt church.—Though, to speak the truth, I am not quite certain that even these two discriminating and virtuous authors did not, especially Erasmus, now and then indulge themselves in a sharpness which seemed to bear upon religion itself, and not merely on the luxury and idleness of its degenerate ministers.—As to Le Sage, who, with all his wit, I should never have thought of bringing into such good company, he was certainly withheld by no restraints either moral or religious. And it is obvious to me that he seems rather gratified, that he had the faults to expose, than actuated by an honest zeal, by exposing to correct them.'

'I wish I could say,' replied Sir John, 'that the Spanish Friar of Dryden, and the witty Opera of the living Dryden did not fall under the same suspicion. I have often observed, that as Lucien dashes with equal wit and equal viru

lence at every religion, of every name and every nation, so Dryden with the same diffusive zeal attacks the ministers of every religion. In ransacking muftis, monks, and prelates to confirm his favourite position,

That Priests of all religions are the same,

he betrays a secret wish to intimate that not only the priests of all religions, but the religions of all priests are pretty much alike.'

'He has, however,' said Mr. Stanley, 'made a sort of palinode, by his consummately beautiful poem of the *good parson*.—Yet even this lovely picture he could not allow himself to complete without a fling at the order, which he declares at the conclusion, he only spares for the sake of one exception.'

'Rousseau,' said Sir John, 'seems to be the only sceptic who has not in this respect acted unfairly. His Savoyard vicar is represented as a grave, consistent, and exemplary character.'

'True,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'but don't you perceive why he is so represented? He is exhibited as a model of goodness, in order to exalt the scanty faith and unsound doctrines of which he is the teacher.'

'I would not,' continued he, 'call that man an enemy to the church who should reprobate characters who are a dishonour to it.—But the just though indignant biographer of a real Sterne, or a real Churchill, exhibits a very different spirit, and produces a very different effect from the painter of an imaginary *Thwackum* or *Supple*. In the historian, concealment would be blameable, and palliation mischievous. He fairly exposes the individual without wishing to bring any reproach on the profession. What I blame is, employing the vehicle of fiction for the purpose of blackening, or in any degree discrediting, a body of men, who depend much for the success of their labours on public opinion, and on the success of whose labours depends so large a portion of the public virtue.'

'I have sometimes,' said I, 'heard my father express his surprise that the most engaging of all writers, Mr. Addison, a man so devout himself, so forward to do honour to religion on all occasions, should have let slip so fair an opportunity for exalting the value of a country clergyman as the description of Sir Roger de Coverly's chaplain naturally put in his hands.'*

'You must allow,' said Sir John, 'that he has made him worthy, and that he has not made him absurd.'

'I grant it,' replied I, 'but he has made him dull and acquiescent. He has made him any thing rather than a pattern.'

'But what I most regret,' said Mr. Stanley, is, that the use he has made of this character is to give the stamp of his own high authority to a practice, which though it is characteristically recommended by the whimsical knight, whose original vein of humour leaves every other far behind it, yet should never have had the sanction of the author of the Saturday pieces in the Spectator—I mean, the practice of the minister of a little country parish, preaching to farmers and peasants the most learned, logical, and profound discourses in the English language.'

'It has, I believe,' replied Sir John, 'excited general wonder that so consummate a judge of propriety should have commended, as suitable instruction for illiterate villagers, the sermons of those incomparable scholars Fleetwood, South, Tillotson, Barrow, Calamy, and Sanderson.'

'But this is not the worst,' said Mr. Stanley, 'for Mr. Addison not only clearly approves it in the individual instance, but takes occasion from it, to establish a general rule, and indefinitely to advise the country clergy to adopt the custom of preaching these same discourses, '*instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own.*'

'Surely,' replied I, 'an enemy of religion could not easily have devised a more effectual method for thinning the village church, or lessening the edification of the unlettered auditor, than this eminent advocate for Christianity has here incautiously suggested.'

'I am sorry,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that such a man has given such a sanction for reducing religious instruction to little more than a form, and for seeming to consider the mere act of attending public worship as the sole end of its institution, without sufficiently taking into the account the nature and the importance of the instruction itself; and without considering that nothing can be edifying which is not intelligible. Besides, it is not only preventing the improvement of the people, but checking that of the preacher. It not only puts a bar to his own advancement in the art of teaching, but retards that growth in piety which might have been promoted in himself while he was preparing in secret to promote that of his hearers.'

'And yet,' replied Sir John, 'to speak honestly, I am afraid, had I been the patron, I should have been so gratified myself with hearing those fine compositions, that I could not heartily have blamed my chaplain for preaching no other.'

'My dear Sir John,' said Mr. Stanley, 'neither your good sense, nor your good nature would, I am persuaded, allow you to purchase your own gratification at the expense of a whole congregation. You, a man of learning and of leisure, can easily supply any deficiency of ability in plain but useful sermons. But how would the tenants, the workmen, and the servants, (for of such at least was Sir Roger's congregation composed,) how would those who have little other means of edification indemnify themselves for the loss of that single opportunity which the whole week affords them? Is not that a most inequitable way of proportioning instruction which, while it pleases or profits the well-informed individual, cuts off the instruction of the multitude? If we may twist a text from its natural import, is it 'rightly dividing the word of truth' to feast the patron and starve the parish?'

* See Spectator, Vol ii. No. 107

CHAP. XXVIII.

Though Mr. Stanley had checked my impetuosity in my application to him, and did not

encourage my addresses with a promptitude suited to the ardour of my affection, yet as the warmth of my attachment, notwithstanding I made it a duty to restrain its outward expression, could not escape either his penetration, or that of his admirable wife, they began a little to relax in the strictness with which they had avoided speaking of their daughter. They never indeed introduced the subject themselves, yet it some how or other never failed to find its way into all conversation in which I was one of the interlocutors.

Sitting one day in Lucilla's bower with Mrs. Stanley, and speaking, though in general terms, on the subject nearest my heart, with a tenderness and admiration as sincere as it was fervent, I dwelt particularly on some instances which I had recently heard from Edwards, of her tender attention to the sick poor, and her zeal in often visiting them without regard to weather, or the accommodation of a carriage.

'I assure you,' said Mrs. Stanley, 'you overrate her. Lucilla is no prodigy dropped down from the clouds. Ten thousand other young women, with natural good sense, and good temper, might, with the same education, the same neglect of what is useless, and the same attention to what is necessary, acquire the same habits and the same principles. Her being no prodigy, however, perhaps makes her example, as far as it goes, more important. She may be more useful, because she carries not that discouraging superiority, which others might be deterred from imitating, through hopelessness to reach. If she is not a miracle whom others might despair to emulate, she is a Christian whom every girl of a fair understanding and good disposition may equal, and whom, I hope and believe, many girls excel.'

I asked Mrs. Stanley's permission to attend the young ladies in one of their benevolent rounds. 'When I have leisure to be of the party,' replied she, smiling, 'you shall accompany us. I am afraid to trust your warm feelings. Your good nature would perhaps lead you to commend as a merit, what in fact deserves no praise at all, the duty being so obvious, and so indispensable. I have often heard it regretted that ladies have no stated employment, no profession. It is a mistake. *Charity is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is her profession.* Men have little time or taste for details. Women of fortune have abundant leisure, which can in no way be so properly or so pleasantly filled up, as in making themselves intimately acquainted with the worth and the wants of all within their reach. With their wants, because it is their bounden duty to administer to them; with their worth, because without this knowledge, they cannot administer prudently and appropriately.'

I expressed to Mrs. Stanley the delight with which I had heard of the admirable regulations of her family, in the management of the poor, and how much their power of doing good was said to be enlarged by the judgment and discrimination with which it was done.

'We are far from thinking,' replied she, 'that our charity should be limited to our own immediate neighbourhood. We are of opinion, that it should not be left undone any where, but that *there* it should be done indispensably. We consider our own parish as our more appropriate field of action, where Providence, by 'fixing the bounds of our habitation,' seems to have made us peculiarly responsible for the comfort of those whom he has doubtless placed around us for that purpose. It is thus that the Almighty vindicates his justice, or rather calls on us to vindicate it. It is thus he explains why he admits natural evil into the world, by making the wants of one part of the community an exercise for the compassion of the other.

'Surely,' added Mrs. Stanley, 'the reason is particularly obvious, why the bounty of the affluent ought to be most liberally, though not exclusively, extended to the spot whence they derived their revenues. There seems indeed to be a double motive for it. The same act involves a duty both to God and to man. The largest bounty to the necessitous on our estates, is rather justice than charity. 'Tis but a kind of pepper-corn acknowledgment to the great Lord and proprietor of all, from whom we hold them. And to assist their own labouring poor is a kind of natural debt, which persons who possess great landed property owe to those from the sweat of whose brow they derive their comforts, and even their riches. 'Tis a commutation, in which, as the advantage is greatly on our side, so is our duty to diminish the difference, of paramount obligation.'

I then repeated my request, that I might be allowed to take a practical lesson in the next periodical visit to the cottages.

Mrs. Stanley replied, 'As to my girls, the elder ones, I trust, are such veterans in their trade that your approbation can do them no harm, nor do they stand in need of it as an incentive. But should the little ones find that their charity procures them praise, they might perhaps be charitable for the sake of praise, their benevolence might be set at work by their vanity, and they might be led to do that, from the love of applause, which can only please God when the principle is pure. *The iniquity of our holy things*, my good friend, requires much Christian vigilance. Next to not giving at all the greatest fault is to give from ostentation. The contest is only between two sins. The motive robs the act of the very name of virtue, while the good work that is paid in praise, is stripped of the hope of higher retribution.'

On my assuring Mrs. Stanley, that I thought such an introduction to their systematic schemes of charity might inform my own mind and improve my habits, she consented, and I have since been a frequent witness of their admirable method; and have been studying plans which involve the good both of body and soul. Oh! if I am ever blest with a coadjutress, a directress, let me rather say, formed under such auspices, with what delight shall I transplant the principles and practices of Stanley Grove to the Priory! Nor indeed would I ever marry but with the animating hope that not only myself, but all around me, would be the better and the happier for the presiding genius I shall place there.

Sir John Belfield had joined us while we were on this topic. I had observed sometimes that though he was earnest on the general principle

of benevolence, which he considered as a most imperious duty, or, as he said in his warm way, as so lively a pleasure, that he was almost ready to suspect if it *were* a duty; yet I was sorry to find that his generous mind had not viewed this large subject under all its aspects. He had not hitherto regarded it as a matter demanding any thing but money; while time, inquiry, discrimination, system, he confessed he had not much taken into the account. He did a great deal of good, but had not allowed himself time or thought for the best way of doing it. Charity, as opposed to hard-heartedness and covetousness, he warmly exercised; but when, with a willing liberality, he had cleared himself from the suspicion of those detestable vices, he was indolent in the proper distribution of money and somewhat negligent of its just application. Nor had he ever considered, as every man should do, because every man's means are limited, how the greatest quantity of good could be done with any given sum.

But the worst of all was, he had imbibed certain popular prejudices respecting the more *religious* charities; prejudices altogether unworthy of his enlightened mind. He too much limited his ideas of bounty to bodily wants. This distinction was not with him, as it is with many, invented as an argument for saving his money, which he most willingly bestowed for feeding and clothing the necessitous. But as to the propriety of affording them religious instruction, he owned he had not made up his mind. He had some doubts whether it were a duty. Whether it were a benefit, he had still stronger doubts; adding, that he should begin to consider the subject more attentively than he had yet done.

Mrs. Stanley in reply, said, 'I am but a poor casuist, Sir John, and I must refer you to Mr. Stanley for abler arguments than I can use. I will venture however to say, that even on your own ground it appears to be a pressing duty. If sin be the cause of so large a portion of the miseries of human life, must not that be the noblest charity which cures, or lessens, or prevents sin? And are not they the truest benefactors even to the bodies of men, who by their religious exertions to prevent the corruption of vice, prevent also, in some measure, that poverty and disease which are the natural concomitants of vice? If in endeavouring to make men better, by the infusion of a religious principle which shall check idleness, drinking, and extravagance, we put them in the way to become healthier, and richer, and happier, it will furnish a practical argument which I am sure will satisfy your benevolent heart.'

CHAP. XXIX.

Mr. Tyrrel and his nephew called on us in the evening, and interrupted a pleasant and useful conversation, on which we were just entering.

'Do you know, Stanley,' said Mr. Tyrrel, 'that you have absolutely corrupted my nephew, by what passed at your house the other day in favour of reading. He has ever since been ransacking the shelves for idle books'

'I should be seriously concerned,' replied Mr Stanley, 'if any thing I had said should have drawn Mr. Edward off from more valuable studies, or diverted him from the important pursuit of religious knowledge.'

'Why to do him justice, and you too,' resumed Mr. Tyrrel, 'he has since that conversation begun assiduously to devote his mornings to serious reading, and it is only an hour's leisure in the evening which he used to trifle away, that he gives to books of taste; but I had rather he would let them all alone. The best of them will only fill his heart with cold morality, and stuff his head with romance and fiction. I would not have a religious man ever look into a book of your *belles lettres* nonsense; and if he be really religious, he will make a general bonfire of the poets.'

'That is rather two sweeping a sentence,' said Mr. Stanley. 'It would, I grant you, have been a benefit to mankind, if the entire works of some celebrated poets, and a considerable portion of the works of many not quite so exceptionable, were to assist the conflagration of your pile.'

'And if fuel failed,' said Sir John Belfield, 'we might not only rob Belinda's altar of her

Twelve tomes of French romances neatly gilt,

but feed the flame with countless marble covered octavos from the modern school.—But having made this concession, allow me to observe, that because there has been a voluptuous Petronius, a profane Lucretius, and a licentious Ovid, to say nothing of the numberless modern poets, or rather individual poems, that are immoral and corrupt—shall we therefore exclude all works of imagination from the library of a young man? Surely we should not indiscriminately banish the Muses, as infallible corruptors of the youthful mind; I would rather consider a blameless poet as the auxiliary of virtue.—Whatever talent enables a writer to possess an empire over the heart, and to lead the passions at his command puts it in his power to be of no small service to mankind. It is no new remark that the abuse of any good thing is no argument against its legitimate use. Intoxication affords no just reason against the use of wine, nor prodigality against the possession of wealth. In the instance in dispute I should rather infer that a talent capable of diffusing so much mischief, was susceptible of no small benefit. That it has been so often abused by its misapplication, is one of the highest instances of the ingratitude of man for one of the highest gifts of God.'

'I cannot think,' said I, 'that the Almighty conferred such a faculty with a wish to have it extinguished. Works of imagination have in many countries been a chief instrument of civilization. Poetry has not only preceded science in the history of human progress, but it has in many countries preceded the knowledge of the mechanical arts; and I have somewhere read, that in Scotland they could write elegant Latin verse before they could make a wheel-barrow. For my own part, in my late visit to London, I thought the decline of poetry no favourable symptom.'

'I rejoice to hear it is declining,' said Tyrrel. I hope that what is decaying, may in time be extinguished.'

'Mr. Tyrrel would have been delighted with what I was displeased,' replied I. 'I met with philosophers, who were like Plato in nothing but in his abhorrence of the Muses; with politicians, who resembled Burleigh only in his enmity to Spenser; and with warriors, who however they might emulate Alexander in his conquests, would never have imitated him in sparing 'the house of Pindarus.'

'The *art* of poetry,' said Mr. Stanley, 'is to touch the passions, and its *duty* to lead them on the side of virtue. To raise and to purify the amusements of mankind; to multiply and to exalt pleasures, which being purely intellectual, may help to exclude such as are gross, in beings so addicted to sensuality, is surely not only to give pleasure, but to render service. It is allowable to seize every avenue to the heart of a being so prone to evil; to rescue him by every fair means not only from the degradation of vice, but from the dominion of idleness. I do not now speak of gentlemen of the sacred function, to which Mr. Edward Tyrrel aspires, but of those who, having no profession, have no stated employment; and who, having more leisure, will be in danger of exceeding the due bounds in the article of amusement. Let us then endeavour to allure our youth of fashion from the low pleasures of the dissolute; to snatch them, not only from the destruction of the gaming-table, but from the excesses of the dining-table, by inviting them to an elegant delight that is safe, and especially by enlarging the range of pure mental pleasure.

'In order to this, let us do all we can to cultivate their taste, and innocently indulge their fancy. Let us contend with impure writers, those deadliest enemies to the youthful mind, by opposing to them in the chaster author, images more attractive, wit more acute, learning more various; in all which excellencies our first-rate poets certainly excel their vicious competitors.'

'Would you, Mr. Tyrrel,' said Sir John, 'throw into the enemy's camp all the light arms which often successfully annoy where the heavy artillery cannot reach?'

'Let us,' replied Mr. Stanley, rescue from the hands of the profane and the impure, the monopoly of wit which they affect to possess, and which they would possess, if no good men had written works of elegant literature, and if all good men totally despised them.'

'For my own part,' said Mr. Tyrrel, 'I believe that a good man, in my sense of the word, will neither write works of imagination, nor read them.'

'At your age and mine, and better employed as we certainly may be,' said Mr. Stanley, 'we want no such resources. I myself, though I strongly retain the relish, have little leisure for the indulgence, which yet I would allow, though with great discrimination, to the young and the unoccupied. What is to whet the genius of the champions of virtue, so as to enable them successfully to combat the leaders of vice and infidelity, if we refuse to let them be occasionally sharpened and polished by such studies? That model of brilliant composition, Bishop Jeremy Taylor, was of this opinion, when he said 'by whatever instrument piety is advantaged, use that, though thou grindest thy spears and arrows at the forges of the Philistines.'

'I know,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'that a Christian need not borrow weapons of attack or defence from the classic armoury; but, to drop all metaphor, if he is called upon to defend truth and virtue against men whose minds are adorned with all that is elegant, strengthened with all that is powerful, and enriched with all that is persuasive, from the writers in question—Is he likely to engage with due advantage if his own mind be destitute of the embellishments with which their's abound? While wit and imagination are *their* favourite instruments, shall we consider the aid of either as useless, much less as sinful in their opponents?'

'While young men *will* be amused,' said Sir John, 'it is surely of importance that they should be *safely* amused. We should not therefore wish to obliterate in authors such faculties as wit and fancy, nor to extinguish a taste for them in readers.'

'Show me any one instance of good that ever was effected by any one poet,' said Mr. Tyrrel, 'and I will give up the point; while on the other hand, a thousand instances of mischief might doubtless be produced.'

'The latter part of your assertion, Sir,' said I, 'I fear is too true: but to what evil has elevation of fancy led Milton, or Milton his readers? In what labyrinths of guilt did it involve Spenser or Cowley? Has Thomson, or has Young added to the crimes or the calamities of mankind? Into what immoralities did it plunge Gay or Goldsmith? Has it tainted the purity of Beattie in his Minstrel, or that of the living minstrel of the Lay? What reader has Mason corrupted, or what reader has Cowper not benefitted? Milton was an enthusiast both in religion and politics. Many enthusiasts with whom he was connected, doubtless condemned the exercise of his imagination in his immortal poem as a crime; but his genius was too mighty to be restrained by opposition, and his imagination too vast and powerful to be kept down by a party. Had he confined himself in his prose writings, weighty and elaborate as some of them are, how little service would he have done the world, and how little would he now be read or quoted! In his life time politics might blind his enemies, and fanaticism his friends. But now, who, comparatively, reads the Iconoclastes? Who does not read Comus?'

'What then,' said Mr. Tyrrel, 'you would have our young men spend their time in reading idle verses, and our girls, I suppose, in reading loose romances?'

'It is to preserve both from evils which I deprecate,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that I would consign the most engaging subjects to the best hands, and raise the taste of our youth, by allowing a little of their leisure, and of their leisure only, to such amusements; and that chiefly with a view to disengage them from worse pursuits. It is not romance, but indolence; it is not poetry, but sensuality, which are the p

vailing evils of the day—evils far more fatal in themselves, far more durable in their effects, than the perusal of works of wit and genius. Imagination will cool of itself. The effervescence of fancy will soon subside; but absorbing dissipation, but paralyzing idleness, but degrading self-love,

Grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength.

'A judicious reformer,' said Sir John, 'will accommodate his remedy to an existing and not an imaginary evil. When the old romances, the grand Cyruses, the Clelias, the Cassandras, the Pharamonds, and the Amadises, had turned all the young heads in Europe; or when the fury of knight errantry demanded the powerful reign of Cervantes to check it—it was a duty to attempt to lower the public delirium. When, in our own age and country, Sterne wrote his corrupt but too popular lesser work, he became the mischievous founder of the school of sentiment. A hundred writers communicated, a hundred thousand readers caught the infection. Sentimentality was the disease which then required to be expelled. The reign of Sterne is past. Sensibility is discarded, and with it the softness which it must be confessed belonged to it. Romance is vanished, and with it the heroic, though somewhat unnatural elevation which accompanied it. We have little to regret in the loss of either: nor have we much cause to rejoice in what we have gained by the exchange. A pervading and substantial selfishness, the striking characteristic of our day, is no great improvement on the wildness of the old romance, or the vapid puling of the sentimental school.'

'Surely,' said I, (L'Almanac des Gourmands at that instant darting across my mind,) 'it is as honourable for a gentleman to excel in critical as in culinary skill. It is as noble to cultivate the intellectual taste, as that of the palate. It is at least as creditable to discuss the comparative merits of Sophocles and Shakspeare, as the rival ingredients of a soup or a sauce. I will even venture to affirm that it is as dignified an amusement to run a tilt in favour of Virgil or Tasso against their assailants, as to run a barouche against a score of rival barouches; and though I own that, in Gulliver's land of the Houyhnhnms, the keeping up the breed of horses might have been the nobler patriotism, yet in Great Britain it is hitherto at least become no contemptible exertion of skill and industry to keep up the breed of gentlemen.'

CHAP. XXX.

I STROLLED out alone, intending to call at the Rectory, but was prevented by meeting the worthy Doctor Barlow, who was coming to the Grove. I could not lose so fair an opportunity of introducing a subject that was seldom absent from my thoughts. I found it was a subject, on which I had no new discoveries to impart. He told me, he had seen and rejoiced in the election my heart had made. I was surprised at his penetration. He smiled, and told me, 'he took no great credit for his sagacity, in perceiving what was obvious to spectators far more indifferent than himself. That I resembled those animals who by hiding their heads in the earth fancied nobody could see them.'

I asked him a thousand questions about Lucilla, whose fine mind I knew he had in some measure contributed to form. I inquired with an eagerness which he called jealousy, who were her admirers? 'As many men as have seen her,' replied he, 'I know of no man who has so many rivals as yourself. To relieve your apprehensions, however, I will tell you, that though there have been several competitors for her favour, not one has been accepted. There has, indeed, been this summer a very formidable candidate, young Lord Staunton, who has a large estate in the country, and whom she met on a visit.' At these words I felt my fears revive. A young and handsome peer seemed so redoubtable a rival, that for a moment I only remembered she was a woman, and forgot that she was Lucilla.

'You may set your heart at rest,' said Dr. Barlow, who saw my emotion. 'She heard he had seduced the innocent daughter of one of his tenants, under the most specious pretence of honourable love. This, together with the looseness of his religious principles, led her to give his lordship a positive refusal, though he is neither destitute of talents, nor personal accomplishments.'

How ashamed was I of my jealousy! How I felt my admiration increase! Yet I thought it was too great before to admit of augmentation. 'Another proposal,' said Dr. Barlow, 'was made to her father by a man every way unexceptionable. But she desired him to be informed that it was her earnest request, that he would proceed no further, but spare her the pain of refusing a gentleman, for whose character she entertained a sincere respect; but being persuaded she could never be able to feel more than respect, she positively declined receiving his addresses, assuring him at the same time, that she sincerely desired to retain as a friend, him whom she felt herself obliged to refuse as a husband. She is as far from the vanity of seeking to make conquests, as from the ungenerous insolence of using ill, those whom her merit has captivated, and whom her judgment cannot accept.'

After admiring in the warmest terms the purity and generosity of her heart, I pressed Dr. Barlow still farther, as to the interior of her mind. I questioned him as to her early habits, and particularly as to her religious attainments, telling him that nothing was indifferent to me which related to Lucilla.

'Miss Stanley,' replied he, 'is governed by a simple, practical end, in all her religious pursuits. She reads her bible, not from habit, that she may acquit herself of a customary form; nor to exercise her ingenuity by allegorizing literal passages, or spiritualizing plain ones, but that she may improve in knowledge, and grow in grace. She accustoms herself to meditation, in order to get her mind more deeply imbued with a sense of eternal things. She practices self-examination, that she may learn to watch against the first rising of bad dispositions, and to detect

every latent evil in her heart. She lives in the regular habit of prayer; not only that she may implore pardon for sin, but that she may obtain strength against it. She told me one day when she was ill, that if she did not constantly examine the actual state of her mind, she should pray at random, without any certainty what particular sins she should pray against, or what were her particular wants. She has read much scripture and little controversy. There are some doctrines that she does not pretend to define, which she yet practically adopts. She cannot perhaps give you a disquisition on the mysteries of the Holy Spirit, but she can and does fervently implore his guidance and instruction; she believes in his efficacy, and depends on his support. She is sensible that those truths, which from their deep importance are most obvious, have more of the vitality of religion, and influence practice more, than those abstruse points, which unhappily split the religious world into so many parties.

'If I were to name what are her predominant virtues, I should say sincerity and humility. Conscious of her own imperfections, she never justifies her faults, and seldom extenuates them. She receives reproof with meekness, and advice with gratitude. Her own conscience is always so ready to condemn her, that she never wonders, nor takes offence at the censure of others.

'That softness of manner which you admire in her, is not the varnish of good breeding, nor is it merely the effect of good temper, though in both she excels, but it is the result of humility. She appears humble, not because a mild exterior is graceful, but because she has an inward conviction of unworthiness which prevents an assuming manner. Yet her humility has no cant; she never disburthens her conscience by a few disparaging phrases, nor lays a trap for praise by indiscriminately condemning herself. Her humility never impairs her cheerfulness; for the sense of her wants directs her to seek, and her faith enables her to find, the sure foundation of a better hope than any which can be derived from a delusive confidence in her own goodness.

'One day,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'when I blamed her gently for her backwardness in expressing her opinion on some serious point, she said, 'I always feel diffident in speaking on these subjects, not only lest I should be *thought* to assume, but lest I really *should* assume a degree of piety which may not belong to me. My great advantages make me jealous of myself. My dear father so carefully instructed me, and I live so much in the habit of hearing his pious sentiments, that I am often afraid of appearing better than I am, and of pretending to feel in my heart, what perhaps I only approve in my judgment. When my beloved mother was ill,' continued she, 'I often caught myself saying mechanically, 'God's will be done!' when I blushed to own, how little I felt in my heart of that resignation of which my lips were so lavish.'

I hung with inexpressible delight on every word Dr. Barlow uttered, and expressed my fears that such a prize was too much above my deserts, to allow me to encourage very sanguine hopes. 'You have my cordial wishes for your success,' said he, 'though I shall lament the day when you snatch so fair a flower from our fields, to transplant it into your northern gardens.'

We had now reached the Park-gate, where Sir John and Lady Belfield joined us. As it was very hot, Dr. Barlow proposed to conduct us a nearer way. He carried us through a small nursery of fruit trees, which I had not before observed, though it was adjoining the ladies' flower garden, from which it was separated and concealed by a row of small trees. I expressed my surprise that the delicate Lucilla would allow so coarse an enclosure to be so near her ornamented ground. 'You see she does all she can to shut it out,' replied he. 'I will tell you how it happens, for I cannot vindicate the taste of my fair friend, without exposing a better quality in her. But if I betray her you must not betray me.

'It is a rule when any servant who has lived seven years at the Grove marries, provided they have conducted themselves well, and made a prudent choice, for Mr. Stanley to give them a piece of ground on the waste to build a cottage; he also allows them to take stones from his quarry, and lime from his kiln; to this he adds a bit of ground for a garden. Mrs. Stanley presents some kitchen furniture, and gives a wedding dinner; and the Rector refuses his fee for performing the ceremony.'

'Caroline,' said Sir John, 'this is not the first time since we have been at the Grove, that I have been struck with observing how many benefits naturally result to the poor, from the rich living on their own estates. Their dependants have a thousand petty local advantages, which cost almost nothing to the giver, which are yet valuable to the receiver, and of which the absent never think.'

'You have heard,' said Dr. Barlow, 'that Miss Stanley, from her childhood, has been passionately fond of cultivating a garden. When she was hardly fourteen, she began to reflect that the delight she took in this employment was attended neither with pleasure nor profit to any one but herself, and she became jealous of a gratification which was so entirely selfish. She begged this piece of waste ground of her father, and stocked it with a number of fine young fruit trees of the common sort, apples, pears, plums, and the smaller fruits. When there is a wedding among the older servants, or when any good girl out of her school marries, she presents their little empty garden with a dozen young apple trees, and a few trees of the other sorts, never forgetting to embellish their little court with roses and honey-suckles. These last she transplants from the shrubbery, not to fill up the *village garden*, as it is called, with any thing that is of no positive use. She employs a poor lame man in the village a day in the week to look after this nursery, and by cuttings and grafts a good stock is raised on a small space. It is done at her own expense, Mr. Stanley making this a condition when he gave her the ground; 'otherwise,' said he, 'trifling as it is, it would be my charity and not her's, and she would get thanked for a kindness which would cost her nothing.' The warm-hearted little Phœbe co-operates in this, and all her sister's labours of love.'

'Some such union of charity with every personal indulgence, she generally imposes on herself and from this association she has acquired another virtue, for she tells me smiling, she is sometimes obliged to content herself with practising frugality instead of charity. When she finds she cannot afford both her own gratification, and the charitable act which she wanted to associate with it, and is therefore compelled to give up the charity, she compels herself to give up the indulgence also. By this self-denial she gets a little money in hand, for the next demand, and thus is enabled to afford both next time.'

As he finished speaking, we spied the lame gardener pruning and clearing the trees. 'Well, James,' said the Doctor, 'how does your nursery thrive?' 'Why, Sir,' said the poor man, 'we are rather thin of stout trees at present. You know we had three weddings at Christmas, which took thirty-six of my best apple trees at a blow, besides half a dozen tall pear trees, and as many plums. But we shall soon fetch it up, for Miss Lucilla makes me plant two for every one that is removed, so that we are always provided for a wedding, come when it will.'

I now recollected that I had been pleased with observing so many young orchards and flourishing cottage gardens in the village; little did I suspect the fair hand which could thus in a very few years diffuse an air of smiling comfort around these humble habitations, and embellish poverty itself. She makes, they told me, her periodical visits of inspection to see that neatness and order do not degenerate.

Not to appear too eager, I asked the poor man some questions about his health, which seemed infirm. 'I am but weak, Sir,' said he, 'for the matter of that, but I should have been dead long ago but for the 'Squire's family. He gives me the run of his kitchen, and Miss Lucilla allows me half a crown a week, for one day's work and any odd hour I can spare; but she don't let me earn it, for she is always watching for fear it should be too hot or too cold, or too wet for me: and she brings me my dose of bark herself into this tool-house, that she may be sure I take it; for she says servants and poor people like to have medicines provided for them, but don't care to take them. Then she watches that I don't throw my coat on the wet grass, which, she says, gives labouring men so much rheumatism; and she made me this nice flannel waistcoat, Sir, with her own hands. At Christmas they gave me a new suit from top to toe, so that I want nothing but a more thankful heart, for I never can be grateful enough to God and my benefactors.'

I asked some further questions, only to have the pleasure of hearing him talk longer about Lucilla. 'But, Sir,' said he, interrupting me, 'I hear bad news, very bad news. Pray your honour forgive me.' 'What do you mean, James?' said I, seeing his eye fill. 'Why, Sir, all the servants at the Grove will have it that you are come to carry off Miss Lucilla. God bless her whenever she goes. Your Mr. Edwards, Sir, says you are one of the best of gentlemen, but indeed, indeed, I don't know who can deserve her. She will carry a blessing wherever she goes.' The honest fellow put up the sleeve of his coat to brush away his tears, nor was I ashamed of those with which his honest affection filled my own eyes. While we were talking, a poor little girl, who I knew by her neat uniform belonged to Miss Stanley's school, passed us with a little basket in her hand. James called to her, and said, 'make haste, Rachel, you are after your time.'

'What, this is market day, James, is it,' said Dr. Barlow, 'and Rachel is come for her nosegays?' 'Yes, Sir,' said James; 'I forgot to tell their honours, that every Saturday, as soon as the school is over, the younger Misses give Rachel leave to come and fetch some flowers out of her garden, which she carries to the town to sell; she commonly gets a shilling, half of which they make her lay out to bring home a little tea for her poor sick mother, and the other half she lays up to buy shoes and stockings for herself and her crippled sister. Every little is a help where there is nothing, Sir.'

Sir John said nothing, but looked at Lady Belfield, whose eyes glistened while she softly said, 'O how little do the rich ever think what the aggregate even of their own squandered shillings would do in the way of charity, were they systematically applied to it.'

James now unlocked a little private door, which opened into the pleasure ground. There, at a distance, sitting in a circle on the new-mown grass, under a tree, we beheld all the little Stanleys, with a basket of flowers between them, out of which they were earnestly employed in sorting and tying up nosegays. We stood some time admiring their little busy faces and active finger's without their perceiving us, and got up to them just as they were putting their prettily formed bouquets into Rachel's basket, with which she marched off, with many charges from the children to waste no time by the way, and to be sure and leave the nosegay that had the myrtle in it at Mrs. Williams's.

'How many nosegays have you given to Rachel to-day, Louisa?' said Dr. Barlow to the eldest of the four. 'Only three a-piece, Sir,' replied she. 'We think it a bad day when we can't make up our dozen. They are all our own; we seldom touch mamma's flowers, and we never suffer James to take ours, because Phœbe said it might be tempting him.' Little Jane lamented that Lucilla had given them nothing to-day, except two or three sprigs of her best flowering myrtle, which, added she, 'we make Rachel give into the bargain to a poor sick lady, who loves flowers, and used to have good ones of her own, but who has now no money to spare, and could not afford to give more than the common price for a nosegay for her sick room! So we always slip a nice flower or two out of the green-house into her little bunch, and say nothing. When we walk that way we often leave her some flowers ourselves, and would do it oftener, if it did not hurt poor Rachel's trade.'

As we walked away from the sweet prattlers Dr. Barlow said, 'These little creatures already emulate their sisters in associating some pretty kindness with their own pleasures. The act is trifling, but the habit is good; as is every habit which helps to take us out of self; which teaches

us to transfer our attention from our own gratification, to the wants and pleasures of another.'

'I confess,' said Lady Belfield, as we entered the house, 'that it never occurred to me that it was any part of charity to train my children to the habit of sacrificing their time or their pleasure for the benefit of others, though, to do them justice, they are very feeling and very liberal with their money.'

'My dear Caroline,' said Sir John, 'it is our money, not their's. It is, I fear, a cheap liberality, and abridges not themselves of one enjoyment. They well know we are so pleased to see them charitable, we shall instantly repay them with interest, whatever they give away, so that we have hitherto afforded them no opportunity to show their actual dispositions. Nay I begin to fear they may become charitable through covetousness, if they find out that the more they give the more they shall get. We must correct this artificial liberality as soon as we go home.'

CHAP. XXXI.

A FEW days after, Sir John Belfield and I agreed to take a ride to Mr. Carlton's, where we breakfasted. Nothing could be more rational than the whole turn of his mind, nor more agreeable and unreserved than his conversation. His behaviour to his amiable wife was affectionately attentive, and Sir John, who is a most critical observer, remarked that it was quite natural and unaffected. It appeared to be the result of esteem inspired by her merit, and quickened by a sense of his former unworthiness, which made him feel as if he could never do enough to efface the memory of past unkindness. He manifested evident symptoms of a mind earnestly intent on the discovery and pursuit of moral and religious truth; and from the natural ardour of his character, and the sincerity of his remorse, his attainments seemed likely to be rapid and considerable.

The sweet benignity of Mrs. Carlton's countenance was lighted up at our entrance with a smile of satisfaction. We had been informed with what pleasure she observed every accession of right-minded acquaintance which her husband made. Though her natural modesty prevented her from introducing any subject herself, yet when any thing useful was brought forward by others, she promoted it by a look compounded of pleasure and intelligence.

After a variety of topics had been despatched, the conversation fell on the prejudices which were commonly entertained by men of the world against religion. 'For my own part,' said Mr. Carlton, 'I must confess that no man had ever more and stronger prejudices to combat than myself. I mean not my own exculpation, when I add, that the imprudence, the want of judgment, and above all the incongruous mixtures and inconsistencies in many characters who are reckoned religious, and are ill calculated to do away the unfavourable opinions of men of an opposite way of thinking. As I presume that you, gentlemen, are not ignorant of the errors of my early life—error indeed is an appellation far too mild—I shall not scruple to own to you the source of those prejudices which retarded my progress, even after I became ashamed of my deviations from virtue. I had felt the turpitude of my habits long before I had courage to renounce them; and I renounced them long before I had courage to avow my abhorrence of them.'

Sir John and I expressed ourselves extremely obliged by the candour of his declaration, and assured him that his further declarations would not only gratify but benefit us.

'Educated as I had been,' said Mr. Carlton, 'in almost entire ignorance of religion, mine was rather an habitual indifference than a systematic unbelief. My thoughtless course of life, though it led me to hope that Christianity might not be true, yet had by no means been able to convince me that it was false. As I had not been taught to search for truth at the fountain, for I was unacquainted with the Bible, I had no readier means for forming my judgment, than by observing, though with a careless and casual eye, what effect religion produced in those who professed to be influenced by it.—My observations augmented my prejudices. What I saw of the professors increased my dislike of the profession. All the charges brought by their enemies, for I had been accustomed to weigh the validity of testimony, had not rivetted my dislike so much, as the difference between their own avowed principles and their obvious practice. Religious men should be the more cautious of giving occasion for reproach, as they know the world is always on the watch, and is more glad to have its prejudices confirmed than removed.

'I seized the moment of Mrs. Carlton's absence (who was just then called out of the room, but returned almost immediately) to observe, that what rooted my disgust, was, the eagerness with which the mother of my inestimable wife, who made a great parade of religion, pressed the marriage of her only child with a man whose conduct she knew to be irregular, and of whose principles she entertained a just, that is, an unfavourable opinion. To see, I repeat, the religious mother of Mrs. Carlton obviously governed in her zeal for promoting our union by motives as worldly as those of my poor father, who pretended to no religion at all, would have extremely lowered any respect which I might have previously been induced to entertain for characters of that description. Nor was this disgust diminished by my acquaintance with Mr. Tyrrel. I had known him while a professed man of the world, and had at that time, I fear, disliked his violent temper, his narrow mind, and his coarse manners, more than his vices.

'I had heard of the power of religion to change the heart, and I ridiculed the wild chimera. My contempt for this notion was confirmed by the conduct of Mr. Tyrrel in his new character. I found it had produced little change in him, except furnishing him with a new subject of discussion. I saw that he had only laid down one set of opinions, and taken up another, with no addition whatever to his virtues, and with the addition to his vices of spiritual pride

and self-confidence; for with hypocrisy I have no right to charge any man. I observed that Tyrrel and one or two of his new friends, rather courted attack than avoided it. They considered discretion as the infirmity of a worldly mind, and every attempt at kindness or conciliation as an abandonment of faith. They eagerly ascribed to their piety, the dislike which was often excited by their peculiarities. I found them apt to dignify the disapprobation which their singularity occasioned with the name of persecution. I have seen them take comfort in the belief that it was their religion which was disliked, when perhaps it was chiefly their oddities.

'At Tyrrel's I became acquainted with your friends Mr. and Mrs. Ranby. I leave you to judge whether their characters, that of the lady especially, were calculated to do away my prejudices. I had learned from my favourite Roman poet a precept in composition, of never making a God appear, except on occasions worthy of a God, I have since had reason to think this rule as justly theological as it is classical. So thought not the Ranbys.

'It will indeed readily be allowed by every reflecting mind, as God is to be viewed in all his works, so his 'never-failing Providence ordereth all things both in heaven and on earth.' But surely there is something very offensive in the indecent familiarity with which the name of God and Providence is brought in on every trivial occasion, as was the constant practice of Mr. and Mrs. Ranby. I was not even then so illogical a reasoner as to allow a general and deny a particular providence. If the one were true, I inferred that the other could not be false. But I felt that the religion of these people was of a slight texture and a bad taste. I was disgusted with littleness in some instances, and with inconsistency in others. Still their absurdity gave me right to suspect their sincerity.

'Whenever Mrs. Ranby had a petty inclination to gratify, she had always recourse to what she called the *leadings of Providence.* In matters of no more moment than whether she should drink tea with one neighbour instead of another, she was *impelled*, or *directed*, or *overruled.* I observed that she always took care to interpret these *leadings* to her own state, and under their sanction she always did what her fancy led her to do. She professed to follow this guidance on such minute occasions, that I had almost said, her piety seemed a little impious. To the actual dispensations of Providence, especially when they came in a trying or adverse shape, I did not observe more submission than I had seen in persons who could not be suspected of religion. I must own to you also, that as I am rather fastidious, I began to fancy that vulgar language, quaint phrases, and false grammer, were necessarily connected with religion. The sacrifice of taste and elegance seemed indispensable, and I was inclined to fear that if *they* were right, it would be impossible to get to heaven with good English.'

'Though I grant there is some truth in your remarks, Sir,' said I, 'you must allow that when men are determined at all events to hunt down religious characters, they are never at a loss to find plausible objections to justify their dislike; and while they conceal, even from themselves, the real motive of their aversion, the vigilance with which they pry into the characters of men who are reckoned pious, is exercised with the secret hope of finding faults enough to confirm their prejudices.'

'As a general truth, you are perfectly right,' said Mr. Carlton; 'but at the period to which I allude, I had now got to that stage of my progress, as to be rather searching for instances to invite than to repel me in my inquiry.'

'You will grant, however,' said I, 'that it is a common effect of prejudice to transfer the faults of a religious man to religion itself. Such a man happens to have an uncouth manner, an awkward gesture, an unmodulated voice; his allusions may be coarse, his phraseology quaint, his language slovenly. The solid virtues which may lie disguised under these incumbrances go for nothing. The man is absurd, and therefore Christianity is ridiculous. Its truth, however, though it may be eclipsed, cannot be extinguished. Like its divine Author, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

'There was another repulsive circumstance,' replied Mr. Carlton, 'the scanty charities both of Tyrrel and his new friends, so inferior to the liberality of my father and of Mr. Flam, who never professed to be governed by any higher motive than mere feeling, strengthened my dislike. The calculations of mere reason taught me that the religious man who does not greatly exceed the man of the world in his liberalities, falls short of him; because the worldly man who gives liberally, acts above his principle, while the Christian who does no more, falls short of his. And though I by no means insist that liberality is a certain indication of piety, yet I will venture to assert that the want of the one is no doubtful symptom of the absence of the other.'

'I next resolved to watch carefully the conduct of another description of Christians, who come under the class of the formal and the decent. They were considered as more creditable, but I did not perceive them to be more exemplary. They were more absorbed in the world, and more governed by its opinion. I found them clamorous in defence of the church in words, but neither adorning it by their lives, nor embracing its doctrines in their hearts. Rigid in the observance of some of its external rites, but little influenced by its liberal principles and charitable spirit. They venerated the establishment merely as a political institution; but of her outward forms they conceived as comprehending the whole of her excellence. Of her spiritual beauty and superiority they seemed to have no conception. I observed in them less warmth of affection for those with whom they agreed in external profession, than of rancour for those who differed from them, though but a single shade, and in points of no importance. They were cordial haters, and frigid lovers. Had they lived in the early ages, when the church was split into parties by paltry disputes, they would have thought the controversy about the time of keeping Easter, of more consequence than the event itself, which that festival celebrates.'

'My dear Sir,' said I, as soon as he had done speaking, 'you have accounted very naturally for your prejudices. Your chief error seems to have consisted in the selection of the persons you adopted as standards. They all differed as much from the right as they differed from each other; and the truth is, their vehement desire to differ from each other was a chief cause why they departed so much from the right. But your instances were so unhappily chosen, that they proved nothing against Christianity. The two opposite descriptions of persons who deterred you from religion, and who passed muster in their respective corps, under the generic term of religious, would, I believe, be scarcely acknowledged as such by the soberly and soundly pious.'

'My own subsequent experience,' resumed Mr. Carlton, 'has confirmed the justness of your remark. When I began, through the gradual change wrought in my views and actions by the silent but powerful preaching of Mrs. Carlton's example, to have less interest in believing that Christianity was false, I then applied myself to search for reasons, to believe that it was true. But plain, abstract reasoning, though it might catch hold on beings who are all pure intellect, and though it might have given a right bias even to *my* opinions, would probably never have determined my conduct, unless I saw it clothed, as it were, with a body. I wanted examples which should influence me to act, as well as proofs which should incline me to believe; something which would teach me what to do, as well as what to think. I wanted exemplifications as well as precepts. I doubted of all merely speculative truth. I wanted, from beholding the effect, to refer back to the principle. I wanted arguments more palpable and less theoretic. Surely, said I to myself, if religion be a real principle it must be an operative one, and I would rationally infer that Christianity were true, if the tone of Christian practice were high.

'I Began to look clandestinely into Henrietta's Bible. There indeed I found that the spirit of religion was invested with just such a body as I had wished to see; that it exhibited actions as well as sentiments, characters as well as doctrines; the life pourtrayed evidently governed by the principle inculcated; the conduct and the doctrine in just correspondence. But if the Bible be true, thought I, may we not reasonably expect, that the principles which once produced the exalted practice which that Bible records will produce similar effects now?

'I put, rashly perhaps, the truth of Christianity on this issue, and sought society of a higher stamp. Fortunately, the increasing external decorum of my conduct, began to make my reception less difficult among good men than it had been. Hitherto, and that for the sake of my wife, my visits had rather been endured than encouraged; nor was I myself forward to seek the society which shunned me. Even of those superior characters, with whom I did occasionally associate, I had not come near enough to form an exact estimate.'

'Disinterestedness and consistency had become with me a sort of touch-stone, by which to try the characters I was investigating. My experiment was favourable. I had for some time examined my wife's conduct, with a mixture of admiration as to the act, and incredulity as to the motive. I had seen her foregoing her own indulgences, that she might augment those of a husband whom she had so little reason to love. Here were the two qualities I required, with a renunciation of self without parade or profession. Still this was a solitary instance. When, on a nearer survey, I beheld Dr. Barlow exhibiting, by his exemplary conduct during the week, the best commentary on his Sunday's sermon: when I saw him refuse a living of nearly twice the value of that he possessed, because the change would diminish his usefulness, I was *staggered*.

'When I saw Mr. and Mrs. Stanley spending their time and fortune as entirely in acts of beneficence, as if they had built their hope on charity alone, and yet utterly renouncing any such confidence, and trusting entirely to another foundation;—when I saw Lucilla, a girl of eighteen, refusing a young nobleman of a clear estate, and neither disagreeable in his person or manner, on the single avowed ground of his loose principles; when the noble rejection of the daughter was supported by the parents, whose principles no arguments drawn from rank or fortune could subvert or shake—I was *convinced*.

'These, and some other instances of the same nature, were exactly the test I had been seeking. Here was *disinterestedness* upon full proof. Here was *consistency* between practice and profession. By such examples, and by cordially adopting those principles which produced them, together with a daily increasing sense of my past enormities, I hope to become in time less unworthy of the wife to whom I owe my peace on earth, and my hope in heaven.'

The tears which had been collecting in Mrs. Carlton's eyes for some time, now silently stole down her cheeks. Sir John and myself were deeply affected with the frank and honest narrative to which we had been listening. It raised in us an esteem and affection for the narrator which has since been continually augmenting. I do not think the worse of his state, for the difficulties which impeded it, nor that his advancement will be less sure, because it has been gradual. His fear of delusion has been a salutary guard. The apparent slowness of his progress has arisen from his dread of self-deception, and the diligence of his search is an indication of his sincerity.

'But did you not find,' said I, 'that the piety of these more correct Christians drew upon them nearly as much censure and suspicion as the indiscretion of the enthusiasts? And that the formal class who were nearly as far removed from effective piety as from wild fanaticism, ran away with all the credit of religion?'

'With those,' replied Mr. Carlton, 'who are on the watch to discredit Christianity, no consistency can stand their determined opposition; but the fair and candid inquirer will not reject the truth, when it forces itself on the mind with a clear and convincing evidence.'

Though I had been joining in the general subject, yet my thoughts had wandered from it

to Lucilla, ever since her noble rejection of Lord Staunton had been named by Mr. Carlton as one of the causes which had strengthened his unsteady faith. And while he and Sir John were talking over their youthful connections, I resumed with Mrs. Carlton, who sat next me, the interesting topic.

'Lord Staunton,' said she, 'is a relation, and not a very distant one, of ours. He used to take more delight in Mr. Carlton's society when it was less improving, than he does now, that it is become really valuable; yet he often visits us. Miss Stanley now and then indulges me with her company for a day or two. In the visits Lord Staunton happened to meet her two or three times. He was enchanted with her person and manners, and exerted every art and faculty of pleasing, which, it must be owned, he possesses. Though we should both have rejoiced in an alliance with the excellent family at the Grove, through this sweet girl, I thought it my duty not to conceal from her the irregularity of my cousin's conduct in one particular instance, as well as the general looseness of his religious principles. The caution was the more necessary, as he had so much prudence and good breeding as to behave with general propriety when under our roof; and he allowed me to speak to him more freely than any other person. When I talked seriously, he sometimes laughed, always opposed, but was never angry.

'One day he arrived quite unexpectedly when Miss Stanley was with me. He found us in my dressing-room reading together a *Dissertation on the power of religion to change the heart.* Dreading some levity, I strove to hide the book, but he took it out of my hand, and glancing his eye on the title, he said, laughing, 'This is a foolish subject enough; a *good heart* does not want changing, and with a *bad* one none of *us three* having any thing to do.' Lucilla spoke not a syllable. All the light things he uttered, and which he meant for wit, so far from raising a smile, increased her gravity. She listened, but with some uneasiness, to a desultory conversation between us, in which I attempted to assert the power of the Almighty to rectify the mind, and alter the character. Lord Staunton treated my assertion as a wild chimera, and said, 'He was sure I had more understanding than to adopt such a methodistical notion; professing at the same time a vague admiration of virtue and goodness, which he said, bowing to Miss Stanley, were *natural* where they existed at all; that a good heart did not want mending, and a bad one could not be mended, with other similar expressions, all implying contempt of my position, and exclusive compliment to her.

'After dinner, Lucilla stole away from a conversation which was not very interesting to her, and carried her book to the summer-house, knowing that Lord Staunton liked to sit long at table. But his lordship, missing her for whom the visit was meant, soon broke up the party, and hearing which way she took, pursued her to the summer-house. After a profusion of compliments, expressive of his high admiration, he declared his passion in very strong and explicit terms, and requested her permission to make proposals to her father, to which he conceived she could have no possible objection.

'She thanked him with great politeness for his favourable opinion, but frankly told him, that though extremely sensible of the honour he intended her, thanks were all she had to offer in turn; she earnestly desired the business might go no further, and that he would spare himself the trouble of an application to her father, who always kindly allowed her to decide for herself, in a concern of so much importance.

'Disappointed, shocked, and irritated at a rejection so wholly unexpected, he insisted on knowing the cause. Was it his person? was it his fortune? was it his understanding to which she objected? She honestly assured him it was neither. His rank and fortune were above her expectations. To his natural advantages there could be no reasonable objection. He still vehemently insisted on her assigning the true cause. She was then driven to the necessity of confessing that she feared his principles were not those of a man with whom she could venture to trust her own.

'He bore this reproof with more patience than she had expected. As she had made no exception to his person and understanding, both of which he rated very highly, he could bear with the charge brought against his principles, on which he did not set so great a value. She had indeed wounded his pride, but not in the part where it was most vulnerable. 'If that be all,' said he gaily, 'the objection is at an end; your charming society will reform me, your influence will raise my principles, and your example will change my character.'

'What, my Lord,' said she, her courage increasing with her indignation, 'this from *you* From you, who declared only this morning, that the work of changing the heart was too great for the Almighty himself? You do not now scruple to declare that it is in *my* power. That work which is too hard for Omnipotence, your flattery would make me believe a weak girl can accomplish. No my lord, I will never add to the number of those rash women who have risked their eternal happiness on this vain hope. It would be too late to repent of my folly, after my presumption had incurred its just punishment.'

'So saying, she left the summer-house with a polite dignity, which, as she afterwards told me, increased his passion, while it inflamed his pride almost to madness. Finding she refused to appear, he quitted the house, but not his design. His applications have since been repeated, but though he has met with the firmest repulses, both from the parents and the daughter, he cannot be prevailed upon to relinquish his hope. It is so far a misfortune to us, as Lucilla now never comes near us, except he is known not to be in the country. Had the objection been to his person, or fortune, he says, as it would have been substantial, it might have been insuperable; but where the only ground of difference is mere matter of opinion, he is sure that time and perseverance will conquer such a chimerical objection.'

I returned to the Grove, not only cured of

every jealous feeling, but transported with such a decisive proof of the dignity and purity of Miss Stanley's mind.

CHAP. XXXII.

Miss Sparkes, a neighbouring lady. whom the reputation of being a wit and an Amazon, had kept single at the age of five and forty, though her person was not disagreeable, and her fortune was considerable, called in one morning while we were at breakfast. She is remarkable for her pretension to odd and opposite qualities. She is something of a scholar, and a huntress, a politician, and a farrier. She out-rides Mr. Flam, and out-argues Mr. Tyrrel; excels in driving four in hand, and in canvassing at an election. She is always anxious about the party, but never about the candidate, in whom she requires no other merit, but his being in the opposition, which she accepts as a pledge for all other merit. In her adoption of any talent, or her exercise of any quality, it is always sufficient recommendation to her that it is not feminine.

From the window we saw her descend from her lofty phæton, and when she came in,

> The cap, the whip, the masculine attire,

the loud voice, the intrepid look, the independent air, the whole deportment indicated a disposition rather to confer protection than to accept it.

She made an apology for her intrusion, by saying that her visit was rather to the stable than the breakfast room. One of her horses was a little lame, and she wanted to consult Mr. Stanley's groom, who it seems was her oracle in that science, in which she herself is a professed adept.

During her short visit, she laboured so sedulously, not to diminish by her conversation the character she was so desirous to establish, that her efforts defeated the end they aimed to secure. She was witty with all her mirth, and her sarcastic turn, for wit it was not, made little amends for her want of simplicity. I perceived that she was fond of the bold, the marvellous, and the incredible. She ventured to tell a story of two, so little within the verge of ordinary probability, that she risked her credit for veracity, without perhaps really violating truth. The credit acquired by such relations seldom pays the relater for the hazard run by the communication.

As we fell into conversation, I observed the peculiarities of her character. She never sees any difficulties in any question. Whatever topic is started, while the rest of the company are hesitating as to the propriety of their determination, she alone is never at a loss. Her answer always follows the proposition, without a moment's interval for examination herself, or, for allowing any other person a chance of delivering an opinion.

Mr. Stanley, who always sets an example of strict punctuality to his family, had to-day come in to perform his family devotions somewhat latter than usual. I could perceive that he had been a little moved. His countenance wanted something of its placid serenity, though it seemed to be a seriousness untinctured with anger. He confessed, while we were at breakfast, that he had been spending above an hour, in bringing one of his younger children to a sense of a fault she had committed. 'She has not,' said he, 'told an absolute falsehood, but in what she said there was a prevarication, there was pride, there was passion. Her perverseness has at length given way. Tears of resentment are changed into tears of contrition. But she is not to appear in the drawing-room to-day. She is to be deprived of the honour of carrying food to the poor in the evening. Nor is she to furnish her contingent of nosegay to Rachel's basket. This is a mode of punishment we prefer to that of curtailing any personal indulgences: the importance we should assign to the privation would be setting too much value on the enjoyment.'

'You should be careful Mr. Stanley, said Miss Sparkes, 'not to break the child's spirits. Too tight a rein will check her generous ardour, and curb her genius. I would not subdue the independence of her mind, and make a tame, dull animal, of a creature whose very faults give indications of a soaring nature.' Even Lady Belfield, to whose soft and tender heart the very sound of punishment, or even privation, carried a sort of terror, asked Mr. Stanley, 'if he did not think that he had taken up a trifling offence too seriously, and punished it too severely.'

'The thing is a trifle in itself,' replied he, 'but infant prevarication unnoticed, and unchecked, is the prolific seed of subterfuge, of expediency, of deceit, of falsehood, of hypocrisy.'

'But the dear little creature,' said Lady Belfield, 'is not addicted to equivocation.—I have always admired her correctness in her pleasant prattle.'

'It is for the very reason,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that I am so careful to check the first indication of the contrary tendency.—As the fault is a solitary one, I trust the punishment will be so too. For which reason I have marked it in a way to which her memory will easily recur. Mr. Brandon, an amiable friend of mine, but of an indolent temper, through a negligence in watching over an early propensity to deceit, suffered his only son to run on from one stage of falsehood to another, till he settled down in a most consummate hypocrite. His plausible manners enabled him to keep his more turbulent vices out of sight. Impatient when a youth of that contradiction to which he had never been accustomed when a boy, he became notoriously profligate. His dissimulation was at length too thin to conceal from his mistaken father his more palpable vices. His artifices finally involved him in a duel, and his premature death broke the heart of my poor friend.

'This sad example led me in my own family to watch the evil in the bud. Divines often say, that unbelief lies at the root of all sin. This seems strikingly true in our conniving at the faults of our children. If we really believed the denunciation of Scripture, could we for the sake of a momentary gratification, not so much

to our child as to ourselves, (which is the case in all blameable indulgence,) overlook that fault which may be the germ of unspeakable miseries! In my view of things, deceit is no slight offence. I feel myself answerable in no small degree for the eternal happiness of these beloved creatures whom Providence has especially committed to my trust.'

'But it is such a severe trial,' said Lady Belfield, 'to a fond parent to inflict voluntary pain!'

'Shall we feel for their pain and not for their danger?' replied Mr. Stanley. 'I wonder how parents, who love their children as I love mine, can put in competition a temporary indulgence, which may foster one evil temper, or fasten one bad habit, with the eternal welfare of that child's soul. A soul of such inconceivable worth, whether we consider its nature, its duration, or the price which was paid for its redemption! What parent, I say, can by his own rash negligence, or false indulgence, risk the happiness of such a soul, not for a few days or years, but for a period compared with which the whole duration of time is but a point?—A soul of such infinite faculties, which has a capacity for improving in holiness and happiness, through all the countless ages of eternity?'

Observing Sir John listen with some emotion, Mr. Stanley went on; 'what remorse, my dear friend, can equal the pangs of him who has reason to believe that his child has not only lost this eternity of glory, but incurred an eternity of misery, through the carelessness of that parent, who assigned his very fondness as a reason for his neglect?—Think of the state of such a father, when he figures to himself the thousands and ten thousands of glorified spirits that stand before the throne, and his darling excluded!—excluded perhaps by his own ill-judging fondness. Oh, my friends, disguise it as we may, and deceive ourselves as we will, want of faith is as much at the bottom of this sin as of all others. Notwithstanding an indefinite, indistinct notion which men call faith, they do actually *believe* in this eternity; they believe it in a general way, but they do not believe in it practically, personally, influentially.'

While Mr. Stanley was speaking with an energy which evinced how much his own heart was affected, Miss Sparkes, by the impatience of her looks, evidently manifested that she wished to interrupt him. Good breeding, however, kept her silent till he had done speaking: she then said, 'that though she allowed that absolute falsehood, and falsehood used for mischievous purposes was criminal, yet there was a danger on the other hand of laying too severe restrictions on freedom of speech. That there might be such a thing as tacit hypocrisy. That people might be guilty of as much deceit by suppressing their sentiments if just, as by expressing such as were not quite correct.—That a repulsive treatment was calculated to extinguish the fire of invention. She thought also that there were occasions where a harmless falsehood might not only be pardonable, but laudable. But then she allowed, that a falsehood to be allowed must be inoffensive.'

Mr. Stanley said, 'that an inoffensive falsehood was a perfect anomaly. But allowing it possible, that an individual instance of deceit might be passed over, which however he never could allow, yet one successful falsehood, on the plea of doing good, would necessarily make way for another, till the limits which divide right and wrong would be completely broken down, and every distinction between truth and falsehood be utterly confounded.—If such latitude were allowed, even to obtain some good purpose, it would gradually debauch all human intercourse. The smallest deviation would naturally induce a pernicious habit, endanger the security of society, and violate an express law of God.'

'There is no tendency,' said Sir John Belfield, 'more to be guarded against among young persons of warm hearts and lively imaginations. The feeling will think falsehood good if it is meant to *do* good, and the fanciful will think it justifiable if it is ingenious.'

Phœbe, in presenting her father with a dish of coffee, said in a half whisper, 'surely, papa, there can be no harm in speaking falsely on a subject where I am ignorant of the truth.'

'There are occasions, my dear Phœbe,' replied her father, 'in which ignorance itself is a fault. Inconsiderateness is always one. It is your duty to deliberate before you speak. It is your duty not to deceive by your negligence in getting at the truth; or by publishing false information as truth, though you have reason to suspect it may be false. You well know who it is that associates him that *loveth* a lie with him that *maketh* it.'

'But, Sir,' said Miss Sparkes, 'if by a falsehood I could preserve a life, or save my country, falsehood would then be meritorious, and I should glory in deceiving.'

'Persons, Madam,' said Mr. Stanley, 'who, in debate, have a favourite point to carry, are apt to suppose extreme cases, which *can* and *do* very rarely if ever occur. This they do in order to compel the acquiescence of an opponent to what ought never to be allowed. It is a proud and fruitless speculation. The infinite power of God can never stand in need of the aid of a weak mortal to help him out of his difficulties.—If he sees fit to preserve the life, or save the country, he is not driven to such shifts. Omnipotence can extricate himself, and accomplish his own purposes without endangering an immortal soul.'

Miss Sparkes took her leave soon after, in order, as she said, to go to the stable and take the groom's opinion. Mr. Stanley insisted that her carriage should be brought round to the door, to which we all attended her. He inquired which was the lame horse. Instead of answering, she went directly up to the animal, and after patting him with some technical jockey phrases, she fearlessly took up his hind leg, carefully examined his foot, and while she continued standing in what appeared to the ladies a perilous, and to me a disgusting situation, she run over all the terms of the veterinary art with the groom, and when Miss Stanley expressed some fear of her danger, and some dislike of her coarseness, she burst into a loud laugh, and slapping her on the shoulder, asked her if it was not better to understand the properties and diseases of so noble an animal, than to waste her time in studying confectionary with old Goody

Comfit, or in teaching the catechism to little ragged beggar-brats?

As soon as she was gone, the lively Phœbe, who, her father says, has narrowly escaped being a wit herself, cried out, 'Well, papa, I must say that I think Miss Sparkes with all her faults is rather an agreeable woman.' 'I grant that she is amusing,' returned he, 'but I do not allow her to be quite agreeable. Between these, Phœbe, there is a wide distinction. To a correct mind, no one can be agreeable who is incorrect. Propriety is so indispensable to agreeableness, that when a lady allows herself to make any, even the smallest, sacrifice of veracity, religion, modesty, candour, or the decorums of her sex, she may be shining, she may be showy, she may be amusing, but she cannot, properly speaking, be agreeable.—Miss Sparkes, I very reluctantly confess, does sometimes make these sacrifices, in a degree to alarm her own principles. She would not tell a direct falsehood for the world: she does not indeed invent, but she embellishes, enlarges, she exaggerates, she discolours. In her moral grammar there is no positive or comparative degree. Pink with her is scarlet. The noise of a pop-gun is a cannon. A shower is a tempest. A person of small fortune is a beggar. —One in easy circumstances is a Crœsus.—A girl, if not perfectly well made, is deformity personified; if tolerable, a Grecian Venus. Her favourites are Angels, her enemies Dæmons.

She would be thought very religious, and I hope that she will one day become so; yet she sometimes treats serious things with no small levity, and though she would not originally say a very bad word, yet she makes no scruple of repeating, with great glee, profane stories told by others. Besides she possesses the dangerous art of exciting an improper idea, without using an improper word. Gross indecency would shock her, but she often verges so far towards indelicacy, as to make Mrs. Stanley uneasy. Then she is too much of a genius to be tied down by any considerations of prudence. If a good thing occurs, out it comes, without regard to time or circumstance. She would tell the same story to a bishop, as to her chambermaid. If she says a right thing, which she often does, it is seldom in the right place. She makes her way in society without attaching many friends. Her bon mots are admired and repeated; yet I never met with a man of sense who, though he may join in flattering her, did not declare, as soon as she was out of the room, that he would not for the world that she should be his wife or daughter. It is irksome to her to converse with her own sex, while she little suspects that ours is not properly grateful for the preference with which she honours us.

'She is,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'charitable with the purse, but not with her tongue; she relieves her poor neighbours, and indemnifies herself by slandering her rich ones.—She has, however, many good qualities, is generous, feeling, and humane, and I would on no account speak so freely of a lady whom I receive at my house, were it not that, if I were quite silent, after Phœbe's expressed admiration, she might conclude that I saw nothing to condemn in Miss es and might be copying her faults, under the notion that being entertaining made amends for every thing.'

CHAP. XXXIII.

One morning, Sir John coming in from his ride, gaily called out to me, as I was reading, 'Oh, Charles, such a piece of news! the Miss Flams are converted. They have put on tuckers—they were at church twice on Sunday—Blair's Sermons are sent for, and *you* are the reformer.' This ludicrous address reminded Mr. Stanley, that Mr. Flam had told him we were all in disgrace; for not having called on the ladies, and it was proposed to repair this neglect.

'Now take notice,' said Sir John, 'if you do not see a new character assumed. Thinking Charles to be a fine man of the town, the modish racket, which indeed is their natural state, was played off, but it did not answer. As they probably, by this time, suspect your character to be somewhat between the Strephon and the Hermit, we shall now, in return, see something between the wood nymph and the nun; I shall not wonder if the extravagantly modish Miss Bell

Is now Pastora by a fountain's side.

Though I would not attribute the change to the cause assigned by Sir John, yet I confess we found, when we made our visit, no small revolution in Miss Bell Flam. The part of the Arcadian Nymph, the reading lady, the lover of retirement, the sentimental admirer of domestic life, the censurer of thoughtless dissipation, was each acted in succession, but so skilfully touched, that the shades of each melted in the other, without any of those violent transitions which a less experienced actress would have exhibited. Sir John slily, yet with affected gravity, assisting her to sustain this newly adopted character, which, however, he was sure would last no longer than this visit.

When we returned home we met the Miss Stanleys in the garden, and joined them. 'Don't you admire,' said Sir John, 'the versatility of Miss Bell's genius? You, Charles, are not the first man on whom an assumed fondness for rural delights has been practised. A friend of mine was drawn in to marry, rather suddenly, a thorough-paced town-bred lady, by her repeated declarations of her passionate fondness for the country, and the rapture she expressed when rural scenery was the subject. All she knew of the country was, that she had now and then been on a party of pleasure at Richmond, in the fine summer months; a great dinner at the Star and Garter, gay company, a bright day, lovely scenery, a dance on the green, a partner to her taste, French horns on the water, altogether constituted a feeling of pleasure, from which she had really persuaded herself that she was fond of the country. But when all these concomitants were withdrawn, when she had lost the gay partner, the dance, the horns, the flattery and the frolic, and nothing was left but her books, her own dull mansion, her domestic employments, and the sober society of her husband,

the pastoral vision vanished. She discovered, or rather *he* discovered, but too late, that the country had not only no charms for her, but that it was a scene of constant *ennui* and vapid dullness. She languished for the pleasures she had quitted, and for the comforts she had lost. Opposite inclinations led to opposite pursuits; difference of taste, however, needed not to have led to total disunion, had there been on the part of the lady such a degree of attachment as might have induced a spirit of accommodation, or such a fund of principle as might have taught her the necessity of making those sacrifices which affection, had it existed, would have rendered pleasant, or duty would have made light, had she been early taught self-government.'

Miss Stanley, smiling said, 'she hoped Sir John had a little overcharged the picture.' He defended himself by declaring he drew from life, and that from his long observation he could present us with a whole gallery of such portraits. He left me to continue my walk with the two Miss Stanleys.

The more I conversed with Lucilla, the more I saw that good breeding in her was only the outward expression of humility, and not an art employed for the purpose of enabling her to do without it. We continued to converse on the subject of Miss Flam's fondness for the gay world. This introduced a natural expression of my admiration of Miss Stanley's choice of pleasures and pursuits, so different from those of most other women of her age.

With the most graceful modesty she said, 'nothing humbles me more than compliments; for when I compare what I hear with what I feel, I find the picture of myself, drawn by a flattering friend, so utterly unlike the original in my own heart, that I am more sunk by my own consciousness of the want of resemblance, than elated that another had not discovered it. It makes me feel like an impostor. If I contradict this favourable opinion, I am afraid of being accused of affectation; and if I silently swallow it, I am contributing to the deceit of passing for what I am not.' This ingenuous mode of disclaiming flattery only raised her in my esteem, and the more, as I told her such humble renunciation of praise could only proceed from that inward principle of genuine piety, and devout feeling, which made so amiable a part of her character.

'How little,' said she, 'is the human heart known except to him who made it. While a fellow creature may admire our apparent devotion, He who appears to be its object, witnesses the wandering of the heart, which seems to be lifted up to him. He sees it roving to the ends of the earth, busied about any thing rather than himself; running after trifles which not only dishonour a Christian, but would disgrace a child. As to my very virtues, if I dare apply such a word to myself, they sometimes lose their character by not keeping their proper place. They become sins by infringing on higher duties. If I mean to perform an act of devotion, some crude plan of charity forces itself on my mind, and what with trying to drive out one, and to establish the other, I rise dissatisfied and unimproved, and resting my sole hope not on the duty which I have been performing, but on the mercy which I have been offending.'

I assured her, with all the simplicity of truth, and all the sincerity of affection, that this confession only served to raise my opinion of the piety she disclaimed, that such deep consciousness of imperfection, so quick a discernment of the slightest deviation, and such constant vigilance to prevent it, were the truest indications of an humble spirit; and that those who thus carefully guarded themselves against small errors, were in little danger of being betrayed in to great ones.

She replied, smiling, that 'she should not be so angry with vanity, if it would be contented to keep its proper place among the vices; but her quarrel with it was, that it would mix itself with our virtues, and rob us of their reward.'

'Vanity, indeed,' replied I, 'differs from the other vices in this: *they* commonly are only opposite to the one contrary virtue, while this vice is a kind of ubiquity, is on the watch to intrude every where, and weakens all the virtues which it cannot destroy. I believe vanity was the harpy of the ancient poets, which tell us tainted whatever it touched.'

'Self-deception is so easy,' replied Miss Stanley, 'that I am even afraid of highly extolling any good quality, lest I should sit down satisfied with having borne my testimony in its favour, and so rest contented with the praise instead of the practice. Commending a right thing is a cheap substitute for doing it, with which we are too apt to satisfy ourselves.'

'There is no mark,' I replied, 'which more clearly distinguishes that humility which has the love of God for its principle, from its counterfeit, a false and superficial politeness, than that, while this flatters, in order to extort in return more praise than is due, humility like the divine principle from which it springs, seeketh not even its own.'

In answer to some further remark of mine, with an air of infinite modesty, she said, 'I have been betrayed, Sir, into saying too much. It will, I trust however, have the good effect of preventing you from thinking better of me than I deserve. In general, I hold it indiscreet to speak of the state of one's mind. I have been taught this piece of prudence by my own indiscretion. I once lamented to a lady the fault of which we have been speaking, and observed how difficult it was to keep the heart right. She so little understood the nature of this inward corruption, that she told in confidence to two or three friends, that they were all much mistaken in Miss Stanley, for though her character stood so fair with the world, she had secretly confessed to her that she was a great sinner.'

I could not forbear repeating, though she had chid me for it before, how much I had been struck with several instances of her indifference to the world, and her superiority to its pleasures. 'Do you know,' continued she, smiling, 'that you are more my enemy than the lady of whom I have been speaking? She only defamed my principles, but you are corrupting them. The world, I believe, is not so much a place as a nature. It is possible to be religious in a court and worldly in a monastery. I find that the thought-

may be engaged too anxiously about so petty a concern as a little family arrangement; that the mind may be drawn off from better pursuits, and engrossed by things too trivial to name, as much as by objects more apparently wrong. The country is certainly favourable to religion, but it would be hard on the millions who are doomed to live in towns if it were exclusively favourable. Nor must we lay more stress on the accidental circumstance than it deserves. Nay I almost doubt if it is not too pleasant to be quite safe. An enjoyment which assumes a sober shape may deceive us, by making us believe we are practising a duty when we are only gratifying a taste.'

'But do you not think,' said I, 'that there may be merit in the taste itself? May not a succession of acts forming a habit, and that habit a good one, induce so sound a way of thinking, that it may become difficult to distinguish the duty from the taste, and to separate the principle from the choice? This I really believe to be the case in minds finely wrought and vigilantly watched.

I observed that however delightful the country might be a great part of the year, yet there were a few winter months when I feared it might be dull, though not in the degree Sir John Richmond's lady had found it.

With a smile of compassion at my want of taste, she said 'she perceived I was no gardener. To me,' added she, 'the winter has charms of its own, If I were not afraid of the light habit of introducing Providence on an occasion not sufficiently important, I would say that he seems to reward those who love the country well enough to live in it the whole year, by making the greater part of the winter the busy season for gardening operations. If I happen to be in town a few days only, every sun that shines, every shower that falls, every breeze that blows, seems wasted, because I do not see their effect upon my plants.' 'But surely,' said I, 'the winter at least suspends your enjoyment. There is little pleasure in contemplating vegetation in its torpid state, in surveying

The naked shoots, barren as lances,

as Cowper describes the winter shrubbery.'

'The pleasure is in the preparation,' replied she. 'When all appears dead and torpid to you idle spectators, all is secretly at work; nature is busy in preparing her treasures under ground, and art has a hand in the process. When the blossoms of summer are delighting you mere amateurs, then it is that we professional people,' added she, laughing, 'are really idle. The silent operations of the winter now produce themselves —the canvass of nature is covered—the great Artist has laid on his colours—then we petty agents lay down our implements, and enjoy our leisure in contemplating *his* work.'

I had never known her so communicative; but my pleased attention, instead of drawing her on, led her to check herself. Phœbe, who had been busily employed in trimming a flaunting yellow Azalia, now turned to me, and said —'Why, it is only the Christmas month that our labours are suspended, and then we have so much pleasure that we want no business; such in-door festivities and diversions, that the dull month is with us the gayest in the year.' So saying she called Lucilla to assist her in tying up the branch of an orange-tree, which the wind had broken.

I was going to offer my services when Mrs. Stanley joined us, before I could obtain an answer to my question about these Christmas diversions. A stranger, who had seen me pursuing Mrs. Stanley in her walks, might have supposed not the daughter, but the mother was the object of my attachment. But with Mrs. Stanley I could always talk of Lucilla, with Lucilla I durst not often talk of herself.

The fond mother and I stood looking with delight on the fair gardeners. When I had admired their alacrity in these innocent pursuits, their fondness for retirement, and their cheerful delight in its pleasures; Mrs. Stanley replied, 'yes, Lucilla is half a nun. She likes the rule, but not the vow. Poor thing! her conscience is so tender that she oftener requires encouragement than restraint. While she was making this plantation, she felt herself so absorbed by it, that she came to me one day, and said that her gardening work so fascinated her, that she found whole hours passed unperceived, and she began to be uneasy by observing that all cares and all duties were suspended while she was disposing beds of Carnations, or knots of Anemonies. Even when she tore herself away, and returned to her employments, her flowers still pursued her, and the improvement of her mind gave way to the cultivation of her Geraniums.'

'"I am afraid," said the poor girl, "that I must really give it up." I would not hear of this. I would not suffer her to deny herself so pure a pleasure. She then suggested the expedient of limiting her time, and hanging up her watch in the conservatory to keep her within her prescribed bounds. She is so observant of this restriction, that when her allotted time is expired, she forces herself to leave off even in the most interesting operation. By this limitation a treble end is answered. Her time is saved, self-denial is exercised, and the interest which would languish, by protracting the work is kept in fresh vigour.' I told Mrs. Stanley that I had observed her watch hanging in a citron tree the day I came, but little thought it had a moral meaning. She said, 'it had never been left there since I had been in the house for fear of causing interrogatories.' Here Mrs. Stanley left me to my meditations.

It was wisely ordered that all mortal enjoyment should have some alloy. I never tasted a pleasure since I had been at the Grove, I never witnessed a grace, I never heard related an excellence of Lucilla without a sigh that my beloved parents did not share my happiness. 'How would they,' said I, delight in her delicacy, rejoice in her piety, love her benevolence, admire her humility, her usefulness! O how do children feel, who wound the peace of *living* parents by an unworthy choice, when not a little of my comfort springs from the certainty that the departed would rejoice in mine. Even from their blessed abode, my grateful heart seems to

hear them say, 'This is the creature with whom we shall rejoice with thee through all eternity!'

Yet such was my inconsistency, that charmed as I was, that so young and lovely a woman could be so cheaply pleased, and delighted with that simplicity of taste which made her resemble my favourite heroine of Milton in her amusements as well as in her domestic pursuits; still I longed to know what those Christmas diversions, so slightly hinted at, could be; diversions which could reconcile these girls to their absence not only from their green-house, but from London. I could hardly fear indeed to find at Stanley Grove what the newspapers pertly call *Private Theatricals*. Still I suspected it might be some gay dissipation, not quite suited to their general character, nor congenial to their amusements. My mother's favourite rule of *consistency* strongly forced itself on my mind, though I tried to repel the suggestion as unjust and ungenerous.

Of what meannesses will not love be guilty! It drove me to have recourse to my friend Mrs. Comfit to dissipate my doubts.—From her I learned that that cold and comfortless season was mitigated at Stanley Grove by several feasts for the poor of different classes and ages. 'Then, Sir,' continued she, 'if you could see the blazing fires, and the abundant provisions! the roasting, and the boiling, and the baking. The house is all alive! On those days the drawers and shelves of Miss Lucilla's store-room are completely emptied. 'Tis the most delightful bustle, Sir, to see our young ladies tying on the good women's warm cloaks, fitting their caps and aprons, and sending home blankets to the infirm who cannot come themselves.—The very little ones kneeling down on the ground to try on the poor girl's shoes; even little Miss Celia; and she is so tender to fit them exactly, and not hurt them! Last feast-day, not finding a pair small enough for a poor little girl, she privately slipt off her own and put on the child. It was some time before it was discovered that she herself was without shoes. We are all alive, Sir. Parlour, and hall, and kitchen, all is in motion! Books, and business, and walks, and gardening, all is forgotten for these few happy days.'

How I hated myself for my suspicion!—And how I loved the charming creatures who could find in these humble but exhilirating duties, an equivalent for the pleasures of the metropolis! 'Surely,' said I to myself, 'my mother would call *this* consistency, when the amusements of a religious family smack of the same flavour with its business and its duties.' My heart was more than easy; it was dilated, while I congratulated myself in the thought that there *were* young ladies to be found who could spend a winter not only unrepiningly, but cheerfully and delightedly in the country.

I am aware that were I to repeat my conversations with Lucilla, I should subject myself to ridicule, by recording such cold and spiritless discourse on my own part. But I had not yet declared my attachment. I made it a point of duty not to violate my engagement with Mr. Stanley. I was not addressing declarations, but studying the character of her on whom the happiness of my life was to depend. I had resolved not to show my attachment by any overt act. I confined the expression of my affection to that *series of small, quiet attentions*, which an accurate judge of the human heart has pronounced to be the surest avenue to a delicate mind. I had, in the mean time, the inexpressible felicity to observe a constant union of feeling, as well as a general consonancy of opinion between us. Every sentiment seemed a reciprocation of sympathy, and every look, of intelligence. This unstudied correspondence enchanted me the more, as I had always considered that a conformity of tastes was nearly as necessary to conjugal happiness, as a conformity of principles.

CHAP. XXXIV.

One morning I took a ride alone to breakfast at Lady Aston's, Mr. Stanley having expressed a particular desire that I should cultivate the acquaintance of her son. 'Sir George is not quite twenty,' said he, 'and your being a few years older, will make him consider your friendship as an honour to him: I am sure it will be an advantage.'

In her own little family circle, I had the pleasure of seeing Lady Aston appear to more advantage than I had yet done. Her understanding is good, and her affections are strong. She had received a too favourable prepossession of my character from Mr. Stanley, and treated me with as much openness as if I had been his son.

The gentle girls, animated by the spirit of their brother, seemed to derive both happiness and importance from his presence; while the amiable young Baronet himself won my affection by his engaging manners, and my esteem by his good sense, and his considerable acquirements in every thing which becomes a gentleman.

This visit exemplified a remark I had sometimes made, that shy characters, who from natural timidity are reserved in general society, open themselves with peculiar warmth and frankness to a few select friends, or to an individual of whom they think kindly. A distant manner is not always, as is suspected, the result of a cold heart, or a dull head; nor is gaiety necessarily connected with feeling. High animal spirits, though they often evaporate in mere talk, yet by their warmth and quickness of motion, obtain the credit of strong sensibility; a sensibility however, of which the heart is not always the fountain. While in the timid, that silence, which is construed into pride, indifference, or want of capacity, is often the effect of keen feelings. Friendship is the genial climate in which such hearts disclose themselves; they flourish in the shade, and kindness alone makes them expand. A keen discerner will often detect, in such characters, qualities which are not always connected with

> The rattling tongue
> Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

When people who have seen little of each other are thrown together, nothing brings on

free communication so quickly or so pleasantly, as their being both intimate with a third person, for whom all parties entertain one common sentiment. Mr. Stanley seemed always a point of union between his neighbours and me.

After various topics had been discussed, Lady Aston remarked, that she could now trace the goodness of Providence in having so ordered events, as to make those things which she had so much dreaded at the time, work out advantages which could not have been otherwise obtained for her.

'I had a singular aversion,' added she, 'to the thoughts of removing to this place, and quitting Sir George's estate in Warwickshire, where I had spent the happiest years of my life. When I had the misfortune to lose him,' (here a tear quietly strayed down her cheek,) 'I resolved never to remove from the place where he died. I had fully persuaded myself that it was a duty to do all I could to cherish grief. I obliged myself, as a law, to spend whole hours every day in walking round the place where he was buried.—These melancholy visits, the intervals of which were filled with tears, prayers, and reading a few good but not well chosen books, made up the whole round of my sad existence. I had nearly forgotten that I had any duties to perform, that I had any mercies left. Almost all the effect which the sight of my children produced in me was, by their resemblance to their father, to put me in mind of what I had lost.

I was not sufficiently aware how much more truly I should have honoured his memory, by training his lively representatives, in such a manner, as he, had he been living, would have approved. 'My dear George,' said she, smiling at her son, through her tears, 'was glad to get away to school, and my poor girls, when they lost the company of their brother, lost all the little cheerfulness which my recluse habits had left them. We sunk into total inaction, and our lives became as comfortless as they were unprofitable.'

'My dear Madam,' said Sir George, in the most affectionate tone and manner, 'I can only forgive myself from the consideration of my being then too young and thoughtless to know the value of the mother, whose sorrows ought to have endeared my home to me, instead of driving me from it.'

'They are *my* faults, my dear George, and not yours that I am relating. Few mothers would have acted like me; few sons differently from you. Your affectionate heart deserved a warmer return than my broken spirits were capable of making you. But I was telling you, Sir,' said she, again addressing herself to me, 'that the event of my coming to this place, not only became the source of my present peace, and of the comfort of my children, but that its result enables me to look forward with a cheerful hope to that state where there is neither sin, sorrow, nor separation. The thoughts of death, which used to render me useless, now make me only serious. The reflection that 'the night cometh,' which used to extinguish my activity, now kindles it.

'Forgive me, Sir,' added she, wiping her eyes, 'these are not such tears as I then shed. These are tears of gratitude, I had almost said of joy In the family at the Grove, Providence had been providing for me friends, for whom, I doubt not, I shall bless him in eternity.

'I had long been convinced of the importance of religion. I had always felt the insufficiency of the world to bestow happiness; but I had never before beheld religion in such a form. I had never been furnished with a proper substitute for the worldly pleasures which I yet despised, I did right in giving up diversions, but I did wrong in giving up employment, and in neglecting duties. I knew something of religion as a principle of fear, but I had no conception of it as a motive to the love of God, and as the spring of active duty; nor did I consider it as a source of inward peace. Books had not been of any great service to me, for I had no one to guide me in the choice, or to assist me in the perusal. I went to my daily task of devotion with a heavy heart, and returned from it with no other sense of comfort but that I had not omitted it.

'My former friends and acquaintances had been decent and regular; but they had adopted religion as a form, and not as a principle. It was compliance and not conviction. It was conformity to custom, and not the persuasion of the heart. Judge then how I must have been affected, in a state when sorrow and disappointment had made my mind peculiarly impressible, with the conversation and example of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley! I saw in them that religion was not a formal profession, but a powerful principle. It ran through their whole life and character. All the Christian graces were brought into action in a way, with a uniformity and a beauty, which nothing but Christian motives could have effected.

'The change which took place in my own mind, however, was progressive. The strict consonance which I observed between their sentiments and actions, and those of Dr. Barlow and Mr. Jackson strengthened and confirmed mine. This similarity in all points, was a fresh confirmation that they were all right. The light of religion gradually grew stronger, and the way more smooth. It was literally a 'lamp to my feet,' for I walked more safely as I saw more clearly. My difficulties insensibly lessened, and my doubts disappeared. I still indeed continue hourly to feel much cause to be humbled, but none to be unhappy.'

When Lady Aston had done speaking, Sir George said, 'I owe a thousand obligations to my mother, but not one so great as her introduction of me to Mr. Stanley. He has given a bent and bias to my sentiments, habits and pursuits, to which I trust every day will add fresh strength. I look up to him as my model: happy if I may, in any degree, be able to form myself by it! Till I had the happiness of knowing you, Sir, I preferred the company of Dr. Barlow and Mr. Stanley, to that of any *young* man with whom I am acquainted.'

After some further conversation, in which Sir George, with great credit to himself, bore a considerable part; Miss Aston took courage to ask me if I would accompany them all into the garden, as she wished me to carry home intelligence to Miss Stanley, of the flourishing state

of some American plants, which had been raised under her direction. To speak the truth, I had for some time been trying to bring Lucilla on the tapis, but had not found a plausible pretence, I now inquired if Miss Stanley directed their gardening pursuits. 'She directs *all* our pursuits,' said the two bashful, blushing girls, who now, for the first time in their lives, spoke both at once; the subject kindling an energy in their affectionate hearts, which even their timidity could not rein in.

'I thought Clara,' said Sir George, 'that Miss *Phœbe* Stanley too had assisted in laying out the flower garden. Surely she is not behind her sister in any thing that is kind, or any thing that is elegant.' His complexion heightened as he spoke, and he expressed himself with an emphasis, which I had not before observed in his manner of speaking. I stole a glance at Lady Aston, whose meek eye glistened with pleasure, at the earnestness with which her son spoke of the lovely Phœbe. My rapid imagination instantly shot forward to an event, which some years hence will probably unite two families so worthy of each other. Lady Aston, who already honours me with her confidence, afterwards confirmed my suspicions on a subject, about which nothing but the extreme youth of both parties made her backward to express the secret hope she fondly entertained.

In our walk round the gardens, the Miss Astons continued to vie with each other, who should be warmest in the praise of our young friends at the Grove. To Miss Stanley they gratefully declared, they owed any little taste, knowledge, or love of goodness which they themselves might possess.

It was delightful to observe these quiet girls warmed and excited by a subject so interesting. I was charmed to see them so far from feeling any shadow of envy at the avowed superiority of their young friends, and so unanimously eloquent in the praise of merit so eclipsing.

After having admired the plants of which I promised to make a favourable report, I was charged with a large and beautiful bouquet for the young ladies at the Grove. They then drew me to the prettiest spot in the grounds. While I was admiring it, Miss Clara, with a blush, and some hesitation, begged leave to ask my advice about a little rustic building, which she and her sisters were just going to raise in honour of the Miss Stanleys. It was to be dedicated to them, and called the Temple of Friendship. 'My brother,' said she, 'is kindly assisting us. The materials are all prepared, and we have now only to fix them up.'

She then put into my hands a little plan. I highly approved it; venturing, however, to suggest some trifling alterations, which I told them I did in order to implicate myself a little in the pleasant project. How proud was I when Clara added, 'that Miss Stanley had expressed a high opinion of my general taste!'—They all begged me to look in on them in my rides, and assist them with my farther counsel; adding that, above all things, I must keep it a secret at the Grove.

Lady Aston said, 'that she expected our whole party to dine at the Hall, some day next week. Her daughters entreated that it might be postponed till the latter end, by which time they doubted not their little edifice would be completed. Sir George then told me, that his sisters had requested him to furnish an inscription, or to endeavour to procure one from me. He added his wishes to theirs that I would comply. They all joined so earnestly in the entreaty that I could not withstand them, 'albeit unused to the *rhyming* mood.'

After some deliberation, Friday in the next week was fixed upon for the party at the Grove to dine at Aston-Hall, and I was to carry the invitation. I took a respectful leave of the excellent Lady of the mansion, and an affectionate one of the young people; with whom the familiar intercourse of this quiet morning had contributed to advance my friendly acquaintance, more than could have been done by many ceremonious meetings.

When I returned to the Grove, which was but just in time to dress for dinner, I spoke with sincere satisfaction of the manner in which I had passed the morning. It was beautiful to observe the honest delight, the ingenuous kindness, with which Lucilla heard me commend the Miss Astons. No little disparaging hint on the one hand, gently to let down her friends, nor on the other, no such exaggerated praise as I have sometimes seen employed as a screen for envy, or as a trap to make the hearer lower what the speaker had too highly raised.

I dropped in at Aston-Hall two or three times in the course of the week, as well to notice the progress of the work, as to carry my inscription, in which as Lucilla was both my subject and my muse, I succeeded rather better than I expected.

On the Friday, according to appointment, our whole party went to dine in the Hall. In our way, Mr. Stanley expressed the pleasure it gave him, that Lady Aston was now so convinced of the duty of making home agreeable to her son, as delightedly to receive such of her friends as were warmly disposed to become his.

Sir George, who is extremely well-bred, did the honours admirably for so young a man, to the great relief of his excellent mother, whom long retirement had rendered habitually timid in a party, of which some were almost strangers.

The Miss Astons had some difficulty to restrain their young guests from running directly to look at the progress of the American plants; but as they grew near the mysterious spot, they were not allowed to approach it before the allotted time.

After dinner, when the whole party were walking in the garden, Lady Aston, was desired by her daughters to conduct her company to a winding grass walk, near the little building, but from whence it was not visible. While they were all waiting at the appointed place, the two elder Miss Astons gravely took a hand of Lucilla, Sir George and I each presented a hand to Phœbe, and in profound silence, and great ceremony, we led them up the turf steps into this simple, but really pretty temple. The initials of Lucilla and Phœbe were carved in

cyphers over a little rustic window, under which was written,

Sacred to Friendship.

In two niches prepared for the purpose, we severally seated the two astonished nymphs, who seemed absolutely enchanted. Above was the inscription in large Roman letters.

The Astons looked so much alive, that they might have been mistaken for Stanleys, who in their turn, were so affected with this tender mark of friendship, that they looked as tearful as though they had been Astons. After reading the inscription, 'my dear Clara,' said Lucilla to Miss Aston, 'where *could* you get these beautiful verses? Though the praise they convey is too flattering to be just, it is too delicate not to please. The lines are at once tender and elegant.' 'We got them,' said Miss Aston, with a sweet vivacity, 'where we get every thing that is good, from Stanley Grove,' bowing modestly to me.

How was I elated; and how did Lucilla blush! but though she now tried to qualify her flattery, she could not recal it. And I would not allow myself to be robbed of the pure delight it had given me. All the company seemed to enjoy her confusion and my pleasure.

I forgot to mention, that as we crossed the park, we had seen enter the house, through a back avenue, a procession of little girls neatly dressed in a uniform. In a whisper, I asked Lady Aston what it meant, 'you are to know,' replied her ladyship, 'that my daughters adopt all Miss Stanley's plans, and among the rest, that of associating with all their own indulgences some little act of charity, that while they are receiving pleasure, they may also be conferring it. The opening of the Temple of Friendship, is likely to afford too much gratification to be passed over without some such association. So my girls give to day a little feast, with prizes of merit, to their village school, and to a few other deserving young persons.'

When we had taken our seats in the temple, Phœbe suddenly cried out, clasping her hands in an ecstacy, 'Only look Lucilla! There is no end to the enchantment. It is all fairy land.' On casting our eyes as she directed, we were agreeably surprised with observing a large kind of temporary shed or booth at some distance from us. It was picturesquely fixed near an old spreading oak, and was ingeniously composed of branches of trees, fresh and green. Under the oak stood ranged the village maids. We walked to the spot. The inside of the booth was hung round with caps, aprons, bonnets, handkerchiefs, and other coarse, but neat articles of female dress. On a rustic table was laid a number of Bibles, and specimens of several kinds of coarse works, and little manufactures. The various performances were examined by the company; some presents were given to all. But additional prizes were awarded by the young Patronesses, to the best specimens of different work; to the best spinners, the best knitters, the best manufacturers of split straw, and the best performers in plain work, I think they called it.

Three grown up young women, neatly dressed, and of modest manner, stood behind. It appeared that one of them had taken such good care of her young sisters and brothers, since their mother's death, and had so prudently managed their father's house, that it had saved him from an imprudent second choice. Another had postponed for many months a marriage, in which her heart was engaged, because she had a paralytic grandmother whom she attended day and night, and whom nothing, not even love itself, could tempt her to desert. Death had now released the aged sufferer, the wedding was to take place next Sunday. The third had for above a year worked two hours every day, over and above her set time, and applied the gains to clothe the orphan child of a deceased friend. She also was to accompany her lover to the altar on Sunday, but had made it a condition of her marrying him, that she should be allowed to continue her supernumerary hours work, for the benefit of the poor orphan. All three had been exemplary in their attendance at church, as well as in their general conduct. The fair Patronesses presented each with a handsome Bible, and with a complete, plain, but very neat suit of apparel.

While these gifts were distributing, I whispered Sir John that one such ticket as we were desired to take for Squallini's benefit, would furnish the cottages of these poor girls. 'And it *shall*,' replied he with emphasis. 'How little a way will that sum go in superfluities, which will make two honest couple happy! How costly is vanity, how cheap is charity!'

'Can these happy, useful young creatures be my little, inactive, insipid Astons, Charles?' whispered Mr. Stanley, as we walked away to leave the girls to sit down to their plentiful supper, which was spread on a long table under the oak, without the green booth. This group of figures made an interesting addition to the scenery, when we got back to the Temple, and often attracted our attention while we were engaged in conversation.

CHAP. XXXV

The company were not soon weary of admiring the rustic building, which seemed raised as if by the stroke of a magician's wand, so rapidly had it sprung up. They were delighted to find that their pleasure was to be prolonged by drinking tea in the temple.

While we were at tea Mr. Stanley, addressing himself to me, said, 'I have always forgotten to ask you, Charles, if your high expectations of pleasure from the society in London had been quite answered?'

'I was entertained, and I was disappointed,' replied I. 'I always found the pleasure of the moment not heightened but effaced by the succeeding moment. The ever restless, rolling tide of new intelligence at once gratified and excited the passion of novelty, which I found to be *le grand poisson qui mange les petits*. This successive abundance of fresh supply gives an ephemeral importance to every thing, and a lasting importance to nothing. We skimmed every topic, but dived into none. Much desultory talk, but little discussion. The comba-

tants skirmished like men whose arms were kept bright by constant use; who were accustomed to a flying fight, but who avoided the fatigue of coming to close quarters. What was old, however momentous, was rejected as dull, what was new, however insignificant, was thought interesting. Events of the past week were placed with those beyond the flood; and the very existence of occurrences which continue to be matter of deep interest with us in the country, seemed there totally forgotten.

'I found, too, that the inhabitants of the metropolis had a standard of merit of their own; that knowledge of the town was concluded to be knowledge of the world; that local habits, reigning phrases, temporary fashions, and an acquaintance with the surface of manners, was supposed to be knowledge of mankind. Of course, he who was ignorant of the topics of the hour, and the anecdotes of a few modish leaders, was ignorant of human nature.'

Sir John observed, that I was rather too young to be a *praiser of past times*, yet he allowed that the standard of conversation was not so high as it had been in the time of my father, by whose reports my youthful ardour had been inflamed. He did not indeed suppose that men were less intellectual now, but they certainly were less colloquially intellectual. 'For this,' added he, 'various reasons may be assigned. In London man is every day becoming less of a social, and more of a gregarious animal. Crowds are as little favourable to conversation as to reflection. He finds, therefore, that he may figure in the mass with less expense of mind: and as to women they figure at no expense at all. They find that by mixing with myriads, they may carry on the daily intercourse of life, without being obliged to bring a single idea to enrich the common stock.'

'I do not wonder,' said I, 'that the dull and uninformed love to shelter their insignificance in a crowd. In mingling with the multitude, their deficiencies elude detection. The vapid and the ignorant are like a bad play; they owe the little figure they make to the dress, the scenery, the music, and the company. The noise and the glare take off all attention from the defects of the work. The spectator is amused, and he does not inquire whether it is with the piece or the accompaniments. The end is attained, and he is little solicitous about the means. But an intellectual woman, like a well written drama, will please at home without all these aids and adjuncts, nay the beauties of the superior piece, and of the superior woman, will rise on a more intimate survey. But you were going, Sir John, to assign other causes for the decline and fall of conversation.'

'One very affecting reason,' replied he, 'is that the alarming state of public affairs fills all men's minds with one momentous object. As every Englishman is a patriot, every patriot is a politician. It is natural that that subject should fill every mouth, which occupies every heart, and that little room should be left for extraneous matter.'

'I should accept this,' said I, 'as a satisfactory vindication, had I heard that the same absorbing cause had thinned the public places, or diminished the attraction of the private resorts of dissipation.'

'There is a third reason,' said Sir John, 'polite literature has in a good degree given way to experimental philosophy. The admirers of science assert, that the last was an age of words, and that this is the age of things. A more substantial kind of knowledge has partly superseded these elegant studies, which have caught such hold on your affections.'

'I heartily wish,' replied I, 'that the new pursuits may be found to make men wiser; they certainly have not made them more agreeable.'

'It is affirmed,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that the prevailing philosophical studies have a religious use, and that they naturally tend to elevate the heart to the great Author of the Universe.'

'I have but one objection to that assertion,' replied Sir John, 'namely, that it is not true. This should seem indeed, to be their direct tendency; yet experiment, which you know is the soul of philosophy, has proved the contrary.'

He then adduced some instances in our country, which I forbear to name, that clearly evinced, that this was not their necessary consequence; adding, however, a few great names on the more honourable side. He next adverted to the Baillies, the Condorsets, the D'Alamberts, and the Lalandes, as melancholy proofs of the inefficacy of mere science to make Christians.

'Far be it from me,' said Sir John, 'to undervalue philosophical pursuits. The modern discoveries are extremely important, especially in their application to the purposes of common life; but where these are pursued exclusively, I cannot help preferring the study of the great classic authors, those exquisite masters of life and manners, with whose spirited conversation, twenty or thirty years ago, was so richly impregnated.'

'I confess,' said I, 'that there may be more matter, but there is certainly less mind in the reigning pursuits. The reputation of skill, it is true, may be obtained at a much less expense of time and intellect. The comparative cheapness of the acquisition holds out the powerful temptation of more credit with less labour. A sufficient knowledge of botany or chemistry to make a figure in company is easily obtained, while a thorough acquaintance with the historians, poets, and orators of antiquity requires much time, and close application.' 'But,' exclaimed Sir John, 'can the fashionable studies pretend to give the same expansion to the mind, the same elevation to the sentiments, the same energy to the feelings, the same stretch and compass to the understanding, the same correctness to the taste, the same grace and spirit to the whole moral and intellectual man?'

'For my own part,' replied I, 'so far from saying with Hamlet, "Man delights not me, nor woman neither," I confess, I have little delight in any thing else. The study of the human mind, is, of merely human studies, my chief pleasure. As a man, man is the creature with whom I have to do, and the varieties in his character interest me more than all the possible varieties of mosses, and shells, and fossils. To view this compound creature in the complexity of his actions, as portrayed by the hand of those

immortal masters, Tacitus and Plutarch; to view him in the struggle of his passions, as displayed by Euripides and Shakspeare: to contemplate him in the blaze of his eloquence, by the two rival orators of Greece and Rome, is more congenial to my feelings, than the ablest disquisition of which matter was ever the subject.' Sir John, who is a passionate, and rather too exclusive an admirer of classic lore, warmly declared himself of my opinion.

'I went to town,' replied I, 'with a mind eager for intellectual pleasure. My memory was not quite unfurnished with passages which I thought likely to be adverted to, and which might serve to embellish conversation, without incurring the charge of pedantry. But though, most of the men I conversed with were my equals in education, and my superiors in talent, there seemed little disposition to promote such topics as might bring our understanding into play. Whether it is that business, active life, and public debate, absorb the mind, and make men consider society rather as a scene to rest than to exercise it, I know not; certain it is that they brought less into the treasury of conversation than I expected; not because they were poor, but proud, or idle, and reserved their talents and acquisitions for higher occasions. The most opulent possessors, I often found the most penurious contributors.'

'*Rien de trop*,' said Mr. Stanley, 'was the favourite maxim of an author,* whom I am not apt to quote for rules of moral conduct. Yet its adoption would be a salutary check against excess in all our pursuits. If polite learning is undervalued by the mere man of letters: If it dignifies retirement, and exalts society, it is not the great business of life; it is not the prime fountain of moral excellence.'

'Well, so much for *man*,' said Sir John, 'but Charles, you have not told us what you had to say of *women*, in your observations on society.'

'As to women,' replied I, 'I declare that I found more propensity to promote subjects of taste and elegant speculation among some of the superior class of females, than in many of my own sex. The more prudent, however, are restrained through fear of the illiberal sarcasms of men, who not contented to suppress their own faculties, ridicule all intellectual exertion in women, though evidently arising from a modest desire of improvement, and not the vanity of hopeless rivalry.'

'Charles is always the Paladin of the reading ladies,' said Sir John. 'I do not deny it,' replied I, 'if they bear their faculties meekly. But I confess that what is sneeringly called a learned lady is to me far preferable to a scientific one, such as I encountered one evening, who talked of the fulcrum, and the lever, and the statera, which she took care to tell us was the Roman steel-yard, with all the sang-froid of philosophical conceit.'

'Scientific men,' said Sir John, 'are in general admirable for their simplicity, but in a technical woman I have seldom found a grain of taste or elegance.'

'I own,' replied I, 'I should greatly prefer a fair companion, who could modestly discriminate between the beauties of Virgil and Milton, to one who was always dabbling in chemistry, and who came to dinner with dirty hands from the labratory. And yet I admire chemistry too; I am now only speaking of that knowledge which is desirable in a female companion; for knowledge I must have. But arts, which are of immense value in manufactures, won't make my wife's conversation entertaining to me. Discoveries which may greatly improve dyeing and bleaching, will add little to the delights of our summer evening's walk, or winter fireside.'

The ladies, Lucilla especially, smiled at my warmth. I felt that there was approbation in her smile, and though I had said too much already, it encouraged me to go on.—'I repeat that, next to religion, whatever relates to human manners, is most attracting to human creatures. To turn from conversation to composition. What is it that excites so feeble an interest, in perusing that finely written poem of the *Abbe de Lille*, '*Les Jardins!*' It is because his garden has no cultivators, no inhabitants, no men and women. What confers that powerful charm on the descriptive parts of Paradise Lost? A fascination, I will venture to affirm, paramount to the lovely and magnificent scenery which adorns it. Eden itself, with all its exquisite landscape, would excite a very inferior pleasure did it exhibit only inanimate beauties. 'Tis the proprietors, 'tis the inhabitants, 'tis the *live stock* of Eden, which sieze upon the affections, and twine about the heart. The gardens, even of Paradise, would be dull without the gardeners. 'Tis mental excellence, 'tis moral beauty, which completes the charm. Where this is wanting, landscape poetry, though it may be read with pleasure, yet the interest it raises is cold. It is admired, but seldom remembered, praised, but seldom quoted. It leaves no definite idea on the mind. If general, it is indistinct; if minute, tedious.'

'It must be confessed,' said Sir John, 'that some poets are apt to forget that the finest representation of nature is only the scene, not the object; the canvass, not the portrait. We had indeed some time ago, so much of this gorgeous scene-painting, so much splendid poetical botany, so many amorous flowers, and so many vegetable courtships; so many wedded plants; roots transformed to nymphs, and dwelling in emerald palaces; that some how or other truth, and probability, and nature and man, slipt out of the picture, though it must be allowed that genius held the pencil.'

'In Mason's English Garden,' replied I, 'Alcander's precepts would have been no personification. The introduction of character dramatizes what else would have been frigidly didactic. Thompson enriched his landscape with here and there a figure, drawn with more correctness than warmth, with more nature than spirit, but exalts it every where by moral allusion and religious reference. The scenery of Cowper is perpetually animated with sketches of character, enlivened with portraits from real life, and the exhibition of human manners and passions. His most exquisite descriptions owe their vividness to moral illustration.—Loyalty,

* Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.

liberty, patriotism, charity, piety, benevolence, every generous feeling, every glowing sentiment, every ennobling passion, grows out of his descriptive powers. His matter always bursts into mind. His shrubbery, his forest, his flower garden, all produce

Fruits worthy of Paradise,

and lead to immortality.'

Mr. Stanley said, adverting again to the subject of conversation, it was an amusement to him to observe, what impression the first introduction to general society made conversant with books, but to whom the world was in a manner new.

'I believe,' said Sir John, 'that an overflowing commerce, and the excessive opulence it has introduced, though favourable to all the splendours of art, and mechanic ingenuity, yet have lowered the standard of taste, and debilitated the mental energies.—They are advantageous to luxury, but fatal to intellect. It has added to the brilliancy of the drawing-room itself, but deducted from that of the inhabitant. It has given perfection to our mirrors, our candelabras, our gilding, our inlaying and our sculpture, but it has communicated a torpor to the imagination, and enervated our intellectual vigour.'

'In one way,' said Mr. Stanley, smiling, 'luxury has been favourable to literature.—From the unparalleled splendour of our printing, paper, engraving, illuminating, and binding, luxury has caused more books to be purchased, while, from the growth of time-absorbing dissipation, it causes fewer to be read. Even where books are not much considered as the vehicle of instruction they are become an indispensable appendage to elegance. But I believe we were much more familiar with our native poets in their former plain garb, than since they have been attired in the gorgeous dress which now decorates our shelves.

'Poetry,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'has of late too much degenerated into personal satire, persiflage and caricature, among one class of writers; while among another it has exhibited the vagrancies of genius, without the inspiration; the exuberance of fancy, without the curb of judgment, and the eccentricities of invention, without the restrictions of taste. The image has been strained, while the verse has been slackened. We have had pleonasm without fulness, and facility without force. Redundancy has been mistaken for plenitude, flimsiness for ease, and distortion for energy. An over desire of being natural, has made the poet feeble, and the rage for being simple has sometimes made him silly. The sensibility is sickly, and the elevation virtiginous.

'To Cowper,' said Sir John, 'master of melody as he is, the mischief is partly attributable. Such an original must naturally have a herd of imitators. If they cannot attain to his excellences, his faults are always attainable. The resemblance between the master and the scholar is found chiefly in his defects. The determined imitator of an easy writer becomes vapid, of a sublime one, absurd. Cowper's case appeared his most imitable charm: but ease aggravated is insipidity. His occasional negligences his disciples adopted uniformly. In Cowper there might sometimes be carelessness in the verse, but the verse itself was sustained by the vigour of the sentiment. The imitator forgot that his strength lay in the thought; that his buoyant spirit always supported itself, that the figure though amplified was never distorted; the image though bold was never incongruous, and the illustration though new was never false.

'The evil, however,' continued Sir John, 'seems to be correcting itself. The real genius, which exists in several of this whimsical school, I trust, will at length lead them to prune their excrescences, and reform their youthful eccentricities. Their good sense will teach them that the surest road to fame, is to condescend to tread in the luminous track of their great precursors in the art. They will see that deviation is not always improvement; that whoever wants to be better than nature, will infallibly be worse; that truth in taste is as obvious as in morals, and as certain as in mathematics. In other quarters, both the classic and the Gothic music are emulously soaring, and I hail the restoration of genuine poetry and pure taste.'

'I must not,' said I, 'loquacious as I have already been, dismiss the subject of conversation, without remarking that I found there was one topic, which seemed as uniformly avoided by common consent, as if it had been banished by the interdict of absolute authority; and that some forfeiture, or at least dishonour and disgrace, were to follow it on conviction—I mean religion.'

'Surely, Charles,' said Sir John, 'you would not convert general conversation into a divinity school, and friendly societies into debating clubs.'

'Far from it,' replied I, 'nor do I desire that ladies and gentlemen over their tea and coffee should rehearse their articles of faith, or fill the intervals of carving and eating with introducing dogmas, or discussing controversies. I do not wish to erect the social table, which was meant for innocent relaxation, into an arena for theological combatants. I only wish, as people live so much together, that if, when out of the multitude of topics which arise in conversation, an unlucky wight happens to start a serious thought, I could see a cordial recognition of its importance; I wish I could see a disposition to pursue it, instead of a chilling silence which obliges him to draw in, as if he had dropt something dangerous to the state, or inimical to the general cheerfulness, or derogatory to his own understanding. I only desire, that as, without any effort on the part of the speaker, but merely from the overflowing fulness of a mind habitually occupied with one leading concern, we easily perceive that one of the company is a lawyer, another a soldier, a third a physician; I only wish, that we could oftener discover from the same plenitude, so hard to conceal where it exists, that we were in a company of Christians.'

'We must not expect in our days,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to see revive that animating picture of the prevalence of religious intercourse given by the prophet. 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.' And yet one cannot but regret that, in select society, men well informed as we know, well principled as

we hope, having one common portion of being to fill, having one common faith, one common father, one common journey to perform, one common termination to that journey, and one common object in view beyond it, should, when together, be so unwilling to advert occasionally to these great points, which doubtless often occupy them in secret; that they should on the contrary adopt a sort of inverted hypocrisy, and wish to appear worse than they really are; that they should be so backward to give or to gain information, to lend or to borrow lights, in a matter in which they are all equally interested; which cannot be the case in any other possible subject.'

'In all human concerns,' said I, 'we find that those dispositions, tastes, and affections, which are brought into exercise, flourish, while others are smothered, by concealment. 'It is certain,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that knowledge which is never brought forward, is apt to decline. Some feelings require to be excited, in order to know if they exist. In short, topics of every kind, which are kept totally out of sight, make a fainter impression on the mind than such as are occasionally introduced. Communication is a great strengthener of any principle. Feelings, as well as ideas, are often elicited by collision. Thoughts that are never to be produced, in time seldom present themselves, while mutual interchange almost creates as well as cultivates them. And as to the social affections, I am persuaded that men would love each other more cordially; good will and kindness would be inconceivably promoted, were they in the habit of maintaining that sort of intercourse, which would keep up a mutual regard for their eternal interests, and lead them more to consider each other as candidates for the same immortality through the same common hope.'

Just as he had ceased to speak, we heard a warbling of female voices, which came softened to us by distance and the undulation of the air. The little band under the oak had finished their cheerful repast, and arranged themselves in the same regular procession in which they had arrived. They still stood at a respectful distance from the temple, and in their artless manner sung Addison's beautiful version of the twenty-third psalm, which the Miss Astons had taught them because it was a favourite with their mother.

Here the setting sun reminded us to retreat to the house. Before we quitted the temple, however, Sir George Aston ventured modestly to intimate a wish, that if it pleased the Almighty to spare our lives, the same party should engage always to celebrate this anniversary in the Temple of Friendship, which should be finished on a larger scale, and rendered less unworthy to receive such guests. The ladies smiled assentingly. Phœbe applauded rapturously. Sir John Bel field and I warmly approved the proposal. Mr. Stanley said, it could not but meet with his cordial concurrence, as it would involve the assurance of an annual visit from his valued friends.

As we walked into the house, Lady Aston, who held by my arm, in answer to the satisfaction I expressed at the day I had passed, said, 'We owe what little we are and do under Providence to Mr. Stanley. You will admire his discriminating mind, when I tell you that he recommends these little exhibitions for my daughters far more than to his own. He says, that they, being naturally cheerful and habitually active, require not the incentive of company to encourage them. But that for my poor timid inactive girls, the support and animating presence of a few chosen friends, just gives them that degree of life and spirit which serves to warm their hearts, and keep their minds in motion.'

CHAP. XXXVI.

Miss Sparkes came to spend the next day, according to her appointment. Mr. Flam, who called accidentally staid to dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Carlton had been previously invited. After dinner, the conversation chanced to turn upon domestic economy, a quality which Miss Sparkes professed to hold in the most sovereign contempt.

After some remarks of Mrs. Stanley, in favour of the household virtues, Mr. Carlton said, Mr. Addison, in the Spectator, and Dr. Johnson, in the Rambler, have each given us a lively picture of a vulgar, ungentlewoman-like, illiterate housewife. The notable woman of the one suffocated her guests at night with drying herbs in their chamber, and tormented them all day with plans of economy, and lectures on management. The economist of the other ruined her husband by her parsimonious extravagance, if I may be allowed to couple contradictions; by her tent-stitch hangings, for which she had no walls, and her embroidery for which she had no use. The poor man pathetically laments her detestable catalogue of made wines, which hurt his fortune by their profusion, and his health by not being allowed to drink them till they were sour. Both ladies are painted as domestic tyrants, whose husbands had no peace, and whose children had no education.'

'Those coarse housewives,' said Sir John, 'were exhibited as *warnings*. It was reserved for the pen of Richardson to exhibit *examples*. This author, with deeper and juster views of human nature, a truer taste for the proprieties of female character, and a more exact intuition into real life, than any other writer of fabulous narrative, has given, in his heroines, exemplifications of elegantly cultivated minds, combined with the sober virtues of domestic economy. In no other writer of fictitious adventures has the triumph of religion and reason over the passions, and the now almost exploded doctrines of filial obedience, and the household virtues, their natural concomitants been so successfully blended. Whether the works of this most original, but by no means faultless writer, were cause or effect, I know not; whether these well-imagined examples induced the ladies of that day 'to study household good;' or whether the then existing ladies, by their acknowledged attention to feminine concerns, furnished Richardson with living models, I cannot determine. Certain it is, that

the novel writers of the subsequent period, have in general been as little disposed to represent these qualities as forming an indispensable part of the female character, as the contemporary young ladies themselves have been to supply them with patterns. I a little fear that the predominance of this sort of reading, has contributed its full share to bring such qualities into contempt.'

Miss Sparkes characteristically observed, that 'the meanest understanding and most vulgar education, were competent to form such a wife as the generality of men preferred. That a man of talents, dreading a rival, always took care to secure himself by marrying a fool.'

'Always except the present company, Madam, I presume,' said Mr. Stanley, laughing. 'But pardon me, if I differ from you. That many men are sensual in their appetites, and low in their relish of intellectual pleasures, I confess. That many others, who are neither sensual, nor of mean attainments, prefer women whose ignorance will favour their indolent habits, and whom it requires no exertion of mind to entertain, I allow also. But permit me to say, that men of the most cultivated minds, men who admire talents in a woman, are still of opinion, that *domestic* talents can never be dispensed with: and I totally dissent from you in thinking that these qualities infer the absence of higher attainments, and necessarily imply a sordid or a vulgar mind.

'Any ordinary art, after it is once discovered, may be practised by a very common understanding. In this, as in every thing else, the kind arrangements of Providence are visible, because, as the common arts employ the mass of mankind, they could not be universally carried on if they were not of easy and cheap attainment. Now cookery is one of these arts, and I agree with you, Madam, in thinking, that a mean understanding, and a vulgar education, suffice to make a good cook. But a cook or housekeeper; and a lady qualified to wield a considerable establishment, are two very different characters. To prepare a dinner, and to conduct a great family, requires talents of a very different size: and one reason why I could never choose to marry a woman ignorant of domestic affairs, is, that she who wants, or she who despises this knowledge, must possess that previous bad judgment which, as it prevented her from seeing this part of her duty, would be likely to operate on other occasions.

'I entirely agree with Mr. Stanley,' said Mr. Carlton. 'In general I look upon the contempt, or the fulfilment, of these duties as pretty certain indications of the turn of mind from which the one or the other proceeds. I allow, however, that *with* this knowledge a lady may unhappily have overlooked more important acquisitions; but *without* it I must ever consider the female character as defective in the texture, however it may be embroidered and spangled on the surface.'

Sir John Belfield declared, that though he had not that natural antipathy to a wit, which some men have; yet unless the wildness of a wit was tamed, like the wildness of other animals by domestic habits, he himself would not choose to venture on one. He added, that he should pay a bad compliment to Lady Belfield, who had so much higher claims to his esteem, if he were to allege that these habits were the determining cause of his choice, yet had he seen no such tendencies in her character, he should have suspected her power of making him as happy as she had done.'

'I confess with shame,' said Mr. Carlton, 'that one of the first things which touched me with any sense of my wife's merit, was the admirable good sense she discovered in the direction of my family. Even at the time that I had most reason to blush at my own conduct, she never gave me cause to blush for hers. The praises constantly bestowed on her elegant yet prudent arrangements, by my friends, flattered my vanity, and raised her in my opinion, though they did not lead me to do her full justice.'

The two ladies who were thus agreeably flattered, looked modestly grateful. Mr. Stanley said, 'I was going to endeavour at removing Miss Sparkes's prejudices, by observing how much this domestic turn brings the understanding into action. The operation of good sense is requisite in making the necessary calculations for a great family in a hundred ways. Good sense is required to teach that a perpetually recurring small expense is more to be avoided than an incidental great one; while it shows that petty savings cannot retrieve an injured estate. The story told by Johnson of a lady, who, while ruining her fortune by excessive splendour and expense, yet refused to let a two shilling mango be cut at her table, exemplifies exactly my idea. Shabby curtailments, without repairing the breach, which prodigality has made, discredit the husband, and bring the reproach of meanness on the wife. Retrenchments to be efficient must be applied to great objects. The true economist will draw in by contracting the outline, by narrowing the bottom, by cutting off with an unsparing hand costly superfluities, which affect not comfort, but cherish vanity.'

'"Retrench the lazy vermin of thine hall," was the wise counsel of the prudent Venetian, to his thoughtless son-in-law,' said Sir John, 'and its wisdom consisted in its striking at one of the most ruinous and prevailing domestic evils, an overloaded establishment.'

If Miss Sparkes had been so long without speaking, it was evident, by her manner and turn of countenance, that contempt had kept her silent, and that she thought the topic under discussion as unworthy of the support of the gentlemen as of her own opposition.

'A discreet woman,' said Mr. Stanley, 'adjusts her expenses to her revenues. Every thing knows its time, and every person his place. She will live within her income, be it large or small; if large, she will not be luxurious, if small she will not be mean. Proportion and propriety are among the best secrets of domestic wisdom; and there is no surer test both of integrity and judgment, than a well-proportioned expenditure.

'Now the point to which I would bring all this verbage,' continued he, 'is this,—will a lady of a mean understanding, or a vulgar edu

cation, be likely to practise economy on this large scale! And is not such economy a field in which a woman of the best sense may honourably exercise her own powers?'

Miss Sparkes, who was always a staunch opposer in moral as well as in political debate, because she said it was the best side for the exertion of wit and talents, comforted herself that though she felt she was completely in the minority, yet she always thought that was rather a proof of being right than the contrary; for if it be true, that the generality are either weak or wicked, it follows that the inferior number is most likely to be neither

'Women,' said Mr Carlton, 'in their course of action describe a smaller circle than men; but the perfection of a circle consists not in its dimensions, but in itsc orrectness. There may be,' added he carefully turning away his eyes from Miss Sparkes, 'here and there a soaring female who looks down with disdain on the paltry affairs of "this dim speck called earth," who despises order and regularity as indications of a grovelling spirit. But a sound mind judges directly contrary. The larger the capacity, the wider is the sweep of duties it takes in. A sensible woman loves to imitate that order which is stamped on the whole creation of God. All the operations of nature are uniform even in their changes, and regular in their infinite variety. Nay, the great Author of Nature himself disdains not to be called the God of order.'

'I agree with you,' said Sir John. 'A philosophical lady may 'read Mallebranch, Boyle, and Locke:' she may boast of her intellectual superiority; she may talk of abstract and concrete; of substantial forms and essences; complex ideas and mixed modes, of identity and relation; she may decorate all the logic of one sex with all the rhetoric of the other; yet if her affairs are *delabres*, if her house is disorderly, her servants irregular, her children neglected, and her table ill arranged, she will indicate the want of the most valuable faculty of the human mind, a sound judgment.'

'It must, however, be confessed,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that such instances are so rare, that the exceptions barely serve to establish the rule. I have known twenty women mismanage their affairs, through a bad education, through ignorance, espccially of arithmetic, that grand deficiency in the education of women, through a multiplicity of vain accomplishments, through an excess of dissipation, through a devotedness to personal embellishments, through an absorption of the whole soul in music, for one who has made her husband metaphysically miserable.'

'What marks the distinction,' said Mr. Carlton, 'between the judicious and the vulgar economist is this: the narrow-minded woman succeeds tolerably in the filling up, but never in the outline. She is made up of detail, but destitute of plan. Petty duties demand her whole grasp of mind, and after all the thing is incomplete. There is so much bustle and evident exertion in all she does! she brings into company a mind exhausted with her little efforts! overflowing with a sense of her own merits! looking up to her own performances as the highest possible elevation of the human intellect, and looking down on the attainments of more highly gifted women, as so many obstructions to their usefulness; always drawing comparisons to her own advantage, with the cultivated and the refined, and concluding that because she possesses not their elegance they must necessarily be deficient in her art. While economists of the higher strain, I draw from living and not absent instances,' added he, looking benignantly around him, 'execute their well ordered plan, as an indispensable duty, but not as a superlative merit. They have too much sense to omit it, but they have too much taste to talk of it. It is their business, not their boast. The effect is produced, but the hand which accomplishes it is not seen. The mechanism is set at work, but it is behind the scenes. The beauty is visible, the labour is kept out of sight.'

'The misfortune is,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that people are apt to fancy, that judgment is a faculty only to be exercised on great occasions; whereas it is one that every hour is called into exercise. There are certain habits, which though they appear inconsiderable when examined individually, are yet of no small importance in the aggregate. Exactness, punctuality, and other minor virtues, contribute more than many are aware, to promote and to facilitate the exercise of the higher qualities. I would not erect them into a magnitude beyond their real size; as persons are too apt to do who are *only* punctual, and are deficient in the higher qualities; but by the regular establishment of these habits in a family, it is inconceivable to those who have not made the experiment, how it saves, how it amplifies time, that canvass upon which all virtues must be wrought. It is incredible how an orderly division of the day gives apparent rapidity to the wings of time, while a stated devotion of the hour to its employment really lengthens life. It lengthens it by the traces which solid occupation leaves behind it: while it prevents tediousness by affording, with the successive change, the charm of novelty, and keeping up an interest which would flag, if any one employment were too long pursued. Now all these arrangements of life, these divisions of time, and these selections and appropriations of the business to the hour, come within the department of the lady.' And how much will the cares of a man of sense be relieved, if he choose a wife who can do all this for him!'

'In how many of my friends' houses,' said Mr. Carlton, 'have I observed the contrary habits produce contrary effects? A young lady bred in total ignorance of family management, transplanted from the house of her father, where she has learnt nothing, to that of her husband, where she is expected to know every thing, disappoints a prudent man: his affection may continue, but his esteem will be diminished; and with his happiness, his attachment to home will be proportionably lessened.'

'It is perfectly just,' said Sir John, 'and this comfortless deficiency has naturally taught men to inveigh against the higher kind of knowledge which they suppose, though unjustly, to be the cause of ignorance in domestic matters. It is not entirely to gratify the animal, as Miss Sparkes supposes, that a gentleman likes to

have his table well appointed; but because his own dignity and his wife's credit are involved in it. The want of this skill is one of the grand evils of modern life. *From the heiress of the man of rank, to the daughter of the opulent tradesman, there is no one quality in which young women are so generally deficient as in domestic economy.* And when I hear learning contended for on one hand, and modish accomplishments on the other, I always contend for this intermediate, this valuable, this neglected quality, so little insisted on, so rarely found, and so indispensably necessary.'

'Besides,' said Mr. Carlton, addressing himself to Miss Sparkes, 'you ladies are apt to consider versatility as a mark of genius. She therefore, who can do a great thing well, ought to do a small one better; for, as Lord Bacon well observes, he who cannot contract his mind as well as dilate it, wants one great talent in life.'

Miss Sparkes, condescending at length to break a silence which she had maintained with evident uneasiness, said, 'all these plodding employments cramp the genius, degrade the intellect, depress the spirits, debase the taste, and clip the wings of imagination. And this poor, cramped, degraded, stinted, depressed, debased creature is the very being whom men, men of reputed sense too, commonly prefer to the mind of large dimensions, soaring fancy, and aspiring tastes.'

'Imagination,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'well directed, is the charm of life; it gilds every object, and embellishes every scene: but allow me to say, that where a woman abandons herself to the dominion of this vagrant faculty, it may lead to something worse than a disorderly table; and the husband may find that the badness of his dinner is not the only ill consequence of her superlunary vagaries.'

'True enough,' said Mr. Flam, who had never been known to be so silent, or so attentive; 'true enough, I have not heard so much sense for a long time. I am sure 'tis sense, because 'tis exactly my own way of thinking. There is my Bell now. I have spent seven hundred pounds, and more money, for her to learn music and whim-whams, which all put together are not worth sixpence. I would give them all up to see her make such a transy-pudding, as that which the widow in the Spectator helped Sir Roger to at dinner: why I don't believe Bell knows whether pie-crust is made of butter or cheese; or whether a venison pasty should be baked or boiled. I can tell her, that when her husband, if she ever gets one, comes in sharp set from hunting, he won't like to be put off with a tune instead of a dinner. To marry a singing girl, and complain she does not keep you a good table, is like eating nightingales, and finding fault that they are not good tasted. They sing, but they are of no further use—to *eat* them, instead of listening to them, is applying to one sense, the gratification which belongs to another.'

In the course of conversation, Miss Sparkes a little shocked the delicate feelings of the ladies, of Lucilla especially, by throwing out some expressions of envy, at the superior advantages which men possess for distinguishing themselves. 'Women,' she said, 'with talents not inferior, were allowed no stage for display, while men had such a reach for their exertions, such a compass for exercising their genius, such a range for obtaining distinction, that they were at once the objects of her envy for the means they possessed, and of her pity for turning them to no better account. There were indeed,' she added, 'a few men who redeemed the credit of the rest, and for their sakes she gloried, since she could not be of their sex, that she was at least of their species.'

'I know, Madam,' said Mr. Stanley, 'your admiration of heroic qualities and manly virtues —courage for instance. But there are still nobler ways of exercising courage than even in the field of battle. There are more exalted means of showing spirit than by sending or accepting a challenge. To sustain a fit of sickness may exhibit as true heroism as to lead an army. To bear a deep affliction well calls for as high exertion of soul as to storm a town and to meet death with Christian resolution is an act of courage, in which many a woman has triumphed, and many a philosopher, and even some generals, have failed.

I thought I saw in Miss Sparkes's countenance a kind of civil contempt, as if she would be glad to exchange the patient sickness and heroic death-bed for the renown of victory and the glory of a battle: and I suspected that she envied the fame of the challenge, and the spirit of the duel more than those meek and passive virtues which we all agreed were peculiarly Christian, and peculiarly feminine.

CHAP. XXXVII.

In the afternoon, when the company were assembled in the drawing room, the conversation turned on various subjects. Mr. Flam, feeling as if he had not sufficiently produced himself at dinner, now took the lead. He was never solicitous to show what he called his learning, but when Miss Sparkes was present, whom it was his grand delight to *set down* as he called it. Then he never failed to give broad hints that if he was now no great student, it was not from ignorance, but from the pressure of more indispensable avocations.

He first rambled into some desultory remarks on the absurdity of the world, and the preposterousness of modern usages, which perverted the ends of education, and exalted things which were of least use into most importance.

'You seem out of humour with the world, Mr. Flam,' said Mr. Stanley. 'I hate the world,' returned he. 'It is indeed,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'a scene of much danger, because of much evil.'

I don't value the danger a straw,' rejoined Mr. Flam; 'and as to the evil, I hope I have sense enough to avoid that: but I hate it for its folly, and despise it for its inconsistency.'

'In what particulars, Mr. Flam?' said Sir John Bellfield.

'In every thing,' replied he. 'In the first place, don't people educate their daughters entirely for holidays, and then wonder that they are of no use? Don't they charge them to be

modest, and teach them every thing that can make them bold? Are we not angry that they don't attend to great concerns, after having instructed them to take the most pains for the least things! There is my Fan now,—they tell me she can dance as well as a posture mistress, but she slouches in her walk like a milk maid. Now as she seldom dances, and is always walking, would it not be more rational to teach her to do that best which she is to do oftenest? She sings like a Syren, but 'tis only to strangers. I who paid for it, never heard her voice. She is, always warbling in a distant room, or in every room where there is company; but if I have the gout and want to be amused, she is as dumb as a dormouse.'

'So much for the errors in educating our daughters,' said Sir John, 'now for the sons.'

'As to our boys,' returned Mr. Flam, 'don't we educate them in one religion, and then expect them to practise another? Don't we cram them with books of heathen philosophy, and then bid them go and be good Christians? Don't we teach them to admire the heroes and gods of the old poets, when there is hardly one hero, and certainly not one god, who would not in this country have been tried at the Old Bailey, if not executed at Tyburn? And as to the goddesses, if they had been brought before us on the bench, brother Stanley, there is scarcely one of them but we should have ordered to the house of correction. The queen of them, indeed, I should have sent to the ducking stool for a scold.

'Then again don't we tell our sons, when men, that they must admire a monarchical government, after every pains have been taken, when they were boys, to fill them with raptures for the ancient republics?'

'Surely, Mr. Flam,' said Sir John, 'the ancient forms of government may be studied with advantage, were it only to show us by contrast the superior excellence of our own.'

'We might,' said Miss Sparkes, in a supercilious accent, 'learn some things from them which we much want. You have been speaking of economy. These republicans whom Mr. Flam is pleased to treat with so much contempt, he must allow, had some good, clever contrivance to keep down the taxes, which it would do us no harm to imitate. Victories were much better bargains to them than they are to us. A few laurel leaves or a sprig of oak was not quite so dear a pension.'

'But you will allow, Madam,' said Sir John, smiling, 'that a triumph was a more expensive reward than a title.'

Before she had time to answer, Mr. Flam said, 'let me tell you, Miss Sparkes, that as to triumphs, our heroes are so used to them at sea, that they would laugh at them at home. Those who obtain triumphs as often as they meet their enemies, would despise such holiday play among their friends. We don't to be sure, reward them as your ancients did. We don't banish them, nor put them to death for saving their country like your Athenians. We don't pay them with a trumpery wreath like your Romans. We Englishmen don't put our conquerors off with leaves; we give them fruits, as cheerfully bestowed as they are fairly earned. God bless them! I would reduce my table to one dish, my hall to one servant, my stable to one saddle-horse, and my kennel to one pointer, rather than to abridge the preservers of Old England of a feather.'

'Signal exploits, if nationally beneficial,' said Sir John, 'deserve substantial remuneration; and I am inclined to think that public honours are valuable, not only as rewards but incitements. They are as politic as they are just. When Miltiades and his illustrious ten thousand gained their immortal victory, would not a Blenheim erected on the plains of Marathon, have stimulated unborn soldiers, more than the little transitory columns which barely recorded the names of the victors?'

'What warrior,' said Mr. Carlton, 'will hereafter visit the future Palace of Trafalgar without reverence? A reverence, the purity of which will be in no degree impaired by contemplating such an additional motive to emulation.'

In answer to some further observations of Miss Sparkes, on the superiority of the ancient to British patriotism, Mr. Flam, whose indignation now provoked him to display his whole stock of erudition, eagerly exclaimed—'Do you call that patriotism in your favourite Athenians, to be so fond of rare shows, as not only to devote the money of the state to the play-house, but to make it capital to divert a little of it to the wants of the gallant soldiers, who were fighting their battles? I hate to hear fellows called patriots, who preferred their diversions to their country.'

Then erecting himself, as if he felt the taller for being an Englishman, he added,—'What, Madam Sparkes, would your Greeks have said to a Patriotic Fund by private contribution, of near half a million, in the midst of heavy taxes and a tedious war, voluntarily raised and cheerfully given to the orphans, widows, and mothers of their brave countrymen, who fell in their defence? Were the poor soldiers who fought under your Cimons, and your ——, I forget their names, ever so kindly remembered? Make it out that they were—shew me such a spirit among your ancients, and I'll turn republican to-morrow.

Miss Sparkes having again said something which he thought tended to exalt the ancient states at the expense of our own country, Mr. Flam indignantly replied—'Tell me, Madam, did your Athens, or your Sparta, or your Rome, ever take in seven thousand starving priests, driven from a country with which they were at war; a country they had reason to hate, of a religion they detested? Did they ever receive them I say, maintain them like gentlemen; and caress them like friends? If you can bring me one such instance, I will give up Old England, and turn Greek, or Roman, or—any thing but Frenchman.'

'I should be inclined,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to set down that noble deed to the account of our national religion, as well as of our national generosity.'

Miss Sparkes said, 'in one respect, however, Mr. Flam imitates the French whom he is abusing. He is very apt to triumph where he has gained no victory. If you hear his account of a defeat, you would take it like theirs for a con-

quest.' She added, however, 'that there were illustrious men in other countries besides his own, as their successes testified. For her part, she was a citizen of the world, and honoured heroes wherever they were found, in Macedon, in Sweden, or even in France.'

'True enough,' rejoined Mr. Flam, 'the rulers of other countries have gone about and delivered kingdoms as we are doing: but there is this difference: they free them from mild masters to make them their own slaves; we neither get them for ourselves or our minions, our brothers, or cousins, our Jeromes or Josephs. *We* raise the weak, *they* pull down the prosperous. If *we* redeem kingdoms, 'tis to bestow them on their own lawful kings. If we help this nation, 'tis to recal one sovereign from banishment; if we assist that, 'tis to deliver another from captivity.'

'What a scene for Spain,' said Sir John, 'to behold in us their own national Quixotism soberly exemplified and rationally realized! The generous theory of their romantic knight-errant brought into actual practice. The fervour without the absurdity; the sound principle of justice without the extravagance of fancy! Wrongs redressed and rights restored, and upon the grandest scale! Deliverance wrought, not for imaginary princes, but for deposed and imprisoned monarchs! Injuries avenged—not the ideal injuries of ridiculous individuals, but the substantial wrongs of plundered empires!'

Sir John, who was amused with the oddities of Mr. Flam, was desirous of still provoking him to talk; much effort indeed was not required to induce him to do what he was fond of doing, whenever there was an opportunity of contradicting Miss Sparkes.

'But, Mr. Flam,' said Sir John, 'you were interrupted as you began to enumerate the inconsistencies which you said had put you out of love with the world.'

'Why, it makes me mad,' replied he, 'to hear men who make the loudest outcry about the dangers of the state, cramming their houses with French governesses, French cooks, and French valets; is not this adding flame to the fire? Then I have no patience to see people who pretend great zeal for the church, delighted that an Italian singer should have a larger revenue than the highest of our own bishops. Such patriots might have done well enough for Athenians,' added he, looking insultingly at Miss Sparkes, 'but they make miserable Englishmen. Then I hate to see fellows who pay least taxes, complaining most of the burthen—those who most lament the hardness of the times, spending money in needless extravagance, and luxury increasing in exact proportion as means diminish.

'Then I am sick of the conceit of the boys and girls. Do but observe how their vanity imposes on their understanding, and how names disguise things. My son would start if I were to desire him to go to London in the *stage coach*, but he *puts himself into the mail* with great coolness. If I were to talk to Fan about living in a *small house*, she would not give me the hearing, whereas she is quite wild to live in a *cottage*.'

'I do not quite agree with you, Mr. Flam,' said Sir John, smiling, 'as to the inconsistency of the world, I rather lament its dull uniformity. If we may rely on those living chronicles, the newspapers, all is one faultless scene of monotonous perfection.—Were it otherwise, I presume, those frugal philologers would not keep a set of phrases ready cut and dried, in order to apply them universally in all cases. For instance, is not every public place from St. James to Otaheite, or the Cape, invariably *crowded with beauty and fashion*? Is not every public sermon pronounced to be excellent? Is not every civic speech, every provincial harangue *neat and appropriate*? And is not every military corps, from the veteran regiment of regulars, to the volunteer company of a month's standing, always declared to be *in the highest state of discipline*?'

Before the company went away, I observed that Mrs. Carlton gave Lucilla a significant glance, and both withdrew together.—In spite of my thorough belief of the injustice and absurdity of my suspicion, a pang darted through my heart, at the bare possibility that Lord Staunton might be the subject of this secret conference. I was perfectly assured that Miss Stanley would never accept him, while he retained his present character; but that character might be improved. She had rejected him for his principles; if these principles were changed, there was no other reasonable ground of objection. He might be reformed. Dare I own, even to myself, that I dreaded to hear of his reformation. I hated myself for the thought. I will, said I faintly, endeavour to rejoice if it be so. I felt a conflict in my mind between my principles and my passion, that distressed me not a little. My integrity had never before been so assailed.

At length they returned. I earnestly examined their countenances. Both looked cheerful, and even animated; yet it was evident from the redness of their eyes that both of them had been weeping. The company immediately took their leave; all our party, as it was a fine evening, attended them out to their carriages, except Miss Stanley, she only pressed the hand of Mrs. Carlton, smiled, and looked as if she durst not trust herself to talk to her, withdrew to the bow window from whence she could see them depart. I remained in the room.

As she was wiping her eyes to take away the redness, which was a sure way to increase it, I ventured to join her, and inquired with an interest I could not conceal, what had happened to distress her. 'These are not tears of distress,' said she, sweetly smiling. 'I am quite ashamed that I have so little self-controul; but Mrs. Carlton has given me so much pleasure! I have caught the infection of her joy, though my foolish sympathy looks more like sorrow.' Surely, said I, indignantly to myself, she will not own Staunton's love to my face?

All frank and open as Miss Stanley was, I was afraid to press her. I had not courage to ask what I longed to know. Though Lord Staunton's renewed addresses might not give them so much pleasure, yet his reformation I knew would. I now looked so earnestly inquisitive at Lucilla, that she said, 'Oh he is all we could wish. He is a thoroughly converted man!

Indignation and astonishment made me speechless. Is this the modest Lucilla, said I to myself? It is all over. She loves him to distraction. As I attempted not to speak, she at length said, 'My poor friend is at last quite happy. I know you will rejoice with us. Mr. Carlton has for some time regularly read the Bible with her. He condescends to hear, and to invite her remarks, telling her that if he is the better classic, she is the better Christian, and that their assistance in the things which each understands must be reciprocal. If he is her teacher in human literature, he says, she must be his in that which is divine. He has been very earnest to get his mind imbued with scriptural knowledge.' How inexpressible was now my joy! As I was still silent she went on. 'But this is not all. Last Saturday he said to her, 'Henrietta, I have but one complaint to make of you; and it is for a fault which I always thought would be the last I should ever have to charge you with. It is selfishness.' Mrs. Carlton was a little shocked, though the tenderness of his manner mitigated her alarm, 'Henrietta,' resumed he, 'you intend to go to Heaven without your husband. I know you always retire to your dressing-room, not only for your private devotions, but to read prayers to your maids. What have your men-servants done, what has your husband done, that they should be excluded? Is it not a little selfish, my Henrietta,' added he, smiling, 'to confine your zeal to the eternal happiness of your own sex? Will you allow me and my men-servants to join you? To-morrow is Sunday; we will then, if you please, begin in the hall. You shall prepare what you would have read; and I will be your chaplain. A most unworthy one, Henrietta, I confess; but you will not only have a chaplain of your own making, but a Christian also. Yes, my angelic wife, I am a Christian upon the truest, the deepest conviction.'

"'Never, my dear Lucilla,' continued Mrs. Carlton, 'did I know what true happiness was till that moment. My husband, with all his faults, had always been remarkably sincere. Indeed his aversion to hypocrisy had made him keep back his right feelings and sentiments, till he was assured they were well established in his mind. He has for some time been regular at church, a thing, he said, too much taken up as a customary form to be remarkable, and which therefore involved not much; but family prayer adopted from conviction of its being a duty, rather pledged a man to consistent religion. Never, I hope, shall I forget the joy I felt, nor my gratitude to that Being 'from whom all holy desires proceed,' when, with all his family kneeling solemnly around him, I heard my once unhappy husband with a sober fervour begin,

"'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him, neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us.'

'He evidently struggled with his own feelings; but his manly mind carried him through it with an admirable mixture of dignity and feeling. He was so serenely cheerful the rest of the evening, that I felt he had obtained a great victory over himself, and his heart was at peace with him. Prayer with him was not a beginning form, but a consummation of his better purposes.'"

The sweet girl could not forbear weeping again, while she was giving me this interesting account. I felt as if I had never loved her till then. To see her so full of sensibility, without the slightest tincture of romance, so feeling, yet so sober-minded, enchanted me. I could now afford to wish heartily for Lord Staunton's reformation, because it was not likely to interfere with my hopes. And now the danger was over, I even endeavoured to make myself believe that I *should* have wished it in any event; so treacherous will the human heart be found by those who watch its motions. And it proceeds from not watching them, that the generality are so little acquainted with the evils which lurk within it.

Before I had time to express half what I felt to the fair narrator, the party came in. They seemed as much puzzled at the position in which they found Lucilla and myself, she wiping her eyes, and I standing by in admiration, as I had been at her mysterious interview with Mrs. Carlton. The Belfields knew not what to make of it. The mother's looks expressed astonishment and anxiety. The father's eye demanded an explanation. All this mute eloquence passed in an instant, Miss Stanley gave them not time to inquire. She flew to her mother, and eagerly repeated the little tale which furnished matter for grateful joy and improving conversation the rest of the evening.

Mr. Stanley expressed a thorough confidence in the sincerity of Carlton. 'He had always,' continued he, 'in his worst days an abhorrence of deceit, and such a dread of people appearing better than they are, that he even commended that most absurd practice of Dean Swift, who you know used to perform family prayer in a garret, for fear any one should call in and detect him in the performance.' Carlton defended this as an honourable instance of Swift's abhorrence of ostentation in his religion. I opposed it on the more probable ground of his being ashamed of it. For allowing, what however never can be allowed, that an ordinary man might have some excuse for the dread of being sneered at, as wanting to be thought righteous overmuch; yet in a churchman, in a dignified churchman, family prayer would be expected as a customary decency, an indispensable appendage to his situation; which though it might be practised without piety, could not be omitted without disgrace, and which even a sensible infidel, considering it merely as a professional act could not say was a custom

More honoured in the breach than the observance.

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CHAP. XXXVIII

One evening, which Mr. Tyrrel happened to spend with us, after Mr. Stanley had performed the family devotions, Mr. Tyrrel said to him, 'Stanley, I don't much like the prayer you read

It seems, by the great stress it lays on holiness, to imply that a man has something in his own power. You did indeed mention the necessity of faith, and the power of grace; but there was too much about making the life holy, as if that were all in all. You seem to be putting us so much upon working and doing, that you leave nothing to do for the Saviour.'

'I wish,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'as I am no deep theologian, that you had started this objection before Dr. Barlow went away, for I know no man more able or more willing for serious discussion.'

'No,' replied Tyrrel, 'I see clearly by some things which he dropt in conversation, as well as by the whole tenor of his sermons, that Barlow and I should never agree. He means well, but knows little. He sees something, but feels nothing. More argument than unction. Too much reasoning, and too little religion; a little light, and no heat. He seems to me so to 'overload the ship with duties,' that it will sink by the means he takes to keep it afloat. I thank God my own eyes are opened, and I at last feel comfortable in my mind.'

'Religious comfort,' said Mr. Stanley, 'is a high attainment. Only it is incumbent on every Christian to be assured that if he is happy it is on safe grounds.'

'I have taken care of that,' replied Mr. Tyrrel. 'For some years after I had quitted my loose habits, I attended occasionally at church, but found no comfort in it, because I perceived so much was to be *done*, and so much was to be *sacrificed*. But the great doctrines of faith, as opened to me by Mr. *H—n*, have at last given me peace and liberty, and I rest myself without solicitude on the mercy so freely offered in the Gospel. No mistakes or sins of mine can ever make me forfeit the divine favour.'

'Let us hear, however,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'what the Bible says; for as that is the only rule by which we shall be judged hereafter, it may be prudent to be guided by it here. God says by the prophet, 'I will put my Spirit within you:' but he does this for some purpose; for he says, in the very next words, 'I will cause you to *walk* in my statutes.' And for fear this should not plainly enough inculcate holiness, he goes on to say, 'And ye shall *keep* my judgments, and *do* them.' Show me, if you can, a single promise made to an impenitent, unholy man.'

Tyrrel. 'Why is not the mercy of God promised to the wicked in every part of the Bible?'

Stanley. 'It is. But that is, 'if he forsake his way.'

Tyrrel. 'This fondness for works is, in my opinion, nothing else but setting aside the free grace of God.'

Stanley. 'Quite the contrary: so far from setting aside, it is the way to glorify it, for it is by that grace alone that we are enabled to perform right actions. For myself, I always find it difficult to answer persons, who, in flying to one extreme, think they cannot too much degrade the opposite. If we give faith its due prominence, the mere moralist reprobates our principles, as if we were depreciating works. If we magnify the beauty of holiness, the advocate for exclusive faith accuses us of being its enemy.'

Tyrrel. 'For my own part, I am persuaded that unqualified trust is the only ground of safety.'

Stanley. 'He who cannot lie has indeed told us so. But trust in God is humble dependence, not presumptuous security. The Bible does not say trust in the Lord and sin on, but, 'trust in the Lord, and be doing good.' We are elsewhere told that, 'God works in us to will and to do.' There is no getting over that little word *to do*. I suppose you allow the necessity of prayer.'

Tyrrel. 'Certainly I do.'

Stanley. 'But there are conditions to our prayers also, 'if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.''

Tyrrel. 'The scriptures affirm that we must live on the promises.'

Stanley. 'They are indeed the very aliment of the Christian life. But what are the promises?'

Tyrrel. 'Free pardon and eternal life to them that are in Christ Jesus.'

Stanley. 'True. But who are they that *are* in Christ Jesus! The Apostle tells us, 'they who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.' Besides, is not holiness promised as well as pardon? 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.'

Tyrrel. 'Surely, Stanley, you abuse the grace of the Gospel, by pretending that man is saved by his own righteousness.'

Stanley. 'No, no, my dear Tyrrel, it is you who abuse it, by making God's mercy set aside man's duty. Allow me to observe, that he who exalts the grace of God, with a view to indulge himself in any sin, is deceiving no one but himself; and he who trusts in Christ, with a view to spare himself the necessity of watchfulness, humility, and self-denial, that man depends upon Christ for more than he has promised.'

Tyrrel. 'Well, Mr. Stanley, it appears to me that you want to patch up a convenient accommodating religion, as if Christ were to do a little, and we were to do the rest: a sort of partnership salvation, and in which man has the largest share.'

Stanley. 'This, I fear, is indeed the dangerous creed of many worldly Christians.—No, God may be said to do all, because he gives power for all, strength for all, grace for all. But this grace is a principle, a vital energy, a life-giving spirit to quicken us, to make us abound in holiness. He does not make his grace abound, that we may securely live in sin, but that we may subdue it, renounce it, live above it.'

Tyrrel. 'When our Saviour was upon earth, there was no one quality he so uniformly commended, in those who came to be healed by him, as faith.'

Stanley. 'It is most true. But we do not meet in any of them with such a presumptuous faith, as led them to rush into diseases on purpose to show their confidence in his power of healing them, neither are we to 'continue in sin that grace may abound.'—You cannot but observe, that the faith of the persons you mention, was always accompanied with an earnest desire to get rid of their diseases. And it is worth re-

marking, that to the words 'thy faith has made thee whole,' is added '*sin no more*,' lest a worse thing come unto thee.'

Tyrrel. 'You cannot persuade me that any neglect, or even sin of mine, can make void the covenant of God.'

Stanley. 'Nothing can set aside the covenant of God, which is sure and steadfast.—But as for him who lives in the allowed practice of any sin, it is clear that he has no part nor lot in the matter. It is clear that he is not one of those whom God has taken into the covenant. That God will keep his word is most certain, but such a one does not appear to be the person to whom that word is addressed. God as much designed that you should apply the faculties, the power, and the will he has given you, to a life of holiness, as he meant when he gave you legs, hands, and eyes, that you should walk, work, and see. His grace is not intended to exclude the use of his gifts, but to perfect, exalt, and ennoble them.'

Tyrrel. 'I can produce a multitude of texts to prove that Christ has done every thing, and of course has left nothing for me to do, but to believe on him.'

Stanley. 'Let us take the general tenor and spirit of scripture, and neither pack single texts together, detached from the connexion in which they stand; nor be so unreasonable as to squeeze all the doctrines of Christianity out of every single text, which perhaps was only meant to inculcate one individual principle. How consistently are the great leading doctrines of faith and holiness balanced and reconciled in every part of the Bible! If ever I had been in danger of resting on a mere dead faith, by one of those texts on which you exclusively build, in the very next sentence, perhaps, I am roused to active virtue, by some lively example, or absolute command. If again I am ever in danger, as you say, of sinking the ship with my proud duties, the next passage calls me to order, by some powerful injunction to renounce all confidence in my miserable defective virtues, and to put my whole trust in Christ. By thus assimilating the Creed with the Commandments, the Bible becomes its own interpreter, and perfect harmony is the result. Allow me also to remark, that this invariable rule of exhibiting the doctrines of Scripture in their due proportion, order, and relative connexion, is one of the leading excellences in the service of our Church. While no doctrine is neglected or undervalued, none is disproportionately magnified, at the expense of the others. There is neither omission, undue prominence, nor exaggeration. There is complete symmetry and correct proportion.

Tyrrel. 'I assert that we are freed by the Gospel from the condemnation of the law.'

Stanley. 'But where do you find that we are free from the obligation of obeying it? For my own part I do not combine the doctrine of grace to which I most cordially assent, with any doctrine which practically denies the voluntary agency of man. Nor, in my adoption of the belief of that voluntary agency, do I, in the remotest degree, presume to abridge the sovereignty of God. I adopt none of the metaphysical subtleties, none of the abstruse niceties of any party, nor do I imitate either in the reprobation of the other, firmly believing that heaven is peopled with the humble and the conscientious out of every class of real Christians.'

Tyrrel. 'Still I insist that if Christ has delivered me from sin, sin can do me no harm.'

Stanley. 'My dear Mr. Tyrrel, if the king of your country were a mighty general, and had delivered the land from some powerful enemy, would it show your sense of the obligation, or your allegiance as a subject, if you were to join the enemy he had defeated? By so doing, though the country might be saved, you would ruin yourself. Let us then live in confederacy with sin, the power of which indeed our Redeemer has broken, but both the power and guilt of which the individual is still at liberty to incur.'

Tyrrel. 'Stanley, I remember when you thought the Gospel was all in all.

Stanley. 'I think so still: but I am now, as I was then, for a sober consistent Gospel, a Christianity, which must evidence itself by its fruits. The first words of the Apostle after his conversion were, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' When he says, 'so run that ye may obtain,' he could never mean that we could obtain by sitting still, nor would he have talked of 'labouring *in vain*,' if he meant that we should not labour at all. We dare not persist in any thing that is wrong, or neglect any thing that is right, from an erroneous notion, that we have such an interest in Christ, as will excuse us from doing the one, or persisting in the other.'

Tyrrel. 'I fancy you think that a man's salvation depends on the number of good actions he can muster together.'

Stanley. 'No, it is the very spirit of Christianity not to build on this or that actual work, but sedulously to strive for that temper, and those dispositions, which are the seminal principle of all virtues; and where the heart struggles, and prays for the attainment of this state, though the man should be placed in such circumstances as to be able to do little to promote the welfare of mankind, or the glory of God, in the eyes of the world; this very habitual aim and bent of the mind, with humble sorrow at its low attainments. is, in my opinion, no slight degree of obedience.'

Tyrrel. 'But you will allow that the Scriptures affirm, that Christ is not only a sacrifice, but a refuge, a consolation, a rest.'

Stanley. 'Blessed be God, he is indeed all these. But he is a consolation only to the heavy laden, a refuge to those alone who forsake sin. The rest he promises is not a rest from labour, but a rest from evil. It is a rest from the drudgery of the world, but not from the service of God. It is not inactivity, but quietness of spirit; not sloth but peace. He draws men indeed from slavery to freedom, but not a freedom to do evil, or to do nothing. He makes his service easy, but not by lowering the rule of duty, not by adapting his commands to the corrupt inclinations of our nature. He communicates his grace, gives fresh and higher motives to obedience, and imparts peace and comfort, not by any abatement in his demands, but by this infusion of his own grace, and this communication of his own Spirit.'

Tyrrel. 'You are a strange fellow. Accord-

ing to you, we can neither be saved by good works, nor without them.'

Stanley. 'Come, Mr. Tyrrel, you are nearer the truth than you intended. We cannot be saved by the merit of our good works, without setting at nought the merits and death of Christ; and we cannot be saved without them, unless we set at nought God's holiness, and make him a favourer of sin. Now to this the doctrine of the atonement, properly understood, is most completely hostile. That this doctrine *favours* sin, is one of the false charges which worldly men bring against vital Christianity, because they do not understand the principle, nor inquire into the grounds on which it is adopted.'

Tyrrel. 'Still I think you limit the grace of God, as if people must be very good first, in order to deserve it, and then he will come and add his grace to their goodness. Whereas grace has been most conspicuous in the most notorious sinners.'

Stanley. 'I allow that the grace of God has never manifested itself more gloriously than in the conversion of notorious sinners. But it is worth remarking, that all such, with St. Paul at their head, have ever after been eminently more afraid than other men of falling again into sin; they have prayed with the greatest earnestness to be delivered from the power of it, and have continued to lament most deeply the remaining corruptions of their hearts.'

In the course of the conversation, Mr. Tyrrel said, 'he should be inclined to entertain doubts of that man's state, who could not give an accurate account of the time and the manner in which he was first awakened, and who had no sensible manifestation of the divine favour.'

'I believe,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'that my notions of the evidence of being in the favour of God differ materially from yours. If a man feel in himself a hatred of all sin, without sparing his favourite corruption; if he rest for salvation on the promise of the Gospel alone; if he maintain in his mind such a sense of the nearness and immeasurable importance of eternal things, as shall enable him to use temporal things with moderation, and anticipate their end without dismay; if he delight in the worship of God, is zealous for his service, making *his* glory the end and aim of all his actions; if he labour to fulfil his allotted duties conscientiously; if he love his fellow creatures as the children of the same common father, and partakers of the same common hope; if he feel the same compassion for the immortal interests, as for the worldly distresses of the unfortunate; forgiving others, as he hopes to be forgiven; if he endeavour according to his measure and ability, to diminish the vice and misery with which the world abounds, *that* man has a solid ground of peace and hope, though he may not have those sensible evidences which afford triumph, and exultation. In the mean while, the man of a heated imagination, who boasts of mysterious communications within, is perhaps exhibiting outwardly unfavourable marks of his real state, and holding out by his low practice, discouragements unfriendly to that religion of which he professes himself a shining instance.

'The sober Christian is as fully convinced, that only He who made the heart, can new make it, as the enthusiast. He is as fully persuaded that his natural dispositions cannot be changed, nor his affections purified, but by the agency of the Divine Spirit, as the fanatic. And though he presume not to limit omnipotence to a sudden or a gradual change, yet he does not think it necessary to ascertain the day, and the hour, and the moment, contented to be assured that whereas he was once blind he now sees. If he do not presume in his own case to fix the *chronology of conversion*, he is not less certain as to its effects. If he cannot enumerate dates, and recapitulate feelings, he can and does produce such evidences of his improvement, as virtuous habits, a devout temper, an humble and charitable spirit, 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' and this gives an evidence less equivocal, as existing more in the heart than on the lips, and more in the life than in the discourse. Surely if a plant be flourishing, the branches green, and the fruit fair and abundant, we may venture to pronounce these to be indications of health and vigour, though we cannot ascertain the moment when the seed was sown, or the manner in which it sprung up.'

Sir John, who had been an attentive listener, but had not yet spoken a word, now said, smiling, 'Mr. Stanley, you steer most happily between the two extremes. This exclusive cry of grace in one party of religionists, which drives the opposite side into as unreasonable a clamour against it, reminds me of the Queen of Louis Quatorze. When the Jesuits who were of the court party, made so violent an outcry against the Jansenists, for no reason but because they had more piety than themselves. Her Majesty was so fearful of being thought to favour the oppressed side, that in the excess of her party zeal, she vehemently exclaimed, 'Oh fie upon grace! fie upon grace!' "

Mr. Stanley. 'Party violence thinks it can never recede far enough from the side it opposes.'

Tyrrel. 'But how then is our religion to be known, except by our making a profession of truths, which the irreligious are either ignorant of or oppose?'

Stanley. 'There is, as I have already observed, a more infallible criterion. It is best known by the effects it produces on the heart, and on the temper. A religion, which consists in opinions only, will not advance us in our progress to heaven; it is apt to inflate the mind with the pride of disputation; and victory is so commonly the object of debate, that eternity slides out of sight. The two cardinal points of our religion, justification and sanctification, are, if I may be allowed the term, correlatives; they imply a reciprocal relation, nor do I call that state Christianity, in which either is separately and exclusively maintained. The union of these manifests the dominion of religion in the heart, by increasing its humility, by purifying its affections, by setting it above the contamination of the maxims and habits of the world, by detaching it from the vanities of time, and elevating it to a desire for the riches of eternity.'

Tyrrel. 'All the exhortation to duties with

which so many sermons abound, are only an infringement on the liberty of a Christian. A true believer knows of no duty but faith, no rule but love.'

Stanley. 'Love is indeed the fountain and principle of all practical virtue. But love itself requires some regulation to direct its exertion; some law to guide its motions; some rule to prevent its aberrations; some guard to hinder that which is vigorous from becoming eccentric. With such a regulation, such a law, such a guard, the divine ethics of the gospel have furnished us. The word of God is as much our rule, as his Spirit is our guide, or his Son our 'way.' This unerring rule alone secures Christian liberty from disorder, from danger, from irregularity, from excess. Conformity to the precepts of the Redeemer is the most infallible proof of having an interest in his death.'

We afterwards insensibly slid into other subjects, when Mr. Tyrrel, like a combatant who thought himself victorious, seemed inclined to return to the charge. The love of money having been mentioned by Sir John with extreme severity, Mr. Tyrrel seemed to consider it as a venal failing, and said that both avarice and charity might be constitutional.'

'They may be so,' said Mr. Stanley, 'but Christianity, Sir, has a constitution of its own; a superinduced constitution. A real Christian 'confers not with flesh and blood,' with his *constitution*, whether he shall give or forbear to give, when it is a clear duty, and the will of God requires it. If we believe in the principles, we must adopt the conclusions. Religion is not an unproductive theory, nor charity an unnecessary, an incidental consequence, nor a contingent left to our choice.' You are a classic, Mr. Tyrrel, and cannot have forgotten that in your mythological poets, the three Pagan graces were always knit together hand in hand; the three Christian graces are equally inseparable, and the greatest of these is charity; that grand principle of love, of which alms-giving is only one branch.'

Mr. Tyrrel endeavoured to evade the subject, and seemed to intimate that true Christianity might be known without any such evidences as Mr. Stanley thought necessary. This led the latter to insist warmly on the vast stress which every part of Scripture laid on the duty of charity. Its doctrines,' said he, 'its precepts, its promises, and its examples all inculcate it.—'the new commandment' of John—'the pure and undefiled religion' of James—'Ye shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just' of Luke—the daily and hourly practice of Him, who not only taught to do good, but who 'went about doing it.'—'The store for a good foundation against the time to come' of Paul—nay, in the only full, solemn, and express representation of the last day, which the gospel exhibits, charity is not only brought forward as a predominant, a distinguishing feature of the righteous, but a specific recompense seems to be assigned to it, when practised on true Christian grounds. And it is not a little observable, that the only posthumous quotation from the sayings of our divine Saviour which the Scripture has recorded, is an encouragement to charity—'Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than receive.'

CHAP. XXXIX.

The next afternoon, when we were all conversing together, I asked Mr. Stanley what opinion he held on a subject which had lately been a good deal canvassed, the propriety of young ladies learning the dead languages; particularly the Latin. He was silent. Mrs. Stanley smiled. Phœbe laughed outright. Lucilla, who had nearly finished making tea, blushed excessively. Little Celia, who was sitting on my knee while I was teaching her to draw a bird, put an end to the difficulty, by looking up in my face and crying out—'Why, Sir, Lucilla reads Latin with Papa every morning.' I cast a timid eye on Miss Stanley, who, after putting the sugar into the cream pot, and the tea into the sugar basin, slid out of the room, beckoning Phœbe to follow her.

'Poor Lucilla,' said Mr. Stanley, 'I feel for her! Well, Sir,' continued he, 'you have discovered by external, what I trust would not have been found by internal evidence. Parents who are in high circumstances, yet from principle abridge their daughters of the pleasures of the dissipated part of the world, may be allowed to substitute other pleasures; and if the girl has a strong inquisitive mind, they may direct it to such pursuits as call for vigorous application, and the exercise of the mental powers.'

'How does that sweet girl manage,' said Lady Belfield, 'to be so utterly void of pretension? So much softness and so much usefulness, strip her of all the terrors of learning.'

'At first,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'I only meant to give Lucilla as much Latin as would teach her to grammatize her English, but her quickness in acquiring led me on, and I think I did right; for it is superficial knowledge that excites vanity. A learned language, which a discreet woman will never produce in company, is less likely to make her vain, than those acquirements which are always in exhibition. And after all, it is a hackneyed remark, that the best instructed girl will have less learning than a school-boy; and why should vanity operate in her case more than in his?'

'For this single reason, Sir,' said I, 'that every boy knows that which very few girls are taught. Suspect me not, however, of censuring a measure which I admire. I hope the example of your daughters will help to raise the tone of female education.'

'Softly, softly,' interrupted Mr. Stanley, 'retrench your plural number. It is only one girl out of six who has deviated from the beaten track. I do not expect many converts, to what I must rather call my practice in one instance, than my general opinion. I am so convinced of the prevailing prejudice, that the thing has never been named out of the family. If my gay neighbour Miss Rattle knew that Lucilla had learned Latin, she would instantly find out a few odd moments to add that language to her innumerable acquirements, because her mother can

afford to pay for it, and because Lady Di. Dash has never learnt it. I assure you, however,' (laughing as he spoke,) 'I never intend to smuggle my poor girl on any man, by concealing from him this unpopular attainment, any more than I would conceal any personal defect.'

'I will honestly confess, said Sir John, who had not yet spoken, 'that had I been to judge the case *a priori*, had I met Miss Stanley under the terrifying persuasion that she was a scholar, I own I should have met her with a prejudice; I should have feared she might be forward in conversation, deficient in feminine manners, and destitute of domestic talents. But having had such a fair occasion of admiring her engaging modesty, her gentle and unassuming tone in society, and above all, having heard from Lady Belfield how eminently she excels in the true science of a lady, domestic knowledge, I cannot refuse her that additional regard, which this solid acquirement, so meekly borne, deserves. Nor, on reflection, do I see why we should be so forward to instruct a woman in the language spoken at Rome in its present degraded state, in which there are comparatively few authors to improve her, and yet be afraid that she should be acquainted with that which was its vernacular tongue, in its age of glory two thousand years ago, and which abounds with writers of supreme excellence.'

I was charmed at these concessions from Sir John, and exclaimed with a transport which I could not restrain: 'In our friends, even in our common acquaintance, do we not delight to associate with those whose pursuits have been similar to our own, and who have read the same books? How dull do we find it, when civility compels us to pass even a day with an illiterate man? Shall we not then delight in the kindred acquirements of a dearer friend? Shall we not rejoice in a companion who has drawn, though less copiously, perhaps, from the same rich sources with ourselves; who can relish the beauty we quote, and trace the allusion at which we hint? I do not mean that *learning* is absolutely necessary, but a man of taste who has an ignorant wife, cannot, in her company, think his own thoughts, nor speak his own language. His thoughts he will suppress; his language he will debase, the one from hopelessness, the other from compassion.—He must be continually lowering and diluting his meaning, in order to make himself intelligible. This he will do for the woman he loves, but in doing it he will not be happy. She who cannot be entertained by his conversation, will not be convinced by his reasoning; and at length he will find out that it is less trouble to lower his own standard to hers, than to exhaust himself in the vain attempt to raise hers to his own.'

'A fine high sounding *tirade*, Charles, spoken *con amore*,' said Sir John. 'I really believe though, that one reason why women are so frivolous is that the things they are taught are not solid enough to fix the attention, exercise the intellect, and fortify the understanding. They learn little that inures to reasoning, or compels to patient meditation.'

'I consider the difficulties of a solid education,' said Mr. Stanley, 'as a sort of preliminary course, intended perhaps by Providence as a gradual preparative for the subsequent difficulties of life; as a prelude to the acquisition of that solidity and firmness of character which actual trials are hereafter to confirm. Though I would not make instruction unnecessarily harsh and rugged, yet I would not wish to increase its facilities to such a degree as to weaken that robustness of mind which it should be its object to promote, in order to render mental discipline subservient to moral.'

'How have you managed with your other girls, Stanley,' said Sir John, 'for though you vindicate general knowledge, you profess not to wish for general learning in the sex.'

'Far from it,' replied Mr. Stanley. 'I am a gardener you know, and accustomed to study the genius of the soil before I plant. Most of my daughters, like the daughters of other men, have some one talent, or at least propensity; for parents are too apt to mistake inclination for genius. This propensity I endeavour to find out, and to cultivate. But if I find the natural bias very strong, and not very safe, I then labour to counteract, instead of encouraging the tendency, and try to give it a fresh direction. Lucilla having a strong bent to whatever relates to intellectual taste, I have read over with her the most unexceptionable parts of a few of the best Roman classics. She began at nine years old, for I have remarked that it is not learning much, but learning late which makes pedants.

'Phœbe, who has a superabundance of vivacity, I have in some measure tamed, by not only making her a complete mistress of arithmetic, but by giving her a tincture of mathematics. Nothing puts such a bridle on the fancy as demonstration. A habit of computing steadies the mind, and subdues the soarings of imagination. It sobers the vagaries of trope and figure, substitutes truth for metaphor, and exactness for amplification. This girl, who if she had been fed on poetry and works of imagination, might have become a Miss Sparkes, now rather gives herself the airs of a calculator and of a grave computist. Though, as in the case of the cat in the fable, who was metamorphosed into a lady, nature will break out as soon as the scratching of a mouse is heard; and all Phœbe's philosophy can scarcely keep her in order, if any work of fancy comes in her way.

'To soften the horrors of her fate, however, I allowed her to read a few of the best things in her favourite class. When I read to her the more delicate parts of Gulliver's Travels, with which she was enchanted, she affected to be angry at the voyage to Laputa, because it ridicules philosophical science. And in Brobdignag, she said the proportions were not correct. I must however explain to you, that the use which I made of these dry studies with Phœbe, was precisely the same which the ingenious Mr. Cheshire makes of his steel machines for defective shapes, to straighten a crooked tendency or strengthen a weak one. Having employed these means to set her mind upright, and to cure a wrong bias, as that skilful gentleman discards his apparatus as soon as the patient becomes straight, so have I discontinued these pursuits, for I never meant to make a mathematical lady.

Jane has a fine ear and a pretty voice, and will sing and play well enough for any girl who is not to make music her profession. One or two of the others sing agreeably.

The little one, who brought the last nosegay, has a strong turn for natural history, and we all of us generally botanize a little of an evening, which gives a fresh interest to our walks. She will soon draw plants and flowers pretty accurately. Louisa also has some taste in designing, and takes tolerable sketches from nature. These we encourage because they are solitary pleasures, and want no witnesses. They all are too eager to impart somewhat of what they know to your little favourite Celia, who is in danger of picking up a little of every thing, the sure way to excel in nothing.

'Thus each girl is furnished with some one source of independent amusement. But what would become of them, or rather what would become of their mother and me, if every one of them was a scholar, a mathematician, a singer, a performer, a botanist, a painter? Did we attempt to force all these acquirements and a dozen more on every girl, all her *time* would be occupied about things which will be of no value to her in *eternity*. I need not tell you that we are carefully communicating to every one of them that general knowledge which should be common to all gentlewomen.

'In unrolling the vast volume of ancient and modern history, I ground on it some of my most useful instructions, and point out how the truth of Scripture is illustrated by the crimes and corruptions which history records, and that the same pride, covetousness, ambition, turbulence, and deceit, bring misery on empires, and destroy the peace of families. To history, geography, and chronology are such indispensable appendages, that it would be superfluous to insist on their usefulness. As to astronomy, while 'the heavens declare the glory of God,' it seems a kind of impiety not to give young people some insight into it.

'I hope,' said Sir John, 'that you do not exclude the modern languages from your plan.' 'As to French,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'with that thorough inconsistency which is common to man, the demand for it seems to have risen in exact proportion as it ought to have sunk.* I would not however rob my children of a language in which, though there are more books to be avoided, there are more that deserve to be read, than in all the foreign languages put together.'

'If you prohibit Italian,' said Sir John laughing, 'I will serve you as Cowper advised the boys and girls to serve Johnson for depreciating Henry and Emma; I will join the musical and poetical ladies in tearing you to pieces, as the Thracian damsels did Orpheus, and send your head with his

Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.

'You remember me, my dear Belfield,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'a warm admirer of the exquisite beauties of Italian poetry. But a father feels, or rather judges differently from the mere man of taste, and as a father, I cannot help regretting, that what is commonly put into the hands of our daughters, is so amatory, that it has a tendency to soften those minds which rather want to be invigorated.

'There are few things I more deprecate for girls than a poetical education, the evils of which I saw sadly exemplified in a young friend of Mrs. Stanley. She had beauty and talents. Her parents, enchanted with both, left her entirely to her own guidance. She yielded herself up to the uncontrolled rovings of a vagrant fancy. When a child, she wrote verses, which were shown in her presence to every guest, their flattery completed her intoxication. She afterwards translated Italian sonnets, and composed elegies of which love was the only theme.—These she was encouraged by her mother to recite herself, in all companies, with a pathos and sensibility which delighted her parents, but alarmed her more prudent friends.

'She grew up with the confirmed opinion that the two great and sole concerns of human life were love and poetry. She considered them as inseparably connected, and she resolved in her own instance never to violate so indispensable a union. The object of her affection was unhappily chosen, and the effects of her attachment were such as might have been expected from a connection formed on so slight a foundation. In the perfections with which she invested her lover, she gave the reins to her imagination, when she thought she was only consulting her heart.—She picked out and put together all the fine qualities of all the heroes, of all the poets she had ever read, and into this finished creature, her fancy transformed her admirer.

'Love and poetry commonly influence the two sexes in a very disproportionate degree. With men, each of them is only one passion among many. Love has various and powerful competitors in hearts divided between ambition, business, and pleasure. Poetry is only one amusement in minds, distracted by a thousand tumultuous pursuits; whereas in girls of ardent tempers, whose feelings are not curbed by restraint, and regulated by religion, love is considered as the great business of their earthly existence. It is cherished, not as 'the cordial drop,' but as the whole contents of the cup; the remainder is considered only as froth or dregs. The unhappy victim not only submits to the destructive dominion of a despotic passion, but glories in it. So at least did this ill-starred girl

'The sober duties of a family had early been transferred to her sisters, as far beneath the attention of so fine a genius; while she abandoned herself to studies, which kept her imagination in a fever, and to a passion which those studies continually fed and inflamed. Both together completed her delirium. She was ardent, generous, and sincere; but violent, imprudent, and vain to excess. She set the opinion of the world at complete defiance, and was not only totally destitute of judgment and discretion herself, but despised them in others. Her lover and her muse were to her instead of the whole world.

'After having for some years exchanged son

* See an ingenious little treatise entitled Latium Redivivum, or the modern use of the Latin language, and the prevalence of the French.

nets under the names of Laura and Petrarch, and elegies under those of Sappho and Phaon; the lover, to whom all this had been mere sport, the gratification of vanity, and the recreation of an idle hour, grew weary.

Younger and fairer he another saw.

He drew off. Her verses were left unanswered, her reproaches unpitied. Laura wept, and Sappho raved in vain.

'The poor girl, to whom all this visionary romance had been a serious occupation, which had swallowed up cares and duties, now realized the woes she had so often admired and described. Her upbraidings only served to alienate still more the heart of her deserter; and her despair, which he had the cruelty to treat as fictitious, was to him a subject of mirth and ridicule. Her letters were exposed, her expostulatory verses read at clubs and taverns, and the unhappy Sappho was toasted in derision.

'All her ideal refinements now degenerated into practical improprieties. The public avowal of her passion drew on her from the world charges which she had not merited.—Her reputation was wounded, her health declined, her peace was destroyed. She experienced the dishonours of guilt without its turpitude, and in the bloom of life fell, the melancholy victim to a mistaken education, and an undisciplined mind.'

Mrs. Stanley dropped a silent tear to the memory of her unhappy friend, the energies of whose mind she said would, had they been rightly directed, have formed a fine character.

'But none of the things of which I have been speaking,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'are the great and primary objects of instruction. The inculcation of fortitude, prudence, humility, temperance, self-denial—this is education. These are things which we endeavour to promote far more than arts or languages. These are tempers, the habit of which should be laid in early, and followed up constantly, as there is no day in life which will not call them into exercise; and how can that be practised which has never been acquired!

'Perseverance, meekness, and industry,' continued he, 'are the qualities we most carefully cherish and commend. For poor Laura's sake I make it a point never to extol any indications of genius. Genius has pleasure enough in its own high aspirings.—Nor am I indeed over much delighted with a great blossom of talents. I agree with good Bishop Hall, that it is better to thin the blossoms, that the rest may thrive; and that in encouraging too many propensities, one faculty may not starve another.'

Lady Belfield expressed herself grateful for the hints Mr. Stanley had thrown out, which could not but be of importance to her who had so large a family. After some further questions from her he proceeded.

'I have partly explained to you, my dear Madam, why, though I would not have every woman learn every thing, yet why I would give every girl, in a certain station of life, some one amusing accomplishment. There is here and there a strong mind, which requires a more substantial nourishment than the common education of girls affords. To such and to such only, would I furnish the quiet resource of a dead language, as a solid aliment which may fill the mind without inflating it.

'But that no acquirements may inflate it let me add, there is but one sure corrective. Against learning, against talents of any kind, nothing can steady the head, unless you fortify the heart with real Christianity. In raising the moral edifice, we must sink deep in proportion as we build high. We must widen the foundation if we extend the superstructure. Religion alone can counteract the aspirings of genius, can regulate the pride of talents.

'And let such women as are disposed to be vain of their comparatively petty attainments, look up with admiration to those two contemporary shining examples, the venerated Elizabeth Carter, and the blooming Elizabeth Smith. I knew them both, and to know was to revere them. In *them*, let our young ladies contemplate profound and various learning chastened by true Christian humility. In *them*, let them venerate acquirements which would have been distinguished in a university, meekly softened, and beautifully shaded by the gentle exertion of every domestic virtue, the unaffected exercise of every feminine employment.

CHAP. XL.

Ever since Mr. Tyrrel had been last with us, I had observed an unusual seriousness in the countenance of Sir John Belfield, though accompanied with his natural complacency. His mind seemed intent on something he wished to communicate. The first time we were both alone in the library with Mr. Stanley, Sir John said, 'Stanley, the conversations we have lately had, and especially the last with Tyrrel, in which you bore so considerable a part, have furnished me with agreeable matter for reflection. I hope the pleasure will not be quite destitute of profit.'

'My dear Sir John,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'in conversation with Mr. Tyrrel, I labour under a disadvantage common to every man, who when he is called to defend some important principle which he thinks attacked, or undervalued, is brought into danger of being suspected to undervalue others, which, if they in their turn were assailed, he would defend with equal zeal. When points of the last importance are slighted as insignificant, in order exclusively to magnify one darling opinion, I am driven to appear as if I opposed that important tenet, which, if I may so speak, seems pitted against the others. Those who do not previously know my principles, might almost suspect me of being an opposer of that prime doctrine, which I really consider as the leading principle of Christianity.'

'Allow me to say,' returned Sir John 'that my surprise has been equal to my satisfaction. Those very doctrines which you maintained, I had been assured, were the very tenets you rejected. Many of our acquaintance, who do not come near enough to judge, or who would not be competent to judge if they did, ascribe the strictness of your practice to some unfounded peculiarities of opinion, and suspect that the doctrines of Tyrrel, though somewhat modified

a little more rationally conceived, and more ably expressed, are the doctrines held by you, and by every man who rises above the ordinary standard of what the world calls religious men. And what is a little absurd and inconsequent, they ascribe to these supposed dangerous doctrines, his abstinence, from the diversions, and his disapprobation of the manners and maxims of the world. *Your* opinions, however, I always suspected could not be very pernicious, the effects of which, from the whole tenor of your life, I knew to be so salutary.'

'My dear Belfield,' said Mr. Stanley 'men of the world are guilty of a striking inconsistency in the charge they bring against religious men. They accuse them at once of maintaining doctrines which lead to licentiousness, and of overstrictness in their practice. One of them may be true: but both cannot be so.'

'I now find upon full proof,' replied Sir John, that there is nothing in your sentiments but what a man of sense might approve; nothing but what, if he be really a man of sense, he will without scruple adopt. May I be enabled more fully, more practically to adopt them! You shall point out to me such a course of reading, as may not only clear up my remaining difficulties, but what is infinitely more momentous than the solution of any abstract question, may help to awaken me to a more deep and lively sense of my own individual interest in this great concern.'

Mr. Stanley's benevolent countenance was lighted up with more than its wonted animation. He did not attempt to conceal the deep satisfaction with which his heart was penetrated. He modestly referred his friend to Doctor Barlow, as a far more able casuist, though not a more cordial friend. For my own part, I felt my heart expand towards Sir John, with new sympathies and an enlarged affection. I felt nobler motives of attachment, an attachment which I hoped would be perpetuated beyond the narrow bounds of this perishable world.

'My dear Sir John,' said Mr. Stanley, 'it is among the daily but comparatively petty trials of every man, who is deeply in earnest to secure his immortal interests, to be classed with low and wild enthusiasts, whom his judgment condemns, with hypocrites against whom his principles revolt, and with men, pious and conscientious I am most willing to allow, but differing widely from his own views; with others who evince a want of charity in some points, and a want of judgment in most. To be identified, I say, with men so different from yourself, because you hold in common some great truths, which all real Christians have held in all ages, and because you agree with them in avoiding the blameable excesses of dissipation, is among the sacrifices of reputation which a man must be contented to make, who is earnest in the great object of a Christian's pursuit. I trust, however, that, through divine grace, I shall never renounce my integrity for the praise of men, who have so little consistency, that though they pretend their quarrel is with your faith, yet who would not care how extravagant your belief was, if your practice assimilated with their own. I trust, on the other hand, that I shall always maintain my candour towards those with whom we are unfairly involved; men, religious though somewhat eccentric; devout, though injudicious; and sincere, though mistaken; but who, with all their errors, against which I protest, and with all their indiscretion, which I lament, and with their ill-judged because irregular zeal, which I blame, I shall ever think—always excepting hypocrites and false pretenders—are better men, and in a safer state than their rivelers.'

'I have often suspected,' said I, 'that under the plausible pretence of objecting to your creed, men conceal their quarrel with the commandments.'

'My dear Stanley,' said Sir John, 'but for this visit I might have continued in the common error, that there was but one description of religious professors. That a fanatical spirit, and a fierce adoption of one or two particular doctrines, to the exclusion of all the rest, with a total indifference to morality, and a sovereign contempt of prudence, made up the character against which I confess, I entertained a serious disgust. Still, however, I loved *you* too well, and had too high an opinion of your understanding, to suspect that you would ever be drawn into those practical errors, to which I had been told, your theory inevitably led. Yet I own I had an aversion to this dreaded enthusiasm which drove me into the opposite extreme.

'How many men have I known,' replied Mr. Stanley, smiling, 'who, from their dread of a burning zeal, have taken refuge in a freezing indifference? As to the two extremes of heat and cold, neither of them is the true climate of Christianity; yet the fear of each drives men of opposite complexions into the other, instead of fixing them in the temperate zone which lies between them, and which is the region of genuine piety.

'The truth is, Sir John, *your* society considers earnestness in religion as the fever of a distempered understanding, while in inferior concerns they admire it as the indication of a powerful mind. Is zeal in politics accounted the mark of a vulgar intellect? Did they consider the unquenchable ardour of Pitt, did they regard the lofty enthusiasm of Fox, as evidences of a feeble or a disordered mind? Yet I will venture to assert, that ardour in religion is as much more noble than ardour in politics as the prize for which it contends is more exalted. It is beyond all comparison superior to the highest human interest, the truth and justice of which after all may possibly be mistaken, and the objects of which must infallibly have an end.'

Dr. Barlow came in, and seeing us earnestly engaged, desired that he might not interrupt the conversation. Sir John in a few words informed him of what had passed, and with a most graceful humility spoke of his own share in it, and confessed how much he had been carried away by the stream of popular prejudice, respecting men who had courage to make a consistent profession of Christianity. 'I now,' added he, 'begin to think with Addison, that singularity in religion is heroic bravery, 'because it only leaves the species by soaring above it.'

After some observations from Dr. Barlow, much in point, he went to remark that the difficulties of a clergyman were much increased

by the altered manners of the age. 'The tone of religious writing,' said he, 'but especially the tone of religious conversation, is much lowered. The language of a Christian minister in discussing Christian topics will naturally be consonant to that of Scripture. The Scripture speaks of a man being *renewed in the spirit of his mind*, of his being *sanctified by the grace of God*. Now how much circumlocution is necessary for us in conversing with a man of the world, to convey the sense without adopting the expression; and what pains must we take to make our meaning intelligible without giving disgust, and to be useful without causing irritation!'

Sir John. 'But, my good Doctor, is it not a little puritanical, to make use of such solemn expressions in company?'

Dr. Barlow. 'Sir, it is worse than puritanical, it is hypocritical, where the principle itself does not exist; and even where it does, it is highly inexpedient to introduce such phrases into general company at all. But I am speaking of serious private conversation, when, if a minister is really in earnest, there is nothing absurd in his prudent use of Scripture expressions. One great difficulty, and which obstructs the usefulness of a clergyman, in conversation with many persons of the higher class, who would be sorry not to be thought religious, is, that they keep up so little acquaintance with the Bible, that from their ignorance of its venerable phraseology, they are offended at the introduction of a text, not because it is Scripture; for that they maintain a kind of general reverence; but, because, from not reading it, they do not know that it *is* Scripture.

'I once lent a person of rank and talents an admirable sermon, written by one of our first divines. Though deeply pious, it was composed with uncommon spirit and elegance, and I thought it did not contain one phrase which could offend the most fastidious critic. When he returned it, he assured me that he liked it much on the whole, and should have approved it altogether, but for one methodistical expression. To my utter astonishment he pointed to the exceptionable passage, 'There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.' The chapter and verse not being mentioned, he never suspected it was a quotation from the Bible.'

'This is one among many reasons,' said Mr. Stanley, 'why I so strenuously insist that young persons should read the Scriptures, unaltered, unmodernized, unmutilated, unabridged. If parents do not make a point of this, the peculiarities of sacred language will become really obsolete to the next generation.'

In answer to some further remarks of Sir John, Mr. Stanley said, smiling, 'I have sometimes amused myself with making a collection of certain things, which are now considered and held up by a pretty large class of men as the infallible symptoms of methodism. Those which at present occur to my recollection are the following. Going to church in the afternoon, maintaining family prayer, not travelling, or giving great dinners or other entertainments on Sundays, rejoicing in the abolition of the slave trade, promoting the religious instruction of the poor at home, subscribing to the Bible Society, and contributing to establish Christianity abroad. These, though the man attend no eccentric clergyman, hold no one enthusiastic doctrine, associate with no fanatic, is sober in his conversation, consistent in his practice, correct in his whole deportment, will infallibly fix on him the charge of methodism. Any *one* of these will excite suspicion, but all united will not fail absolutely to stigmatize him. The most devoted attachment to the establishment will avail him nothing, if not accompanied with a fiery intolerance towards all who differ. Without intolerance, his charity is construed into unsoundness, and his candour into disaffection. He is accused of assimilating with the principles of every weak brother whom, though his judgment compels him to blame, his candour forbids him to calumniate. Saint and hypocrite are now, in the scoffer's lexicon, become convertible terms: the last being always implied where the first is sneeringly used.'

'It has often appeared to me,' said I, 'that the glory of a tried Christian somewhat resembles that of a Roman victor, in whose solemn procession, among the odes of gratulation, a mixture of abuse and railing made part of the triumph.'

'Happily,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'a religious man knows the worst he is likely to suffer. In the present established state of things he is not called, as in the first ages of Christianity, to be made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. But he must submit to be assailed by three different descriptions of persons. From the first, he must be contented to have principles imputed to him which he abhors, motives which he disdains, and ends which he deprecates. He must submit to have the energies of his well-regulated piety confounded with the follies of the fanatic, and his temperate zeal blended with the ravings of the insane. He must submit to be involved in the absurdities of the extravagant, in the duplicity of the designing, and in the mischiefs of the dangerous; to be reckoned among the disturbers of that church which he would defend with his blood, and of that government which he is perhaps supporting in every possible direction. Every means is devised to shake his credit. From such determined assailants no prudence can protect his character, no private integrity can defend it, no public service rescue it.'

'I have often wondered,' said Sir John, 'at the success of attacks which seemed to have nothing but the badness of the cause to recommend them. But the assailant, whose object is to make good men ridiculous, well knows that he has secured to himself a large patronage in the hearts of all the envious, the malignant, and irreligious, who, like other levellers, find it more easy to establish the equality of mankind by abusing the lofty, than by elevating the low.'

'In my short experience of life,' said I, when Sir John had done speaking, 'I have often observed it as a hardship, that a man must only submit to be condemned for doctrines he disowns, but also for consequences which others may draw from the doctrines he maintains,

though he himself both practically and speculatively disavow any such consequences.'

'There is another class of enemies,' resumed Mr. Stanley. 'To do them justice, it is not so much the individual Christian, as Christianity itself, which *they* hope to discredit; *that* Christianity which would not only restrain the conduct, but would humble the heart; which strips them of the pride of philosophy, and the arrogant plea of merit; which would save, but will not flatter them. In this enlightened period, however, for men who would preserve any character, it would be too gross to attack religion itself, and they find they can wound her more deeply and more creditably through the sides of her professors.'

'I have observed,' said I, 'that the uncandid censurer always picks out the worst man of a class, and then confidently produces him as being a fair specimen of it.'

'From our own thoughtless, but less uncharitable acquaintance, the gay and the busy,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'we have to sustain a gentler warfare. A little reproach, a good deal of ridicule, a little suspicion of our designs, and not a little compassion for our gloomy habits of life, and implied contempt of our judgment, some friendly hints that we carry things too far, an intimation that being righteous over much in the practice has a tendency to produce derangement in the faculties. These are the petty but daily trials of every man who is seriously in earnest; and petty indeed they are to him whose prospects are well grounded, and whose hope is full of immortality.'

'This hostility, which a real Christian is sure to experience,' said I, 'is not without its uses. It quickens his vigilance over his own heart, and enlarges his charity towards others, whom reproach perhaps may as unjustly stigmatize. It teaches him to be on his guard, lest he should really deserve the censure he incurs; and what I presume is of no small importance, it teaches him to sit loose to human opinion; it weakens his excessive tenderness for reputation, makes him more anxious to deserve, and less solicitous to obtain it.'

'It were well,' said Dr Barlow, 'if the evil ended here. The established Christian will evince himself to be such by not shrinking from the attack. But the misfortune is, that the dread of this attack keeps back well disposed but vacillating characters. They are intimidated at the idea of partaking the censure, though they know it to be false.

'When they hear the reputation of men of piety assailed, they assume an indifference which they are far from feeling. They listen to reproaches cast on characters which they inwardly revere, without daring to vindicate them. They hear the most attached subjects accused of disaffection, and the most sober-minded churchmen of innovation, without venturing to repel the charge, lest they should be suspected of leaning to the party. They are afraid fully to avow that their own principles are the same, lest they should be involved in the same calumny. To efface this suspicion, they affect a coldness which they do not feel, and treat with levity what they inwardly venerate. Very young men, from this criminal timidity, are led to risk their eternal happiness through the dread of a laugh. Though they know that they have not only religion but reason on their side, yet it requires a hardy virtue to repel a sneer, and an intrepid principle to confront a sarcasm. Thus their own mind loses its firmness, religion loses their support, the world loses the benefit which their example would afford, and they themselves become liable to the awful charge which is denounced against him who is ashamed of his Christian profession.'

'Men of the world,' said Sir John, 'are extremely jealous of whatever may be thought *particular;* they are frightened at every thing that has not the sanction of public opinion, and the stamp of public applause. They are impatient of the slightest suspicion of censure in what may be supposed to affect the credit of their judgment, though often indifferent enough as to any blame that may attach to their conduct. They have been accustomed to consider strict religion as a thing which militates against good taste, and to connect the idea of something unclassical and inelegant, something awkward and unpopular, something uncouth and ill-bred, with the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; doctrines which, though there is no harm in believing, they think there can be no good in avowing.

'It is a little hard,' said Mr. Stanley, 'that men of piety, who are allowed to possess good sense on all other occasions, and whose judgment is respected in all the ordinary concerns of life, should not have a little credit given to them in matters of religion, but that they should be at once transformed into idiots or madmen, in that very point which affords the noblest exercise to the human faculties.'

'A Christian then,' said I, 'if human applause be his idol, is of all men most miserable. He forfeits his reputation every way. He is accused by the men of the world of going too far; by the enthusiast of not going far enough. While it is one of the best evidences of his being right, that he is rejected by one party for excess, and by the other for deficiency.'

'What then is to be done?' said Dr. Barlow. 'Must a discreet and pious man give up a principle because it has been disfigured by the fanatic, or abused by the hypocrite, or denied by the sceptic, or reprobated by the formalist, or ridiculed by the men of the world? He should rather support it with an earnestness proportioned to its value; he should rescue it from the injuries it has sustained from its enemies; and the discredit brought on it by its imprudent friends. He should redeem it from the enthusiasm which misconceives, and from the ignorance or malignity which misrepresents it. If the learned and the judicious are silent in proportion as the illiterate and the vulgar are obtrusive and loquacious, the most important truths will be abandoned by those who are best able to unfold, and to defend them, while they will be embraced exclusively by those who misunderstand, degrade and debase them. Because the unlettered are absurd, must the able cease to be religious? If there is to be an abandonment of every Christian principle, because it has been unfairly, unskilfully, or inadequately treated, there would, one

by one, be an abandonment of every doctrine of the New Testament.'

'I felt myself bound,' said Mr. Stanley, 'to act on this principle in our late conversation with Mr. Tyrrel. I would not refuse to assert with him the doctrines of grace, but I endeavoured to let him see that I had adopted them in a scriptural sense. I would not try to convince him that he was wrong, by disowning a truth because he abused it. I would cordially reject all the bad use he makes of any opinion, without rejecting the opinion itself, if the Bible will bear me out in the belief of it. But I would scrupulously reject all the other opinions which he connects with it, and with which I am persuaded it has no connection.

'The nominal Christian,' said Dr. Barlow, 'who insists that religion resides in the understanding only, may contend that love to God, gratitude to our Redeemer, and sorrow for our offences, are enthusiastic extravagances; and effectually repress by ridicule and sarcasm, those feelings which the devout heart recognizes, and which Scripture sanctions. On the other hand, those very feelings are inflamed, exaggerated, distorted, and misrepresented, as including the whole of religion, by the intemperate enthusiast, who thinks reason has nothing to do in the business; but who, trusting to tests not warranted by Scripture, is governed by fancies, feelings, and visions of his own.

'Between these pernicious extremes, what course is the other Christian to pursue? Must he discard from his heart all pious affections because the fanatic abuses them, and the fastidious deny their existence? This would be like insisting, that because one man happens to be sick of a dead palsy, and another of a phrenzy fever, there is therefore in the human constitution no such temperate medium as sound health.'

CHAP. XLI.

Since the conversation which had accidentally led to the discovery of Miss Stanley's acquirements, I could not forbear surveying the perfect arrangements of the family, and the completely elegant but not luxurious table, with more than ordinary interest. I felt no small delight in reflecting that all this order and propriety were produced without the smallest deduction from the mental cultivation.

I could not refrain from mentioning this to Mrs. Stanley. She was not displeased with my observation, though she cautiously avoided saying any thing which might be construed into a wish to set off her daughter. As she seemed surprised at my knowledge of the large share her Lucilla had in the direction of the family concerns, I could not, in the imprudence of my satisfaction, conceal the conversation I had with my old friend Mrs. Comfit.

After this avowal she felt that any reserve on this point would look like affectation, a littleness which would have been unworthy of her character. 'I am frequently blamed by my friends,' said she, 'for taking some of the load from my own shoulders, and laying it on hers. 'Poor thing, she is too young!' is the constant cry of fashionable mothers. My general answer is, you do not think your daughters of the same age too young to be married, though you know marriage must bring with it these, and still heavier cares. Surely then Lucilla is not too young to be initiated in that useful knowledge which will hereafter become no inconsiderable part of her duty. The acquisition would be really burthensome then, if it were not lightened by preparatory practice now. I have, I trust, convinced my daughters, that though there is no great merit in possessing this sort of knowledge, yet to be destitute of it is highly discreditable.'

'In several houses where I had visited, I had observed the forwardness of the parents, the mother especially, to make a display of the daughter's merits,—'so dutiful' so notable! such an excellent nurse!' The girl was then called out to sing or to play, and was thus, by that *inconsistency* which my good mother deprecated, kept in the full exhibition of those very talents which are most likely to interfere with nursing and notableness. But since I had been on my present visit, I had never once heard my friends extol their Lucilla, or bring forward any of her excellences. I had however observed their eyes fill with delight, which they could not suppress, when her merits were the subject of the praise of others.

I took notice of this difference of conduct to Mrs. Stanley. 'I have often,' said she, 'been so much hurt at the indelicacy to which you allude, that I very early resolved to avoid it. If the girl in question does not deserve the commendation, it is not only disingenuous but dishonest. If she does, it is a coarse and not very honourable stratagem for getting her off. But if the daughter be indeed all that a mother's partial fondness believes,' added she, her eyes filling with tears of tenderness, 'how can she be in such haste to deprive herself of the solace of her life? How can she by gross acts wound that delicacy in her daughter, which, to a man of refinement, would be one of her chief attractions, and which will be lowered in his esteem, by the suspicion that she may concur in the indiscretion of the mother.

'As to Lucilla,' added she, 'Mr. Stanley and I sometimes say to each other, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols!' O my dear young friend! it is in vain to dissemble her unaffected worth and sweetness. She is not only our delightful companion, but our confidential friend. We encourage her to give us her opinion on matters of business, as well as of taste; and having reflected as well as read a good deal, she is not destitute of materials on which to exercise her reasoning powers. We have never repressed her natural vivacity, because we never saw it, like Phœbe's, in danger of carrying her off from the straight line.'

I thanked Mrs. Stanley for her affectionate frankness, with a warmth which showed the cordial interest I took in her, who was the object of it; company coming in interrupted our interesting tete-a-tete.

After tea, I observed the party in the saloon to be thinner than usual. Sir John and Lady

Belfield having withdrawn to write letters; and that individual having quitted the room, whose presence would have reconciled me to the absence of all the rest, I stole out to take a solitary walk. At the distance of a quarter of a mile from the park-gate, on a little common, I observed, for the first time, the smallest and neatest cottage I ever beheld. There was a flourishing young orchard behind it, and a little court full of flowers in front. But I was particularly attracted by a beautiful rose tree in full blossom which grew against the house, and almost covered the clean white walls. As I knew this sort of rose was a particular favourite of Lucilla's I opened the low wicket which led into the little court, and looked about for some living creature, of whom I might have begged the flowers. But seeing no one, I ventured to gather a bunch of the roses, and the door being open, walked into the house, in order to acknowledge my theft, and make my compensation. In vain I looked round the little neat kitchen! no one appeared.

I was just going out, when the sound of a soft female voice over head arrested my attention. Impelled by a curiosity which, considering the rank of the inhabitants, I did not feel it necessary to resist, I softly stole up the narrow stairs, cautiously stooping as I ascended, the lowness of the ceiling not allowing me to walk upright. I stood still at the door of a little chamber, which was left half open to admit the air. I gently put my head through. What were my emotions when I saw Lucilla Stanley kneeling by the side of a little clean bed, a large old Bible spread open on the bed before her, out of which she was reading one of the penitential Psalms to a pale emaciated female figure, who lifted up her failing eyes, and clasped her feeble hands in solemn attention!

Before two little bars, which served for a grate, knelt Phœbe, with one hand stirring some broth, which she had brought from home, and with the other fanning with her straw bonnet the dying embers, in order to make the broth boil; yet seemingly attentive to her sister's reading. Her dishevelled hair, the deep flush which the fire and her labour of love gave her naturally animated countenance, formed a fine contrast to the angelic tranquillity and calm devotion which sat on the face of Lucilla. Her voice was inexpressibly sweet and penetrating, while faith, hope and charity seemed to beam from her uplifted eyes. On account of the closeness of the room, she had thrown off her hat, cloak, and gloves, and laid them on the bed; and her fine hair, which escaped from its confinement, shaded that side of her face which was next the door, and prevented her seeing me.

I scarcely dared to breathe lest I should interrupt such a scene. It was a subject not unworthy of Raphael. She next began to read the forty-first Psalm, with the meek yet solemn emphasis of devout feeling. 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy, the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.' Neither the poor woman nor myself could hold out any longer. She was overcome by her gratitude, and I by my admiration, and we both at the same moment involuntarily exclaimed, Amen! I sprang forward with a motion which I could no longer control. Lucilla saw me, started up in confusion,

> and blush'd
> Celestial rosy red.

Then eagerly endeavouring to conceal the Bible, by drawing her hat over it, 'Phœbe,' said she, with all the composure she could assume, 'is the broth ready?' Phœbe, with her usual gaiety, called out to me to come and assist, which I did, but so unskilfully that she chid me for my awkwardness.

It was an interesting sight to see one of these blooming sisters lift the dying woman in her bed, and support her with her arm, while the other fed her, her own weak hand being unequal to the task. At that moment how little did the splendors and vanities of life appear in my eyes! and how ready was I to exclaim, with Wolsey,

> Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you.

When they had finished their pious office, I inquired if the poor woman had no attendant. Phœbe who was generally the chief speaker, said, 'she has a good daughter, who is out at work by day, but takes care of her mother at night; but she is never left alone, for she has a little grand-daughter who attends her in the mean time; but as she is obliged to go once a day to the Grove to fetch provisions, we generally contrive to send her while we are here, that Dame Alice may never be left alone.'

While we were talking, I heard a little weary step, painfully climbing up the stairs, and looking round, expecting to see the grand-daughter; but it was little Kate Stanley, with a lap full of dry sticks, which she had been collecting for the poor woman's fire. The sharp points of the sticks had forced their way in many places through the white muslin frock, part of which, together with her bonnet, she had left in the hedge, which she had been robbing. At this loss she expressed not much concern, but lamented not a little that sticks were so scarce; that she feared the broth had been spoiled, from her being so long in picking them, but *indeed* she could not help it. I was pleased with these under allotments, these low degrees in the scale of charity.

I had gently laid my roses on the hat of Miss Stanley, as it lay on the Bible, and before we left the room, as I drew near the good old Dame to slip a couple of guineas into her hand, I had the pleasure of seeing Lucilla, who thought herself unobserved, retire to the little window, and fasten the roses into the crown of her hat like a garland. When the grand-daughter returned loaded with the daily bounty from the Grove, we took our leave, followed by the prayers and blessings of the good woman.

As we passed by the rose-tree, the orchard, and the court, Phœbe said to me, 'An't you glad that poor people can have such pleasures?' I told her it doubled my gratification to witness the enjoyment, and to trace the hand which conferred it; for she had owned it was *their* work. 'We have always,' replied Phœbe, 'a

particular satisfaction in observing a neat little flower garden about a cottage, because it holds out a comfortable indication that the inhabitants are free from absolute want, before they think of these little embellishments.'

'It looks also,' said Miss Stanley, 'as if the woman, instead of spending her few leisure moments in gadding abroad, employed them in adorning her little habitation, in order to make it more attractive to her husband. And we know more than one instance in this village in which the man has been led to give up the public house, by the innocent ambition of improving on her labours.'

I asked her what first inspired her with such fondness for gardening, and how she had acquired so much skill and taste in this elegant art? She blushed and said, 'she was afraid I should think her romantic, if she were to confess that she had caught both the taste and the passion, as far as she possessed either, from an early and intimate acquaintance with the Paradise Lost, of which she considered the beautiful descriptions of the scenery and plantations as the best precepts for landscape gardening. Milton,' she said, 'both excited the taste and supplied the rules. He taught the art and inspired the love of it.'

From the gardens of Paradise the transition to its heroine was easy and natural. On my asking her opinion of this portrait, as drawn by Milton, she replied, 'that she considered Eve, in her state of innocence, as the most beautiful model of the delicacy, propriety, grace and elegance of the female character which any poet ever exhibited. Even after her fall,' added she, 'there is something wonderfully touching in her remorse, and affecting in her contrition.'

'We are probably,' replied I, 'more deeply affected with the beautifully contrite expressions of repentance in our first parents, from being so deeply involved in the consequences of the offence which occasioned it.'

'And yet,' replied she, 'I am a little affronted with the poet, that while, with a noble justness, he represents Adam's grief at his expulsion, as chiefly arising from his being banished from the presence of his Maker, the sorrows of Eve seem too much to arise from being banished from her flowers. The grief, though never grief was so beautifully eloquent, is rather too exquisite, her substantial ground for lamentation considered.'

Seeing me going to speak, she stopped me with a smile, saying, 'I see by your looks that you are going, with Mr. Addison, to vindicate the poet, and to call this a just appropriation of the sentiment to the sex; but surely the disproportion in the feeling here is rather too violent, though I own the loss of her flowers *might* have aggravated any common privation. There is, however, no female character in the whole compass of poetry, in which I have ever taken so lively an interest, and no poem that ever took such powerful possession of my mind.'

If any thing had been wanting to my full assurance of the sympathy of our tastes and feelings, this would have completed my conviction. It struck me as the Virgilian lots formerly struck the superstitious. Our mutual admiration of the Paradise Lost, and of its heroine, seemed to bring us nearer together than we had yet been. Her remarks, which I gradually drew from her in the course of our walk, on the construction of the fable, the richness of the imagery, the elevation of the language, the sublimity and just appropriation of the sentiments, the artful structure of the verse and the variety of the characters, convinced me that she had imbibed her taste from the purest sources. It was easy to trace her knowledge of the best authors, though she quoted none.

'This,' said I exultingly to myself, 'is the true learning for a lady; a knowledge that is rather detected than displayed, that is felt in its effects on her mind and conversation; that is seen, not by her citing learned names, or adducing long quotations, but in the general result, by the delicacy of her taste, and the correctness of her sentiments.'

In our way home I made a merit with little Kate, not only by rescuing her hat from the hedge, but by making a little provision of wood under it, of larger sticks than she could gather, which she joyfully promised to assist the granddaughter in carrying to the cottage.

I ventured, with as much diffidence as if I had been soliciting a pension for myself, to entreat that I might be permitted to undertake the putting forward Dame Alice's little girl in the world, as soon as she shall be released from her attendance on her grandmother. My proposal was graciously accepted, on condition that it met with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley's approbation.

When we joined the party at supper, it was delightful to observe that the habits of religious charity were so interwoven with the texture of these girls minds, that the evening which had been so interesting to me, was to them only a common evening, marked with nothing particular. It never occurred to them to allude to it; and once or twice when I was tempted to mention it, my imprudence was repressed by a look of the most significant gravity from Lucilla.

I was comforted, however, by observing that my roses were transferred from the hat to the hair. This did not escape the penetrating eye of Phœbe, who archly said, 'I wonder, Lucilla, what particular charm there is in Dame Alice's faded roses. I offered you some fresh ones since we came home. I never knew you prefer withered flowers before.' Lucilla made no answer, but cast down her timid eyes, and outblushed the roses on her head.

CHAP. XLII.

After breakfast next morning the company all dropped off one after another, except Lady Belfield, Miss Stanley, and myself. We had been so busily engaged in looking over the plan of a conservatory, which Sir John proposed to build at Beechwood, his estate in Surry, that we hardly missed them.

Little Celia, whom I call the Rosebud, had climbed up my knees, a favourite station with her, and was begging me to tell her another pretty story. I had before told her so many, that I had exhausted both my memory and my

imagination. Lucilla was smiling at my impoverished invention, when Lady Belfield was called out of the room. Her fair friend rose mechanically to follow her. Her ladyship begged her not to stir, but to employ the five minutes of her absence in carefully criticising the plan she held in her hand, saying, she would bring back another which Sir John had by him; and that Lucilla, who is considered as the last appeal in all matters of this nature, should decide to which the preference should be given, before the architect went to work.

In a moment I forgot my tale and my rosebud, and the conservatory, and every thing but Lucilla, whom I was beginning to address, when little Celia, pulling my coat, said, 'Oh, Charles,' (for so I teach all the little ones to call me,) 'Mrs. Comfit tells me very bad news. She says that your new curricle is come down, and that you are going to run away. Oh! don't go; I can't part with you,' said the little charmer, throwing her arms round my neck.

'Will you go with me, Celia?' said I, kissing her rosy cheek. 'There will be room enough in the curricle.' 'Oh, I should like to go,' said she, 'if Lucilla may go with us. Do, dear Charles, do let Lucilla go to the Priory. She will be very good; won't you, Lucilla?' I ventured to look at Miss Stanley, who tried to laugh without succeeding, and blushed without trying at it.

On my making no reply, for fear of adding to her confusion, Celia looked up piteously in my face, and cried: 'and so you won't let Lucilla go home with you? I am sure the curricle will hold us all nicely; for I am very little, and Lucilla is not very big.'—'Will *you* persuade her, Celia?' said I,—'O,' said she, 'she does not want persuading; she is willing enough, and I will run to papa and mamma and ask their leave, and then Lucilla will go and be glad: won't you Lucilla?'

So saying, she sprung out of my arms, and ran out of the room; Lucilla would have followed and prevented her. I respectfully detained her. How could I neglect such an opportunity? Such an opening as the sweet prattler had given me it was impossible to overlook. The impulse was too powerful to be resisted; I gently replaced her on her seat, and in language which, if it did any justice to my feelings, was the most ardent, tender, and respectful, poured out my whole heart. I believe my words were incoherent; I am sure they were sincere.

She was evidently distressed. Her emotion prevented her replying. But it was the emotion of surprise, not of resentment. Her confusion bore no symptom of displeasure. Blushing and hesitating, she at last said—'My father, Sir—my mother.' Here her voice failed her. I recollected with joy, that on the application of Lord Staunton, she had allowed of no such reference, nay she had forbidden it.

'I take your reference joyfully,' said I, 'only tell me that if I am so happy as to obtain their consent, you will not withhold yours.' She ventured to raise her timid eyes to mine, and her modest but expressive look encouraged me almost as much as any words could have done.

At that moment the door opened, and in came Sir John with the other drawing of the conservatory in his hand. After having examined us both with his keen, critical eye; 'Well, Miss Stanley,' said he, with a look and tone which had more meaning than she could well stand, 'here is the other drawing. As you look as if you had been *calmly* examining the first, you will now give me your *cool*, *deliberate* opinion of the merits of both.' He had the cruelty to lay so much stress on the words calm and deliberate, and to pronounce them in so arch a manner, and so ironical a tone, as clearly showed, he read in her countenance that no epithets could possibly have been so ill applied.

Lady Belfield came in immediately after. 'Well, Caroline,' said he, with a significant glance, 'Miss Stanley has deeply considered the subject since you went; I never saw her look more interested about any thing. I don't think she is dissatisfied on the whole. General approbation is all she now expresses. She will have time to spy out faults hereafter: she sees none at present. All is beauty, grace, and proportion.'

As if this was not enough, in ran Celia quite out of breath—'O, Lucilla,' cried she, 'Papa and Mamma won't let you go with Charles, though I told them you begged and prayed to go.' Lucilla, the pink of whose cheeks was become crimson, said angrily; 'how Celia! what do you mean?' 'Oh, no,' replied the child, 'I mean to say that *I* begged and prayed, and I thought you looked as if you would like to go—though Charles did not ask you, and so I told Papa.'

This was too much. The Belfields laughed outright; but Lady Belfield had the charity to take Lucilla's hand, saying, 'come into my dressing-room, my dear, and let us settle this conservatory business. This prattling child will never let us get on.' Miss Stanley followed, her face glowing with impatience. Celia, whom I detained, called after her—'Papa only said there was not room in the curricle for three, but if 'tis only a little way I am sure we could sit—could not we, Lucilla?' Lucilla was now happily out of hearing.

Though I was hurt that her delicacy had suffered so much, yet I own I hugged the little innocent author of this confusion with additional fondness. Sir John's raillery, now that Lucilla could be no longer pained by it, was cordially received, or rather I was inattentive to every object but the one of which my heart was full. To be heard, to be accepted, though tacitly, to be referred to parents who I knew had no will but hers,

> Was such a sacred and homefelt delight,
> Such sober certainty of waking bliss
> As I ne'er felt till now.

During the remainder of the day I found no means of speaking to Mr. Stanley. Always frank and cheerful, he neither avoided nor sought me, but the arrival of company prevented our being thrown together. Lucilla appeared at dinner as usual: a little graver and more silent, but always unaffected, natural and delicate. Sir John whispered to me, that she had intreated her mother to keep Celia out of the way, till

this curricle business was a little got out of her head.

CHAP. XLIII.

THE next morning, as soon as I thought Mr. Stanley had retreated to his library, I followed him thither. He was busy writing letters. I apologized for my intrusion. He laid his papers aside, and invited me to sit by him.

'You are too good, Sir,' said I, 'to receive with so much kindness a culprit who appears before you ingenuously to acknowledge the infraction of a treaty into which he had the honour of entering with you. I fear that a few days are wanting of my prescribed month. I had resolved to obey you with the most religious scrupulousness; but a circumstance trifling in itself, has led almost irresistibly to a declaration, which in obedience to your commands I had resolved to postpone. But though it is somewhat premature, I hope, however, you will not condemn my precipitancy. I have ventured to tell your charming daughter how necessary she is to my happiness. She does not reject me. She refers me to her father.'

'You have your peace to make with my daughter, I can tell you, Sir,' said Mr. Stanley, looking gravely, 'I fear you have mortally offended her.' I was dreadfully alarmed. 'You know not how you afflict me, Sir,' said I; 'how have I offended Miss Stanley?' 'Not Miss Stanley,' said he, smiling, 'but Miss Celia Stanley,' who extremely resents having been banished from the drawing-room yesterday evening.'

'If Celia's displeasure is all I have to fear, Sir, I am most fortunate. Oh, Sir, my happiness, the peace of my future life is in your hands. But first tell me you forgive the violation of my promise.'

'I am willing to believe, Charles,' replied he, 'that you kept the spirit of your engagement, though you broke it in the letter; and for an unpremeditated breach of an obligation of this nature, we must not, I believe, be too rigorous. Your conduct since your declaration to me, has confirmed the affection which your character had before excited. You were probably surprised and hurt at my cold reception of your proposal; a proposal which gave me a deeper satisfaction than I can express. Yet I was no dissembler in suppressing the pleasure I felt at an address so every way desirable. My dear Charles, I know a little of human nature. I know how susceptible the youthful heart is of impressions. I know how apt these impressions are to be obliterated; a new face, a more advantageous connexion.' 'Hold, Sir,' said I, indignantly interrupting him, 'you cannot think so meanly of me. You cannot rate the son of your friend so low.'

'I am very far indeed, replied he, 'from rating you low. I know you abhor mercenary considerations; but I know also that you are a young man, lively, ardent, impressible. I know the rapid effect which leisure, retirement, rural scenes, daily opportunities of seeing a young woman not ugly, of conversing with a young woman not disagreeable, may produce on the heart, or rather on the imagination. I was aware that seeing no other, conversing with no other, none at least that, to speak honestly, I should consider as a fair competitor, hardly left you an unprejudiced judge of the state of your own heart. I was not sure but that this sort of easy commerce might produce a feeling of complacency which might be mistaken for love. I could not consent that mere accident, mere leisure, the mere circumstance of being thrown together should irrevocably entangle either of you. I was desirous of affording you time to see, to know, and to judge. I would not take advantage of your first emotions. I would not take advantage of your friendship for me. I would not take advantage of your feeling ardently, till I had given you time to judge temperately, and examine fairly.'

I assured him I was equally at a loss to express my gratitude of his kindness, and my veneration of his wisdom; and thanked him in terms of affectionate energy.

'My regard for you,' said he, 'is not of yesterday. I have taken a warm interest in your character and happiness almost ever since you have been in being; and in a way more intimate and personal than you can suspect.'

So saying he arose, unlocked the drawer of a cabinet which stood behind him, and took out a large packet of letters. He then resumed his seat, and holding out the direction on the covers, asked me if I was acquainted with the handwriting. A tear involuntarily startled into my eye as I exclaimed—'it is the well known hand of my beloved father.'

'Listen to me attentively,' resumed he. 'You are not ignorant that never were two men more firmly attached by all the ties which ever cemented a Christian friendship, than your lamented father and myself. Our early youth was spent in the same studies, the same pleasures, the same society. 'We took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God as friends.' He condescendingly overlooked my being five or six years younger than himself. After his marriage with your excellent mother, the current of life carried us different ways, but without causing any abatement in the warmth of our attachment.

'I continued to spend one month every year with him at the Priory, till I myself married. You were then not more than three or four years old; and your engaging manners, and sweet temper, laid the foundation of an affection which had not been diminished by time, and the reports of your progress. Sedentary habits on the part of your father, and a rapidly increasing family on mine, kept us stationary at the two extremities of the kingdom. I settled at the Grove, and both as husband and father have been happiest of the happy.

'As soon as Lucilla was born, your father and I, simultaneously, formed a wish that it might be possible to perpetuate our friendship by the future union of our children.'

When Mr. Stanley uttered these words, my heart beat so fast, and the agitation of my whole frame was so visible, that he paused for a moment; but perceiving that I was all ear, and that I made a silent motion for him to proceed, he went on.

'This was a favourite project with us. We pursued it however with the moderation of men who had a settled sense of the uncertainty of all human things, of human life itself; and with a strong conviction of the probability that our project might never be realized.

'Without too much indulging the illusions of hope, we agreed that there could be no harm in educating our children for each other; in inspiring them with corresponding tastes, similar inclinations, and especially with an exact conformity in their religious views. We never indulged the presumptuous thought of counteracting providential dispensations, of conquering difficulties which time might prove to be insuperable, and above all, we determined never to be so weak, or so unjust, as to think of compelling their affections. We had both studied the human heart long enough to know that it is a perverse and wayward thing. We were convinced that it would not be dictated in a matter which involved its dearest interests; we knew that it liked to pick out its own happiness in its own way.'

As Mr. Stanley proceeded, my heart melted with grateful love for a father who, in making such a provision for my happiness, had generously left my choice so free. But while my conscience seemed to reproach me, as if I had not deserved such tenderness, I rejoiced that my memory had no specific charge to bring against it.

'For all these reasons,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'we mutually agreed to bury our wishes in our own bosoms; to commit the event to Him by whom all events are governed; never to name you to each other but in a general way; to excite no factitious liking, to elicit no artificial passion, and to kindle neither impatience, curiosity, nor interest. Nothing more than a friendly family regard was ever manifested, and the names of Charles and Lucilla were never mentioned together.

'In this you have found your advantage. Had my daughter been accustomed to hear you spoken of with any particularity; had she been conscious that any important consequences might have attached to your visit, you would have lost the pleasure of seeing her in her native simplicity of character. Undesigning and artless, I trust she would have been under any circumstance, but to have been unreserved and open would have been scarcely possible; nor might you, my dear Charles, with your strong sense of filial piety, have been able exactly to discriminate how much of your attachment was choice, how much was duty. The awkwardness of restraint would have diminished the pleasure of intercourse to both.

'Knowing that the childish brother and sister sort of intimacy was not the most promising mode for the development of your mutual sentiments, we agreed that you should not meet till within a year or two of the period when it would be proper that the union, if ever, might take place.

'We were neither of us of an age or character to indulge very romantic ideas of the doctrine of sympathies. Still we saw no reason for excluding such a possibility. If we succeeded, we knew that we were training two beings in a conformity of Christian principles, which, if they did not at once attract affection, would not fail to ensure it, should inferior motives first influence your mutual liking. And if it failed, we should each have educated a Christian, who would be likely to carry piety and virtue into two other families. Much good would attend our success, and no possible evil could attend our failure.

'I could show you, I believe, near a hundred letters on each side, of which you were the unconscious subject. Your father, in his last illness, returned all mine, to prevent a premature discovery, knowing how soon his papers would fall into your hands. If it will give you pleasure, you may peruse a correspondence, of which, for almost twenty years, you were the little hero. In reading my letters you will make yourself master of the character of Lucilla. You will read the history of her mind; you will mark the unfolding of her faculties, and the progress of her education. In those of your father you will not be sorry to trace back your own steps.'

Here Mr. Stanley making a pause, I bowed my grateful acceptance of his obliging offer. I was afraid to speak, I was almost afraid to breathe, lest I should lose a word of a communication so interesting.

'You now see,' resumed Mr. Stanley, 'why you were sent to Edinburgh. Cambridge and Oxford were too near London, and of course too near Hampshire, to have maintained the necessary separation. As soon as you left the University, your father proposed accompanying you on a visit to the Grove. Like fond parents, we had prepared each other to expect to see a being just such a one as each would have wished for the companion of his child.

'This was to be merely a visit of experiment. You were both too young to marry. But we were impatient to place you both in a post of observation; to see the result of a meeting; to mark what sympathy there would be between two minds formed with a view to each other.

'But vain were all the projects of man. Oh! blindness to the future! You doubtless remember, that just as every thing was prepared for your journey southwards, your dear father was seized of the lingering illness of which he died. Till almost the last, he was able to write me in his intervals of ease, short letters on the favourite topic. I remember with what joy his heart dilated, when he told me of your positive refusal to leave him, on his pressing you to pursue the plan already settled, and to make your visit to London and the Grove without him. I will read you the passage from his letter.'—He read as follows:

'In vain have I endeavoured to drive this dear son for a short time from me. He asked, with the indignant feeling of affronted filial piety, if I could propose to him any compensation for his absence from my sick couch? 'I make no sacrifice of duty,' said he, 'in preferring you. If I make any sacrifice, it is to pleasure.'

Seeing my eyes overflow with grateful tenderness, Mr. Stanley said, 'if I can find his last letter I will shew it you.' Then looking over

the pacquet,— 'here it is,' said he, putting it into my hands with visible emotion. Neither of us had strength of voice to be able to read it aloud. It was written at several times.

"*Priory, Wednesday, March*, 18, 1807.

'Stanley—I feel that I am dying. Death is awful, my dear friend, but it is neither surprising nor terrible. I have been too long accustomed steadily to contemplate it at a distance, to start from it now it is near.

'As a man I have feared death. As a Christian, I trust, I have overcome this fear. Why should I dread that, which mere reason taught me is not an extinction of my being, and which revelation has convinced me will be an improvement of it? An improvement, O how inconceivable!

'For several years I have habituated myself every day to reflect for some moments on the vanity of life, the certainty of death, the awfulness of judgment, and the duration of eternity.

'The separation from my excellent wife is a trial from which I should utterly shrink, were I not sustained by the Christian hope. When we married, we knew that we were not immortal. I have endeavoured to familiarize to her and to myself the inevitable separation, by constantly keeping up in the minds of both the idea that one of us *must* be the survivor. I have endeavoured to make that idea supportable by the conviction that the survivorship will be short—the re-union certain—speedy—eternal. *O præclarum diem!** &c. &c. How gloriously does Christianity exalt the rapture by ennobling the objects, of this sublime apostrophe!'

Friday, the 20th.

'As to the union of my son with Lucilla, you and I, my friend, have long learned from an authority higher than that classical one, of which we have frequently admired the expression, and lamented the application, that long views, and remote hopes, and distant expectations, become not so short-sighted, so short-lived a creature as man,† I trust, however, that our plans have been carried on with a complete conviction of this brevity; with an entire acquiescence in the will of the great Arbiter of life and death. I have told Charles, it is my wish that he should visit you soon after my death. I durst not command it—for this incomparable youth, who has sacrificed so much to his father, will find that he has a mother worthy of still greater sacrifices. As soon as he can prevail on himself to leave her, you will see him. May he and your Lucilla behold each other with the eyes, with which, each of us views his own child! If they see each other with indifference, never let them know our wishes. It would perplex and hamper those to whom we wish perfect freedom of thought and action. If they conceive a mutual attachment, reveal our project. In such minds, it will strengthen that attachment.—The approbation of a living and the desire of a deceased parent will sanctify their union.

'I must break off through weakness.'

'Monday, 23.

'I resume my pen, which I thought I had held for the last time. May God bless and direct our children! Infinite wisdom permits me not to see their union. Indeed my interest in all earthly things weakens. Even my solicitude for this event is somewhat diminished. The most important circumstance, if it have not God for its object, now seems comparatively little. The longest life, with all its concerns, shrinks to a point in the sight of a dying man whose eye is filled by eternity. Eternity! Oh, my friend, Eternity is a depth which no geometry can measure, no arithmetic calculate, no imagination conceive, no rhetoric describe. The eye of a dying Christian seems gifted to penetrate depths hid from the wisdom of philosophy. It looks athwart the dark valley without dismay, cheered by the bright scene beyond it. It looks with a kind of chastised impatience to that land where happiness will be only holiness perfected. There all the promises of the gospel will be accomplished. There afflicted virtue will rejoice at its past trials, and acknowledge their subservience to its present bliss. There the secret self-denials of the righteous shall be recognized and rewarded—and all the hopes of the Christian shall have their complete consummation.'

Saturday, 28th.

'My weakness increases—I have written this at many intervals. My body faints, but in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Oh, Stanley! if pain is trying, if death is awful to him, who knows in whom he has trusted; how is pain endured, how is death encountered by those who have no such support?'

Tuesday, the 31st.

'I am better to-day—If I experience little of that rapture which some require, as the sign of their acceptance, I yet have a good hope through grace. Nay there are moments when I rejoice with joy unspeakable. I would not produce this joy as any certain criterion of my safety, because, from the nature of my disease, there are also moments when my spirits sink, and this might equally furnish arguments against my state, to those who decide by frames and feelings. I think my faith as sound, my pardon as sure, when these privileges are withdrawn, as when I enjoy them. No depression of spirits can make my evidences less solid, though it may render the review of them less delightful.'

Friday, 3d April.

'Stanley! my departure is at hand. My eternal redemption draweth nigh. My hope is full of immortality. This is my comfort—not that my sins are few or small, but that they are, I humbly trust, pardoned, through him who loved me, and gave himself for me. Faithful is HE that has promised, and HIS promises are not-too great to be made good—for Omniscience is my promiser, and I have Omnipotence itself for my security.—Adieu!

* See this whole beautiful passage in Cicero de Senectute.

† Horace, in speaking of the brevity and uncertainty of life, seldom fails to produce it as an incentive to sensual indulgence. See particularly the fourth and eleventh Odes of the first book.

* * * * *

On the cover was written, in Mr. Stanley's hand —he died three days after!

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It is impossible to describe the mingled and conflicting emotions of my soul, while I perused this letter. Gratitude that I had possessed such a father—sorrow that I had lost him—transport in anticipating an event which had been his earnest wish for almost twenty years—regret that he was not permitted to witness it—devout joy that he was in a state so superior to even *my* sense of happiness—a strong feeling of the uncertainty and brevity of *all* happiness—a solemn resolution that I would never act unworthy of such a father—a fervent prayer that I might be enabled to keep that resolution:—all these emotions so agitated and divided my whole mind as to render me unfit for any society, even for that of Lucilla. I withdrew, gratefully pressing Mr. Stanley's hand; he kindly returned the pressure, but neither of us attempted to speak.

He silently put my father's packet into my hands. I shut myself into my apartment, and read for three hours, letters for which I hope to be the better in time and in eternity. I found in them a treasure of religious wisdom, excellent maxims of human prudence, a thorough acquaintance with life and manners, a keen insight into human nature in the abstract, and a nice discrimination of individual characters; admirable documents for general education, the application of those documents to my particular turn of character, and diversified methods for improving it.—The pure delight to which I looked forward in reading these letters with Lucilla, soon became my predominant feeling.

I returned to the company with a sense of felicity, which the above feelings and reflections had composed into a soothing tranquillity. My joy was sobered without being abated. I received the cordial congratulations of my friends. Mrs. Stanley behaved to me with increased affection, she presented me to her daughter, with whom I afterwards passed two hours. This interview left me nothing to desire, but that my gratitude to the Almighty Dispenser of happiness might bear in some little proportion to his blessings.

As I was passing through the hall, after dinner, I spied little Celia peeping out of the door of the children's apartment, in hope of seeing me pass. She flew to me, and begged I would take her into the company. As I knew the interdict was taken off, I carried her into the saloon where they were sitting. She ran into Lucilla's arms and said, in a voice which she meant for a whisper, but loud enough to be heard by the whole company, 'Do, dear Lucilla, forgive me, I will never say another word about the curricle, and you shan't go to the Priory since you don't like it.' Lucilla found means to silence her, by showing her the pictures in the 'Peacock at Home;' and without looking up to observe the general smile, contrived to attract the sweet child's attention to this beautiful little poem, in spite of Sir John, who did his utmost to widen the mischief.

CHAP. XLIV.

The next day in the afternoon Dr. Barlow called on us. By the uncommon seriousness of his countenance I saw something was the matter. 'You will be shocked,' said he, 'to hear that Mr. Tyrrel is dying, if not actually dead. He was the night before last, seized with a paralytic stroke. He lay a long time without sense or motion; a delirium followed. In a short interval of reason he sent earnestly imploring to see me. Seldom have I witnessed so distressing a scene.

'As I entered the room he fixed his glassy eyes full upon me, quite unconscious who I was, and groaned out in an inward hollow voice—'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries are come upon you.' I asked how he did:—he replied still from St. James—'How? why my gold and silver are cankered, the rust of them shall witness against me; they eat up my flesh as it were fire.'

'I was astonished,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'to see so exact a memmory coupled with so wild an imagination. 'Be composed, Sir,' said I, seeing he began to recollect me, 'this deep contrition is a favourable symptom.' 'Dr. Barlow,' replied he, grasping my hand with a vehemence which corresponded with his look, 'have you never heard of riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt? Restitution! Doctor, restitution!—and it must be immediate, or it will be too late.' I was now deeply alarmed. 'Surely, Sir,' said I, 'you are not unhappily to adopt St. James's next words—'forgive me;—but you cannot surely have 'defrauded.'' 'O no, no,' cried he, 'I have been what the world calls honest, but not what the Judge of quick and dead will call so. The restitution I must make is not to the rich, for any thing I have *taken* from them, but to the poor, for what I have *kept* from them. Hardness of heart would have been but a common sin in a common man; but I have been a professor, Doctor, I will not say a hypocrite, for I deceived myself as much as others. But oh! how hollow has my profession been!'

'Here seeing him ready to faint,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'I imposed silence on him, till he had taken a cordial. This revived him, and he went on.

'"I was miserable in my early course of profligacy. I was disappointed in my subsequent schemes of ambition. I expected more from the world than it had to give. But I continued to love it with all its disappointments. Under whatever new shape it presented its temptations, it was still my idol. I had always loved money; but other passions more turbulent had been hitherto predominant. These I at length renounce. Covetousness now became my reigning sin. Still it was to the broken cistern that I cleaved. Still it was on the broken reed that I leaned. Still I was unhappy, I was at a loss whither to turn for comfort. Of religion I scarcely knew the first principles.

'"In this state I met with a plausible, but ill-informed man. He had zeal, and a sort of popular eloquence; but he wanted knowledge, and argument, and soundness. I was, however struck with his earnestness, and with the im

portance of some truths which, though common to others, were new to me. But his scheme was hollow and imperfect, and his leading principles subversive of all morality."'

'Here Mr. Tyrrel paused. I entreated him to spare himself; but after a few deep groans he proceeded.

'"Whether his opinions had made *himself* immoral I never inquired. It is certain they were calculated to make his hearers so. Instead of lowering my spiritual disease, by prescribing repentance and humility, he inflamed it by cordials. All was high—all was animating—all was safe! On no better ground than my avowed discontent, he landed me at once in a security so much the more fatal, as it laid asleep all apprehension. He mistook my uneasiness for a complete change. My talking of sin was made a substitute for renouncing it. Proud of a rich man for a convert, he led me to mistake conviction for conversion. I was buoyed up with an unfounded confidence. I adopted a religion which promised pardon without repentance, happiness without obedience, and heaven without holiness. I had found a short road to peace. I never inquired if it were a safe one."'

'The poor man now fell back, unable to speak for some minutes. Then rallying again, he resumed, in a still more broken voice.

'"Here I stop short. My religion had made no change in my heart, it therefore made none in my life. I read good books, but they were low and fanatical in their language, and antinomian in their principle. But my religious ignorance was so deplorable, that their novelty caught strong hold of me."'

'I now desired him,' continued Dr. Barlow, 'not to exhaust himself farther. I prayed with him. He was struck with awe at the holy energy in the office for the sick, which was quite new to him. He owned he had not suspected the church to be so evangelical. This is no uncommon error. Hot-headed and superficial men, when they are once alarmed, are rather caught by phrases than sentiments, by terms than principles. It is this ignorance of the doctrines of the Bible and of the church in which men of the world unhappily live, that makes it so difficult for us to address them under sickness and affliction. We have no common ground on which to stand; no intelligible medium through which to communicate with them. It is having both a language and a science to learn at once.'

In the morning Dr. Barlow again visited Mr. Tyrrel. He found him still in great perturbation of mind. Feeling himself quite sensible he had begun to make his will. He had made large bequests to several charities. Dr. Barlow highly approved of this; but reminded him, that though he himself would never recommend charity as a commutation or a bribe; yet some immediate acts of bounty, while there was a possibility of his recovery, would be a better earnest of his repentance, than the bequeathing his whole estate when it could be of no further use to himself. He was all acquiescence.

He desired to see Mr. Stanley. He recommended to him his nephew, over whose conduct Mr. Stanley promised to have an eye. He made him and Dr. Barlow joint executors. He offered to leave them half his fortune. With their usual disinterestedness they positively refused to accept it, and suggested to him a better mode of bestowing it.

He lifted up his hands and eyes, saying, 'This is indeed Christianity; pure and undefiled religion! If it be not faith, it is its fruits. If it be not the procuring cause of salvation it is one evidence of a safe state. O, Mr. Stanley, our last conversation has sunk deep into my heart. You had begun to pull the veil from my eyes; but nothing tears the whole mask off, like the hand of death, like impending judgment. How little have I considered eternity! Judgment was not in all my thoughts—I had got rid of the terrors of responsibility! O, Doctor Barlow, is there any hope for me?'

'Sir,' replied the Doctor, 'your sin is not greater because you feel it; so far from it, your danger diminishes in proportion as it is discerned. Your condition is not worse, but better, because you are become sensible of your sins and wants. I judge far more favourably of your state now, than when you thought so well of it. Your sense of the evil of your own heart is the best proof of your sincerity; your repentance towards God is the best evidence of your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.'

'Doctor, it is too late,' replied the sick man. 'How can I shew that my repentance is sincere? In this miserable condition how can I glorify God?'

'Sir,' replied Dr. Barlow, 'you must lay anew the whole foundation of your faith. That Saviour whom you had unhappily adopted as a substitute for virtue, must be received as a propitiation for sin. If you recover, you must devote yourself, spirit, soul, and body to his service. You must adorn his gospel by your conduct; you must plead his cause in your conversation; you must recommend his doctrines by your humility; you must dedicate every talent God has given you to his glory. If he continue to visit you with sickness, this will call new and more difficult Christian graces into exercise. If by this severe affliction you lose all ability to do God actual service, you may perhaps glorify him more effectually by casting yourself entirely on him for support, by patient suffering for his sake who suffered every thing for yours. You will have an additional call for trusting in the divine promises; an additional occasion for imitating the divine example; a stronger motive for saying practically, the cup which my Father has given me shall I not drink it.'

'O, Doctor,' said the unhappy man, 'my remorse arises not merely from my having neglected this or that moral duty, this or that act of charity, but from the melancholy evidence which that neglect affords that my religion was not sincere.'

'I repeat, Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, 'that your false security and unfounded hope were more alarming than your present distress of mind. Examine your own heart, fear not to probe it to the bottom; it will be a salutary smart. As you are able, I will put you into a course of reading the Scriptures, with a view to promote self-examination. Try yourself by the strait rule they hold out, pray fervently that the Al-

mighty may assist you by his Spirit, and earnestly endeavour to suffer as well as to do his whole will.'

Dr. Barlow says he thinks there is now as little prospect of his perfect recovery, as of his immediate dissolution; but as far as one human creature can judge of the state of another, he believes the visitation will be salutary.

CHAP. XLV.

As we were setting at supper, after Dr. Barlow had left us, Lady Belfield, turning to me, said, 'she had had a governess proposed to her from a quarter I should little expect to hear.' She then produced a letter, informing her that Mr. Fentham was lately found dead in his bed of an apoplexy. That he had died insolvent; and that his large income ceasing with his life, his family were plunged into the utmost distress. That Mrs. Fentham experienced the most mortifying neglect from her numerous and noble friends, who now, that she could no longer amuse them with balls, concerts, and suppers, revenged themselves by wondering what she could ever mean by giving them at all, and declaring what bore it had always been to them to go to her parties. They now insisted that people ought to confine themselves to their own station, and live within their income, though they themselves had lifted her above her station, and had led her to exceed her income.

'The poor woman,' continued Lady Belfield, 'is in extreme distress. Her magnificently furnished house will go but a very little way towards satisfying her creditors. That house, whose clamorous knocker used to keep the neighbourhood awake, is already reduced to utter stillness. The splendid apartments, brilliant with lustres and wax-lights, and crowded with company, are become a frightful solitude, terrifying to those to whom solitude has not one consolation or resource to offer. Poor Mrs. Fentham is more wounded by this total desertion of those whom she so sumptuously entertained, and so obsequiously flattered, than by her actual wants.'

'It is,' said Sir John, 'a fine exemplification of the friendships of the world,

Confederacies in vice, or leagues in pleasure.

'Lady Denham, when applied to,' resumed Lady Belfield, 'said, that she was extremely sorry for them; but as she thought extravagance the greatest of all faults, it would look like an encouragement to imprudence if she did any thing for them. Their extravagance, however, had never been objected to by her, till the fountain which supplied it was stopped: and she had for years made no scruple of winning money almost nightly from the woman whose distresses she now refused to relieve. Lady Denham farther assigned the misery into which the elopement of her darling child with Signior Squallini had brought her, as an additional reason for withholding her kindness from Mrs. Fentham.'

'It is a reason,' said I, interrupting Lady Belfield, 'which, in a right-turned mind, would have a directly contrary operation. When domestic calamities overtake ourselves, is it not the precise moment for holding out a hand to the wretched? for diminishing the misery abroad which at home may be irretrievable?

'Lady Bab Lawless, to whom Mrs. Fentham applied for assistance, coolly advised her to send her daughters to service, saying, 'that she knew of no acquirement they had which would be of any use to them, except their skill in hair-dressing.'

'It seemed a cruel reproach from a professed friend, said Sir John, and yet it is a literal truth. I know not what can be done for them, or for what they are fit. Their accomplishments might be turned to some account, if they were accompanied with real knowledge, useful acquirements, or sober habits. Mrs. Fentham wishes us to recommend them as governesses. But can I conscientiously recommend to others, girls with whom I could not trust my own family? Had they been taught to look no higher than the clerks of their father, who had been a clerk himself, they might have been happy; but those very men will now think them as much beneath themselves, as the young ladies lately thought they were above them.'

'I have often,' said Mr. Stanley, 'been amused with observing what a magic transformation the same event produces on two opposite classes of characters. The misfortunes of their acquaintance convert worldly friends into instantaneous strictness of principle. The faults of the distressed are produced as a plea for their own hard-hearted covetousness. While that very misfortune so relaxes the strictness of good men, that the faults are forgotten in the calamity; and they, who had been perpetually warning the prodigal of his impending ruin, when that ruin comes are the first to relieve him. The worldly friend sees only the errors of the sufferer, the Christian sees only his distress.'

It was agreed among us, that some small contribution must be added to a little sum, that had been already raised, for their immediate relief; but that nothing was so difficult, as effectually to serve persons whose views were so disproportioned to their deserts, and whose habits would be too likely to carry corruption into families who might receive them from charitable motives.

The conversation then fell insensibly on the pleasure we had enjoyed since we had been together; and on the delights of rational society, and confidential intercourse such as ours had been, where minds mingled, and affection and esteem were reciprocal. Mr. Stanley said many things which evinced how happily his piety was combined with the most affectionate tenderness of heart. Indeed I had always been delighted to observe in him, a quality which is not so common as it is thought to be, a thorough capacity for friendship.

'My dear Stanley,' said Sir John, 'it is of the very essence of human enjoyments, that they must have an end. I observe with regret, that the time assigned for our visit is more than elapsed. We have prolonged it beyond our intention, beyond our convenience: but we have, I trust, been imbibing principles, stealing habits,

and borrowing plans, which will ever make us consider this visit as an important era in our lives.

'My excellent Caroline is deeply affected with all she has seen and heard at the Grove. We must now leave it, though not without reluctance. We must go and endeavour to imitate what, six weeks ago, we almost feared to contemplate. Lady Belfield and I have compared notes. On the most mature deliberation, we agree that we have lived long enough to the world. We agree that it is time to begin to live to ourselves, and to Him who made us. We propose in future to make our winters in London much shorter. We intend to remove early every spring to Beechwood, which we will no longer consider as a temporary residence, but as our home; we will supply it with every thing that may make it interesting, and improving to us all. We are resolved to educate our children in the fear of God. Our fondness for them is rather increased than diminished; but in the exercise of that fondness, we will remember that we are to train them up for immortality. We will watch over them as creatures for whose eternal well being a vast responsibility will attach to ourselves.

'In our new plan of life, we shall have fewer sacrifices to make than most people in our situation; for we have long felt a growing indifference for things which we appeared to enjoy. Of the world, we are only going to give up that part which is not worth keeping, and of which we are really weary. In securing our real friends, we shall not regret, if we drop some acquaintance by the way. The wise and the worthy we shall more than ever cherish. In your family, we have enjoyed those true pleasures which entail no repentance. That cheerfulness which alone is worthy of accountable beings, we shall industriously maintain in our own. I bless God if we have not so many steps to tread back, as some others have, who are entering, upon principle, on a new course of life.

'We have always endeavoured, though with much imperfection, to fill some duties to each other, to our children, to our friends, and to the poor. But of the prime duty, the main spring of action and of all moral goodness, duty to God, we have not been sufficiently mindful. I hope we have at length learnt to consider Him as the fountain of all good, and the gospel of his Son, as the fountain of all hope. This new principle, I am persuaded, will never impair our cheerfulness, it will only fix it on a solid ground. By purifying the motive it will raise the enjoyment.

'But if we have not so many habits to correct as poor Carlton had, I question if we have not as many difficulties to meet in another way. His loose course was discreditable. His vices made him stand ill with the world. He would therefore acquire nothing but credit in changing his outward practice. Lady Belfield and I, on the contrary, stand rather too well with the world. We had just that external regularity, that cool indifference about our own spiritual improvement, and the wrong courses of our friends, which procure regard, because they do not interfere with others, nor excite jealousy for ourselves. But we have now to encounter that censure, which we have perhaps hitherto been too solicitous to avoid. It will still be our trial, but I humbly trust that it will be no longer our snare. Our morality pleased, because it seemed to proceed merely from a sense of propriety; our strictness will offend, when it is found to spring from a principle of religion.

'To what tendency in the heart of man, my dear Stanley, is it owing, that religion is commonly seen to excite more suspicion than the want of it? When a man of the world meets with a gay, thoughtless, amusing person, he seldom thinks of enquiring whether such a one be immoral, or an unbeliever, or a profligate, though the bent of his conversation rather leans that way. Satisfied with what he finds him, he feels little solicitude to ascertain what he really is. But no sooner does actual piety show itself in any man, than your friends are putting you on your guard;—there is instantly a suggestion, a hint, a suspicion. 'Does he not carry things too far?' 'Is he not righteous over much?' 'Is he not intemperate in his zeal?' 'Above all things is he *sincere*?' and in short—for that is the centre in which all the lines of suspicion and reprobation meet, '*Is he not a methodist?*'

'I trust, however, that, through divine grace our minds will be fortified against all attacks on this our weak side; this pass through which the sort of assaults most formidable to *us* will be likely to enter. I was mentioning this danger to Caroline this morning. She opened her Bible, over which she now spends much of her solitary time, and with an emphasis foreign from her usual manner read,

'Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?'

As Sir John repeated these words, I saw Lucilla, who was sitting next Lady Belfield, snatch one of her hands and kiss it, with a rapture which she had no power to controul. It was evident that nothing but our presence restrained her from rising to embrace her friend. Her fine eyes glistened, but seeing that I observed her, she gently let go the hand she held, and tried to look composed. I cannot describe the chastised but not less fervent joy of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. Their looks expressed the affectionate interest they took in Sir John's honest declaration. Their hearts overflowed with gratitude to Him without whom, 'nothing is strong, nothing is holy.' For my own part, I felt myself raised

Above this visible diurnal sphere.

Sir John afterwards said, 'I begin more and more to see the scantiness of all morality which has not the love of God for its motive. *That* virtue will not carry us safely, and will not carry us far, which looks to human estimation as its reward. As it was a false and inadequate principle which first set it agoing, it will always stop short of the true ends of goodness. Do not think, my dear Stanley,' continued he, 'that I fancy it is only our habits which want improving. Dr. Barlow has convinced me that there must be *a mutation of the whole man:* that the change in our practice must grow out of a new motive; not merely out of an amended principle, but a new principle; not an improve-

ment in some particulars, but a general determining change.'

'My dear Belfield,' replied Mr. Stanley, 'all reformation short of this, though it may obtain credit, brings neither peace nor acceptance. This change shows itself, gradually perhaps, but unequivocally, by enlightening the understanding, awakening the conscience, purifying the affections, subduing the will, reforming the life.'

Lady Belfield expressed, with a sweet humility, her deep conviction of the truth of these remarks. After some farther discussion, she said, 'Sir John, I have been seriously thinking that I ought not to indulge in the expense of this intended conservatory. We will, if you please, convert the money to the building a charity school. I cannot consent to incur such a superfluous expense merely for my amusement.'

'My dear Caroline,' replied Sir John, 'through the undeserved goodness of God, my estate is so large, and through your excellent management it is so unimpaired, that we will not give up the conservatory, unless Mr. Stanley thinks we ought to give it up. But we will adopt Lucilla's idea of combining a charity with an indulgence —we will associate the charity school with the conservatory. This union will be a kind of monument to our friends at the Grove, from whom you have acquired the love of plants, and I of religious charity.'

We all looked with anxious expectation at Mr. Stanley. He gave it as his opinion, that as Lady Belfield was now resolved to live the greater part of the year in the country, she ought to have some amusements in lieu of those she was going to give up. 'Costly decorations and expensive gardens,' continued he, 'at a place where the proprietors do not so much as *intend* to reside, have always appeared to me among the infatuations of opulence. To the expenses which they do not *want*, it is adding an expense which they do not *see*. But surely, at a mansion where an affluent family actually live, all reasonable indulgences should be allowed. And where a garden and green-house are to supply to the proprietor, the place of the abdicated theatre and ball room; and especially when it is to be a means in her hands of attaching her children to the country, and of teaching them to love home, I declare myself in favour of the conservatory.'

Lucilla's eyes sparkled, but she said nothing.

'It would be unfair,' continued Mr. Stanley, 'to blame too severely those, who, living constantly in the country, give a little into its appropriate pleasures. The real objects of censure seem to be those who, grafting bad taste on bad habits, bring into the country the amusements of the town, and superadd to such as are local, and natural, and innocent, such as are foreign, artificial, and corrupt.'

'My dear Stanley,' said Sir John, 'we have resolved to indemnify our poor neighbours for two injuries which we have been doing them. The one is, by our having lived so little among them: for I have now learnt, that the mere act of residence is a kind of charity, even in the uncharitable, as it necessarily causes much money to be spent, even where little is given. The other is, that we will endeavour to make up for our past indifference to their spiritual concerns by now acting as if we were aware that the poor have souls as well as bodies; and that, in the great day of account, the care of both will attach to our responsibility.'

Such a sense of sober joy seemed to pervade our little party, that we were not aware that the night was far advanced. Our minds were too highly wrought for much loquacity, when Phœbe suddenly exclaimed, 'Papa, why is it that happiness does not make one merry? I never was half so happy in my life, and yet I can hardly forbear crying: and I believe it is catching, Sir, for look, Lucilla is not much wiser than myself.'

The next day but one after this conversation, our valuable friends left us. Our separation was softened by the prospect of a speedy meeting. The day before they set out, Lady Belfield made an earnest request to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, that they would have the goodness to receive Fanny Stokes into their family for a few months, previous to her entering theirs as governess. 'I can think of no method so likely,' continued she, 'to raise the tone of education in my own family, as the transfusion into it of your spirit, and the adoption of your regulations.'—Mr. and Mrs. Stanley most cheerfully acceded to the proposal.

Sir John said, 'I was meditating the same request, but with an additional clause tacked to it, that of sending our eldest girl with Fanny, that the child also may get imbued with something of your family spirit, and be broken into better habits than she has acquired from our hitherto relaxed discipline.' This proposal was also cordially approved.

CHAP. XLVI.

Dr. Barlow came to the Grove to take leave of our friends. He found Sir John and I sitting in the library with Mr. Stanley. 'As I came from Mr. Tyrrel's,' said the Doctor, 'I met Mr. Flam going to see him. He seemed so anxious about his old friend, that a wish strongly presented itself to my mind that the awful situation of the sick man might be salutary to him.

'It is impossible to say,' continued he, 'what injury religion has suffered from the opposite characters of these two men. Flam, who gives himself no concern about the matter, is kind and generous; while Tyrrel, who has made a high profession, is mean and sordid. It has been said, of what use is religion, when morality has made Mr. Flam a better man than religion makes Mr. Tyrrel? Thus men of the world reason! But nothing can be more false than their conclusions. Flam is naturally an open, warm hearted man, but incorrect in many respects, and rather loose in his principles. His natural good propensities religion would have improved into solid virtues, and would have cured the more exceptionable parts of his character. But from religion he stands aloof.

'Tyrrel is naturally narrow and selfish. Religion has not made, but found him such. But what a religion has he adopted! A mere assumption of terms; a dead, inoperative, uninfluencing

notion, which he has taken up: not, I hope, with a view to deceive others, but by which he has grossly deceived himself. He had heard that religion was a cure for an uneasy mind; but he did not attend to the means by which the cure is effected, and it relieved not him.

'The corrupt principle whence his vices proceeded was not subdued. He did not desire to subdue it, because in the struggle he must have parted with what he resolved to keep. He adopted what he believed was a cheap and easy religion; little aware that the great fundamental scripture doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ was a doctrine powerfully opposing our corruptions, and involving in its comprehensive requirements, a new heart and a new life.'

At this moment Mr. Flam called at the Grove. 'I am just come from Tyrrel,' said he. 'I fear it is nearly over with him. Poor Ned! he is very low, almost in despair. I always told him that the time would come when he would be glad to exchange notions for actions. I am grieved for him. The remembrance of a kind deed or two done to a poor tenant, would be some comfort to him now, at a time when every man stands in need of comfort.'

'Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, 'the scene which I have lately witnessed at Mr. Tyrrel's makes me serious. If you and I were alone, I am afraid it would make me old. I will, however, suppress the answer I was tempted to make you, because I should not think it prudent or respectful to utter before company what, I am persuaded your good sense would permit me to say were we alone.'

'Doctor,' replied the good tempered, but thoughtless man, 'don't stand upon ceremony. You know I love a debate, and I insist on your saying what was in your mind to say. I don't fear getting out of any scrape you can bring me into. You are too well bred to offend, and, I hope, I am too well-natured to be easily offended. Stanley, I know, always takes your side. Sir John, I trust, will take mine; and so will the young man here, if he is like most other young men.'

'Allow me then to observe,' returned Dr. Barlow, 'that if Mr. Tyrrel has unhappily deceived himself, by resting too exclusively on a mere speculative faith; a faith which by his conduct did not evince itself to be of the right sort; yet, on the other hand, a dependence for salvation on our own benevolence, our own integrity, or any other good quality we may possess, is an error not less fatal, and far more usual. Such a dependence does as practically set at nought the Redeemer's sacrifice, as the avowed rejection of the infidel. Honesty and benevolence are among the noblest qualities; but where the one is practised for reputation, and the other from mere feeling, they are sadly delusive as to the ends of practical goodness. They have both indeed their reward; integrity in the credit it brings, and benevolence in the pleasure it yields. Both are beneficial to society; both, therefore, are politically valuable. Both sometimes lead me to admire the ordinations of that over-ruling power, which often uses as instruments of public good, men who acting well in many respects, are essentially useful to others; but who, acting from motives merely human, forfeit for themselves that high reward which those virtues would obtain, if they were evidences of a lively faith, and the results of Christian principle. Think me not severe, Mr. Flam. To be personal is always extremely painful to me.'

'No, no, Doctor,' replied he, 'I know you mean well. 'Tis your trade to give good counsel; and your lot I suppose to have it seldom followed. I shall hear you without being angry. You in your turn must not be angry if I hear you without being better.'

'I respect you, Sir, too much,' replied Dr. Barlow, 'to deceive you in a matter of such infinite importance. For one man who errs on Mr. Tyrrel's principle, a hundred err on yours. His mistake is equally pernicious, but is not equally common. I must repeat it. For one whose soul is endangered through an unwarrantable dependance on the Saviour, multitudes are destroyed not only by the open rejection, but through a fatal neglect of the salvation wrought by him. Many more perish through a presumptuous confidence in their own merits, than through an unscriptural trust in the merits of Christ.'

'Well, Doctor,' replied Mr. Flam, 'I must say, that I think an ounce of morality will go farther toward making up my account, than a ton of religion, for which no one but myself would be the better.'

'My dear Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, 'I will not presume to determine between the exact comparative proportions of two ingredients both of which are so indispensable in the composition of a Christian. I dare not hazard the assertion which of the two is the more perilous state; but I think I am justified in saying which of the two cases occurs most frequently.'

Mr. Flam said, 'I should be sorry, Dr. Barlow, to find out at this time of day that I have been all my life long in an error.'

'Believe me, Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, 'it is better to find it out now, than at a still later period. One good quality can never be made to supply the absence of another. There are no substitutes in this warfare. Nor can all the good qualities put together, if we could suppose them to unite in one man, and to exist without religion, stand proxy for the death of Christ. If they could so exist, it would be in the degree only, and not in the perfection required by that law which says, *do this and live.* So kind a neighbour as you are, so honest a gentleman, so generous a master as you are allowed to be, I cannot, Sir, think without pain of your losing the reward of such valuable qualities, by your placing your hope of eternal happiness in the exercise of them. Believe me, Mr. Flam, it is easier for a compassionate man, if he be not religious, to 'give all his goods to the poor,' than to bring every thought, 'nay than to bring *any* thought' into captivity to the obedience of Christ! But be assured, if we give ever so much with our hands, while we withhold our hearts from God, though we may do much good to others, we do none to ourselves.'

'Why, surely,' said Mr. Flam, 'you don't mean to insinuate that I should be in a safer state if I never did a kind thing!'

'Quite the contrary,' replied Dr. Barlow, 'but I could wish to see your good actions exalted, by springing from a higher principle, I mean the love of God; ennobled by being practised to a higher end, and purified by your renouncing all self-complacency in the performance.'

'But is there not less danger, Sir, said Mr. Flam, 'in being somewhat proud of what one really *does*, than in doing nothing? And is it not more excusable to be a little satisfied with what one really *is*, than in hypocritically pretending to be what one is *not*?'

'I must repeat,' returned Dr. Barlow, 'that I cannot exactly decide on the question of relative enormity between two opposite sins. I cannot pronounce which is the best of two states so very bad.'

'Why now, Doctor,' said Mr. Flam, 'what particular sin can you charge me with?'

'I erect not myself into an accuser,' replied Dr. Barlow; 'but permit me to ask you, Sir, from what motive is it that you avoid any wrong practice? Is there any one sin from which you abstain through fear of offending your Maker?'

'As to that,' replied Mr. Flam, 'I can't say I ever considered about the motive of the thing. I thought it was quite enough not to do it. Well but Doctor, since we are gone so far in the catechism, what duty to my neighbours can you convict me of omitting?'

'It will be said, Sir,' said the Doctor, 'if you can indeed stand so close a scrutiny, as that to which you challenge me, even on your own principles. But tell me, with that frank honesty which marks your character, does your kindness to your neighbour spring from the true fountain, the love of God? That you do many right things I am most willing to allow. But do you perform them from a sense of obedience to the law of your Maker? Do you perform them because they are commanded in his word, and conformable to his will?'

'I can't say I do,' said Mr. Flam, 'but if the thing be right in itself, that appears to me to be all in all. It seems hard to encumber a man of business like me with the action and motive too. Surely if I serve a man, it can make no difference to him, *why* I serve him.'

'To yourself, my dear Sir,' said the Doctor, 'it makes all the difference in the world. Besides, good actions, performed on any other principle than obedience, are not only spurious as to their birth, but they are defective in themselves; they commonly want something in weight and measure.'

Why, Doctor,' said Mr. Flam, 'I have often heard you say in the pulpit that the best are not perfect. Now, as this is the case, I will tell you how I manage. I think it a safe way to average one's good qualities; to throw a bad one against a good one, and if the balance sinks on the right side the man is safe.'

Doctor Barlow shook his head, and was beginning to express his regret at such a delusive casuistry, when Mr. Flam interrupted him by saying, 'Well, Doctor, my great care in life has been to avoid all suspicion of hypocrisy.'

'You cannot do better,' replied Dr. Barlow, 'than to avoid its *reality*. But, for my own part, I believe religious hypocrisy to be rather a rare vice among persons of your station of life. Among the vulgar, indeed, I fear it is not so rare. In neighbourhoods where there is much real piety, there is no small danger of some false profession. But among the higher classes of society, serious religion confers so little credit on him who professes it, that a gentleman is not likely to put on appearances from which he knows he is far more likely to lose reputation than to acquire it. When such a man, therefore, assumes the character of piety, I own I always feel disposed to give him full credit for possessing it. His religion may indeed be mistaken; it may be defective; it may be unsound; but the chances are very much in favour of its not being insincere. Where the "fruits of the Spirit abound, they will appear."'

'Now, my dear Doctor,' replied Mr. Flam, 'is not that cant? What do you mean by the fruits of the Spirit? Would it not have been more worthy of your good sense to have said morality and virtue? Would not these terms have been more simple and intelligible?'

'They might be so,' replied the Doctor, 'but they would not rise quite so high. They would not take in my *whole* meaning. The fruit of the Spirit indeed always includes *your* meaning, but it includes much more. It is something more than worldly morality, something holier than mere human virtue. I rather conceive morality, in your sense, to be the effect of natural temper, natural conscience, or worldly prudence, or perhaps a combination of all three. The fruit of the Spirit is the morality of the renewed heart. Worldly morality is easily satisfied with itself. It sits down contented with its own meagre performances—with legal honesty, with bare weight justice. It seldom giveth a particle "that is not in the bond." It is always making out its claim to doubtful indulgence; it litigates its right to every inch of contested enjoyment; and is so fearful of not getting enough, that it commonly takes more than its due. It is one of the cases where "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."'

'It obtains, however, its worldly reward. It procures a good degree of respect and commendation; but it is not attended by the silent train of the Christian graces, with that 'joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,' which are the fruits of the Spirit, and the evidences of a Christian.—These graces are calculated to adorn all that is right with all that is amiable, 'whatsoever things are honest and just,' with 'whatsoever things are lovely and of good report.' And, to crown all, they add the deepest humility and most unfeigned self-abasement to the most correct course of conduct: a course of conduct which, though a Christian never thinks himself at liberty to neglect, he never feels himself permitted or disposed to be proud of.'

'Well, well, Doctor,' said Mr. Flam, 'I never denied the truth of Christianity, as Carlton formerly did. 'Tis the religion of the country by law established. And I often go to church, because that too is established by law, for which you know I have a great veneration. 'Tis the religion of my ancestors, I like it for that too.'

'But, Sir,' said the Doctor, 'would you not show your veneration for the church more fully

it you attended it twice, instead of once? And your veneration for the law, if instead of going sometimes, you went every Sunday, which you know both the law of God and man enjoins.'

'Why, unluckily,' returned Mr. Flam, 'the hour of service interferes with that of dinner.'

'Sir,' said Dr. Barlow, smiling, 'hours are so altered, that I believe if the church were to new model the calender, she would say that dinners ought to be placed among the *moveable feasts*. An hour earlier or later would accommodate the difference, liberate your servants, and enable you to do a thing right in itself, and beneficial in its example.'

Mr. Flam not being prepared with an answer went on with his confession of faith.—'Doctor,' said he, 'I am a better Christian than you think. I take it for granted that the Bible is true, for I have heard many men say who examine for themselves, which I cannot say I ever had time or inclination to do, that no opposer has ever yet refuted the scripture account of miracles and prophecies. So if you don't call this being a good Christian, I don't know what is.'

Dr. Barlow replied, 'nothing can be better as far as it goes. But allow me to say, that there is another kind of evidence of the truth of our religion, which is peculiar to the real Christian. I mean that evidence of the truth which arises from his individual conviction of the efficacy of Christianity in remedying the disorders of his own nature. He who has had his own temper improved, his evil propensities subdued, and his whole character formed anew, by being cast into the mould of Christianity, will have little doubt of the truth of a religion which has produced such obvious effects in himself.—The truths for which his reason pleads, and in which his understanding, after much examination, is able to rest, having had a purifying influence on his heart, become established principles, producing in him at the same time holiness of life and peace of conscience. The stronger evidence a man has of his own internal improvement, the stronger will be his conviction of the truth of the religion he professes.'

'There are worse men than I am, Doctor,' said Mr. Flam, rather seriously.

'Sir,' replied he, 'I heartily wish every gentleman had your good qualities. But as we shall be judged positively and not comparatively, as our characters will be finally decided upon, not by our superiority to other men, nor merely by our inferiority to the divine rule, but by our departure from it, I wish you would begin to square your life by that rule now; which, in order that you may do, you should begin to study it. While we live in a total neglect of the Bible, we must not talk of our deficiencies, our failings, our imperfections, as if these alone stood between us and the mercy of God. That indeed is the language and the state of the devout Christian. Stronger terms must be used to express the alienation of heart of those, who, living in the avowed neglect of Scripture, may be said, forgive me, Sir, 'to live without God in the world.' Ignorance is no plea in a gentleman. In a land of light and knowledge ignorance itself is a sin.'

Here Dr. Barlow beir' silent, and Mr. Flam not being prepared to answer, Mr. Stanley said, 'That the pure and virtuous dispositions, which arise out of a sincere belief of Christianity, are not more frequently seen in persons professing themselves to be Christians, is, unhappily, one of the strongest arguments against us that can be urged by unbelievers. Instances, however, occur, which are too plain to be denied, of individuals who, having been led by divine grace cordially to receive Christianity, have exhibited in their conduct a very striking proof of its excellence; and among these are some who, like our friend Carlton, had previously led very corrupt lives. The ordinary class of Christians, who indeed scarcely deserve the name,as well as sceptics and unbelievers, would do well to mark the lives of the truly religious, and to consider them as furnishing a proof which will come powerfully in aid of that body of testimony with which Christianity is intrenched on all sides. And these observers should remember, that though they themselves may not yet possess the best evidence in favour of Christianity, which arises from an inward sense of its purifying nature, they may nevertheless aspire after it; and those who have any remaining doubts should encourage themselves with the hope, that if they fully yield themselves to the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, a salutary change will in time be effected in their own hearts, which will furnish them with irresistible evidence of its truth.'

I could easily perceive, that though Mr. Stanley and Dr. Barlow entertained small hopes of the beneficial effect of their discourse on the person to whom it was directed; yet they prolonged it with an eye to Sir John Belfield, who sat profoundly attentive, and encouraged them by his looks.

As to Mr. Flam, it was amusing to observe the variety of his motions, gestures, and contortions, and the pains he took to appear easy and indifferent,and even victorious; sometimes fixing the end of his whip on the floor, and whirling it round at full speed: then working it into his boot: then making up his mouth for a whistle, but stopping short to avoid being guilty of the incivility of interruption.

At length with the same invincible good nature, and with the same pitiable insensibility to his own state, he arose to take leave. He shook us all by the hand, Dr. Barlow twice, saying, 'Doctor, I don't think the worse of you for your plain speaking. He is a knave or a fool that is angry with a good man for doing his duty. 'Tis my fault if I don't take his advice: but 'tis his fault if he does not give it. Parsons are paid for it, and ought not to be mealy mouthed when there is a proper opening, such as poor Tyrrel's case gave you. I challenged *you*. I should perhaps have been angry if you had challenged *me*. It makes all the difference in the event of a duel which is the challenger. As to myself, it is time enough for me to think of the things you recommend. Thank God, I am in excellent good health and spirits, and am not yet quite fifty. 'There is a time for all things.' Even the Bible allows that.'

The Doctor shook his head at this sad misapplication of the text. Mr. Flam went away,

pressing us all to dine with him next day; he had killed a fine buck, and he assured Dr. Barlow that he should have the best port in his cellar. The Doctor pleaded want of time, and the rest of the party could not afford a day, out of the few which remained to us;' but we promised to call on him. He nodded kindly at Dr. Barlow, saying, 'well, Doctor, as you won't come to the buck, one of his haunches shall come to you; so tell Madam to expect it.

As soon as he had left the room, we all joined in lamenting that the blessings of health should ever be produced as arguments for neglecting to secure those blessings which have eternity for their object.

'Unhappy man!' said Dr. Barlow, 'little does he think that he is, if possible, more the object of my compassion than poor Mr. Tyrrel. Tyrrel, it is true, is lying on a sick, probably on a dying bed. His body is in torture. His mind is in anguish. He has to look back on a life, the retrospect of which can afford him no ray of comfort. But he *knows* his misery. The hand of God is upon him. His proud heart is brought low. His self-confidence is subdued. His high imaginations are cast down. His abasement of soul, as far as I can judge, is sincere. He abhors himself in dust and ashes. He sees death at hand. He feels that the sting of death is sin. All subterfuge is at an end. He is at last seeking the only refuge of penitent sinners, I trust, on right grounds. His state is indeed perilous in the extreme: yet awful as it is, he *knows* it. He will not open his eyes on the eternal world in a state of delusion. But what shall awaken poor Mr. Flam from his dream of security? His high health, his unbroken spirits, his prosperous circumstances and various blessings, are so many snares to him. He thinks that 'to-morrow shall be as this day, and still more abundant. Even the wretched situation of his dying friend, though it awakens compassion, awakens not compunction. Nay, it affords matter of triumph rather than of humiliation. He feeds his vanity with compassions from which he contrives to extract comfort. His own offences being of a different kind, instead of lamenting them, he glories in being free from those which belong to an opposite cast of character. Satisfied that he has not the vices of Tyrrel, he never once reflects on his own unrepented sins. Even his good qualities increase his danger. He wraps himself up in that constitutional good nature, which being partly founded on vanity and self-approbation, strengthens his delusion, and hardens him against reproof.'

CHAP. XLVII.

In conversing with Mr. Stanley on my happy prospects, and my future plans; after having referred all concerns of a pecuniary nature to be settled between him and Sir John Belfield, I ventured to entreat that he would crown his goodness, and my happiness, by allowing me to solicit his daughter for an early day.

Mr Stanley said, the term *early* was relative; but he was afraid that he should hardly consent to what I might consider even as a late one. 'In parting with such a child as Lucilla,' added he, 'some weaning time must be allowed to the tenderest of mothers. The most promising marriage, and surely none can promise more happiness than that to which we are looking, is a heavy trial to fond parents. To have trained a creature with anxious fondness, in hope of her repaying their solicitude hereafter by the charms of her society, and then as soon as she becomes capable of being a friend and companion to lose her for ever, is such a trial that I sometimes wonder at the seeming impatience of parents to get rid of a treasure, of which they best know the value. The sadness which attends the consummation even of our dearest hopes on these occasions, is one striking instance of that *Vanity of human wishes*, on which Juvenal and Johnson have so beautifully expatiated.

'A little delay indeed I shall require, from motives of prudence as well as fondness. Lucilla will not be nineteen these three months and more. You will not, I trust, think me unreasonable if I say, that neither her mother nor myself can consent to part with her before that period.'

'Three months!' exclaimed I, with more vehemence than politeness. 'Three months! It is impossible.'

'It is very possible,' said he, smiling, 'that you can wait, and very certain that we shall not consent sooner.'

'Have you any doubts, Sir,' said I, 'have you any objections which I can remove, and which, being removed, may abridge this long probation?'

'None,' said he, kindly. 'But I consider even nineteen as a very early age: too early indeed, were not my mind so completely at rest about you, on the grand points of religion, morals, and temper, that delay could, I trust, afford me no additional security. You will, however, my dear Charles, find so much occupation in preparing your affairs, and your mind, for so important a change, that you will not find the time of absence so irksome as you fancy.

'Absence, Sir,' replied I. 'What then, do you intend to banish me?'

'No,' replied he, smiling again. 'But I intended to send you *home*. A sentence, indeed, which in this dissipated age is thought the worst sort of exile. You have now been absent six or seven months. This absence has been hitherto justifiable. It is time to return to your affairs, to your duties. Both the one and the other always slide into some disorder by a too long separation from the place of their legitimate exercise. Your steward will want inspection, your tenants may want redress, your poor always want assistance.'

Seeing me look irresolute, 'I must, I find,' added he, with the kindest look and voice, 'be compelled to the inhospitable necessity of turning you out of doors.'

'Live without Lucilla three months!' said I. 'Allow me, Sir, at least to remain a few weeks longer at the Grove.'

'Love is a bad calculator,' replied Mr. Stanley 'I believe he never learnt arithmetic

Don't you know that as you are enjoined a three months banishment, that the sooner you go, the sooner you will return? And that, however long your stay now is, your three months' absence will still remain to be accomplished. To speak seriously; Lucilla's sense of propriety, as well as that of Mrs. Stanley, will not permit you to remain much longer under the same roof, now that the motive will become so notorious. Besides that an act of self-denial is a good principle to set out upon, business and duties will fill up your active hours, and an intercourse of letters with her you so reluctantly quit, will not only give an interest to your leisure, but put you both still more completely in possession of each other's character.'

'I will set out to-morrow, Sir,' said I, earnestly, 'in order to begin to hasten the day of my return.'

'Now you are as much too precipitate on the other side,' replied he. 'A few days, I think, may be permitted, without any offence to Lucilla's delicacy. This even her mother pleads for.'

'With what excellence will this blessed union give me an alliance!' replied I; 'I will go directly and thank Mrs. Stanley for this goodness.'

I found Mrs. Stanley and her daughter together, with whom I had a long and interesting conversation. They took no small pains to convince my judgment, that my departure was perfectly proper. My will however continued rebellious. But as I had been long trained to the habit of submitting my will to my reason, I acquiesced, though not without murmuring, and as they told me with very bad grace.

I informed Mrs. Stanley of an intimation I had received from Sir George Aston of his attachment to Phœbe, and of his mother's warm approbation to his choice, adding that he alleged her extreme youth, as the ground of his deferring to express his hope, that his plea might one day be received with favour.

'He forgot to allege his own youth,' replied she, 'which is a reason almost equally cogent.'

Miss Stanley and I agreed that a connexion more desirable in all respects could not be expected.

'When I assure you,' replied Mrs. Stanley, 'that I am quite of your opinion, you will think me inconsistent if I add that I earnestly hope such a proposal will not be made by Sir George, lest his precipitancy should hinder the future accomplishment of a wish, which I may be allowed remotely to indulge.'

'What objection,' said I, 'can Mr. Stanley possibly make to such a proposal, except that his daughter is too young?'

'I see,' replied she, 'that you do not yet completely know Mr. Stanley; or rather you do not know all that he has done for the Aston family. His services have been very important, not only in that grand point which you and I think the most momentous; but he has also very successfully exerted himself in settling Lady Aston's worldly affairs, which were in the utmost disorder. The large estate, which had suffered by her own ignorance of business, and the dishonesty of a steward, he has not only enabled her to clear, but put her in the way greatly to improve. This skill and kindness in worldly things so raised his credit in the eyes of the guardian, young Sir George's uncle, that he declared he should never again be so much afraid, of religious men; whom he had always understood to be without judgment, or kindness, or disinterestedness.

'Now,' added Mrs. Stanley, 'don't you perceive that not only the purity of Mr. Stanley's motives, but religion itself would suffer, should we be forward to promote this connexion? Will not this Mr. Aston say, that sinister designs influenced all this zeal and kindness, and that Sir George's estate was improved with an eye to his own daughter? It will be said that these religious people always know what they are about—that when they seem to be purely serving God, they are resolved not to serve him for nothing, but always keep their own interest in view. Should Sir George's inclination continue, and his principles stand the siege which the world will not fail to lay to a man of his fortune—some years hence, when he is complete master of his actions, his character formed, and his judgment ripened to direct his choice, so as to make it evident to the world, that it was not the effect of influence, this connexion is an event to which we should look forward with much pleasure.'

'Never,' exclaimed I, 'no not once, have I been disappointed in my expectation of consistency in Mr. Stanley's character. O, my beloved parents, how wise was your injunction that I should make *consistency the test of true piety!* It is thus that Christians should always keep the credit of religion in view, if they would promote its interests in the world.'

When I communicated to Miss Stanley my conversation with *her* father, and read over with her the letters of *mine*, how tenderly did she weep! How were my own feelings renewed! To be thus assured that she was selected for their son, by my deceased parents, seemed, to her pious mind, to shed a sacredness on our union. How did she venerate their virtues! How feelingly regret their loss!

Before I left the country, I did not omit a visit of civility to Mr. Flam. The young ladies, as Sir John predicted, had stept back into their natural character, and natural undress; though he was too severe when he added, that their hopes in assuming the other were not at an end.

They both asked me, if I was not moped to death at the Grove: the Stanley's, they said, were *good sort* of people, but quite *mauvais ton*, as every body must be who did not spend half the year in London. Miss Stanley was a fine girl enough, but knew nothing of the world, wanted manner, which two or three winters in town would give her. 'Better as she is,' interrupted Mr. Flam, 'better as she is. She is a pattern daughter, and will make a pattern wife. *Her* mother has no care nor trouble; I wish I could say as much of all mothers. I never saw a bad humour, or a bad dinner in the house. She is always at home, always in spirits, and always in temper. She is cheerful as if she had no religion, and as useful as if she could not spell her own receipt book.'

I was affected with this generous tribute to my Lucilla's virtues: and when he wished me

joy, as he cordially shook me by the hand, I could not forbear saying to myself, why will not this good-natured man go to heaven?

I next paid a farewell visit to Mr. and Mrs. Carlton, and to the amiable family at Aston Hall, and to Dr. Barlow. How rich has this excursion made me in valuable friendships; to say nothing of the inestimable connexion at the Grove! I did not forget to assure Dr. Barlow, that if any thing could add a value to the blessing which awaited me, it was, that his hand would consecrate it.

Through the good Doctor I received a message from Mr. Tyrrel, requesting me to make him a visit of charity before I quitted the neighbourhood. I instantly obeyed the summons. I found him totally changed in all respects, a body wasted by disease, a mind apparently full of contrition, and penetrated with that deep humility, in which he had been so eminently deficient.

He earnestly entreated my prayers, adding, 'though it is presumption in so unworthy a being as I am, to suppose his intercession may be heard, I will pray for a blessing on your happy prospects. A connexion with such a family is itself a blessing. Oh! that my nephew had been worthy of it! It is to recommend that poor youth to your friendship, that I invited you to this melancholy visit. I call him poor, because I have neglected to enrich his mind: but he will have too much of this world's goods. May he employ well what I have risked my soul to amass! Counsel him, dear Sir; admonish him. Recal to his mind his dying uncle. I would now give my whole estate, nay, I would live upon the alms I have refused, to purchase one more year, though spent in pain and misery, that I might prove the sincerity of my repentance. Be to Ned what my blessed Stanley would have been to me. But my pride repelled his kindness. I could not bear his superiority. I turned away my eyes from a model I could not imitate.' I now entreated him to spare himself, but after a few minutes pause he proceeded.

'As to Ned, I trust he is not ill-disposed, but I have neither furnished his mind for solitude nor fortified his heart for the world. I foolishly thought that to keep him ignorant was to keep him safe. I have provided for him the snare of a large fortune, without preparing him for the use of it. I fell into an error not uncommon, that of grudging the expenses of education to a relation for whom I designed my estate. I have thus fitted him for a companion to the vulgar, and a prey to the designing. I thought it sufficient to keep him from actual vice, without furnishing him with arguments to combat it, or with principles to abhor it.'

Here the poor man paused for want of breath. I was too much affected to speak.

At length he went on. 'I have made over to Dr. Barlow's son two thousand pounds for completing his education. I have also give two thousand pounds a-piece to the two elder daughters of Mr. Stanley in aid of their charities. I have made a deed of gift of this, and of a large sum for charitable purposes at the discretion of my executors. This I hoped would prove my sincerity more than a legacy, as it will be paid immediately. A refusal to accept it will greatly distress me. Ned still will have too much left, unless he employs it to better purposes than I have done.'

Though deeply moved, I hardly knew what to reply. I wished to give him comfort, but distrusted my own judgment as to the manner. I promised my best services to his nephew.

'Oh, good young man!' cried he, 'if ever you are tempted to forget God, as I did for above thirty years; or to mock him by an outward profession as I have lately done, think of me. Think of one who for the largest portion of his life, lived as if there were no God; and who, since he has made a profession of Christianity, deceived his own soul, no less by the religion he adopted, than by his former neglect of all religion. My delusion was this, I did not choose to be good, but I chose to be saved. It is no wonder then that I should be struck with a religion, which I hoped would free me from the discipline of moral rectitude, and yet deliver me from the punishment of having neglected it. Will God accept my present forced submission? Will he accept a penitence of which I may have no time to prove the sincerity? Tell me—You are a Christian.'

I was much distressed. I thought it neither modest nor prudent for me to give a decisive answer. He grasped my hand. 'Then,' said he, 'you think my case hopeless. You think the Almighty cannot forgive me. Thus pressed, I ventured to say, 'to doubt his will to pardon, and his power to save, would, as it appears to me, Sir, be a greater fault than any you have committed.'

'One great comfort is left,' replied he, 'the mercy I have abused is infinite. Tell Stanley I now believe with him, that if we pretend to trust in God, we must be governed by him; if we truly believe in him, we shall obey him; if we think he sent his Son to save sinners, we shall hate sin.'

I ventured to congratulate him on his frame of mind: and seeing him quite overcome, took leave of him with a heart deeply touched with this salutary scene. The family at the Grove were greatly moved with my description, and with the method poor Tyrrel had found out of eluding the refusal of his liberal-minded executors to accept of legacies.

The day fixed for my departure too soon arrived. I took a most affectionate leave of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, and a very tender one of Lucilla, who gratified my affection by the emotion she evidently felt, and my delicacy by the effort she made to conceal it. Phœbe wept outright. The children all hung about me, each presenting me some of her flowers, saying they had nothing else to give me; and assuring me that Rachel should be no loser by it. Little Celia was clamorous in her sorrow, when she saw me ascend the curricle, in which neither she nor Lucilla was to have a place. I took the sweet child up into the carriage, and placed her by me, and gently drove her through the park, at the gate of which I consigned her to the arms of her father, who had good-naturedly walked by the side of the carriage in order to carry her back. I drove off, enriched with his prayers

and blessings, which seemed to insure me protection.

Though this separation from all I loved threw a transient sadness around me, I had abundant matter for delightful reflection and pious gratitude. I experienced the truth of Phœbe's remark, that happiness is a serious thing. While pleasure manifests itself by extravagant gaiety, exuberant spirits, and overt acts, happiness retreats to its own proper region, the heart. There concentrating its feelings, it contemplates its treasures, meditates on its enjoyments and still more fondly on its hopes: counts up its mercies, and feels the consummation of them in looking to the fountain from whence they flow; feels every blessing immeasurably heightened by the heart-cheering reflection, that the most exquisite human pleasures are not the perfection of his nature, but only a gracious earnest, a bounteous pre-libation of that blessedness which is without measure, and shall be without end.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Before the Belfields had quitted us, it was stipulated that we should, with submission to the will of a higher power, all meet for six weeks every other summer at Stanley Grove, and pass a month together every intermediate year, either at the Priory, or at Beechwood.

I passed through London, and spent three days in Cavendish-square, my friends having kindly postponed their departure for the country on my account. Lady Belfield voluntarily undertook whatever was necessary for the internal decoration of the Priory; while Sir John took on himself the friendly office of arranging for me all preliminaries with Mr. Stanley, whose largeness of heart, and extreme disinterestedness, I knew I durst not trust, without some such check as I placed in the hand of our common friend.

As soon as all personal concerns were adjusted, Lady Belfield said, 'I have something to communicate, in which I am persuaded you will take a lively interest. On my return to town, I found, among my visiting tickets, several of Lady Melbury's. The porter told me she had called every day for the last week, and seemed very impatient for my return. Finding she was still in town, I went to her immediately. She was not at home, but came to me within an hour. She expressed great joy at seeing me. She looked more beautiful than ever, at least the blush of conscious shame, which mingled with her usual sweetness, rendered her more interesting.

'She was at a loss how to begin. With a perplexed air she said, 'Why did you stay so long? I have sadly wanted you. Where is Sir John? I have wanted counsellors—comforters—friends. I have never had a friend.'

'I was affected at an opening so unexpected. Sir John came in. This increased her confusion. At length, after the usual compliments, she thus addressed him: 'I am determined to conquer this false shame. There is not a worse symptom in human nature than that we blush to own what we have not been afraid to do. From you, Sir John, I heard the first remonstrance which ever reached my ears. You ought to be informed of its effect. You cannot have forgotten our conversation in my coach,* after we had quitted the scene which filled you with contempt for me, and me with anguish for the part I had acted. You reasonably supposed that my remorse would last no longer than the scene which inspired it. You left me alone. My lord dined abroad. I was abandoned to all the horrors of solitude. I wanted somebody to keep me from myself. Mrs. Stokes dying; her husband dead! the sweet flower-girl pining for want, and I the cause of all! The whole view presented such a complication of misery to my mind, and of guilt to my heart, as made me insupportable to myself.

'"It was Saturday. I was of course engaged to the opera. I was utterly unfit to go, but wanted courage to frame an excuse. Fortunately Lady Bell Finley, whom I had promised to chaperon, sent to excuse herself. This set my person at liberty, but left my mind upon the rack. Though I should have rejoiced in the company even of my own chambermaid, so much did I dread being left to my own thoughts, yet I resolved to let no one in that night. I had scarcely passed a single evening out of the giddy circle for several years. For the first time in my life I was driven to look into myself. I took a retrospect of my past conduct; a confused and imperfect one indeed. This review aggravated my distress. Still I pursued my distracting self-inquisition. Not for millions would I pass such another night!

'"I had done as wrong things before, but they had never been thus brought home to me. My extravagance must have made others suffer, but their sufferings had not been placed before my eyes. What was not seen, I had hoped might not be true. I had indeed heard distant reports of the consequences of my thoughtless expense, but they might be invented—they might be exaggerated. At the flower-maker's I *witnessed* the ruin I had made—I *saw* the fruits of my unfeeling vanity—I *beheld* the calamities I had caused. O how much mischief would such actual observations prevent! I was alone. I had no dependant to qualify the deed no sycophant to divert my attention to more soothing objects. Though Sir John's honest expostulation had touched me to the quick; yet I confess, had I found any of my coterie at home, had I gone to the opera, had a joyous supper succeeded, all together would have quite obliterated the late mortifying scene. I should, as I have often done before, have lost all sense of the Stoke's misery, and of my own crime."

'Here,' pursued Lady Belfield, 'the sweet creature looked so contrite, that Sir John and I were both deeply affected.'

'"You are not accustomed, Sir John," resumed she, with a faint smile, "to the office of a confessor, nor I to that of a penitent. But I make it a test to myself of my own sincerity to tell you the whole truth.

'"I wandered from room to room, fancying

* See ch. 12.

I should be more at ease in any other than that in which I was. I envied the starving tenant of the meanest garret. I envied Mrs. Stokes herself. Both might have pitied the pangs which rent my heart, as I roamed through the decorated apartments of our spacious house. In the gayest part of London I felt the dreariness of a desert. Surrounded with magnificence, I endured a sense of want and wo, of which a blameless beggar can form no idea.

'"I went into the library; I took up a book which my lord had left on the table. It was a translation from a Roman classic. I opened it at the speech of the tragedian to Pompey: "*The time will come that thou shalt mourn deeply, because thou didst not mourn sooner!*" I was struck to the heart. "Shall a pagan," said I, "thus forcibly reprove me; and shall I neglect to search for truth at the fountain?

'"I knew my lord would not come home from his club till the morning. The struggle in my soul between principle and pride was severe; but after a bitter conflict, I resolved to employ the night in writing him a long letter. In it I ingenuously confessed the whole state of my mind, and what had occasioned it. I implored his permission for my setting out next morning for Melbury Castle. I entreated him to prevail on his excellent aunt, Lady Jane, whom I had so shamefully slighted, to accompany me. I knew she was a character of that singular class, who would be glad to revenge herself for my ill-treatment by doing me a service. Her company would be at once a pledge to my lord of the purity of my intentions, and to myself a security against falling into worse society. I assured him that I had no safeguard but in flight. An additional reason which I alleged for my absence was, that as I had promised to give a grand masquerade in a fortnight, the evading this expense would nearly enable me to discharge the debt which sat so heavy on my conscience.

'"I received a note from him as soon as he came home. With his usual complaisance, he complied with my request. With his usual nonchalance, he neither troubled me with his reproaches, nor comforted me with approbation.

'"As he knew that Lady Jane usually rose about the hour he came home from St. James's street, he obligingly went to her at once. I had not been in bed. He came to my dressing-room, and informed me that his aunt had consented at the first word. I expressed my gratitude to them both, saying, that I was ready to set out that very day."

'"You must wait till to-morrow," said he. "There is no accounting for the oddities of some people. Lady Jane told me she could not possibly travel on a Sunday. I wondered where was the impossibility. Sunday, I assured her, was the only day for travelling in comfort, as the road was not obstructed by wagons and carts. She replied, with a gravity which made me laugh, 'that she should be ashamed to think that a person of her rank and education should be indebted, for her being able to trample with more convenience on a divine law, to the piety of the vulgar who durst not violate it.' 'Did you ever hear any thing so whimsical, Matilda?' I said nothing, but my heart smote me. Never will I repeat this offence.

'"On the Monday we set out, I had kept close the preceding day, under pretence of illness. This I also assigned as an excuse in the cards to my invited guests, pleading the necessity of going into the country for change of air. Shall I own I dreaded being shut up in a barouche, and still more in the lonely castle, with Lady Jane? I looked for nothing every moment but 'the thorns and briars of reproof.' But I soon found that the woman whom I had quizzed as a methodist, was a most entertaining companion. Instead of austerity in her looks, and reproach in her language, I found nothing but kindness and affection, but vivacity and elegance. While she soothed my sorrows, she strengthened my better purposes. Her conversation gradually revived in my mind tastes and principles which had been early sown in it, but which the world seemed completely to have eradicated.

'"In the neighbourhood of the Castle, Lady Jane carried me to visit the abodes of poverty and sickness. I envied her large but discriminating liberality, and the means she possessed of gratifying it, while I shed tears at the remembrance of my own squandered thousands. I had never been hard-hearted, but I had always given to importunity rather than to want, or merit. I blushed, that while I had been absurdly profuse to cases of which I knew nothing, my own village had been perishing with a contagious sickness.

'"While I amused myself with drawing, my aunt often read to me some rationally entertaining book, occasionally introducing religious reading and discourse, with a wisdom and moderation which increased the effect of both. Knowing my natural levity, and wretched habits, she generally waited till the proposal came from myself. At first when I suggested it, it was to please her, at length I began to find a degree of pleasure in it myself.

'"You will say I have not quite lost my romance. A thought struck me, that the first use I made of my pencil, should serve to perpetuate at least one of my offences. You know I do not execute portraits badly. With a little aid from fancy, which I thought made it allowable to bring separate circumstances into one piece, I composed a picture. It consisted of a detached figure in the back ground of poor Stokes, seen through the grate of his prison on a bed of straw; and a group, composed of his wife in the act of expiring, Fanny bending over a wreath of roses, withered with the tears she was shedding, and myself in the horrors in which you saw me,

Spectatress of the mischief I had made.

'"Wherever I go this picture shall always be my companion. It hangs in my closet, my dear friends,' added she, with a look of infinite sweetness, 'whenever I am tempted to contract a debt, or to give in to any act of vanity or dissipation which may lead to debt, if after having looked on this picture I can pursue the project, renounce me, cast me off for ever!

'"You know Lady Jane's vein of humour. One day as we were conversing together, I confessed that, at the very time I was the object of general notice, and my gaiety the theme of general envy, I had never known happiness. 'I do not wonder at it,' said she. 'Those who greedily pursue admiration, would be ashamed to sit down with so quiet a thing as happiness.' 'My dear Lady Jane,' said I, 'correct me, counsel me, instruct me, you have been too lenient, too forbearing.' 'Well,' said she, with a cheerful tone, 'as you appoint me your physician, as you disclose your case, and ask relief, I will give you a prescription, which, though the simplest thing in the world, will, I am certain, go a great way towards curing you. As you are barely six and twenty, your disease I trust is not inveterate. If you will be an obedient patient, I will answer for your recovery.'

'"I assured her of my willing adoption of any remedy she might prescribe, as I was certain she would consider my weakness, and adapt her treatment, not so much to what my case absolutely required, as to what my strength was able to bear.

''Well then,' said she—'But pray observe I am no quack. I do not undertake to restore you instantaneously. Though my medicine will work surely, it will work slowly. You know,' added she, smiling, 'the success of all alteratives depends on the punctuality with which they are taken, and the constancy with which they are followed up. Mine must be taken two or three times a day, in small quantities at first, the dose to be enlarged as you are able to bear it. I can safely assert, with the advertising doctors, that it may be used full or fasting, in all weathers, and all seasons; but I cannot add with them that *it requires no confinement.*'

''I grew impatient and begged she would come to the point. 'Softly, Matilda,' said she, 'softly, I must first look into my receipt-book, for fear I should mistake any of my ingredients. This book,' said she, opening it, 'though written by no Charlatan, contains a cure for all diseases. It exhibits not only general directions, but specified cases.' Turning over the leaves as she was speaking, she at length stopped, saying, 'here is your case, my dear, or rather your remedy.' She then read very deliberately—'COMMUNE WITH YOUR OWN HEART—AND IN YOUR CHAMBER—AND BE STILL.'

''I now found her grand receipt-book was the Bible. I arose and embraced her. 'My dear aunt,' said I, 'do with me whatever you please. I will be all obedience. I pledge myself to take your alterative regularly, constantly. Do not spare me. Speak your whole mind.'

''My dear Matilda,' said she, 'ever since your marriage, your life has been one continued opposition to your feelings. You have lived as much below your understsnding as your principles. Your conduct has been a system of contradictions. You have believed in Christianity, and acted in direct violation of its precepts. You knew that there was a day of future reckoning, and yet neglected to prepare for it. With a heart full of tenderness, you have been guilty of repeated acts of cruelty. You have been faithful to your husband, without making him respectable or happy. You have been virtuous, without the reputation or the peace which belongs to virtue. You have been charitable without doing good, and affectionate without having ever made a friend. You have wasted those attentions on the worthless, which the worthy would have delighted to receive, and those talents on the frivolous, which would have been cherished by the enlightened. You have defeated the use of a fine understanding by the want of common prudence, and robbed society of the example of your good qualities by your total inability to resist and oppose. Inconsideration and vanity have been the joint cause of your malady. At your age, I trust it is not incurable. As you have caught it by keeping infected company, there is no possible mode of cure, but by avoiding the contagious air they breathe. You have performed your quarantine with admirable patience. Beware my dearest neice, of returning to the scene where the plague rages, till your antidote has taken its full effect.'

''I will *never* return to it, my dear Lady Jane,' cried I, throwing myself into her arms. 'I do not mean that I will never return to town. My duty to my lord requires me to be where he is, or where he wishes me to be. My residence will be the same, but my society will be changed.'

''You please me entirely,' replied she.—'In resorting to religion, take care that you do not dishonour it. Never plead your piety to God as an apology for your neglect of the relative duties. If the one is soundly adopted the other will be correctly performed.—There are those who would delight to throw such a stigma on real Christianity, as to be able to report that it had extinguished your affections, and soured your temper. Disappoint them, my sweet niece; while you serve your Maker more fervently, you must be still more patient with your husband. But while you bear with his faults, take care you do not connive at them. If you are in earnest, you must expect some trials. He who prepares these trials for you will support you under them, will carry you through them, will make them instruments of his glory, and of your own eternal happiness.'

''Lord Melbury's complaisance to my wishes,' replied I, 'has been unbounded.—As he never controlled my actions, when they required control, I trust he will be equally indulgent now they will be less censurable. Alas! we have too little interfered with each other's concerns—we have lived too much asunder—who knows but I may recall him?' My tears would not let me go on—nor will they now,' added she, wiping her fine eyes.

'Sir John and I were too much touched to attempt to answer her; at length she proceeded.

''By adhering to Lady Jane's directions, I have begun to get acquainted with my own heart. Little did I suspect the evil that was in it. Yet I am led to believe that the incessant whirl in which I have lived, my total want of leisure for reflection, my excessive vanity, and complete inconsiderateness, are of themselves causes adequate to any effects which the grossest vices would have produced.

''Last week my lord made us a visit at the

Castle. I gave him a warm reception; but he seemed rather surprised at the cold one which I gave to a large cargo of new French novels and German plays, which he had been so good as to bring me. I did not venture to tell him that I had changed my course of study. Lady Jane charged me to avoid giving him the least disgust by any unusual gravity in my looks or severity in my conversation. I exerted myself to such good purpose, that he declared he wanted neither cards nor company. I tried to let him see, by my change of habits, rather than by dry documents, or cold remonstrances, the alteration which had taken place in my sentiments. He was pleased to see me blooming and cheerful. We walked together, we read together; we became lovers and companions. He told Lady Jane he never saw me so pleasant. He did not know I was so agreeable a woman, and was glad he had had this opportunity of getting acquainted with me. As he has great expectations from her, he was delighted at the friendship which subsisted between us.

'"He brought us up to town. As it was now empty, the terrors of the masquerade no longer hung over me, and I cheerfully complied with his wishes. I drove immediately to Mrs. Stokes's with such a portion of my debt, as my retirement had enabled me to save. I feasted all the way on the joy I should have in surprising her with this two hundred pounds. How severe, but how just was my punishment, when on knocking at the door I found that she had been dead these two months! No one could tell me what was become of her daughter. This shock operated almost as powerfully on my feelings as the first had done. But if it augmented my self-reproach, it confirmed my good resolutions. My present concern is, how to discover the sweet girl whom, alas, I have helped to deprive of both her parents."

'Here I interrupted her,' continued Lady Belfield, saying, 'You have not far to seek, Fanny Stokes is in this house. She is appointed governess to our children.'

'Poor Lady Melbury's joy was excessive at this intelligence, and she proceeded: "That a too sudden return to the world might not weaken my better purposes, I was preparing to request my lord's permission to go back to the castle, when he prevented me by telling me that he had an earnest desire to make a visit to the brave patriots in Spain, and to pass the winter among them, but feared he must give it up, as the state of the continent rendered it impossible for me to accompany him.

'"This filled my heart with joy. I encouraged him to make a voyage, assured him I would live under Lady Jane's observation, and that I would pass the whole winter in the country."

'"Then you shall pass it with us at Beechwood, my dear Lady Melbury," cried Sir John and I, both at once, "we will strengthen each other in every virtuous purpose. We shall rejoice in Lady Jane's company."

'She joyfully accepted the proposal, not doubting her Lord's consent; and kindly said, that she should be doubly happy in a society, at once so rational and so elegant.

'It was settled that she should spend with us the three months that Fanny Stokes and little Caroline are to pass at Stanley Grove. She desired to see Fanny, to whom she behaved with great tenderness. She paid her the two hundred pounds, assuring her she had no doubt of being able to discharge the whole debt in the spring.

'I received a note from her the next day, informing me of her lord's cheerful concurrence, as well as that of Lady Jane. She added, that when she went up to dress she had found on her toilette her diamond necklace, which her dear aunt had redeemed and restored to her, as a proof of her confidence and affection. As Lady Melbury has for ever abolished her coterie, I have the most sanguine hope of her preseverance. All her promises would have gone for nothing, without this practical pledge of her sincerity.'

When Lady Belfield had finished her little tale, I expressed, in the strongest terms, the delight I felt at the happy change in this charming woman. I could not forbear observing to Sir John, that as Lady Melbury had been the 'glass of fashion,' while her conduct was wrong, I hoped she would not lose all her influence by its becoming right. I added, with a smile, 'in that case, I shall rejoice to see the fine ladies turn their talent for drawing to the same moral account with this fair penitent. Such a record of their faults as she has had the courage to make of hers, hanging in their closets, and perpetually staring them in the face, would be no unlikely means to prevent a repetition, especially if the picture is to be visible as the fault had been.'

CHAP. XLIX.

The next morning I resumed my journey northwards, and on the fourth day I reached the seat of my ancestors. The distant view of the Priory excited strong but mingled emotions in my bosom. The tender sorrow for the loss of the beloved society I had once enjoyed under its roof, was a salutary check to the abundant joy arising from the anticipation of the blessings which awaited me there. My mind was divided between the two conflicting sentiments, that I was soon to be in possession of every material for the highest happiness, and that the highest happiness is short! May I ever live under the influence of that act of devout gratitude, in which, as soon as I entered the house, I dedicated the whole of my future life to its divine Author, solemnly consecrating to his service, my time, my talents, my fortune; all I am and all I have!

I next wrote to Lucilla, with whom I continued to maintain a regular and animated correspondence. Her letters gratify my taste, and delight my heart, while they excite me to every thing that is good. This interchange of sentiment sheds a ray of brightness on a separation which every day is diminishing.

Mr. Stanley also has the goodness to write to me frequently. In one of my letters to him, I ventured to ask him how he had managed to produce in his daughter such complete satisfac

tion in his sober and correct habits of life; adding, that her conformity was so cheerful that it did not look so much like acquiescence as choice.

I received from Mr. Stanley the answer which follows.

Stanley Grove, Sept. 1808.

'My dear Charles,

'As I wish to put you in possession of whatever relates to the mind of Lucilla, I will devote this letter to answer your inquiries respecting her cheerful conformity to what you call our "sober habits of life;" and her indifference to those pleasures which are usually thought to constitute the sole happiness of young women of a certain rank.

Mrs. Stanley and I are not so unacquainted with human nature, as to have pretended to impose on her understanding, by attempting to breed her up in entire ignorance of the world, or in perfect seclusion from it. She often accompanied us to town for a short time. The occasional sight of London, and the frequent enjoyment of the best society, dissipated the illusion of fancy. The bright colours with which young imagination, inflamed by ignorance, report, and curiosity, invests unknown and distant objects, faded under actual observation. Complete ignorance and complete seclusion form no security from the dangers incident to the world, or for correct conduct at a distance from it. Ignorance may be the safety of an idiot, and seclusion the security of a nun. Christian parents should act on a more large and liberal principle, or what is the use of observation and experience? The French women of fashion, under the old regime, were bred in convents, and what women were ever more licentious than many of them, as soon as marriage had set them at liberty?

'I am persuaded that the best-intended formation of character, if formed on ignorance and deceit, will never answer. As to Lucilla, we have never attempted to blind her judgment. We have never thought it necessary to leave her understanding out of the question, while we were forming her heart. We have never told her that the world is a scene absolutely destitute of pleasure: we have never assured her that there is no amusement in the diversion which we disapprove. Even if this assurance had not been deceitful, it would have been vain and fruitless. We cannot totally separate her from the society of those who frequent them, and whom she would hear speak of them with rapture.

'We went upon other grounds. We accustomed her to reflect that she was an intellectual creature; that she was an immortal creature; that she was a Christian.—That to an intellectual being, diversions must always be subordinate to the exercise of the mental faculties; that to an immortal being, born to higher hopes than enjoyments, the exercise of the mental faculties must be subservient to religious duties. That in the practice of a Christian, self-denial is the turning point, the specific distinction. That as to many of the pleasures which the world pursues, Christianity requires her votaries to live above the temptations which they hold out. She requires it the more especially, because Christians in our time, not being called upon to make great and trying sacrifices, of life, of fortune, and liberty; and having but comparatively small occasions to evidence their sincerity, should the more cheerfully make the petty but daily renunciation of those pleasures which are the very element in which worldly people exist.

'We have not misled her by unfair and flattering representations of the Christian life. We have not, with a view to allure her to embrace it on false pretences, taught her that when religion is once rooted in the heart, the remainder of life is uninterrupted peace and unbroken delight; that all shall be perpetually smooth hereafter, because it is smooth at present. This would be as unfair as to show a raw recruit the splendours of a parade-day, and tell him it was actual service. We have not made her believe that the established Christian has no troubles to expect, no vexations to fear, no storms to encounter. We have not attempted to cheat her into religion, by concealing its difficulties, its trials, no, nor its unpopularity.

'We have been always aware, that to have enforced the most exalted Christian principles, together with the necessity of a corresponding practice, ever so often and so strongly, would have been worse than foolish, had we been impresssing these truths one part of the day, and had, on the other part, been living ourselves in the actual enjoyment of the very things against which we were guarding her. My dear Charles, if we would talk to young people with effect, we must, by the habits of which we set them the example, dispose them to listen, or our documents will be something worse than fruitless. It is really hard upon poor girls to be tantalized with religious lectures, while they are at the same time tempted to every thing against which they are warned; while the whole bent and bias of the family practice are diametrically opposite to the principles inculcated.

'In our own case I think I may venture to affirm, that the plan has answered. We endeavoured to establish a principle of right, instead of unprofitable invective against what was wrong Perhaps there can scarcely be found a religious family in which so few anathemas have been denounced against this or that specific diversion, as in ours. We aimed to take another road. The turn of mind, the tendency of the employment, the force of the practice, the bent of the conversation, the spirit of the amusement, have all leaned to the contrary direction, till the habits are gradually worked into a kind of nature. It would be cruel to condemn a creature to a retired life without qualifying her for retirement: next to religion, nothing can possibly do this but mental cultivation who are above the exercise of vulgar employments. The girl who possesses only the worldly acquirements—the singer and the dancer—when condemned to retirement, may reasonably exclaim with Milton's Adam, when looking at the constellations,

> Why all night long shine these?
> Wherefore, if none *behold*.

'Now the woman who derives her principles from the Bible, and her amusements from intellectual sources, from the beauties of nature, and from active employment and exercise, will

not pant for *beholders*. She is no clamorous beggar for the extorted alms of admiration. She lives on her own stock. Her resources are within herself. She possesses the truest independence. She does not wait for the opinion of the world, to know if she is right; nor for the applause of the world, to know if she is happy.

'Too many religious people fancy that the infectious air of the world is confined to the ball-room, or the play-house, and that when you have escaped from these, you are got out of the reach of its contagion. But the contagion follows wherever there is a human heart left to its own natural impulse. And though I allow that places and circumstances greatly contribute to augment or diminish the evil; and that a prudent Christian will always avoid an atmosphere which he thinks not quite wholesome; yet, whoever lives in the close examination of his own heart, will still find some of the morbid mischief clinging to it, which will require constant watching, whatever be his climate or his company.

'I have known pious persons, who would on no account allow their children to attend places of gay resort, who were yet little solicitous to extinguish the spirit which these places are calculated to generate and nourish. This is rather a geographical than a moral distinction. It is thinking more of the place than of the temper. They restrain their persons, but are not careful to expel from their hearts the dispositions which excite the appetite, and form the very essence of danger. A young creature cannot be happy who spends her time at home in amusements destined for exhibition, while she is forbidden to be exhibited.

'But while we are teaching them that Christianity involves an heroic self-denial; that it requires some things to be done, and others to be sacrificed, at which mere people of the world revolt; that it directs us ro renounce some pursuits because they are wrong, and others because they are trifling—we should, at the same time, let them see and feel, that to a Christian the region of enjoyment is not so narrow and circumscribed, is not so barren and unproductive, nor the pleasures it produces so few and small, as the enemies of religion would insinuate. While early habits of self-denial are giving firmness to the character, strenthening the texture of the mind, and hardening it against ordinary temptations—the pleasures and the employments which we substitute in the stead of those we banish, must be such as tend to raise the taste, to invigorate the intellect, to exalt the nature, and enlarge the sphere of enjoyment, to give a tone to the mind, and an elevation to the sentiments, which shall really reduce to insignificance the pleasures that are prohibited.

'In our own instance I humbly trust, that through the divine blessing, perseverance has been its own reward. As to Lucilla, I firmly believe that right habits are now so rooted, and the relish of superior pleasures so established in her mind, that had she the whole range of human enjoyment at her command; had she no higher consideration, no fear of God, no obedience to her mother and me, which forbade the ordinary dissipations, she would voluntarily renounce them, from a full persuasion of their empty, worthless, unsatisfying nature, and from a superinduced taste for higher gratifications.

'I am as far from intending to represent my daughter as a faultless creature, as she herself is from wishing to be so represented. She is deeply conscious both of the corruption of her nature, and the deficiencies of her life. This consciousness I trust will continue to stimulate her vigilance, without which all religion will decline, and to maintain her humility, without which all religion is vain!

'My dear Charles! a rational scene of felicity lies open before you both. It is lawful to rejoice in the fair perspective, but it is safe to rejoice with trembling. Do not abandon yourself to the chimerical hope that life will be to you what it has never yet been to any man—a scene of unmingled delight. This life so bright in prospect, will have its sorrows. This life which at four and twenty seems to stretch itself to an indefinite length, will have an end. May its sorrows correct its illusions! May its close be the entrance on a life which shall have no sorrows and no end.

'I will not say how frequently we talk of you, nor how much we miss you. Need I tell you that the person who says least on the subject, is not the one who least feels your absence? She writes by this post.

'Adieu, my dear Charles! I am with great truth your attached friend, and hope before Christmas to subscribe myself your affectionate father,

'FRANCIS STANLEY'

* * * * *

Delightful hope! as Miss Stanley, when that blessed event takes place, will resign her name, I shall resume mine, and joyfully forever renounce that of

CŒLEBS.

MORAL SKETCHES

OF PREVAILING OPINIONS AND MANNERS,

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC:

WITH REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER.

Let us make a stand on the ancient ways, and then look about us, and discover what is the straight and right way, and walk in it.—*Lord Bacon on Innovation.*

I know not which is the greater wonder, either that prayer, which is a duty so easy and facile, so ready and adapted to the powers and skill and opportunities of every man, should have so great effects and be productive of such mighty blessings; or that we should be so unwilling to use so easy an instrument of producing so much good.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

PREFACE.

It is with the sincerest satisfaction, and the most lively gratitude to God, that the writer of these pages is enabled to bear her feeble but heartfelt testimony, to the progress which religion has made, and is making, amongst us, especially in the higher, and even the highest ranks of society.

At a period, therefore, abounding and advancing in almost every kind of religious improvement, she may be thought by those who would be looking for congratulation rather than caution, to have imposed on herself an invidious task, in choosing to dwell less on the triumphs of Christianity, than on the dangers or the errors of some of its professors. Yet she is persuaded that they who have made the greatest proficiency in piety, will be the most ready to forgive the intimations, of which they stand in the least need.

It may, however, justly be said, that the writer might have found more appropriate objects of censure amongst the worldly and the irreligious, than in the more respectable classes whom she has taken the liberty to make the subject of animadversion. But the truth is, the thoughtless and the profligate have been so successively and so perseveringly attacked by far more powerful pens; have been so long assailed by the monitory maxims of the moralist, pelted by the missile weapons of the satirist, and chastised by the grave rebuke of the divine, that, with due deference, she turns over the hitherto incorrigible to stronger and more efficient hands; while she ventures to address her observations to other quarters, where there will be more hope of forgiveness, and less despair of success.

She does not therefore appeal to those who "hear not Moses and the Prophets," but rather to those, who, in some awful instances, misrepresent them. She presumes, with respect and diffidence, to expostulate with some, who, though exempt from palpable defects in practice, yet require to be reminded that speculative errors cannot be indulged without danger; and to intimate to others, that the practice may be faulty where there are no material errors in the creed. Doubtless indifference to religion will hereafter be more severely judged, than mistakes in it, especially if the latter be found to proceed from the head, as the other more apparently does from the heart.

The remarks in the early part of these Sketches, on the excess of continental intercourse, will probably be accused of blameable scrupulosity, and the writer be charged with unnecessary rigour. Yet what enlightened conscience will deny that some of the habits to which allusion is made, militate as much against the self-denying spirit of our religion as more ostensible faults. They would not, however, have been noticed, had they been confined to trifling and common characters; but the least error that grows into a habit, and that habit sanctioned by the countenance of the worthy and respectable, becomes more important than even the vices of ordinary men or frivolous women. In lamenting the probable injurious consequences to a large proportion of the myriads, who are still with unabated eagerness, crowding to a foreign shore, the author is fully persuaded that many amongst them carry out principles too deeply rooted, to be shaken by unprofitable intercourse, and morals too correct to be infected by the fascinations of pleasure. But who will deny that the countenance of those who escape the injury gives an authority to those who receive it? In this view, the wisest and most correct of our emigrants, may, by lending themselves to the practice, furnish in the result, an apology for things which they themselves disapprove, and thus their example may be pleaded, as favouring what they would be amongst the last to tolerate.

That long and frequent absences from our home, and especially from our country, are not favourable to the mind, is but too visible in that spirit of restlessness induced, by so many who have *repeatedly* made the experiment. For it is observable that the desire once indulged, instead of being cooled, is inflamed; inclination becomes voracity. Appetite has grown with indulgence. And is it not to be feared that the sober scenes of domestic, and especially of rural life, will continue to appear more and more insipid in proportion to the frequency with which they are deserted? Will not successive and protracted carnivals convert the quiet scenes of home enjoyment into what the poet calls "a lenten entertainment?"

Home is at once the scene of repose and of activity. A country gentleman of rank and fortune is the sun of a little system, the movements of which his influence controls. It is at home that he feels his real importance, his usefulness and his dignity. Each diminishes in proportion to the distance he wanders from his proper orbit. The old English gentry kept up the reverence and secured the attachment of their dependents by living among them. Personal affection was maintained by the presence of the benefactor. Subordination had a visible head. Whereas obedience to a master they do not see, savours too much of allegiance to a foreign power.

We know that the Roman hero who transgressed the boundaries of his own province by *once* crossing the Rubicon, changed the whole condition, circumstances, constitution and character

of his country. May not the reiterated passage of the Straits of Dover eventually produce moral changes not less important?

The mischiefs effected by these incessant migrations may, indeed, be slow, but they are progressive. Principles which would revolt at the idea of any sudden change, are melted down by the gradual relaxation of continued contact. Complacency in the soothing enjoyment creeps on by almost imperceptible advances. The revolution is not the less certain, because it is not acknowledged. The conscience, too, is quieted by the geographical anodyne—"I would not do in England what I think it no harm to do in Paris."

Might not a fair practical appeal be made to the different state of the feelings of many of our travellers, on witnessing the open violation of the sanctity of the *first* Sunday, and the *twentieth* repetition of the same abuse? Who can affirm, that familiarity has not gradually diminished the alarm, and in a good measure suppressed the indignation? Who will assert, that this succession of desecrated sabbaths has produced no alteration in the state of their feelings, except that of reconciling them to the practice. They, indeed, who had made such a proficiency in religion as to maintain an unabated sense of the evil, would be the least likely unnecessarily to expose their principles to such a risk.*

For the bold remarks on this dangerous and delicate subject, the culprit throws herself on the mercy, and the Anglicism of her readers; on the courtesy of those, whose kindness she hopes will not be forfeited, by her having shown herself too exclusively an English woman. Anxious, perhaps to a fault, for the welfare, the honour, the prosperity, the character of this Queen of Islands, she yet believes that there are to be found worse prejudices than those national attachments, which in her are irreclaimable.†

It is not, however, to be conceded, that the term *prejudice*, so frequently applied to these attachments, is, by this application, legitimately used. If prejudice, in its true definition, signifies prepossession, judgment formed beforehand, fondness adopted previously to knowledge, notions cherished without inquiry, opinions taken up, and acted upon without examination,—if these be its real significations, and what lexicographer will deny that they are? then how can this term be applied to the more enlightened Britons? How can it be applied to men who, independently of the natural fondness for the soil, and all the objects which endear it; who, in addition to this attachment, feel, acknowledge, and enjoy, in their native country, all the substantial blessings which make life worth living for; a constitution, the best that mortal man has ever yet devised; a religion, above the powers of man indeed to conceive, but reformed and carried to perfection by his agency, taught by the wisdom of God, led by the guidance of his word, and the direction of his Spirit. A system of religious liberty, which, while certain miscreants at home are labouring to destroy under the pretence of improving, some foreign countries are imitating, and all are envying. Institutions, which promise to convey the chief of these blessings to the remotest lands;—if all these assertions are true, let it be again asked, whether, if an intimate knowledge, and a long enjoyment of these blessings, should have produced a filial fondness for such a country, that attachment can be denominated *prejudice*, a word which, let it be repeated, was only meant to express blind zeal, neglected examination, and contented ignorance?

May not this growing attachment for foreign manners, by wearing out domestic attachments, create a powerful preponderance in the opposite scale? The English partialities being cured, may not those who shall have conquered them, become more satisfied with their acquired, than their former tastes; may they not fancy, that they are grown more candid, when perhaps, they are only become less conscientious? When the mind is softened down by pleasurable sensations, pleased with every thing about it, it becomes pleased with itself; begins to look back on its former scrupulous character with present triumph, rejoices in its enlargement from its previous narrowness congratulates itself on its acquired liberality, calls what was firmness, bigotry; and thus to the altered character, the strictness it carried abroad, appears rigour on its return home!

That the attraction may be inviting, and the temptation considerable, is readily allowed; but if once the rightness of an action should come to be determined by its pleasantness, an entirely new system of morals must be introduced amongst Christians; the question then would be no longer, what *ought* we to do, but what should we *like* to do? That the temptation is not irresistible, appears in the self-denial of those who continue to withstand it: many who have felt the desire have prudently deferred its gratification to a safer season; while others continue to doubt its *general* expediency.

That many among our innumerable travellers, have gone abroad on the reasonable ground of health, as well as for the necessary purposes of business, is not to be doubted. And who will deny that some men of great ability and high principle, have gone with the meritorious desire, of doing moral and religious good, in various directions; and that they have, in no inconsiderable degree effected it, or at least have opened a door for further improvement? On the other hand one disgraceful truth must not be concealed, that others have carried out more evil from home, than they found abroad.

It would be uncharitable and unchristian, to desire to maintain a spirit of hostility between

* Some friends of the writer, men of the first respectability, who during the late war commanded volunteer corps, have acknowledged to her, that when first called out to drill on Sundays, their religious feelings were most painfully wounded, but by long habit, it gradually became a matter of indifference to them.

† These prefatory apologies for the offences of a subsequent chapter, will, it is to be feared, remind the reader of the prudent sinner mentioned by Luther, who in going to purchase indulgences for the faults he had *already* committed, purchased another for a fault he *intended* to commit.

near neighbours; but when neighbours have been so frequently on the alert to find pretences for disagreement, and national safety has sometimes been endangered by the quarrels of individuals, will not good neighbourhood be more probably promoted by friendly dispositions and mutual good offices on the respective shores, than by obtrusive visits, which, if they were thoroughly liked, would doubtless be more frequently returned?

For is it not worthy of remark, that we not only refuse to imitate our continental neighbours, in the very point in which they are really respectable? *They stay at home.* Even if they do so with the same proud self-preference, which made ancient Rome call all the other nations of the world barbarians, it is at least an honest and a patriotic partiality. Would not the natives of our happy land who have less to gain, and more to lose, do well to follow their example in this honourable instance? *They* prudently augment the resources of their country in two ways, by spending their own money in their own land, with the additional profit of holding out to us those allurements, which cause ours to be spent there also.

> O England! model to thy inward greatness,
> Like little body with a mighty heart!
> What might'st thou do that honour bids thee do,
> Were all thy children kind and natural!
> But see, thy fault France hath in thee found out.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

While the pen is in the hand of the writer, fresh intelligence is brought of conspiracies forming in different parts of the kingdom for its destruction. Can she, therefore, forbear repeating, that if her degenerate sons betray her, and her honourable sons desert her, her perils are indeed imminent?

At her advanced age the writer has little to hope from praise, or little to fear from censure, except as her views may have been in a right or wrong direction. She has felt that a renewed attention to growing errors is a duty on those who have the good of mankind at heart. The more nearly her time approaches for her leaving the world, there is a sense in which she feels herself more strongly interested in it; she means an increasing anxiety for its improvement; for its advance in all that is right in principle, and virtuous in action. And as the events and experience of every day convince her, that there is no true virtue that is not founded in religion, and no true religion which is not maintained by PRAYER, she hopes to be forgiven, if with declining years and faculties, yet with increasing earnestness, from increasing conviction of its value, she once more ventures to impress this last, important topic, on their attention.

If then she has enlarged even to diffuseness on the subject of prayer, it is because she is fervently desirous to suggest it, as the surest counteractive of those many abberrations of heart and practice but too visible amongst us. In some former publications, however, she had expatiated so largely on this inexhaustible topic, that, in order to avoid repetition, she has chiefly limited her present observations on prayer to the errors which may prevent its efficacy, together with the allusions to certain classes of character in whom these errors most abound.

In taking her final leave of her readers, may she be allowed to express her gratitude for their long unwearied indulgence; for a patience which the too frequent demands on it could not exhaust; for their candour in forgiving her bold remonstrances; for their kindness in bearing with her faults in consideration of her desire to be useful; and for extending to one who had nothing to offer but right intentions, that favour to which merit might have put in a fairer claim.

Barley-Wood, July 24th, 1819.

SKETCHES OF FOREIGN MANNERS.

Foreign Associations.

WE had fervently hoped, during a war unparalleled in duration and severity, that if ever the blessing of peace should be restored, all would be well again: we had hoped, that at least we should be brought back to our previous situation with that improvement in humility and gratitude, which the remembrance of past sufferings, and recent deliverance from those sufferings, would seem naturally to produce. If our pleasant feelings in such a prospective event were shaded at all, it was simply by the irrepairable and individual loss of a father, son, or brother, which almost every family, of every rank, had sustained. Peace was at length providentially granted to our arms and to our prayers; but all the blessings we had anticipated did not return in her train:

> Ease still recants
> Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

Were it not almost doubtful whether in some respects the change may have proved a benefit, if it should be found to be the choice between the two evils, the waste of human lives, or the decay of moral principles? Some scrupulous persons may even think it requires no very correct arithmetic to determine on the comparative value of perishable lives and immortal souls.

What then was the first use we made of a benefit so earnestly implored,—a blessing which we fondly flattered ourselves would be converted to so many salutary purposes? This peace, for

which so many prayers were offered, so many fasts appointed; this peace, whose return was celebrated by thanksgivings in every church, and, as we hope, in every house, and in every heart, to what purpose was its restoration devoted?

This peace was seized on, not as a means to repair in some measure the ravages which were made on the commerce, the property, the comforts, as well as the population of our country; but must it not, in many instances, be said truly, though most painfully said, to vary their nature, and enhance their malignity? Instead of sedulously employing it to raise us to our former situation, by a prudent restriction in our indulgences, an increased residence in our respective districts, and an endeavour to lighten the difficulties of government, by the continued contribution of its rightful supplics; instead of using it to mitigate the distresses, and to restrain the crimes of the lower orders, by living in the midst of them, each at its natural and appropriate station, and thus neutralising the spirit of disaffection, which took advantage only of their absence to break out; instead of improving its opportunities, or providing against the impending scarcity, which the desertion of the rich increased almost to famine, in giving employment to the industrious, relief to the sick, and bread to the famished; instead of each centinel remaining at his providentially appointed watch,—at this critical moment, a very large proportion of our nobles and gentry, an indefinite number of our laity, and not a few of our clergy, that important part of the community, of which the situation is peculiarly local,—all these, as if simultaneously seized by that mania which, in fabulous history, is said to have sent *one* unfortunate object of divine persecution wandering through the world,—all these important portions of our country at once abandoned it. The only use they made of peace was to fly, with most unrighteous speed, to the authors of our calamities, and of such calamities as it might be thought could not at once have been forgotten, to visit a country which had filled our own with widows and orphans, which had made the rest of Europe a scene of desolation.

Not only hundreds of thousands of our country, men, and women, and children, but millions of our money, so severely wanted at home, were transported from every port to visit this lately execrated country. To *visit*, did I say? that had been little; a short excursion to feed the eye, and gratify the taste with pictures and statues, might have been pleaded as a natural temptation.

Here we conceive the grave Christian moralist will censure the writer as much as she censures the emigrants. He will say, 'the desire is too natural to be right.' If we plead in mitigation of damages, that it was innocent curiosity, we shall be told, that it was a curiosity, which one of our first parents believed innocent, but which lost them both Paradise. If it was a desire of knowledge, it might be a knowledge better unknown; if to cure those prejudices, 'for which our country is a name so dear,' such prejudices may better be retained than cured.

But be this as it may, the truth is, that to multitudes, France was not made a place of visit but a home. For when these wonderful productions of art were restored to the places from whence they had been feloniously taken, did that allay the hunger of emigration? France became the settled residence of multitudes. France was made a scene for the education of English, of Christian, of Protestant children! Sons and daughters, even in the middle ranks of life, were transported thither with an eagerness, as if the land of blood had been a land of promise. And as all fashions descend, not a few of our once simple, plain-hearted English yeomen were drawn in to follow the example of *their betters*, as they are not very correctly called. The infection became general, nor has time as yet stayed the plague.

A late French wit,* who always preferred a calumny to a fact, and was more fond of giving a neat turn to a sentence, than of speaking truth, after visiting this country about the middle of the last century, characterised its natives by saying, the English people resembled their own beer, the top was all froth, the bottom all dregs, but the middle was excellent. If this were at that time true, the middle class has now merged its distinctive character in the other two; it is abandoning the honourable station in the cup which it then held, is adopting its worst ingredients from above and below, and by its mixture with the froth and the feculence, has considerably lessened its claim to its once distinct commendation.†

But the evil, great as it is, does not end here; numbers of a higher strain remain domiciliated in France, and too many who are returned, are more than ever assimilated with French manners. It is to be feared, that with French habits, French principles may be imported. French alliances are contracted, as almost every newspaper records. We are losing our national character. The deterioration is by many thought already visible. In a few years, if things proceed in their present course, or rather with increasing velocity, which is always the case with downward tendencies, the strong and discriminating features of the English heart and mind will be obliterated, and we shall be lost in the undistinguished mass.

In the mean time, let us take warning from the consideration, that the first stage of decline is the beginning of dissolution. Whatever has begun already to decay, is not far from perishing. This contagious intercourse has been too probably the cause of the recent multiplication of those great Sunday entertainments, in the diminution of which we had begun to rejoice; a multiplication which is as likely to contribute to the decline of religion in the domestic arrangements of the great, as in any more obvious and ostensible evil.

What would the veteran moralist, who, in his beautiful and vigorous satire, indignantly exclaimed,

* Voltaire.

† It is almost too ludicrous to assert, that the wife of a reputable farmer, being asked lately what she had done with her daughter, replied, 'I have *Frenched* her and *musicked* her, and shall now carry her to France.

I cannot bear a French motropolis;

What would Johnson have said had he been spared till now?

How would he laugh at Britain's modern tribe,
Dart the keen taunt, and edge the piercing gibe!

How would he have poured out his ready wrath, his cutting sarcasm, his powerful reasoning, his robust morality, on a country which is in danger of deserting its own character, impairing its own virtue, and discrediting its own religion?

We set a just value on the French language as the introduction to much elegant literature; to much indeed that is valuable, but to more that is pernicious. But even this agreeable language, for the higher acquisition of which so many important sacrifices are made, so much domestic duty is relinquished, so much religious principle is hazarded, may be bought too dear. Even if this supreme excellence, the perfection of the Parisian accent, *should* obtain for an English lady the coveted distinction of being taken for a French woman; does she not run some risk, even in her own country and her own home, from the habit of domesticating in our families persons of whom all she may know is, that their accent is good; of whose morals she knows little; and of whose religion she knows nothing, except that, if they happen by great chance to have any, it is of a character hostile to her own. The only hope is, that the foreign teacher may care so little about the matter, as never to introduce religion at all; but this is not a very consoling consideration in the instructors of our children.

There is another grievance connected with this mania for whatever is foreign,—a grievance not the less serious because it is overlooked, and because it affects only a subordinate class in society; we allude to the injury sustained by our domestic manufactures from the abundant importation of French articles of dress and decoration. We forbear to enter on the subject in all its painful extent; we forbear to advert to the looms that are standing still, to the gloominess of our trading streets, to the warehouses that are left solitary, to the shops which are nearly deserted; and shall confine our humble remonstrance to pleading more particularly the distress of those unfortunate females who used to procure a decent support by their own industry, and of whom thousands are now plunging into misery. We would fervently but respectfully advocate the cause of this meritorious and most pitiable class.

If British patriotism be not a plea sufficiently powerful to restrain a temptation, which can only be indulged by the violation of laws, which perhaps the husbands and fathers of the fair offenders have established, we would appeal to the sensibilities of a well-regulated heart, to the tenderness of an enlightened conscience, and to the dictates of justice and charity, whether it be pardonable to yield to every slight temptation merely to gratify vanity, or, to speak more tenderly, to indulge a capricious taste.

When tempted to make the alluring purchase by the superior beauty, real or imaginary, of the article, might we not presume to recommend to every lady to put some such questions as the following to herself:—'By this gratification, illicitly obtained, I not only offend against human laws, but against humanity itself; by this purchase I am perhaps starving some unfortunate young creature of my own sex, who gained her daily bread by weaving her lace or braiding her straw. I am driving her to that extremity of want, which may make her yield to the next temptation to vice, which may drive her to the first sinful means that may offer of procuring a scanty, precarious, and miserable support. It is in vain that I may have perhaps subscribed for her being taught better principles at school, that I have perhaps assisted in paying for her acquisition of her little trade, if by crushing that trade I now drive her to despair, if I throw her on a temptation which may overcome those better principles she acquired through my means. Shall I not then make this paltry—this no sacrifice? Shall I not obtain a victory over this petty allurement, whose consequences when I first gave way to it I did not perceive?"

The distress here described is not a picture drawn by the imagination, a touch of sentimentalism, to exhibit feeling and to excite it. It is a plain and simple representation of the state of multitudes of young women, who having been bred to no other means of gaining their support, will probably, if these fail throw themselves into the very jaws of destruction. Think, then, with tenderness, on these thousands of young persons of your own sex, whom a little self-denial on your part might restore to comfort—might snatch from ruin. Many ladies, who make these unlawful purchases, do not want feeling, they only want consideration. Consider, then, we once more beseech you, consider, that it is not merely their bread, but their virtue, of which you may be unintentionally depriving them; and you will find, that your error is by no means so inconsiderable as it may hitherto have appeared to you.

If the superiority of the foreign purchase you are about to make be not great, you have gained little or nothing by your fault; if it is, and you forego it, you have gained a victory over your own inclination,—the victory of an honest principle over a misleading fancy.

Spare yourself, then, the pain of feeling that, if you hear of any of these unfortunate beings having previously to their entering on other sinful courses, been tempted by famine to commit a robbery—spare yourself the pain of reflecting, that you, perhaps by a thoughtless gratification of your taste, first robbed her of that subsistence, the failure of which has driven her to a crime she abhorred. The evil which appeared little, considered by itself, considered in its possible consequences is of no small magnitude.

But to return.—It was from the land of polished arts that ancient Rome imported the poison of her sturdy morals, the annihilation of her masculine character. England has a palladium for her protection, which Ilium, which Rome never possessed. Yet on that guardian genius depended, as the people thought, the safety of the former; of the latter it was considered as the destiny. Our palladium is the CHRISTIAN, the PROTESTANT RELIGION. It cannot

be taken by storm; but like that of Ilium, it may be taken by stratagem. The French are to us as much more formidable than the Greeks were to Rome, as we have much more to lose. While our guardian genius remains inclosed within our wall, we shall be safe, in spite of wars and revolutions; if we neglect it, like the besieged city of antiquity, we fall: losing our religion, we lose all with it. Religion is our compass, the only instrument for directing and determining our course; and though it will not save the trouble of working the vessel, nor diminish the vigilance of guarding against rocks and shoals; yet it constantly points to that star which, by ascertaining our course, insures our safety.

In making our country an island, Divine Providence seems to have made a provision for our happiness as well as for our security. As that circumstance has protected us from the sword, it should also protect us from the manners of our continental neighbours. The more she labours to resume them, the more she will lose of her independent character. *Le gout du terroir* is often mentioned as the distinctive mark of the country which produces certain wines. The British character, we hope, will always retain its indigenous flavour.

But if Britain, blest by Heaven above all the nations, ancient or modern, recorded in the annals of history, sacred or profane, has not made the most of all the advantages bestowed on her; if she has not yet made the best use of that elevation, on which Divine Providence has placed her; if she has not yet applied to the best possible ends, the rich gifts with which he has endowed her; nor turned the provision made for her happiness to the best account: if, standing on the loftiest summit of naval, military, and literary glory; if favoured with the best civil and religious constitution the wit of man has yet devised;—if, with all these advantages, she has yet some steps to ascend before she reach to the height to which the Almighty seems to have destined her, let her remember, she has resources within himself, by which, with the blessing of Him who conferred them, she may still set an example to all the kingdoms of the earth. We will not say she may acquire a superiority over other nations—of that she has long been in possession—No; we must not try her by her comparative, but her positive merit: not by placing her in juxta-position with other countries, but with the possibilities of her own excellence.

Britain, we repeat, has abundant resources. If it be true that she has lately, in any respect, gone back, rather than advanced; if, when her public character has reached its zenith, her private character is in any thing deteriorated, she has still within herself all the materials of moral renovation; ample means, not only of recovering what has been lost, but of rising to heights yet unattained. It is only to be wished that she may use these resources, and consider them as raw materials, that will not produce their effect without being industriously worked up.

If the familiar and protracted intercourse with a neighbouring nation; if, during this intercourse, the long witnessed contempt of religion, morbid insensibility to morals, desecrated Sabbaths, an abandonment to amusements the most frivolous, to pleasures, knit in one eternal dance; if all this should happily have left unimpaired, or have only tinctured, too slightly to make a lasting impression, the noble simplicity, the ancient rectitude, the sound sense, and the native modesty which have long been the characteristics of the British people; if the growth at home, and within our own doors, of an intolerant and superstitious church, be not too fondly fostered—be not promoted instead of tolerated; if the paramount fondness, in the more delicate sex, for unbounded dissipation, for profane and immoral writers, should decline; if the middle classes among us should return to their ancient sobriety and domestic habits, should cease to vie with the great in expensive dress, and the decorations of high life, and to give their daughters the same useless accomplishments, which are carried too far even in the highest station, and in theirs are preposterous; if the instruction we are at length giving to the poor be as conscientiously conducted as it is generally adopted, and the art of reading be made the vehicle of true religion; if a judicious correction of our criminal code, and a prudent rectification of the demand of pauperism, be successfully followed up; if the African slave-trade should be effectually abolished—not in promise, and on paper, but in very deed and act; if our prisons be made places of reform, instead of increased corruption; if the young offenders be so instructed, that they come not out as bad as the old, and the old come not out worse than they went in; if our venerable universities should fulfil the promise they give of becoming as distinguished for moral discipline and strict religion, as they have ever been, and still are, unrivalled for learning and ability of every kind; if churches be as readily attended, as they will be cheerfully provided; if there be the same honourable attention paid to filling the pulpits, as to raising the buildings; if the Bible be as generally read by the giver, as it is liberally bestowed on the receiver; if the good old practice of family prayer should be revived, and public worship more carefully attended by those who give the law to fashion; if those who are 'the makers of manners' will adopt none but such as deserve to be imitated:—if all these improvements should take place, and which of them, let me ask, is impossible—then, though we laugh to scorn the preposterous notion of human perfectibility, we shall yet have a right to expect that England, so far from being satisfied to excel other nations, will not only excel her present self, but be continually advancing in the scale of Christian perfection.

French Opinion of English Society.

The French nation have lately had many opportunities for forming their opinion of the English. It may be worth our while to consider what opinion they *have* formed: since by ascertaining their present judgment of the English character, we may form some instructive conclusions as to the change their tuition is likely to effect in it.

Foreigners are of opinion that we want polish. If this were all, we should rather blame their discernment, or their deficiency in fair deduction. For grant us that we are solid, and we have high authority for saying that solid bodies take the brightest polish.—And if in point of fact the English character, like the English oak, be susceptible of no inconsiderable polish, it is owing in both to the inherent soundness and firmness of its substance. Soft bodies admit of little polish: in them, therefore, recourse is had to varnish, which hides all flaws; and the thicker it is applied, the more surely it conceals the meanness of the materials beneath its surface.

A late brilliant female writer,* whose genius it would be a reflection on our own taste not to admire, and on our own candour not to extol; has, towards the end of her admirable posthumous work, done, in general, noble justice to the English character. She had talents to appreciate, and opportunities to examine it, in its highest condition and most advantageous forms. It must be observed, that we here presume to touch on no part of her able delineation of English habits and manners, but only so far as private society and conversation are concerned. —On these points we are to look for her exceptions: though on the society of the gentlemen she animadverts with the most flattering consideration; and even to that of the ladies she makes a frequent and generous, but not very successful, effort to be civil.

However, with all the politeness and good nature of this fine writer, two qualities which she seems to have possessed in no ordinary degree, it frequently escapes her, that she found the English ladies deplorably deficient in those shining talents and airy graces which embellish society. Had her visit to London been three or four years later, she might possibly have found, in some quarters, stronger marks of improvement in this talent so near her heart; at least if any expectation might be formed from their subsequent intercourse with the society of Paris, the charms of which she never fails to exhibit in those glowing colours which she so well knows how to lay on, even on the worst ground.

But this eloquent panegyrist of animated conversation seems to be a little mistaken in some of the causes to which she ascribes the heaviness of London parties. She laments with deeper concern than the occasion, even had it been real, seems to require, that the great English gentlemen regularly retire, and spend nine months in the year on their estates in the country. We wish she had happened to mention in what quarter of the kingdom this annual retreat is made, where this voluntary exile *to* the native home is to be found.

We say voluntary, for Bristish gentlemen are not *relegues* from our capital, as ex-ministers and discarded favourites used to be from Paris. Neither the fate, nor the credit, nor the liberty, nor the choice of habitation of a man of rank in this country, depends on the favour of an arbitrary king; nor does his happiness, his general acceptance, nor his respectability, hang on the smiles of a despotic and capricious master. And if her concern be excessive for the annual voluntary banishment of our men of taste from the centre of social delights, which she would wish to see converted into a circle 'never ending, still beginning;' had this lady never further heard of such places as Bath, or Tunbridge, or Brighton, or any other of those numberless felicitous resources, those supplemental relaxations, those by-reliefs of the *ennui* of retreat, which always stand ready to intercept the speed of the fashionable exile, and to break the fall between the London and the country home?

But if even the fact were as desperate as she intimates, the self-imposed regulation would not be likely to produce the effect she deprecates. This lady, born herself to excel in polished society, regrets this injurious retreat, chiefly because it interrupts the brilliant intercourse of the metropolis, and causes conversation to suffer so tedious and melancholy a suspension. Now we should almost as soon have expected that a philosopher would have imagined a supernumerary eclipse of the sun for the same period, and then have brought it to account for the late dreariness of the natural world and the inclemency of the seasons.

She laments that the manner in which these absentees from the source and centre of intellectual enjoyment spend their time in the country, not a little disqualifies them for the charms of society. With all due deference to this able reasoner, from whom it is hazardous to differ, we should have really thought, that the long leisure for reading, to which this supposed solitude must be at least as favourable to some, as that indolence, sleeping, and drinking which she too indiscriminately ascribes to most, would have been generally seized on for the former purpose by men, who are all scholars by education, and frequently studious from taste.—Thus, instead of starving the intellect, would not this leisure rather serve to nourish it; and, instead of lowering the mind, furnish it with fresh images, enrich it with new ideas, and aided by the 'short retirement urging sweet return,' dispose it to repair with a full mind, additional spirit, replenished resources, and increased energy, to that more splendid society which she deems the life of life; that feast of intellect, of which the writer of these pages is fully disposed to acknowledge the pleasure and the profit?—Those to whom she alludes, who only hunt, and loll, and drink, and sleep at their country seats, are not, we presume, of that race of active intellect who would swell the flow of soul by their contributions, were they even tied as closely and constantly to the metropolis as the tavern waiter who draws their corks, or the more respectable purveyor who supplies the market with their luxuries.

As we presume that there is at this time at least as much genius, and taste, and literature, at home, as in any capital abroad, consequently there can be no deficiency of the finest materials for enriching and embellishing society, were their possessors a little more disposed to imitate a neighbouring nation in one talent, in which they must be allowed to excel all others—the talent *se faire valoir*.

There is more sterling weight than show in

* Madam de Stael.

the genuine English character; and Mr. Addison was not the only one of his countrymen who, with respect to intellectual wealth, could draw for a thousand pounds, though he may not always have a guinea in his pocket. But if they are incessantly producing all they are worth to every comer; when called out in public situations, in the senate, the pulpit, or at the bar, we see all the energies of genius in all its opulence and variety. We see the most powerful reasoning, adorned by the most persuasive eloquence. With these ample materials for conversation, they are not perhaps driven, like some of their more volatile neighbours, to talk for the sake of talking. Talking is not with Englishmen so completely a *besoin*, so entirely a natural necessity. They are more disposed to consider conversation as the refreshment than the pabulum of life. Added to this, their professional and laborious duties abroad, may make some of them frequently consider society as a scene in which rather to repose their minds, than to keep them in full exercise.

Learning in this country, is not confined to academicians, authors, and professional men. There is scarcely a man of fortune in the kingdom who, if he be not actually learned, has not, however, been bred to learning. The effect of that high institution, brought from the halls and bowers of our distinguished seats of learning, is generally diffused; it serves to fill and adorn the stations of dignity, honour, and utility of public, as well as to grace the shade and raise the tone of private life. So that an illiterate gentlemen is more rarely to be met with in this country, than in any other in the world. When a learned dignitary of our church enquired of one of the French emigrant clergy, who took refuge in England, if he understood Greek, he coolly replied, '*Monsieur, nous avons un professeur!*'

But to return to the other sex.—Our only fear on this subject is, lest they should not always remain what the writer in question represents them as being at present. If, indeed, we were only sent into this world to be entertaining; if we had nothing to do but to talk, nothing to aim at but to shine, nothing to covet but admiration; we should more readily coincide in opinion with this sprightly lady.

A great ancient has pronounced silence to be no unimportant art in society, and points, in a particular instance, at one man, as the wisest in an enlightened assembly, because he knew how to hold his tongue. If there had not been many discreet imitators of this taciturn orator in the London parties, what a diminution would it have been in the number of this lady's delighted auditors, and what a lessening of their own gratification in enjoying the exhibition of her superlative talents!

There are, indeed, very frequently sounder causes for being silent than deficiency of talent, or lack of information; and how happily would the multitude of idle talkers be diminished, if they never opened their mouths, but when they had something to say. The writer in question ascribes to causes which appear quite new, the reserve and insipidity of the English ladies, when she says, that the true motive is the fear of ridicule; and that as they are not called upon to enliven conversation, they are more struck with the danger of talking, than with the inconvenience of silence. She then somewhat unaccountably, goes on to attribute the frigidity of their society to the dread of newspapers; and conjectures, that because they do not delight in political warfare, they keep themselves back as much as possible in the presence of others. We did not know that English ladies were either so political or so discreet, or that vivacity and the graces were such heavy losers from these unsuspected causes. Perhaps this lady did not know that the English educate, or rather *did once* educate, women of fashion for *home*. A man of sense will desire to find in his domestic associate, good taste, general information, and a correct judgment. In the course of their literary pursuits and conversation together, he will take pleasure in refining and improving her mind; but he would not delight in a wife who will be always introducing subjects for debate, who will be always disputing the palm of victory. Competition and emulation do not contain the elements of domestic happiness. He married for a companion, not for a competitor. Rivalry is no great promoter of affection; nor does superiority in wit always confer superiority in happiness. A professed female wit, like a professed devotee to music, will be soon weary of wasting her talent on her husband; and even he, though he might like such an occasional display in a visit to the house of his friend, will find other talents wanting in a constant home companion: talents which will not only embellish, but improve society; qualities which will eclipse wit, and outlive beauty.

We do not find that those brilliant French women, who had spoiled this sprightly writer for English society, reserved their wit for the entertainment of their husbands, or their learning for the instruction of their families. Their most graceful ethic and courtly poet, who had the best opportunities of ascertaining the real value of professed wits in society, has given his estimate in a single line:

Diseurs de bon mots, fades caracteres!

Among other deductions from brilliant society in England, this lively writer laments an evil, which, if things proceed as they have now begun, we fear may not always remain a subject of lamentation, as coquetry is, in her recipe book, the flavour which gives to society its poignancy: and this zest she complains is not to be found in England, except in the unmarried! If, however, the growing imitation of French manners should hereafter add this new savour to the real accomplishments of English ladies, their fathers and husbands may not think it the most desirable finishing. She accounts for the fondness of our ladies for foreign travel in a manner not the most flattering to their purity, by supposing it to arise as much from the desire of escaping from the restraint on their manners, as from the influence of the fogs on their constitutions.

She is at no loss to know the true cause of a fact, which we are entirely indebted to her sagacity for discovering at all, namely, why *the dis*

gust of life seizes on those women who are confined to these inanimate societies. Certainly this explanation admits the following preliminary question,—Are the movers in these lifeless circles disgusted with their existence? By the way, we do not quite understand whether by *le degout de la vie* she means a dislike to company, or a taste for suicide.

But let us do justice to her who has in most respects done ample justice to our country. If she is a little sickened with the moody taciturnity, and unassuming manners of our ladies, she graciously redeems their characters by making them a full allowance of the more solid virtues; acknowledges that sincerity and truth form the basis of their conversation, even where all the graces are wanting. It is somewhat doubtful, however, whether she would not willingly have relinquished the actual, in exchange for the absent qualities.

While we continue to preserve, or rather to improve in, this only true foundation of Christian intercourse, we will less regret the want of its embellishments; and while reserve is protection, and delicacy security, we will console ourselves under these minor evils, which are considered as so cruelly detracting from the fascinations of polished society.

Lord Chesterfield, who adorned conversation by his wit as much as he impaired it by his principles, has defined politeness 'to be the art of pleasing. Saint Paul, one of the few writers with whom this accomplished peer was not acquainted, recommends, with as much warmth as his lordship, the duty of pleasing our neighbour. But here the two moralists part. The noble writer would have us please others to benefit ourselves. All his precepts originate, proceed, and terminate in that one object—self. The Christian writer directs us to 'please others for their good,' their highest good, their moral 'edification.' The essence of the worldly code of ethics is selfishness; that of the Christian is disinterestedness.

There is a generosity in Christian intercourse, the very reverse of that little and narrowing spirit ascribed to it by those who do not know, or do not love it. It cannot be otherwise; for are not those who cultivate it ever the followers of Him, whose sublime characteristic it was—'that he pleased not himself?'

In the society of Christians, every man does not so much look on his own things as on the things of others. Christians do not make conversation a theatre for dispute or display. They consider it as a reciprocation of benignity; a desire to draw out the talents of those who, with more merit, have less pretension. An interchange of sentiment between intellectual and highly principled persons confers both pleasure and benefit. To make it at once pleasant and profitable, there must be an accordance of principle, if not of opinion. The conversation will frequently have a tincture of religion, even when the topic under discussion is not religious. Topics barely secular are susceptible of this spirit; and in pious and discreet hands, they will be treated in a way to promote religion without professing it.

True religion keeps the whole man in order whether he be engaged in business or in company. It sheds its benign influence far beyond its own sphere, and by a reflex light casts a ray on actions or speculations to which it has no immediate reference. The Christian does not go out of his way in search of wit, or embellishment, though he does not refuse them when they naturally present themselves, when they grow out of the subject, and the story is not invented for their forced introduction, nor any sacrifice made of something better than themselves. The Christian uses his talents temperately, seeks not to eclipse the less brilliant; and had much rather not shine at all, than shine at the expense of another. The religious man in society finds means for the exercise of many christian virtues without descanting on them,—candour, charitable construction, patience with the less enlightened, and temper with the less forbearing, a scrupulous veracity, an inviolable sincerity, a watchful guard against every vain thought and every light expression. He is careful to preserve wit unsullied, gayety pure, and vivacity correct. He is constantly on the watch to introduce subjects of a higher strain; when the occasion offers, he gladly embraces it, but with a due regard to time, place, and circumstance. Let it be observed, we are not here speaking of select society, associating for religious improvement, but of the duty of keeping ordinary conversation within the bounds and under the discipline of correct principle.

English Opinion of French Society.

It may at first sight be censured as a departure from the general design of these slight pages, to introduce any allusion to the manners of foreign countries, as exhibited in their own journals, memoirs, and letters. But when it is considered how deeply our own manners are now becoming assimilated with theirs, it may not be thought quite irrelevant to the subjects under consideration, to take a cursory view of the habits of society in a neighbouring metropolis, so far as they may be likely to affect and influence those of our own country, avoiding every thing public or political, or general, and confining the few cursory remarks to be made, to the fashionable circles of private society.

Paris has been long looked up to by many with admiration, as the centre of all that is brilliant in wit, or fascinating in conversation. In a capital, which before the Revolution was said to contain twenty thousand men of letters, high society was not likely to want eulogists. The extravagant encomiums bestowed on these societies by their own people, and echoed back by ours, may prevent its being thought inexpedient to give a superficial sketch of a few of the leading characters which seem to have set the superiority of the circles over which they presided above all competition. It is, we repeat, the apprehension that this boasted superiority may kindle undue admiration, and even excite envy, in the ardent and ingenuous mind of young persons of taste, who feel themselves precluded from the enjoyment, which must apologize for

the freedom, whilst it explains the motive, of these observations.

It is indeed wounding to delicacy to speak explicitly on things which should not be so much as named. Yet though it is painful to touch on such topics, how shall we be so likely to prevent evils, as by exposing them? Perhaps it may check the desire of imitation, lightly to touch on a few of the *bad characters* who preside over these *good societies*.

That many have escaped their pollution, is a thing more to inspire wonder than to excite imitation. All do not die of the plague where the plague rages; but the preservation of the few is no proof of the salubrity of the air, where so many have been infected.

In certain societies the difficulties of being witty is materially diminished by the readiness of the speaker to make any sacrifice, both to piety and modesty, to the good thing he is about to utter. While the feeling of that very sacrifice may perhaps give a keener relish to the pleasure of the profane hearer, the Christian, not inferior in talent, rejects in horror the reputation for wit to be obtained by any such sacrifice himself, and disdains to sanction or applaud it as the hearer of others.

Though the late sanguinary revolution in France overturned law, order, government, and religion; and had given a more emphatical character to crime of every description; yet if we take a cursory view of the period immediately preceding it, we shall see that this tremendous convulsion rather aggravated than introduced many of its moral corruptions. To be convinced of this, we need not travel so far back as the period which the natives consider as the *acme* of human glory—the age of *Louis Quatorze*, of Richelieu, and the Academy, the immortal Forty, as this academy had the modesty to call itself.

More sober thinkers are, however, of opinion, that what characterised that splendid reign, was unbounded extravagance, elegant profligacy, and tolerated debauchery. Surely these, which were its notorious distinctions, are practices which contribute little to the real grandeur of a country; unless, indeed, it can be proved that, according to the fearfully unguarded expression of the otherwise moral Burke, that the exhibition of vice in a better taste, by taking from it all its apparent grossness, takes away half of its real turpitude.

What arts of refinement could neutralise the evil, when all the bounds of moral restraint were so far broken through, as that the royal wife and the royal mistress were every where received with the same appearance of respect, when they were even met together in the same societies?

Louis has lately obtained, in certain quarters, a kind of resuscitation of his buried fame, by the only method perhaps by which it could have been raised,—a comparison with the prisoner of St. Helena. But surely to have committed fewer crimes than the man who has committed more than any other man, is not to have attained a very high degree in the scale of moral excellence. Are splendour in decoration and magnificence in expense a mantle broad enough to cover that injustice and those exactions on a plundered people by which they were purchased? The piety of the king's latter days is frequently thrown into the scale against the disorders of his earlier life. But surely the transition from profligacy to persecution is no great improvement in the human character. Were not his false virtues even more destructive than his avowed vices? Did matters take a better turn, when the monarch by exchanging gross immoralities for the exercise of a superstitious and intolerant religion, indulged himself and his directress in a long and bitter persecution of his own subjects? a persecution accompanied with every act of the most unrelenting cruelty. Exile, proscription, torture, death, were the rewards of four millions of his faithful protestant subjects! To these rigorous exercises of arbitrary power, he was encouraged and impelled by a woman who had herself been educated in the faith she now endeavours to exterminate. We pass over this intermediate government of 'the godless Regent trembling at a star,' in whose character, in addition to the most disgraceful vices, we see a shocking, but not uncommon union of the wildest superstition with the most avowed infidelity.

During the reign of the next equally corrupt successor, we have endless records of the state of society among persons in the higher walks life. These notices are to be found in a multitude of the letters and memoirs of the individuals who were themselves actors and interlocutors in these scenes of familiar life. These fashionable societies are all that come within our present designs. Many of those works have preserved the history of characters, principles, and sentiments, which had they been consigned to eternal oblivion, religion would have had less to mourn, and virtue less to regret.

Many of these writings, for life would be too short, and time ill spent to peruse them all, are adorned with elegancies of composition, and graces of style, which, had they been devoted to the purposes for which they were given, might have benefitted the world as much as they have injured it. Out of all these mischievous but lighter writings, we shall only mention one or two; nor would they have been noticed in a little work of this nature, but for the popularity they have obtained among us, and our dread of that natural progress, the tendency of admiration to produce imitation.

In the life of Marmontel, written by himself, we have an extraordinary specimen of decorous vice and accredited infamy—of abandoned manners, to which reference is frequently made, at least to the characters which exhibit them, without the slightest feeling of their turpitude. Vices abound and are revealed without the least apparent suspicion of their guilt. The intimations, indeed, are not repeated in the way of boasting, but look as if the writer did not think that concealment of the vice would raise the character he was eulogizing. If there are no offensive descriptions of vicious manners, it seems to be because they were not understood to be vicious; and if gayety of spirit seems to conceal from the writer the complexion of his own morals, gayety of style seems almost to make the reader lose sight of the character of

the company in which he is passing his time. In fact the delineation of those characters consists rather in a morbid insensibility to sin, than in an ambitious display of it. The slight veil thrown over corrupt manners by decency of expression, seems the effect of some remains, not of principle, but of good taste. It is the cold-bloodedness of a heart stagnated by long habits of impunity; for while the passions are inflamed by criminal indulgences, the sensibilities of the soul are chilled. The mind insensibly loses that delicacy of perception which nicely distinguishes not only the shades of evil, but the very existence of the distinction between vice and virtue. This deadness of principle, and liveliness of language, it is which makes this writer, and others we could name, so peculiarly dangerous.

Women of fashion, of the very worst description, to whose parties the writer referred to was familiarly admitted, are named with unbounded admiration, not merely of their talents, but their virtues. The charms of their conversation, and the amiableness of their characters, are the theme of his unmixed panegyric. Incidentally, however, as a thing by the by, as a trifle not requiring to be named expressly, as a thing not invalidating any of their perfections, it comes out, that these women, so faultless and so panegyrised, are living in an illicit commerce with different men—men, whose wives are, with the same uncensurable guilt, carrying on similar connexions with the husbands of other women! Sobriety, chastity, the conjugal and maternal virtues, are not thought necessary to be called in to complete their round of perfection. Impurity of heart and life, dereliction of all the domestic duties, are never brought forward as any deduction from the all-atoning merit of graces of manner and vivacity of conversation.

Divine Providence seems to have intended advanced age as a season of repose, reflection, and preparation for death; and to have sent its infirmities, sufferings, and debility, as gracious intimations of our approaching change, and with a merciful view of our attaining by those remembrances, to the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

But one of the unhallowed projects on which these accomplished societies seem to have congratulated themselves, was in defeating this providential procedure. It was their boasted aim to cheat old age of itself—of its present inconveniences, its decays, and its prospective views, by a more amusing method. They contrived to divert the stage of infirmity into a scene of superinduced gayety and increased levity. Instead of desiring to invest it with the peaceful attributes of calmness and resignation, they invented the means of making old age lose itself, as it were, in youthful images, not only by indulging in light reading, but loose composition. One of them was so successfully boiled in Medea's kettle, that his eulogist triumphantly tells us he translated Ariosto, and published tales exhibiting pictures of voluptuousness without indecency; and these boasted exploits are adduced as adding fresh laurels to a being on the very verge of eternity!

Hear a celebrated academician immortalize one of the deceased confraternity in his public oration! In illustrating the character of his friend, who died in extreme old age, he describes this period as 'a season when ingenious trifling is peculiarly graceful; a period in which men might give themselves up to levity with the least scruple and the most success. It is in old age, says the orator, that *the mind is disabused on all subjects, and that a man has a right to jest upon every thing!* It is then that long experience has taught him the wit of concealing reason under a veil which may embellish it! *

Whoever has cast an eye on the lately published letters of Madame du Deffane,—a most unnecessary and uprofitable addition to the late load of similar literary mischiefs,—will have beheld such a picture of the manners even of private and select society, among persons of high rank, science, taste, and literature, as must make him look on these distinctions without envy, when beheld disconnected with those principles which alone render talents estimable.

In the history of this distinguished lady, we find these striking circumstances: they present a melancholy instance how completely in Paris, at that time, a disregard of all the obligations of duty, all sense of religion, all the charities of domestic virtue, all the purposes of social usefulness, was, on *her* part, perfectly compatible with her being received into the first society. On the part of her associates, all the objections, insurmountable, we trust, in any other place, were there sacrificed to the reigning idol—the fondness for display in conversation, the vanity of eclipsing those who eclipsed others.

We see also how little splendid talents contribute to the felicities of the life, or to the virtues of the possessor. We even see that, when not under the controul of sound principle, they awfully increase the present capacity for evil, and the responsibility of a future reckoning. Instead of promoting improvement, they carry contamination. In morals as well as in politics,

'Great power is an achievement of great ill.'

Some of these brilliant societies fostered in their bosoms the serpents that were so soon to sting, not only their country, but all Europe. Here were cherished those academical philosophers, wits, and political economists, who first sounded the alarm for the simultaneous extinction of thrones and altars; who first exhibited the portentous remedies for curing despotism by anarchy, and superstition by atheism; who sowed the first prolific seeds of those revolutionary horrors which so rapidly sprung up into the poisonous tree of liberty, and who hurled their arrows at the God of Heaven, and erected on the meditated ruins of his kingdom, the temple of the goddess of reason.

Previously to some of Madame du Deffane's numerous intrigues, she had been separated from her husband, on the ground which, it is presumed, the laws of England would not recognise as a lawful impediment—*that* '*he was a weak and tiresome companion!*' She was extraordinarily acute, but her acuteness, though it was frequently just, was always malicious

* Speech of Condorcet to the Academy on the death of Monsieur de Tressen.

It is difficult to say whether she was more completely deficient in sensibility or principle. She possessed all the qualities which attract, but wanted all those which attach; or rather, she wanted no talent but that of turning those she possessed to a better account. Not possessing the female virtues, she either did not believe in their existence, or despised them. If she wanted any vice, it was that of hypocrisy; for she takes little pains to hide qualities which were not fit to be seen. If she possessed any virtue, it was frankness, which yet was often disfigured by coarseness, and not seldom counteracted by falsehood. She wanted all the good feelings of kindness, affection, and tenderness; and possessed in perfection all the bad ones of ill-nature, jealousy, and envy; but her ruling passion was a selfishness the most deeply rooted, and an egotism the most completely unconquerable.

The dark and hollow character which she takes little pains to conceal, is rendered more broadly conspicuous by the warmth of her colouring, the strength of her language, and the power of her wit, all frequently exercised in proclaiming her own impieties.

It is a striking proof of the unrelenting rancour of her heart, that a friend, of the same class of character,* whom she had formerly loved as much as she could love any woman; one who had been her select companion in her own house fifteen years, but who had quitted her in disgust, and set up a *talking house* for herself, which drew away some of 'the best feathers in her wing;'—on hearing the death of this rival lady, she only exclaimed, 'I wish she had died many years ago, and then I should not have lost D'Alembert!'

We learn from her letters, that her splendid society was composed not merely of wits, philosophers, and academicians, but of women of rank, of nobles, and of statesmen, with one of whom she was connected.—From those, it must be confessed, admirably written epistles, we profitably learn much of the hollowness of worldly friendships, much of the insincerity of mere wits and mere men of letters—of persons who associate together, partly for the credit of having it known that they are so associated—who mix acrimony and adulation, venturing to indemnify themselves for their reciprocal flattery when together, by their cutting sarcasms when separated. Happily, the more we see of these communications the more we are convinced that nothing but sound principle, 'godly sincerity,' a conquest over vanity, a triumph over egotism, an habitual struggle against selfishness can establish an honourable, virtuous and durable friendship, or shed a benign lustre on the most polished society.

We repeat, that these reports are not industriously gleaned from rival parties, ill-informed journalists, nor even from virtuous writers, eager to expose the vices they detested; but from the principal performers in the scene—from a woman whose uncontrollable openness prevents her concealing her own vices.

We see, not without pain, her exposure of the faults of some of the associates whom she so sedulously courts, and so constantly abuses; we see the malignity which forces itself through all her endeavours to appear amiable in the eyes of the distinguished person to whom she writes; we see the corroding envy, the gnawing jealousy, and sometimes the obvious aversion to the individuals of a society, without which she cannot exist; which society probably entertained a reciprocal hatred of their flattering hostess, and yet could not exist without *her*. All this exhibits a scene, from which an unsophisticated English heart turns away, sickening with disgust.

This unhappy woman, old, deaf, blind, repining, and impious, yet drew this accomplished society about her by their mutual fondness for conversation. They met without affection, they parted without regret; yet meet they must—they were necessary to each other, not for comfort, for they knew neither the name nor the thing; but society being an article of the first necessity for the support of existence, it must be had with companions hating, and hated by, each other. Under such circumstances, the fondness for society seems not so much a taste, as a raging appetite.

It is, however, a cheerless, heartless society, where persons of talents and breeding meet, not so much to enjoy each other, as to get rid of themselves. Intimacy without confidence, and intercourse without esteem, add little to the genuine delights of social life. Competition, while it inflames vanity, is no improver of kindness.

In a city like Paris, where men were wits and authors by profession, and ladies judges and critics by courtesy, nothing was considered as an exclusion from these societies but want of talents to amuse, or taste to decide. The poet produced his work, not, however, so much to be corrected as applauded; not so much to be counselled as flattered; he, in return, paying usuriously, in the same conterfeit coin, the honour conferred on him, and the benefit done him, by their proclamation of the beauty of his work; his fame, perhaps, suspended on the avowed patronage of a woman whom we, in our plain language, should call infamous. He is grateful to receive his imprimatur and his crown of laurel from fair and fashionable, but impure hands; and Paris resounds, next morning, with the immortality assigned him by the decision of this coterie.

All this might be very well, or at least would not be so very bad, if there were no future reckoning; but to see old age without consolation, dreading solitude as only less terrible than death to contemplate loss of sight as only augmenting spiritual blindness, yet to see the afflicted sufferer clinging to this miserable existence, and closing a life of sin with a death without penitence and without hope; to consider talents capable of great things, abused and misapplied; a God not merely forsaken, but denied; all these are images from which the sober mind turns away with horror softened by compassion. May every daughter of Britain say, with the patriarch of old, 'Come not into their secret, O my soul; to their assembly let not thine honour be united!'

Some ladies of unimpeached morality were found in these coteries. True: yet we hope to

* Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse.

be forgiven for saying, that they could have retained but little of that delicacy which should preserve the purity of society, when they make no scruple of mixing intimately with women whose practices they would not by any means adopt. In such society virtue withers, delicacy is impaired, and principle finally extinguished.

In this view it is impossible not to make a short digression, to observe with gratitude on the obligations of English society to our late venerated queen. Not to insist on the admirable examples she set in her exact performance of all the domestic duties; her public conduct, in one important instance, will ever reflect honour on her memory—we mean her solicitude to prevent the impure mixtures to which we are now alluding. She raised as it were, a rampart between vice and virtue; and her strictness in excluding from the royal presence all who had forfeited their claim to be introduced to it, had a general moral effect, by excluding them also from the virtuous society of others of their own rank. Discriminations of this nature are of incalculable value in preserving the distinctions between correctness and impurity, when no offender, though of the highest rank, can preserve the public dignity of the station she has dishonoured.

'Twas hard, perhaps, on here and there a waif,
Desirous to return, and not received;
But was a wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught the unblemished to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.'

COWPER.

London also has had its select assemblies for conversation. They were neither trifling, dull, nor pedantic. If there were less display of wit, less pains to be easy, less study to be natural, less affectation of being unaffected, less effort to be unconstrained, there was more sincerity, integrity, and kindness. If there was a less perpetual aim at being ingenious, ingenuity was never wanting. If there were less persiflage and sarcasm, there was more affection, truth, and nature. Religion, though not discussed, was always venerated, and no degree of rank or talent would have procured an introduction when there was any taint on the reputation.

The tone of social intercourse is at present, perhaps, likely to be raised by the recent adoption of more direct religious improvement in the private parties of some persons of rank and talents. But to return to Paris.

One instance more of the substitution of talent for virtue, and of the little regard paid to the absence of the one where the other abounded; one instance more, and we will relieve our readers, and carry them to breathe a purer atmosphere in better company. The celebrated Madame d'Epinay is described by one of her admirers,* who came in the order of succession next after Rousseau, not only as the most attractive, but most *discreet* of women! This discretion, which is his rather than hers, appears in his making her indulgence in forbidden gratifications, consistent with her constant regard for public opinion, and the desire of reputation. He records, intentionally to her honour, that being above all prejudices herself, (that is, above the weakness of Christianity,) yet no one knew better what was due to the prejudices of others. She conformed, he observes, as scrupulously to old usages, as to new opinions, and kept up the outward observances of the church as much as a woman of an ordinary mind could have done; that is, she was at once an infidel and a hypocrite. He proclaims to her glory, that, 'without believing in any catechism but that of good sense, she never failed to receive the sacraments, painful as the stupid ceremony was, with the best grace imaginable, as often as decency, or the scruples of her friends, made it becoming.' 'Perhaps,' adds her profane panegyrist, 'there was as much greatness in receiving them with *her* notion of them, as there would have been in refusing them.' Is it any wonder that, with such a conformity of principles, she obtained the prize of the academy, as well as the homage of the academician?

We are amused to think with what a contemptuous smile of pity these ladies, with all their allowed taste and learning, must, if they were consistent, have beheld the pictures of these obsolete wives, Andromache and Penelope, as delineated by the Grecian bard—pictures of female excellence and domestic virtue, which have drawn the tear of admiring sympathy from many a British eye. The poet has omitted to mention whether their valiant lords loved them the less for having spent the hours of *their* absence in scenes of bloody warfare or perilous adventure, in mournful solitude, cheating the time in simple occupations, yet such as served to keep up the memory of their beloved heroes; in one, by contriving decorations for a living lord, or, in the other, honouring the memory of the dead one, by preparing funeral honours for his father, ingeniously deferring the detested second nuptials by nightly unravelling the daily labour, and thus keeping her promise of consent when the work should be finished, and preserving her fidelity to her lord by never finishing it.

What manly English heart would not prefer the fond anxiety of the Trojan wife, which led her in secret to the watch-tower to mark the battle, and tenderly seek to explore her husband so soon to bleed,—to all the Aspasias of Greece, to all the Du Deffands, the De l'Espinasses, the D'Epinays, to all the beau ideal of the fancy, and all the practical pollutions of the life, of the '*bonnes societies*' of the metropolis of France.

But, happily, we need not go back to ransack antiquity for *examples* in the finely imagined females of Troy or Ithica, nor for *warnings* to the polished, but profligate courtezans of Athens, nor to the criminal countesse of Paris;—we may find instances of the one, and a complete contrast to the other, nearer home. We need go no further for the highest examples of female dignity, talent, and worth, than are to be found in the private biography of our own country.

We could produce no inconsiderable number in the highest rank of women, who if their names are not blazoned in the book of fame, will be recorded in more lasting characters in the book of life—who, if their memoirs are not spangled with their *bons mots*, have yet had their good actions and holy principles embalmed

* Le Baron de Grimm.

in the writings of their faithful Christian friends. But we shall confine ourselves to a very few.

The Lady Mary Armyne, descended from the ancient Earls of Shrewsbury, was eminently skilled in human, but especially in divine learning. But the remembrance of her talents, which appear to have been of the first order, is lost in that of her Christian virtues. Among numerous other instances of her pious exertions, she contributed largely to the support of a society for converting the Indians in New-England, long before missions were thought of by her tardy countrymen. On hearing of the fatal massacre of St. Bartholomew, she instantly devoted a large sum to those exiled and destitute clergymen who had fled hither for protection. Her picty was as exemplary as that extensive benevolence of which it was the source.

In Birch's Life of the Hon. Robert Boyle, there is a most interesting account of Mary, Countess of Warwick, of whom it is saying every thing to say that she was entirely worthy of being sister to that illustrious Christian philosopher. Of the eminently pious Lady Frances Hobart, the ornament of the court of James the First, Dr. Collins has preserved an interesting memorial. A long and unwearied attention, for many years to the bodily sufferings of her lord, could only be surpassed by her anxiety for his spiritual interests. Through the blessing of God she became the honoured instrument of a total change in his character, who never named her by any other appellation than that of his 'dear saint.' This term had not then fallen into reproach.

Of Susanna, Countess of Suffolk, it is impossible to say too much. For brevity's sake, however, we must restrict ourselves to one or two particulars in speaking of a life which was a constant series of secret piety and active benevolence. When near her end, which happened in her twenty-second year, she implored her lord, that whatever provision might be made for the fortunes or acquirements of her children, that they might be educated in the strictest principles of Christianity, in comparison of which she esteemed all worldly accomplishments as nothing. To her dying father, who had been inattentive to Christian duties, she administered such spiritual supports, that in rapture he praised God that he should live to receive his best religious consolations from his own child!

To the memory of the Lady Cutts, the incomparable wife of the gallant Lord Cutts, so distinguished at the siege of Namur, noble justice has been done in an admirable funeral sermon of Bishop Atterbury, which we would recommend to every reader who has a taste for exalted piety or fine writing.

The Lady Elizabeth Hastings was not less distinguished for superior talents than for eminence in every Christian attainment.—She has been celebrated for both in the Tatler, under the very inappropriate appellation of Aspasia. No two characters could form a more perfect contrast.

But the time would fail to enumerate all the English ladies who have conferred honour on their country. Of those already mentioned all possessed considerable talents. Some were eminent for their skill in the dead languages; others for their knowledge of philosophy and the sciences; all for their high religious attainments. All were practical Christians—all adorned their profession by the strictest attention to the domestic, the relative, and the social duties.*

But what shall we say to Rachel, Lady Russell? Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all! She has unintentionally bequeathed us her character in her letters. Though there is little elegance in her style, there is all the dignity of wisdom and truth in her sentiments. Many specimens of epistolary writing might be produced, which excel these in the graces of composition, but few which surpass them in that strong sense, solid judgment, and those discriminating powers which were the characteristics of her intellectual attainments, as heroic fortitude, Christian humility, unshaken trust in God, and submission to his dispensations, were of her religious character. Such a combination of tenderness the most exquisite, magnanimity the most unaffected, and Christian piety the most practical, have not often met in the same mind.

An acute, but sceptical French writer, calls 'Magnanimity the good sense of pride, and the noblest way of obtaining praise.'—How well has the prince of Pagan philosophers, by anticipation, corrected this tinsel phrase!' 'If thou art not good, thy magnanimity is ridiculous, and worthy of no honour.' How did our sublime Christian sufferer practically improve upon both! 'Seek not the honour which cometh from men, but that which cometh from God.'

Whether we view this illustrious daughter of the virtuous Southampton taking notes on the public trial of her noble consort, concealing the tender anguish of the wife under the assumed composure of the secretary; whether we behold her, after his condemnation, prostrate at the feet of the unfeeling monarch, imploring a short reprieve for her adored husband, while the iron-hearted king heard the petition without emotion, and refused it without regret; whether we behold her sublime composure at their final separation, which drew from her dying lord the confession, 'the bitterness of death is past;' whether we behold her heroic resolution rather to see him die, than to persuade him to any dishonourable means to preserve his life; whether we see her superiority to resentment afterwards towards the promoters of his execution,—no expression of an unforgiving spirit; no hard sentence escaping her, even against the savage Jeffries, who pronounced his condemnation, adding insult to cruelty; no triumph when that infamous judge was afterwards disgraced and imprisoned; if we view her in that more than temperate letter to the King a few days after her dear lord's execution, declaring that, if she were capable of consolation, it would only be that her lord's fame might be preserved in the King's more favourable opinion:—had long habits of voluptuousness left any sense of pity in this corrupt king; or, rather, if a heart had not been forgotten in his anatomy, it must have been

* For a full account of these, and many other equally eminent ladies, see 'Memoirs of Pious Women'

touched at her humble entreaty that 'he would grant his pardon to a woman amazed with grief, to the daughter of a man who had served his father in his greatest extremities, and his Majesty in his greatest perils:'—if we view this extraordinary sufferer under all these trials, while we admire the woman, we must adore the divine grace which alone could sustain her under them.

After this imperfect sketch, may we not say, that, for an example of conjugal tenderness, we need not go out of our own country for a perfect model? Portia swallowing fire because she would not survive her Brutus, the *Pœte, non dolet* of the faithful Arraia, as she stabbed herself, and then presented the sword to her husband, to set him an example of dying bravely; these heroic instances of conjugal affection, which have been the admiration of ages, are surpassed by the conduct of Lady Russell: *they* died a voluntary death rather than outlive their husbands: Christianity imposed on *her* the severer duty of surviving hers—of living to suffer calamities scarcely less trying, and to perform duties scarcely less heroic. After weeping herself blind, after the loss of her only son, the Duke of Bedford, let us view her called to witness the death of her daughter, the Duchess of Rutland. After seeing her dead corpse, let us behold her going to the chamber of her other daughter, the Duchess of Devonshire, then confined in childbed, of which the other had just died. When her only surviving daughter inquired after her sister, the mother cheerfully replied, 'I have just seen her out of bed!'—It was in her coffin.

In whatever attitude, then, we consider the portrait of this illustrious lady it is with fresh admiration. Each lineament derives additional beauty from its harmony with the rest, the symmetry of the features corresponding with the just proportions of the whole figure.

England's Best Hope.

We have dwelt on the present and the past, as well with reference to our neighbours as ourselves. If we have shown that we have little regret in any still remaining difference between the inhabitants of the opposite shores, and much to fear from a growing resemblance between them; if we have successfully hinted at the grounds of our own real superiority, and the possibility of maintaining, and even increasing our greatness, to any extent consistent with human imperfection; if we have, in the two preceding chapters, anticipated what might be our ultimate degradation, whilst in the first we had pointed at the heights to which we may reasonably aspire; let us not think it unworthy our attention to inquire how we can alone answer our high destination, revive what we have lost, attain what more is within our reach, or having attained it how we may perpetuate the inestimable blessing.

We have at length, though with a slow and reluctant movement, begun to provide a national education for the children of the poor. Prejudice held out against it with its accustomed pertinacity,—knowledge would only make them idle, ignorance would preserve subordination, the knowledge of their duty would impede the performance of it. This last we did not perhaps say in so many words, but was it not the principle of our conduct? We put off the instruction of the poor till the growth of crime made the rich tremble. We refused to make them better till they grew so much worse as to augment the difficulty, as to lessen the probability of their reform. The alarm came home to the opulent. They were afraid for their property, for their lives; they were driven to do what had long been their duty not to have left undone. But they did it not, 'till the overflowings of ungodliness made them afraid.' They discovered at length, that ignorance had not made better subjects, better servants, better men. This lesson they might have condescended to learn sooner from the Irish rebels, from the French revolutionists. We have at length done well, though we have done it reluctantly. We have begun to instruct the poor in the knowledge of religion.

But there is another class, a class surely of no minor importance, from whom too many still withhold the same blessing. If, as is the public opinion, it is the force of temptation which has produced so much crime among the poor, are not the rich, and especially the children of the rich, exposed to at least as strong temptations, not indeed to steal, but to violate other commandments of equal authority? Laws, without manners, will not do all we expect from them: manners without religion will be but imperfectly reformed. And who will say that religious reformation will be complete, whilst it is confined to a single class, or deemed at least a work of supererogation by some among the higher ranks? There are, however, many honourable exceptions, the number of which is, we trust, increasing.

Why should the poor monopolize our benevolence? Why should the rich in this one instance, be so disinterested? Why should not the same charity be extended to the children of the opulent and the great? Why should the son of the nobleman, not share the advantage now bestowed on the children of his servant, of his workman, of the poorest of his neighbours? Why should not Christian instruction be made a prominent article in the education of those who are to govern and to legislate, as well as of those who are to work and to serve? Why are these most important beings, the very beings in this enlightened country whose immortal interests are the most neglected?

The Apostle tells us, that 'he who provides not for his own house has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' If this be true of temporal, what shall be said of him who neglects to make 'for his own' a spiritual provision? Does not he far more emphatically deny 'that faith' which is violated even in the other inferior case?

If we have begun to instruct the poor with a view to check the spirit of insubordination, that spirit requires little less suppression in our own families. In all ranks it is the prevailing evil of the present day. The diminished obedience of children to parents, of servants to masters,

of subjects to sovereigns, all spring from one common root—an abatement of the reverence to the authority of God. Fathers should therefore keep up in their offspring, as long as possible, a dependance on themselves, without which they will gradually shake off their dependence on their Maker. Independence of every kind, as it is the prevailing wish, so it is the most alarming danger. With filial obedience, obedience to Divine authority will become connected; but the muzzle of domestic restraint shaken off, there will be no controul of any kind left. Might not a more exact Christian institution help to arrest the same spirit which has, within a few years, so frequently broken out in our, in many respects, excellent public schools? We mean not altogether, to censure the honourable seminaries. Do not the youth carry thither, rather than acquire there, this want of subordination? Is it not too often previously fostered at home by the habits of luxury, the taste for expense, the unrestrained indulgences, the unsubdued tempers, which so ill prepare them to submit to moral discipline? Laxity of manners and of principles act reciprocally: they are alternately cause and effect.

Tender parents are, indeed, grieved at the indications of evil dispositions in their children; but even worthy people do not always study the human character: they are too much disposed to believe this budding vice but accidental defect—a failing which time will cure. Time cures nothing; time only inveterates, only exasperates, where religion is not called in as a corrective. It is in vain to hope to tame the headstrong violence of the passions by a few moral sentences; the curb is too weak for the natural ferocity of the animal. If the most religious education does not always answer the end, what end is an education, in which religion does not predominate, likely to produce? How is the Christian character likely to be formed without the strict inculcation of religious principles, without the powerful discipline of religious and moral habits?

Parents are naturally and honourably anxious about advancing the interest of their sons; but they do not always extend this anxiety to their best interests. They prepare them for the world, but neglect to prepare them for eternity. We recal our words; they do not even make the best preparation for the world. Their affection is warm, but is short-sighted; for surely that principle which is the root of all virtuous action, of all the great qualities of the heart, of integrity, of sober-mindedness, of patience, of self-denial, of veracity, of fortitude, of perseverance in a right pursuit, is likely to produce a character not unqualified for the best services to society; for advancement in life, for fitness for the most useful employments, for adorning the most honourable situations; for we do not recommend such a religion as would make Ascetics, as would abstract men from the business or the duties of life, or from the true enjoyments of society. There seems, indeed, little necessity for guarding against evils of which we see no great danger.

Gentlemen should be scholars; liberal learning need not interfere with religious acquirements, unless it be so conducted as to leave no time for its cultivation, unless it cause them to consider religion as an object of inferior regard. But no human learning ought to keep religious instruction in the back ground, so as to render it an incidental, a subordinate part in the education of a Christian gentleman.

Some apology might be made for the natives of a neighbouring kingdom for their contempt of religion, from the load of absurd and superstitious observances which degrade it. Though even *they* might have discovered, under these disadvantages, much that is good; for they have had writers who yield to none in elevation of sentiment, in loftiness of genius, and sublimity of devotion.* Yet the labours of these excellent men have left the character of their religion unaltered.

But *we* have no such excuse to plead for the contempt or neglect of religion. Here, Christianity presents herself to us neither dishonoured, degraded, nor disfigured. Here she is set before us in all her original purity; we see her in her whole consistent character, in all her fair and just proportions, as she came from the hands of her Divine Author. We see her as she has been completely rescued from that encumbering load under which she had so long groaned; delivered from her long bondage, by the labours of our blessed reformers, and handed down to us unmutilated and undefaced.

If every English gentleman did but seriously reflect, how much the future moral prosperity of his country depends on the education he may at this moment be giving to his son, even if his paternal feelings did not stimulate his zealous endeavours, his patriotic would.

May the unworthy writer, who loves her country with an ardour which the superior worth of that country justifies; who, during a long life, has anxiously watched its alternations of prosperous and adverse fortune; and who, on the very verge of eternity, is proportionally anxious for its moral prosperity, as she approaches nearer to that state, in view of which all temporal considerations diminish in their value; may she hope that her egotism will be forgiven, and her pardon be obtained for the liberty she is taking? May she venture to suppose that she is now conversing with some individual father of a family in the higher ranks of life, and, presuming that he would permit the freedom, address him, and through him, every man of rank and fortune in the kingdom, in plain and bold language, with something like the following suggestions?

Let it be your principal concern to train up your son in the fear of God. Make this fear, which is not only 'the beginning of wisdom' in point of excellence, the same also in priority of time. Let the beginning of wisdom be made

* What has been said here and elsewhere of France, and of the religion of France, has been said 'more in sorrow than in anger,' and with the single view of caution to our own country. However we deprecate the past, we shall still cherish the hope, that having witnessed the horrors of a political, we may one day hail the dawn of a moral revolution. A virtuous King, and an improving government, leave us not without hope that this fair part of the globe may yet rise in those essentials without which a country can never be *truly* great. May they eventually improve, in 'that righteousness which alone exalteth a nation!'

the beginning of education. Imbue the youthful mind betimes with correct tastes, sound principles, good affections and right habits. Consider that the tastes, principles, affections, and habits he now forms, are to be the elements of his future character; the fountain of honourable actions, the germ of whatever may hereafter be pure, virtuous, lovely, and of good report.

In his education never lose sight of this great truth, that irreligion is the death of all that is graceful, and amiable, in the human mind; the destruction of all moral beauty. Its foundations are in the dust, and it is a vain attempt to hope to raise a noble superstructure on so mean and despicable a basis. Tell him, that the irreligious man never looks out of self. He is his own centre; all his views are low; he has no conception of any thing that is lofty in virtue, or sublime in feeling. How should he? He does not look to God as the model of perfection.—He will act nothing that is holy, for he does not honour *his* commands; he will conceive nothing that is great, for he does not look to the Architype of greatness; there is no image of true grandeur in his soul. His mind will be reduced to the narrowness of the things to which it is familiarized, and stoop to the littleness of the objects about which it is conversant. His views will not be noble, because they are not excursive; they are confined, imprisoned, limed, entangled in earth and its concerns; they never expatiate in the boundless regions of immortality. He has no connecting link between himself and things

'Beyond this visible diurnal sphere.'

His soul is cramped in the exercise of all its noblest faculties; his heart paralyzed in its best attempts after a fugitive, low-minded virtue.

There is no true elevation of soul but what the youth must acquire by the knowledge of God as revealed in his word; no perfect example but that exhibited to him in the character of his Divine Son; nothing but the Gospel, through the grace of God, will check his corruptions, give him a sense of his accountableness, and raise his nature above the degraded state to which sin has reduced it.

It is material to reflect that nothing really preparative to his well-being in this life, and conducive to his qualification as an ornament to his country, will otherwise than forward him in his progress for another country, 'even a heavenly' Adopt the measures which even nature and reason suggest for making him a distinguished member of human society, and it will not lessen your satisfaction, nor lower your gratitude, when you see that you have not only trained him to be a useful and virtuous citizen, but also a candidate for heaven.

Let your child be made familiarly acquainted with God's word, his providence, his controlling power, his superintending eye. Let him be taught not barely to read, but to understand, to love to venerate his Bible. Implant at a proper season, in his mind, the evidences of Christianity, in the clearest, simplest, and most explicit manner. Furnish him with arguments to defend it, for he will not fail to hear it attacked. Teach him to despise ridicule, that last resort of the bad defender of a bad cause; for he will find that those who cannot argue can sneer, and he may feel it harder to withstand the one than the other.

Inform him that in France it was the ignorance of religion which produced the contempt of it; and that both together overturned the state, by inculcating principles hostile to all virtue, fostering passions destructive of all order, and an impatience of control subversive of all government: all springing from one common source, all meeting in one common centre, a combination to throw off the government of God himself. Impress upon his young mind that important truth, that there can be no security for a state in which religion is not warmly, yet wisely taught by its ministers, cherished by its government, and believed and reverenced by the people.

There are certain traditional sayings which claim a sort of prescriptive right to be received, which pass unexamined, and are credited as oracular. Guard him against these false and sordid, but popular maxims, which, though the press may be used chiefly by the lower orders, the things themselves are practically adopted, pretty equally, by 'the great vulgar and the small.' Some vindicate speculatively loose principles, by the assertion that 'thoughts are free.' Tell your son this is not true. A Christian must endeavour to bring his thoughts to the same correct standard with his actions, and from the same awful motive, 'Thou God seest!'

There is another popular but unfounded axiom respecting the use of wealth, namely, that 'A man may do what he will with his own.' Christianity denies this assertion also. Every man has indeed a legal right to the disposal of his own property, but religion interdicts his right to spend it in vanity or vice; or if he be exempt from these grosser temptations, she still abridges his right to monopolise it. Christianity expects that the deserving and the distressed shall come in for such a proportion of his wealth as an enlightened conscience shall dictate. The divine person who refused, in a legal sense, to be 'a divider, or a judge,' over a contested property, did not fail to graft on the question he avoided answering, the imperative caution, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness.'

There is another fatal lesson which he will learn in the world, and which the natural pride of his own heart will second; namely, that to resent an injury is a mark of spirit, while to forgive it shows a base mind. The prince of darkness, in his long catalogue of expedients, never invented a maxim which has brought more generous but ill-disciplined souls to destruction.

The uncurbed desires, the unrestrained passions, to which we have before adverted, the contempt of submission, the supposed meanness of forbearance, the hot resentments not controlled betimes in the boy, may have been preparing the man for an act which may hereafter fill his whole life with cureless remorse.

Boys well born and accustomed to well bred society have a sort of instinctive notion of *honour*, which is strengthened by the conversation to which they are sometimes exposed. Scize

upon this spirit, whether instinctive or contracted, but seize it with a view to convert it to higher purposes. This popular notion of honour may seem to give dignity to the tone of his conversation, while it is inflating his heart with arrogance. It may indeed set him above doing an act which some fashionable men may agree to call base, but it will not preserve him from a duel, which these men agree to call honourable. But whatever acquittal a jury of the world's men of honour may pronounce on such a transaction, it will, by that awful decision from which there lies no appeal, by the difinitive sentence of the great Judge of quick and dead,' be pronounced murder; murder of one of them in the act, of both in the intention; murder as criminal as that which brings its vulgar perpetrator on the highway to his ignominious catastrophe.

Lay hold then on this high-minded feeling, and endeavour to direct it into a purer channel. Lead his aspiring mind to higher objects. Let the hope of the favour, and the dread of the displeasure of God, expel from his heart a too eager desire to court the applause or escape the censure of irreligious men, by acts which, while they would offend his Maker, would destroy his own soul. Let him learn to distinguish between the swellings of human arrogance, and the consciousness of Christian dignity. Worldly maxims of honour are tumid, but they are not great.

There is no sure preservation from these mischiefs, but in an education formed on the religion of Jesus Christ. The principles drawn from the spirit of the Gospel, conscientiously adopted, and acted upon, would subvert all the hollow and destructive maxims of the worldly code. How many boiling passions might have been cooled, how many disappointed hearts and mourning spirits healed, how many duels, how many suicides, (both now so dreadfully prevalent) might have been prevented, by the early and unremitted application of this one grand specific.

Cultivate in your son whatever is valuable in science, or elegant in literature.—Independently of its own intrinsic worth, it will, by filling up his time and engaging his thoughts, assist in setting his mind above low and sordid tastes, and leave him little leisure or relish for the base and grovelling pursuits of sensuality. A love of learning judiciously instilled, is amongst the most probable *human* preservatives from vulgar vice; though since it is human, it can go but certain lengths as to moral benefit; and we have witnessed many deplorable instances of its failure, in minds of the highest literary attainments, for want of being under the direction of a superior principle. It is, however, a most valuable auxiliary, not only in improving the intellect and refining the taste, but, as we have already observed, in rescuing so much leisure from inferior pursuits.

But learning, be it repeated, though it invigorates the mind, will not reform it. It is a shining ornament, but not of the nature of a corrective. Moral evil is not cured, is not regulated,—nay it may even be inflamed by it, where intellectual science is made its own end, and not considered subservient to a higher. Learning will strongly teach him to despise what is worthless in composition, but will feebly lift him above what is unworthy in practice. It will correct his taste, but will not enable him to resist temptation: it will improve his judgment of the world, but will not secure him from its pollutions. Human learning will only teach him the knowledge of others, the Bible that of himself.

Let him therefore enter into the battle of the world armed with weapons from the divine armoury; stoutly furnished with motives and arguments drawn from religion, of potency to fortify his resolutions, convince his understanding, and affect his heart. Let him see in your example, that religion is neither unmanly or ungentlemanly. Accustom him not to hear the three dominant spiritual, and intellectual sins, PRIDE, SELFISHNESS, and EGOTISM, treated with an indulgence not shown to such as are more disreputable, gross, and scandalous. Against both classes the whole artillery of the Gospel is impartially levelled. Of the first, peculiar condemnation is intimated in Scripture. Of pride it is observed, that 'God resisteth the proud,' and that it is hard to be found 'fighting against God.' Against selfishness it is specifically proclaimed, that 'no man' with any pretensions to a Christian character 'liveth to himself;' that we are not to 'seek our own things,' and that we must 'bear one another's burdens.'—Against egotism a host of precepts present themselves in battle array,—'to esteem others better than ourselves, to avoid vain glory, to look on the things of others; to be slow to speak, ready to hear.'

Though these interior and mental sins are as much cherished by impiety as those which are coarser and more notorious, yet as the latter can produce no plausible pretence for their indulgence; as they cannot be qualified by any sophistry, nor covered by any artifice, they are less likely to hold out to the end. Morality is disgusted by vulgar vice, by the practical sins of the sensual man; but mere morality can never extirpate the vices of the heart and mind: it is not always her aim, nor if it were, could she accomplish it.

In your conversation with the young person, do not be satisfied to *generalize* religion. Religion is an indefinite term, a vague word which may be made to involve a variety of meanings, and to amalgamate a number of discrepancies. It may release a man from all the prescribed institutions of Christianity; it may set him loose from all its peculiar doctrines and restraints; turn him adrift, and dismiss him to his choice between the 'Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,' of the sceptical poet. Since life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel, a *general* religion is no religion at all. His must be the religion of the New Testament. Be not ashamed to teach your son the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you believe that there is no other name under heaven by which yourself can be saved, you must be assured that there is no other salvation for your son. Defer not then too long to communicate to him the distinctive peculiarities of our faith. Other notions will occupy the space which you leave vacant. O! stamp the right impressions on his heart while it is soft, tender, and ductile; and he will hereafter mix these early imbibed feelings, and sentiments,

and principles, with his other sweet associations, his other pleasing recollections of the vernal season of life; cherished images! which the matured mind is fond of retracing, and which commonly remain vivid when most others have faded, or are obliterated.

Fancy not that these acquisitions and pursuits will blight the opening buds of youthful gayety; that they will check his vivacity, or obstruct his amiable cheerfulness. The ingenuous unvitiated mind is never so happy as when in a state of virtuous exertion, as when engaged about some object to which it must look up; something which, kindling its energies raises its views; something which excites the ambition of lifting it above itself.

Much less fear that the pursuits here recommended will depress his genius; it will exalt it; his mind will find wider room in which to expand; his horizon will be more extensive; his intellectual eye will take in a wider range; the whole man will have an ample region in which to expatiate. To know that he is formed for immortality, is not likely to contract his ideas, or to shorten his views. It is irreligion which shrinks and shrivels up the faculties, by debasing the spirit, and degrading the soul.

And if to know that he is an immortal being will exalt his ideas, to know that he is an accountable being will correct his habits. If to know that 'God *is*' will raise his thoughts and desires to all that is perfect, fair, and good,—to know that 'God is the rewarder of all them that seek Him,' will stimulate him in the race of Christian duty;—to know that there is a day in which God will judge the world, will quicken his preparation for that day.

As he advances in age and knowledge, impress upon his mind, that in that day of awful inquisition he must stand unconnected, single, naked! It is not the best attachments he may have formed, the most valuable societies to which he may have belonged, that will then stand him any stead. He must therefore join them now with a pure and simple intention;—he must not seek them as something on which to lean, as something with which to share his responsibility—this is his own single undivided concern. It is vain to hope that by belonging to any society, however good, to any party however honourable, he can shrink from his own personal, individual, accountableness. The union of the labourers gives no claim to the division of the responsibility. In this world we may be most useful among bodies of men; in the great judgment we must stand alone. We assist them here, but they cannot answer for us hereafter.

From his Bible, and from his Bible only, let him draw his sense of those principles, of that standard by which he will hereafter be judged; and be careful ever to distinguish in his mind between the worldly morality which he may learn from the multitude, and that Christian holiness which is the dictate of the Scriptures, and of the Scriptures alone. Teach him to discover there, he cannot discover it too soon, that it is not a set of proverbial moral maxims, a few random good actions, decorous and inoffensive manners, the effect of natural feeling, of fashion, of custom, of regard to health, of desire of reputation, that will make a truly valuable character. This is not to be acquired by certain popular virtues, or rather fractions of virtues; for there is no integral virtue where there is no religion. Pleasing manners will attract popular regard, and worldly motives will produce popular actions; but genuine virtue proceeds only from Christian principles. The one is efflorescence, the other is fruit.

After all, though you cannot by your best exertions, seconded by the most fervent prayer, without which exertion will neither be rightly directed nor successfully prosecuted, command success; yet what a support will it be under the possible defeat of your fairest hopes, that you strove to avert it! Even if, through the prevalence of temptation, the perverseness of his own nature, and the malignity of his corruptions, the barbarous son *should* disappoint the best founded hopes of the careful parent; what a heartfelt consolation would it afford you, under this heaviest of all trials, that the misconduct of the child is not imputable to the neglect of the father! The severest evil—and this perhaps is the most severe—is supportable, when not aggravated by the consciousness that we have contributed to bring it upon ourselves. Though it will not pluck the sting from his guilt, it will render the poignancy of your own anguish more tolerable.

But let us indulge higher hopes and brighter prospects for our country. We refer to those hopes with which the first chapter of this little work concluded, namely, the rich provision which God has put into our hands for accomplishing his great designs in our favour. The hope therein expressed, and the means humbly suggested for accomplishing it, was the re-formation of the British character. We have here, feebly indeed, but honestly, shown what obviously appears to be the best security, the most effectual barrier, against the vices and contamination of our prolonged continental intercourse. Religious education, with God's blessing upon it, which every truly Christian father will not fail to invoke, is all in all towards the restoration, the elevation of our national character. And let it never be forgotten, that it is the education of the rich which must finally determine the fate, at once of rich and poor; and by consequence, which must determine the destiny of our country.

Here then is Britain's last, best hope; and when we consider the unparalleled advantages we possess in a learned and orthodox clergy, who instruct us in the sanctuary, and who preside over our public and private seminaries, why need we despair? Why need we doubt, that the Christian religion, grafted on the substantial stock of the genuine British character, and watered by the dews of heaven, may bring forth the noblest productions of which this lower world is capable; though neither the security nor the triumph will be complete till these 'Trees of Righteousness' are transplanted into the paradise of God.

Reader if you are indeed a Christian father, anticipate in idea that triumphant moment, when, having cast your crown at the foot of the

eternal throne, you shall be called upon to give an account of your own conduct, and, as far as had depended on you, of that of your offspring. Think of the multiplied felicities of meeting, in the presence of God, those whom your example and instruction have, through his grace, contributed to bring hither! Think what it will be, to be able, amidst all the hosts of heaven, amidst the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect—think of being able to say to the Universal Father, 'Behold, I and the children thou hast given me!'

ON DOMESTIC ERRORS

IN OPINION, AND IN CERTAIN PRACTICAL HABITS.

On Soundness in Judgment, and Consistency in Conduct.

As a preliminary to the following pages, the writer begs leave to observe, that it consists rather of miscellaneous observations on a variety of topics, than in an attempt at a systematic view of religion or morals. It does not pretend to present an exhibition of Christian doctrine, or to prescribe the duties of a Christian life. It is presumed that the generality of readers who shall honour these pages with their attention, are already, in a greater or less degree, religious characters; consequently, standing in little need of such information as her humble talents could have imparted. But as religion is become a subject of increasing and more general interest, it may not be unseasonable, as we proceed, to point out some of the dangers to which the less advanced Christian may be liable, as well as some of the evils which may subsist with high outward profession. To those who are beginning to see the importance of religion; and of such persons, adored be Almighty goodness! the number is rapidly augmenting; to those interesting characters, may the writer venture to address a few words of affectionate and respectful counsel? Carefully encourage the first dawning dispositions of piety in your heart, cherish every indication of a change in your views and an improvement in your sentiments. Let not the world, nor the things of the world, stifle the new-born principle, nor make you ashamed modestly to avow it.

But while you cultivate this principle by every possible means, avoid the danger of fancying that your religion is confirmed when it is scarcely begun. Do not conclude that a complete change has been effected in your heart because there is a revolution in your opinions, and a favourable alteration in your feelings. The formation of a Christian character is not the work of a day; not only are the views to be changed, but the habits to be new moulded; not only is the heart to be convinced of sin, but its propensities are to be bent in a contrary direction. Be not impatient, therefore, to make a public disclosure of your sentiments. Religion is an interior concern. Try yourselves, prove yourselves, examine yourselves, distrust yourselves. Seek counsel of wise, established, sober Christians. Pray earnestly for more light and knowledge, and especially for perseverance. Pray that you may be able to go on with the same zeal with which you set out. Of how many may it be said, 'Ye did run well—what hindered you?' You ran too fast; your speed exhausted your strength; you had not counted the cost.

Carefully distinguish between the feverish heat of animal fervour, and the vital warmth of Christian feeling. Mere youthful energy, operating upon a newly awakened remorse for a thoughtless life, will carry the mind certain lengths; but if unaccompanied with humility, repentance, and a continual application for a better strength than your own, this slight resource will soon fail. It is not that principle which will encourage progress; it is not that Divine support which will carry you on to the end. The Christian race is not to be run at a heat: religion is a steady, progressive course; it gains speed also: progress quickens the pace; for the nearer the approach to the goal, the more ardent is the desire to reach it. And though, in your further advance, you may imagine yourself not so near as you did when you first set out, this is not really the case; you have a lower opinion of your state, because you have obtained higher views of the spirituality of the law of God, and a more humbling sense of your own unworthiness. Even the almost Christian prophet seems not to have been previously so deeply convinced of sin, as, when overwhelmed by the glory of the Divine vision, he exclaimed, 'Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!'

The person who addresses you has seen some promising characters sadly disappoint the hopes their early stages in religion had excited. By taking too high a tone at first, they not only lost all the ground they had gained, but sunk into indifference themselves, accompanied with a prejudice against serious piety in others. They not only became deserters, but went over to the enemy's camp. Avoid this error. The world is too much disposed to impute rashness, presumption, and enthusiasm to the purest and most correct religious characters. In your instance let them not be furnished with any ground for this censure by your deserving it. If you advance, you glorify God, and promote your own salvation; if you recede, you injure the cause you now intend to serve, and bring upon yourselves a fearful condemnation. Self-abasement, self-examination, and prayer, are the best preservatives for all who have entered on a religious life, and are especially becoming incipient Christians.

There is one thing we would more particularly press on the important class we are now taking

the liberty to address;—*it is the cultivation of a sound judgment.* Of all persons religious persons are most bound to cultivate this precious faculty. We see how highly the great Apostle of the Gentiles valued it. In directing the spiritual labours of his beloved young friend, in stirring him up to every good word and work, he does not forget this exhortation:—'*The Lord give thee a right understanding in all things!*' Again, he prays for his beloved Philippians, 'that their love may abound more and more in *knowledge* and in all *judgment.*' And in his Epistle to the youthful Bishop of Crete, he repeats the admonition to young persons of both sexes to be *sober minded.* These admonitions acquire great additional force when it is considered, that he who gave them was a man of exceeding ardency of temper, and of zeal without a parallel. This experienced saint must have frequently seen the danger of imprudent piety, of self-confidence, of a zeal not regulated by knowledge; and therefore presses the great importance of a *sound judgment.*

Judgment is to the faculties of the mind, what charity is to the virtues of the heart; as without charity the latter are of little worth, so without judgment talents are of little comparative use.

Judgment, with the aid of God's Spirit, and the instructions of his word, is the balance in which qualities are weighed, by which the proportions of our duties, and the harmony of our virtues, are preserved; for it keeps not only the talents in just subordination, but the principles in due equipoise. When exercised in subservience to the Divine rule, the faculty becomes a virtue, and a virtue of a higher order. It restrains irregularity, it subdues vanity, it corrects impetuosity, it checks enthusiasm, and it checks it without diminishing zeal.

One of the most powerful defenders, not only of our church polity, but of our church doctrines, has had the renown of all his great qualities so absorbed in the quality we are recommending; or, rather, this was so much the faculty which maintained his great talents and qualities in their due order, that we never read the name of Hooker without the previous application of this weighty epithet—THE JUDICIOUS.

Judgment is so far from being a cooler of zeal, as some suppose, that it increases its effect by directing its movements; and a warm heart will always produce more extensive, because more lasting good, when conducted by a cool head.

We speak of this attribute the more positively, because it is one, which, more than many others, depends on ourselves. A sound judgment, indeed, is equally bestowed with other blessings by Him from whom cometh every good gift; yet it is not, like the other faculties of the mind, so much born with us, as improved by us. By teaching us to discern the faults of others, it warns us to avoid them; by detecting our own, it leads to their cure. The deepest humility is generally connected with the soundest judgment. The judicious Christian is watchful against speculative errors, as well as against errors in conduct. He never adopts any opinion because it is new, nor any practice because it is fashionable; neither does he, if it be innocent, reject the latter merely for that reason. Judgment is, in short, that quality of the mind which requires to be kept in ever wakeful activity, and the advantages it procures us, will be more apparent, the more it is kept in exercise.

Religious charity more especially demands the full exercise of the judgment. A judicious Christian will double the good done, by his selection of the object, and his manner of relieving it. All things that are good are not equally good. A sound judgment discriminates between the value of the claimants which present themselves, and bestows on them more or less attention, according to their respective claims.

Above all, an enlightened judgment will enable you to attain and to preserve CONSISTENCY, that infallible criterion of a highly finished Christian character, the want of which makes some really religious persons not a little vulnerable. It was this want in some of his people, which led an eminent divine, at once a man of deep piety and lively wit to say, that 'there were some good persons, with whom it would be time enough to be acquainted in heaven.' So much to be regretted is it, that goodness of intention is not always attended by propriety in the execution.

In another class, the want of consistency makes not a few appear over scrupulous as to some minor points, and lax in others of more importance. These incongruities not only bring the individual into discredit, but religion into disgrace. When the world sees persons, whose views are far from high, act more consistently with *their* avowed views, and frequently more above them, than some whose religion professes to be of a loftier standard, they will prefer the lower, as exhibiting fewer discrepancies, and less obvious contradictions.

Consistency presents Christianity in her fairest attitude, in all her lovely proportion of figure, and correct symmetry of feature.—Consistency is the beautiful result of all the qualities and graces of a truly religious mind united and brought into action, each individually right, all relatively associated.—Where the character is consistent, prejudice cannot ridicule, nor infidelity sneer. It may, indeed, be censured, as holding up a standard above the attainment of the careless. The world may dislike, but it cannot despise it.

In the more advanced Christian, religion may seem to be less prominent in parts of the character, because it is infused into the whole. Like the life blood, its vital power pervades the entire system: not an action of the life that is not governed by it; not a quality of the mind which does not partake of its spirit. It is diffused through the whole conduct, and sheds its benign influence, not only on the things done, but on the temper of the doer in performing them. The affections now have other objects, the time other duties, the thoughts other employments.—There will be more exertion, but with less display; less show, because the principle is become more interior: it will be less obtrusive, because it is more rooted and grounded. There will be more humility, because the heart will have found out its own corruptions.

By the continual exercise of the judgment,

and an habitual aim at consistency, the Christian, though animated, will be orderly. He will be less subject to the ebullitions of zeal, as well as to the languors of its decay. Thus, through the joint operation of judgment in the intellect, and principle in the heart, the religion is become equable, regular, consistent.

There never was but one visible exhibition of infallible judgment and complete consistency. In that Divine person who vouchsafed to pitch his tent among us, and to dwell with men on earth, that He might give us a perfect example in his life, before He obtained salvation for us by his death—in HIM alone was judgment without any shadow of error, consistency without any speck of imperfection. His divine perfections none can approach; but all may humbly imitate those which come within the compass of his humanity.

On Novel Opinions in Religion.

AMONG the numerous innovations of this innovating age, it is deeply to be lamented, that religion should come in for so large a portion. Of this we have a melancholy instance in the system of the new secession.—Many are distorting the sacred doctrines, and slighting the practical ethics of the New Testament. The religion of the Gospel is employed to furnish arms against itself. The truth as it is in Jesus, is fearlessly controverted: its sanctity is no security; its Divine authority is no protection.

In the new system—strange to say! the hardihood of the sceptic is adopted for the professed purpose of purifying Christianity. The dogmatism of the unbeliever is employed for improving our faith in the religion which the unbeliever denies!

This heterogeneous system composed of different elements, made up of conflicting principles, unhappily is not brought forward by the avowed opposers, but by the professed and zealous friends of Christianity;—by religionists placing themselves much above the standard of their former pious associates, with whom they once went to the house of God as friends; by Christians so critically scrupulous, that they can no longer go to that house at all.

Novelties in the sciences and in the arts may be, and generally are, beneficial. Every invention may be an improvement; but in religion they are delusions. Genuine Christianity is not, as one class of men seem to suppose, a modern invention; serious piety is no fresh innovation. 'That which was from the beginning declared we unto you,' are the words of inspiration; the new and living way, therefore, now so much depreciated, is only a continuation in the good old way so long ago recommended by the prophet.

Nor is Christianity, as the recent party seem to suppose, a superannuated thing, which wants repairing; nor is it an incomplete thing, which wants filling up; nor is it a redundant thing, whose excrescences want lopping; nor a defective thing, whose deficiencies must be supplied; nor an erroneous thing, whose errors must be expunged.

But to do these malcontents justice, they do not resemble those reformers who are contented to expose the defects of an existing system, without providing a remedy. This restoration, this purifying, this repairing, this expunging, this lopping, this grafting, this perfecting, they have actually and gratuitously taken into their own hands, with a view either to improve the old religion, or, as their progress rather threatens, to produce a new one; while the champions of the antiquated system all agree that 'the old is better.'

Some Christians of the primitive ages were not then, perhaps many of the present age are not now, aware, that he who overleaps the truth, errs as widely as he who falls short of it; nay, the danger is even greater, as it is more difficult to recede than to advance. It was the vain desire of overturning established truths, of being wiser than the wisdom of God, of being more perfect than the perfection of the Gospel, of giving new glosses to old opinions, and rejecting all opinions which did not hit their own distempered fancies; together with the temptation of being considered as the founders of a new school,—which gave rise to the Ebionites, the Cerinthians, the Marcionites, and various other sects; and which has continued to this day, to introduce successive heresies into the church of Christ.

Of the two classes above mentioned—those who think true religion a novelty, and those who are endeavouring to introduce a novel religion, though they are the very antipodes of each other, yet it is difficult to determine which has wandered most widely from the truth. Scylla has it wrecks as well as Charybdis. Though each thinks that the only way to safety is to recede as far as possible from the other, yet, by this increasing desire of mutual recession, they are in more danger of gradually approaching to each other, if not of finally meeting, than either intended or believed at first setting out.

In one quarter we hear the most consoling of all doctrines—the doctrine on which the great hinge of Christianity turns,—rejected as false, and its defenders derided, as if they were adopting it to be a substitute for virtuous practice. We hear one community spoken of by its professors as triumphantly bearing away from all others the proud distinction of *rationality*. It is a monopoly not to be allowed. If by rational religion is meant a religion singularly adapted to rational beings, no church on earth has a fairer claim to the appellation than the Church of England. It is rational to exercise our reason in examining and weighing the evidences of Christianity; and, having clearly proved the authority on which they are grounded, it is then rational to submit our reason to its doctrines. It is rational to believe that we are apostates from our original brightness; not only because we perceive it to be a scriptural doctrine, but because we see it in all around us, and feel it in all within us.

It is rational for a being conscious of its weakness, to desire to lean upon something that is strong; we therefore lean upon a rock, and that rock is Christ. Our church is a rational church;

for it is sober without coldness, and animated without enthusiasm. Its service unites the affections of the heart with the faculties of the mind; it teaches to pray with the spirit and with the understanding also. Though it lays hold with a firmly grasping hand on the blessed doctrine of the atonement, yet it is so far from using this doctrine as a pretence for neglecting virtuous practice, that it draws from thence new motives, new sanctions, new encouragements. It teaches that without shedding of blood there is no remission for sin, while it declares that without repentance, and without holiness, there is no salvation for sinners.

The sound members of this church acknowledge that there are mysteries in our religion; but the same reason which employed its best energies in proving the Divine authority of Scripture, has convinced them that the secret things which belong to God must be adored now, and will be fully understood hereafter. The legitimate members of the church, for she has, it is to be feared, some spurious ones, are not surprised that in a revelation from heaven there should be mysteries, but they believe that these sacred mysteries are meant as exercises of faith to the probationers for Heaven; are meant to promote humility; which *they* consider, whatever others do, as a grand fundamental in religion. They do not pretend to know in what manner the Holy Spirit operates on the human heart; but they know that it does operate, because it produces that change of heart which they are not ashamed to call the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and which distinguishes the vital from the nominal Christian. They leave to those who have sufficient natural resources in their own minds, if such there be, to reject assistance which *they* fervently implore; assistance without which they, who think they stand, may finally fall.

These humble dependants on Divine grace come at length to attain, in addition to the external evidences of Christianity, an internal evidence in their own bosom, which, so far from giving them any elation of heart, any eccentricity of doctrine, any irregularity of conduct, preserves them from each while it affords them 'all joy and peace in believing.'

But while we put in the fair claim of our church to rational religion, we do not make an exclusive pretension to this, or any other excellence. Every human institution bears on it some marks, greater or less, that it is human, of course imperfect; and it is sufficient to guard *us* against the folly of such a pompous assumption to know, that an erroneous church not only assumes the appellation of *infallible* itself, but gives it also to its infirm, mutable, human head, to a being certain of death, and liable to sin.

But if we do not claim soundness as well as rationality, for our exclusive possession, we are more likely to perpetuate both, than the best societies of separatists. All that is good in our church is likely to be secured to it by the fence of an establishment. An enclosure is not so likely to be broken in upon from without, as a society planted in the waste. We are likely, I say, to be secured from the introduction of new dogmas, as well as to be preserved in our long adopted principles. The pale which encircles our church, and the formularies which belong to it, do not leave it open to the experiments of new projectors, to the incursions of fresh innovators. Above all it is enriched by a great mass of the Divine treasures of Scripture; the spirit of which is also expanded in our collects and prayers, so that, as we have observed in another place, if the pulpit should in any instance unhappily degenerate in doctrine, the desk will still furnish a perpetual antidote. It may indeed deserve the name of the *establishment* not only as being the rational religion, but as being built on the foundation of the everlasting Gospel, on the doctrines taught by prophets and evangelists, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

In another of the quarters alluded to, the more novel system, we hear much of opinions but little of practice; much of doctrines, but little of holiness; much of faith—a disproportioned and unproductive faith—but little of repentance. These grand ingredients, which, when severally coupled together, make up the sum and substance of Christianity,—these joint essentials, which Saint Paul preached invariably, and which by never separating, he preached effectually, are now considered as separate interests, and severed from each other as having no necessary connection.

We are very far from the injustice of accusing those who propagate doctrines which are evidently unscriptural, of being themselves unholy. In some of the leading characters we fully believe the contrary to be the case; but the obvious effect of such doctrines on those who hear them, is not only to lessen their value for practical preaching, but to lead them to consider personal holiness as making no part of the things which accompany salvation.

Those who are at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history, must know that in the most flourishing ages of the church, even when Christianity was best understood and most successfully practised, errors of opinion most readily started up, the ephemeral fungus of a luxuriant soil; they were frequently the suggestion of fanciful and mistaken, rather than of immoral men. Our great spiritual adversary, who successfully employs the *vicious* as the corruptors of morals, knows it to be a stale and fruitless device to make them his agents for misleading the judgment and bewildering the imagination; and therefore, by a refinement of ingenuity, prompts the more virtuous to the accomplishment of spiritual mischiefs. Moral men are his selected instruments for broaching novel, enticing, and dangerous opinions. These moral but wayward persons seem to have overlooked the fine supplication of the Apostle, that God would "establish, strengthen, settle them." These terms, which indeed are not synonymes, but shades:—these terms, a noble climax, implying not equality, but gradation, are now inverted. Every move in the new machine seems to shake, weaken, unsettle. One pin in the old system is pulled out after another, till the whole magnificent fabric, if its security depended on them, would fall to the ground. The patriarch Jacob has shown us in the character of his vacillating

son Reuben, how destructive instability is of excellence.

We are assured that the change in these ever varying theories are so frequent, that to confute them would be as difficult as unnecessary; for that which by some of the party is insisted on in one week, gives way in the next to some wider deviation; so that he who might wish to animadvert on some existing evil must be as rapid as its inventor, he must

'Catch ere it fall the Cynthia of the minute.'

If in religious contemplation or discussion, we once give the reins to fancy, if we cherish every seducing thought, merely because it is new, if we set up for complete independence of opinion, if we assume individual release from all the ties that hold Christian society together, if we permit ourselves to plunge into the unfathomable ocean of discovery, without compass or rudder, there is no saying where we may land; it may be on the shore we now dread. Many of these leaders differ in opinion, but each seems to lay as exclusive a claim to truth as the Pope himself; but as the latter was equally infallible when there was one Pope at Avignon and another at Rome, so the infallibility here seems to be lodged by each in himself, only with this variation, that these last begin by differing from each other, till in their more advanced progress they come to differ from themselves.

Is not the recent secession founded on a kind of spiritual democracy, an overturning system; an aversion to whatever is established; a contempt of authority; an impatience of subordination, a thirst for dictatorship; with this difference, that these religious dissidents loose the rein of their self-government, instead of those of their country.

We know to what a degree the love of novelty, the longing to see any thing they have not seen before, though the object be ever so disgusting, is carried by our countrymen. The poet who best knew human nature, who best painted the characters of Englishmen, said, 'In England any monster will *make* (be the making of) a man.' This is so true, that a dwarf, a giant, an unnatural birth in an animal, will afford delight; the greater the distortion the higher the pleasure. We have seen to what excess this passion for what is novel and monstrous may be carried, in the instance of a late preposterous prophetess, a creature born and bred among the dregs of the people, with nothing to recommend her but ignorance, presumption, extravagance and blasphemy; yet did this woman not only make numberless proselytes among her vulgar equals, but obtained advocates among those from whom better things might have been expected. But it is the very absurdity which is the attraction. Such preposterous pretences being obviously out of the power of human means to accomplish, the extravagance is believed to be supernatural. It is the impossibility which makes the assumed certainty. The epilepsy of Mahomet confirmed his claims to inspiration.

Extravagance in religion is a kind of spiritual empiricism, which is sure for a time to lay hold on the vulgar. The ignorant patient in both cases, who frequently pays little attention to the established physician, is sure to be attracted by any new nostrum from the laboratory of the irregular prescriber: he is resorted to with more confidence in proportion to the reputed violence of his catholicon; and he who despised the sober practitioner, swallows without scruple the most pernicious drug of the advertising professor.

Without the slightest desire to detract from the personal character of our new empirics in divinity, we may be allowed to suspect that their education, and early habits of life, had not altogether qualified them for the arduous undertaking of new modelling a church. It is true, that 'the erudition of a (common) Christian man' is not required to be very profound, but surely that of a Christian reformer should be something more than moderate.

The lapse of three centuries has added little clearness to the lucid exposition of Christian truth as exhibited in the writings of those reformers by whom the doctrines of the Church of England were modelled. Whatever defects might have escaped the notice of those eagle-eyed sifters and examiners of Christian truth, when they rescued it from the rubbish under which it lay almost buried, would not these defects have been detected, pointed out, rectified, by the penetrating mind of Bishop Jewel in his renowned challenge at Paul's Cross, or in his celebrated Apology for the Church of England? Would they not have been expunged or purified by the judicious Hooker, that bulwark of the establishment, in his immortal writings on *ecclesiastical polity*, and on *justification*? Would they have eluded the observation and correction of Archbishop Usher, that prodigy of erudition?

We need not be again told the well-known fact, that there may be abundant learning where there is little enlightened piety; but in these glorious champions of the faith of Christ, and of the Protestant church, learning was only a secondary excellence. Various and profound as were their acquirements, they were conscientiously devoted to the purpose of advancing and confirming the scarcely established church Can we believe that Ridley, Hooper, Cranmer and a long list of such distinguished men, would have made the sacrifices they actually made, without scrupulously examining into the momentous truths they professed to believe; that they would have suffered the most cruel tortures, rather than renounce the doctrines of a church to which they were first ornaments and then martyrs?—'There were giants in those days:' but to say no more of them, nor of the succession of profound divines and eminent scholars who succeed them, 'men of stature also'—would it not be casting a severe reflection on these bright luminaries of our country and church, to believe that the great truths of the gospel which were hid from these skilful and acute indagators, were reserved to be brought to light by half a dozen persons in the nineteenth century; that to men, most of them bred to secular pursuits, and living antecedently in secular habits, should be reserved the honour of detecting, not trifling faults, not imperfections from which perhaps no human institution is exempt, but radical errors, but fundamental mischiefs, affecting the very vitals of our reli-

gion? If these evils really exist, if they indeed escaped the penetration, eluded the vigilance, and mocked the wisdom of those mighty champions, then to say those holy men were blameable, is saying little: they were indeed ideots, voluntarily to suffer a violent death, rather than renounce a church too erroneous for the new reformers, not only in which to preach, but in which to remain.

The penetrating sense of Luther seems not only to have exposed all existing, but to have anticipated all future heresies, especially when he inveighs against that which declared that '*The Ten Commandments ought to be taken out of the Church!*'

The Coryphœus of the doctrine of faith, in contradiction to the new system, says: 'Faith is by no means an ineffective quality, but possesses so great excellency, that it utterly confounds and destroys all the foolish dreams and imaginations of sophisters; but if works only are taught, faith is lost.' 'But if nothing but faith is inculcated, carnal men begin to dream that there is no need of good works.' Again: 'If, indeed, faith saves us without works, let us have no anxiety about good actions; let us only take care and believe, and we may do what we please. 'It is true,' adds he, 'that Paul tells you, that faith without works justifies; however he also tells you, that a true faith after it has justified, does not permit a man to slumber in ignorance, but that it worketh by love.' Again: 'You now see, that though it is faith alone which justifies, yet that faith alone is not sufficient.'

There is not a single doctrine of the New Testament which does not involve practical consequences. The necessity of holiness, now unhappily not insisted on, is more exalted by the death of Christ than by all other means that ever were devised. God's hatred of sin is more forcibly expressed by the sacrifice of his Son, than it could have been by any other method, although we do not presume to set limits to infinite power.

Yet this most glorious doctrine, this cleanser from all sin, may be converted by the manner in which it is administered into an open door to that licentiousness which it is its special design, its obvious tendency, and when truly received on scripture grounds, its natural consequences, to cure.

But if men came to the perusal of the Bible with certain prepossessions of their own, instead of a simple and sincere desire after Divine truth; if, instead of getting their obliquities rectified by trying them by this strait line, they venture to bend the strait line till it fits their own crooked opinions; if they are determined to *make* between them a conformity which they do not *find*, they are not far from concluding that they *have* found it. By such means, a very little knowledge, and a great deal of presumption, has been the ground-work of many a novel and pernicious system.

Systems, indeed, there will be as many as they are novel and pernicious; for though men are as tenacious of error, for a time, as if their convictions were as strong as they could be if it were truth, yet the persuasion of error is not likel to be so lasting. As no error can be so irresistible as a known truth, it cannot long carry the same weight with it. He who adopted it, at length finding it not to go, as we say, on all fours, is more likely to plunge into a succession of errors, each deeper than the other, than to return to the truth which he has abandoned. Whether the pride of not going back, or the hope that, in his wider wanderings, he may extricate himself, it is hard to say; for error is as endless as truth is powerful.—Some minds are so constituted, that it is easier to them to produce objections to truth, than to embrace it; they therefore resist truth, when they might resist the obstacles which prevent their receiving it. Our adoption of error as naturally proceeds from our abuse of reason, as our adoption of truth from the right use of it. The question, to a plain Christian, seems to be settled by this declaration of our Lord: 'He that doeth His will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.'

As, in many of those to whom we have been alluding, their aberrations seems to have been occasioned rather by the vagrancy of the imagination, than the corruption of the heart, we are not without hope that they may yet retrace their steps; that the way they have lost may be recovered; that their involution in this labyrinth may not be past extrication; that Divine grace may furnish a clue to lead them back to the plain, obvious, intelligible meaning of the unsophisticated word of God. That this may be the case, is the cordial wish and prayer of many who loved and respected them before they were unhappily led astray, by erratic fancies, into these seducing theories.

There is no method which the subtle adversary of mankind has not devised to injure religion. When the church is at a low ebb, when she is sunk in forms and outward observances; when zeal is asleep, and all seems safe because all is still, he sometimes rouses her, but it is to wrong purposes: it is not to advance the interests of Christianity, but to bend his force against some symptoms of its returning spirit, which begin to oreak out: these symptoms of incipient zeal he calls enthusiasm, though an evil which perhaps, in that stage of the church, does not exist; he, however, strives to prevent the existence not of enthusiasm but of zeal, that the frigid may enjoy their doze, and not be reproached by the threatened exertions in the quarter which is beginning to open its eyes.

At another period when the church is beginning to be triumphant, he sends out his favourite engine, persecution, with his fagot and his axe, burning where he could not refute, and subduing by force what he could not silence by argument.

He is now pursuing a different course.—The same malignant spirit which once laboured to drive men from Christianity by martyrdom, now draws them from it by sophistry. He now deteriorates truth instead of persecuting it; and as the process is less revolting, it succeeds better. Men are no longer terrified into error, but coaxed into it. They are not frightened, but wheedled out of their belief. Their understandings become so bewildered, that they are persuaded that every new advance in heresy is a fresh step to-

wards truth. Advantage is made even of their prejudices, which become more deeply rooted by the very change which they are made to believe is to extirpate them. New converts, who once valued themselves on their incredulity, have become credulous to excess; and those who were previously indifferent to sober religion, are led to swallow the wildest perversions of Christianity, to adopt opinions which she as heartily rejects as she did their former unbelief.

Some subjects are placed out of the reach of the human mind. Presumptuous spirits lose themselves by attempting to pierce through forbidden bounds; by endeavouring to explain things beyond the limits of created comprehension, they subvert the truth they pretend to serve, they involve themselves in the very difficulties they undertake to clear. The humble Christian, like the seraphim, 'covers his face' before the infinite Majesty of Heaven, and exclaims, 'O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' 'Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself.'

We are not called upon to unravel intricacies, but to hold fast the form of sound words. While to the ill-informed these new teachers appear profound because they are unintelligible, they remind those of better judgment of certain animals, who, burrowing in shallow ground, just beneath the surface of the earth, fancy they are deep only because they are dark.

Many a metaphysical reformer, by the manner of conducting his system, so exposes and defeats his own cause, as to resemble in fate, though we say not with any similarity of invention, the Neapolitan atheist Vanini, who, with eleven others of the same class (we presume the number to be a match for the twelve apostles) endeavoured to establish a regular college of infidelity. The object was nearly the same with that of the late atheistical school in France; and by having the priority of two centuries, they robbed that recent rabble of the meritorious claim to original wickedness.

Vanini's object was to exterminate the very idea of a God, and for this he adopted a most singular method. He undertook to prove there was no God, by stating the general idea of God. He strangely fancied that to define the idea was to destroy it; and that to pretend to say what God is, was the surest way to disprove his existence! His definition is so artfully made out, and part of it so ingeniously written, that while he thought he was drawing only the creature of his imagination, it appears as if he were enthroning rather than deposing his Creator. A marvellous delusion to argue against the being of God from the very magnitude of his perfections! Let the delirious metaphysics of modern times alone, and we had almost said they will also argue themselves into the abyss of forgetfulness.*

We want more simplicity in the exercise of our religion; we want to be reformed by it, and not to reform it; we have need to be sent back to our first rudiments. We should imitate the plainness and uncomplicated method of the New Testament, where the doctrines are few, but of importance inestimable, infinite, eternal! We should examine the grounds of our faith by this unerring guide, and not by the pullulations of our own visionary fancies. We want to be sent back to elementary principles. We need not even think it beneath our wisdom to be directed by that familiar summary, the Apostles' Creed. It were well if we fixed our own faith by the articles comprised in, and enclosed by, that safe compendium instead of turning it over to our children as if we were got above its beggarly elements. Even the way-faring man cannot stray while he is contented to keep close within this hedge.

Many do not virtually adopt its first simple declaration, 'I believe in God;' for to believe in God on the Christian scheme, is not merely to believe in a first cause, is not merely to believe in His existence, we must also believe in His attributes, His promises, His threatenings, His Son, His word, His Spirit; to believe in those attributes especially which harmoniously meet in the glorious union of truth and mercy, the blessed combination of righteousness and peace in the person of his Divine Son; those promises which are eternal life to as many as keep his commandments; those threatenings which say to the ungodly, 'Depart from me I never knew you;' that holiness without which no man shall ever see his face.

A bad principle is of much more extensive mischief than a bad example; the latter it is true, like a conflagration, has a tendency to destroy whatever comes within its reach; but a pernicious principle, like the variolous matter, may be conveyed to any distance, and infect the patient, though he had never come in contact with him from whose eruption it was taken. 'It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand, for they have destroyed thy law!'

But it is not the entertaining a dangerous opinion, it is the rage of proselyting to new opinions, which constitutes the most malignant part of the mischief; an erroneous doctrine not propagated, hurts none but him who holds it but by propagating it to unsettle the minds of multitudes to deteriorate the Gospel, and to disturb the peace and unity of the church, is surely no light evil, especially in a country like ours, proverbial for its credulity and love of novelty; and in a church like ours, which has been reformed, sifted, and purified, beyond the example of any other in the Christian world.

The everlasting edifice of the Gospel is founded on a rock, whose stability neither storms can shake, nor waves undermine.—Nor can any contrivances of man improve the beauty of its superstructure. Its depths cannot be fathomed by our short line, nor its height fully apprehended by our short sight! Christianity then is no appropriate field for the perplexities of metaphysics, nor the industry of new discoverers. This brief title of the Bible—THE WORD OF GOD—excludes the censures of all cavillers, annihilates the emendations of all critics!

It is with unfeigned sorrow the writer has witnessed the rise and progress of the new community. If she knows any thing of her own heart, the preceding remarks have not been dictated by a censorious spirit. But it may be said,

* For a further account of this metaphysical atheist, see Mr. Saurin's sermon on 'The deep things of God.'

she was not called upon for any such impertinent animadversions. The probability of such a reproof makes her feel herself obliged to account for the liberty she has taken.

Those who have condescended to look into her former writings, need not be reminded, that she has through life, in a considerable degree, though not exclusively, devoted her humble talents to the service of her own sex; and has conscientiously, though feebly, laboured to be useful to their best interests in every way she could devise. She has endeavoured to strengthen them in the pursuit of what was right, and they have had the goodness to bear with her when she has reminded them of any aberrations from that pursuit.

Though the deep interest she has taken in their credit and their welfare has by no means invested her with a right of interference on the present painful occasion, yet it would not have been consistent with her antecedent practice, to overlook a circumstance in which they are so deeply involved.

It has excited the most lively feelings of regret in many minds, to hear, in a recent instance, of the departure of some ladies of consideration, from that reserve and delicacy so peculiarly the characteristics of their sex, and so naturally appendant to their own respectable characters and situation in life.—They appear not only to have entered very warmly into all the tenets of the seceding school, but to labour very assiduously for their propagation. They are, it seems, not only followers, but joint leaders in the several departments of the government of the seceding party.

Tenderness of heart, warmth of feeling, and liveliness of imagination, form a most interesting part in the composition of an amiable woman; but the qualities which adorn, are also the qualities which mislead. The very attractions which cause them to please, may become snares. If not carefully directed, they give a wrong bias to the character, and a dangerous tendency to the conduct. They lead their possessor more widely astray than is commonly the case with those who are destitute of these pleasing powers.

That providential economy which has clearly determined that women were born to share with men the duties of private life, has as clearly demonstrated, that they were not born to divide with them in its public administration. If, then, they were not intended to command armies in war, nor to direct cabinets in peace, to legislate in the senate, or debate at the bar—doubtless they were not intended to be public teachers of religion, to be makers of canons for a new church, nor to invent dogmas to controvert an old one; nor to be professors of proselytism, nor wrangling polemics, nor conductors of controversy, nor settlers of disputes—disputes which will continue to be agitated as long as men have hot heads and proud hearts; as long as they possess vanity or curiosity, impatience of restraint, or a love of opposition; a weariness of sober truths, and a thirst after the fame to be acquired by their subversion.

Why will women of sense, then, defeat their providential destination? why desert their proper sphere, in which they were intended to benefit, to please, even to shine at least as stars of the *second* magnitude? Why fly from their prescribed orbit? Why roam in useless and eccentric wandering,

> 'And, comet-like, rush lawless through the void,

and then, having for a season astonished with their false and momentary blaze, fall disregarded and forgotten?

These well-meaning ladies would be among the last to use their allotted measure of grace and accomplishment to any purpose which they believed to be improper; yet they require to be told, that neither should their talents be exerted to the purposes of spiritual seduction; that they should not be employed to disturb the faith, to shake by dispute, or weaken by persuasion, the steadiness of persons who, without their endowments, are perhaps in a safer state.

But though the writer cannot hope that these observations will produce any effect on those who have already embarked on this sea, without a shore, and without a bottom—happy would she be, if they might become the means of preserving one inexperienced female from the perils to which novelty, curiosity, and pressing invitation too easily allure. The sure preservatives from this danger are to cultivate deep humility and self-distrust, to keep clear of the very threshold of innovation, to avoid the first step; for all the subsequent ones are easy. Let her bear in mind, that, once seduced, she may find, that 'when she would inherit the blessing, she may be rejected, and find no place of repentance, though she may seek it carefully with tears.'

Ill effects of the late Secession.

Among the evils to which the late secession has contributed, those we are about to mention are of no light nature. It has been the means of exciting a sort of spiritual vanity, of awakening a desire of departing from received opinions, in certain young persons, who may be designated by the name of premature instructors. It has increased the alienation of the lower orders from the church; it has afforded to some who are not favourable to serious piety, a pretence for indiscriminately classing together men of different views, characters, and principles.—Among the more respectable, it has stirred up a spirit of debate and controversy by no means friendly to the cause of genuine Christianity. We shall mention these effects in their order.

There is scarcely a greater mistake in morals, than is committed by those who habitually speak of vanity as a trifling fault, as a small pass not worth guarding. There is perhaps scarcely an error which is so generally adopted, and so carelessly overlooked. It finds its way into characters of every species, and almost into every individual of the species. There is not only the vanity of beauty, of rank, of riches, of learning, of talents, but, as we have already observed, the vanity of religion.

A bold familiarity with Scripture an unhal-

lowed touching of the sacred ark, not as formerly by sceptics and scoffers only, but by persons professing, and we believe intending to be religious, are, it is to be feared, becoming too common. This, like many other of our offences, has its foundation in vanity. It is obvious that an unwillingness to be taught, and an impatience to teach, marks the character of the present day.

There is a scion from this presumptuous stock, which perhaps has not had sufficient time to grow, in order to become generally known, but which is beginning to sprout up in certain provincial towns and villages. There is a growing disposition in a few arrogant young men to read the Bible with their own glosses and interpretations, and to aim at proselyting, and 'taking captive' not only 'silly women' but silly girls. Several of these persons, as soon as they began to open their eyes on the importance of religion, or rather before they were broad awake to its truths, have undertaken this gratuitous tuition. Instead of taking time to promote their own advancement, instead of learning wisdom by an increasing discovery of their own ignorance; instead of improving in Christian knowledge by the only legitimate methods, diligent study of the Bible with the aid of the soundest commentators, both accompanied with fervent prayer for that light they profess to seek,—without consulting able ministers—without taking this straight and obvious road,—on their own very slender stock they set up for teachers themselves. Instead of looking to the experienced and the wise, they collect a little group to look up to them, thus inverting the Apostle's observation—for *they* 'when for the time they seek to be teachers, have need to be taught themselves, which be the first principles of the oracles of God.' If this spiritual vanity should flourish, we shall soon have none to learn; all will be teachers.

Thus the raw and rash Christian, confidently jumps over all the intermediate steps between the enquirer and the instructor, and despising the old gradual approach to the sacred temple, despising the study of books, of men, and of himself, starts up at once a full-grown divine; —the novice seizes the professor's chair, erects himself into a scholar without literature, and a theologian without theology. On the strength of a few texts, ill understood, and worse applied, he undertakes to give his young neighbours new views of the Bible, and without eyes himself, sets up for a guide of the blind.

These young persons in reading the Scriptures seem to be setting out on a voyage of discovery of something new, rather than on a course of observation on what their precursors have done for them. They search, not with devout enquiry, but fearless curiosity; they look out for passages written in a different connection, and applied to different purposes, and then try to prove that they produce not consecutive reasoning, that they do not establish the generally received doctrines. How should they? They were never intended to produce the one, or to establish the other. They bring together propositions which have no relation, and which require different proofs, and then triumph in the supposed opposition of what was never intended to agree.

'Thus fools rush in where angels fear to tread.'

Suffer a few friendly hints. Though Holy Scripture was given to be searched, it was not given to be criticised. It was 'written for our learning,' not for our cavilling; it was given not to be pertly scrutinized, but to be 'inwardly digested;' not to make us wise in our own conceits, but 'to make us wise unto salvation.' It is not to be endured to hear questions on which hang all our hopes and our fears, speculated upon as if they were a question of physics or history, and explained till they become contradictions.

Men taught of God, and possessing those depths of erudition which qualified them to teach others, depend upon it, have left nothing for your discovery except the discovery of your own insufficiency. If there are obscurities they will not be cleared by such shallow expositors. The sun of righteousness will not be made to shine brighter by the light of your farthing candle.

Boldness in religion, we repeat, is one of the great evils of the present day. The more we cavil the less we shall obey. We may explain truths till we come to deny them. We may be so involved in intricacies of our own weaving, that we may end by opposing the doctrine we undertook to clear. Oh! there is no security like a humble mind; a mind always distrusting its own wisdom, and always confiding in the wisdom of God.

Why, then, will not the premature instructor wait till he is himself instructed? Why not look up for information on difficult and disputed points to wiser and older heads? Why not in their little parties turn their attention to practical points, rather than to speculative niceties? Why not cultivate that self-inspection and heart-humbling prayer which would cure those conceits that lead to a critical, and often end in a sceptical spirit; such habits would best preserve them from that inflation of heart which arises from the vanity of some supposed new discovery, in a religion which was given us by the Spirit of God.

The Scripture no where teaches us to indulge this audacious curiosity; it stirs up no eagerness for pushing speculation beyond its legitimate bounds. It furnishes no invitation for ranging beyond the limited sphere allotted to our imperfect human condition. Its incitements are not irritations but encouragements. The Bible wisely represses all that spiritual vanity which would dive into unprofitable, because impenetrable mysteries. It teaches us all that is necessary for us to learn, and there it stops. It teaches what is of prime importance for us to know,—that we are fallen creatures. It shows what we ought to *believe* in order to our being rescued from this state of apostacy. It instructs us in all that is necessary for us to *do* to be restored to the favour of God, which by sin we had forfeited. It is enough that it lays open the disease, presents the remedy, and offers God's Holy Spirit to render it effectual. In short, it reveals all that as probationary beings

we should desire to know, and of all we know it expects us to make a practical use.

The present is, especially among the lower ranks, an age of rebuke and blasphemy; and what is so likely to augment the popular hostility to Christianity, and neglect of the established church, which is founded upon it, as when they see some of its ministers reprobating at one time, the church which they warmly defended at another?—when they see them actually renouncing it as unchristian, and setting up a new system in opposition to it? Where, then, is truth to be found, may not even the more sober amongst the people say, if it is not found in that church, in defence of which so many of her divines, so many of her bishops, were led to the scaffold and the stake? Will not the loose and careless be likely to be confirmed in impiety, when they see these men, who were fostered in her bosom, who had subscribed to their belief in her articles, who had been warm beyond their fellows in the admiration of her liturgy, her doctrines, and her discipline,—when they see these men not only desert her altars, but take up arms against her; when they behold a perpetual conflict between Christian ministers? —for a church that is attacked must be defended—will they not think that an establishment which is so frequently assailed, which requires such continual vindication from which there are so many recent deserters, must needs be an erroneous and unsound church, and even the Scriptures on which it is founded, uncertain, if not false?

What is so likely as this defection to give confidence, without the least intention of doing so, to that spirit of infidelity which used to skulk in corners, and stab from behind a mask, but now avows itself boldly, bares its unblushing front to public gaze, spurns at law as well as decency, openly defies government, whom it used to fear, as well as God, whom it never feared?

Was it not enough that these low, designing demagogues—men who think one religion as good as another, and no religion best of all,—was it not enough that these open violators of order, truth, and justice, should, as the most probable means to accomplish their political mischiefs, endeavour to overturn the church, by bringing her creeds, and her other holy services, into contempt; insulting, by their profane parodies, all that is grave, and rendering ridiculous all that is good? Yet, from such men, such attempts excite our regret and astonishment less than those we have been contemplating. How grievous is it, when persons of a totally different description are, perhaps undesignedly, contributing to help on the work which, we are persuaded they abhor!—when decorous and religious men, though by other devices, and with other weapons, may be contributing to accomplish the work of these vulgar politicians, and assisting, in no inconsiderable degree, to discredit the church which the others are labouring to subvert!

Nay; in one respect the better men are doing the worse deed; for the factitious assailants of the church injure those alone who were injured before; for, by the grossness of their attacks, they shock all who are not totally given up to impiety; while, in the present instance, those more decent characters are more likely to be led astray, who have shown some disposition to be serious; and are, therefore, in more danger of being misled by the specious subtleties, and the assumed tone of confident security, of these religious dogmatists.

The inexperienced and the wavering—those who are unconfirmed in their principles, together with others who have their religion to seek, and who like to have one pointed out to them which will not disturb their repose by the severity of its practical injunctions, nor the self-denying spirit of its tendencies, are likely to be led astray by these false lights; while the sober and self-distrusting Christian will only be driven, by these alarming novelties, to adhere more closely to the humbling and consistent doctrines of the New Testament,—will, with deeper prostration of heart, implore the aid of the Holy Spirit, not only to lead him into all truth, but to *keep* him in it. Such a one will find that it does not require profound knowledge, or deep learning, to perceive the awful dangers of the presumptuous innovations which lead to those perilous subtleties—which terminate in these bold conclusions. He will see that common sense, an humble mind, and a competent acquaintance with Scripture, are all that is wanting to discover that the Bible, and the novelties of the seceding community cannot both be right.

But the evil does not end here; for some of the adversaries of serious piety, are, it is to be feared, disposed to take a most unfair advantage of this secession; and the very circumstance of that separation which ought to have rescued men who firmly adhere to the church, and to the principles on which it is founded, from suspicion, increases it, and causes them to be involved in one common charge of extravagance and error, with men whose opinions they abhor; whereas, when the vessel is assailed by an unexpected storm, instead of throwing themselves out to sea in quest of imaginary safety, the tempest only makes the experienced Christian mariner cling the closer to his hold. Men of more than ordinary zeal and activity, then, should not be suspected of disaffection, unless they afford other, and more substantial reasons, for doubting their want of orthodoxy. Does it not look as if there were no soundness but in apathy, no security but in inertness?

One of the great evils of the times is rash judgment, indiscriminate attack, and a zeal for censure without examination; a not separating men who are materially dissimilar, but lumping them into one common reprobated mass, or, at best, speaking as if the difference were so little, that it was not worth the pains to separate them.

Perhaps there are no church communities in the world, that do not hold some doctrines in common. We are identified in some important points with the Church of Rome; but that does not blind us to its errors, nor does it prevent our keeping clear of them.—There are both rational and orthodox communities in our own country; but our holding some opinions in common with

them, neither makes us adopt those opinions which we disapprove, nor condemn those who profess them, as if they held none that were right. Why, then, should not the case be the same in our own church?

This lumping system is not a little hard on the steady and orderly divine. It weakens the hands of the faithful pastor, when his auditors, who have just been hearing him speak the words of truth and soberness, find him, perhaps, in the next controversial pamphlet they take up, coupled with the half insane, and the wholly absurd. It is hard that the zealous Christian, who is at the same time a pattern of propriety and correct demeanor, should be dragged in to make common cause with those at whose principles he shudders. Yet these men of opposite characters, principles and pursuits, are forced into contact, are together plunged into the crucible of undistinguishing prejudice, and melted down together; all distinctions so lost in the fusion—the sober Christian so mixed with the fanatic, the temperate with the fiery, the regular with the eccentric, that they come out of the furnace blended into one common mass, and are reproduced as if formed of one common material.

Ours is also pre-eminently an age of controversy. Is not charity sometimes recommended with uncharitableness, and religion vindicated irreligiously? But are there not a thousand other subjects better calculated for its legitimate exercise? 'Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth,' on all other topics; but here, though one dash the other in pieces, he does not always escape unhurt himself. But shall the word of 'the High and Holy One, the word of Him who sitteth on the circle of the earth,' be made an arena for the combats of its puny inhabitants, whom the prophet represents by the most contemptible insect?

But although, as we have already observed, if truth be attacked, it must be defended, the Christian controvertist never engages in offensive war. He does not fight for victory, but truth. And the surest way for him to ascertain this, is, to examine the temper with which he defends it. Rivalry is not his motive, nor is railing his weapon.

If, as it is said, warfare is the natural state of man, let his hostility among Christians be directed to a foreign enemy; let them not engage in civil war. You have already 'provoked each other to good works,' which is part of the law; go on, and provoke each other to 'love, which is the fulfilling of the law.' Let both sides rejoice in the good done, without caring which does it. 'There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh in all.' If there is so much done separately, what a mighty mass of good would be produced by cordial co-operation? Let me not be accused of levity in applying the words of the poet,

> The Douglas and the Percy both together,
> Were confident against a world in arms.

We know that, in the sight of God he is not the most successful champion who may have given most falls to his adversary; but he who has obtained the most victories over his own spirit. And *he* will be found, in the great and tremendous day of reckoning, to have been the most valiant sodier of Jesus Christ, not who has been the fiercest combatant in the field of controversy, but who shall have brought most glory to God, and most soul, to heaven.

If we made, as surely we ought to make, the Holy Scripture our standard of judging, as well as of believing, of charity as well as of faith, of brotherly kindness as well as of orthodoxy;—if we brought the Bible to be the constant arbiter of our debates, as well as the professed rule of our lives, we should attack nothing with warmth but what that Bible condemns. All differences of opinion in which God has not set to His seal that it is false, should be treated with candour; men should not then make their own 'purged eyes' the universal medium of clear vision, they should not vilify others for seeing the same topics with other optics. Want of charity is probably no less a fault than the one we may be reviling; and does not a want of discrimination, or rather does not that blindness which is inspired by prejudice, lead to that deficiency in candour which widens the difference? To profess opinions of which Scripture neither commands nor prohibits our belief; ought not to set at irreconcilable variance beings who are equally candidates for heaven. In that abode of perfect peace and perfect love, no small portion of the promised felicity may arise from our being of no party.

A difference in opinion on points on which the Holy Spirit has been silent, on which no declaratory sentence in Scripture has been pronounced, is surely no ground for the triumph of superiority in those who maintain them, nor for supercilious contempt in those who reject them. Is it not putting matters of minor importance in the place of essentials? while perhaps by the disputants on both sides, essentials are not always held with so firm a grasp, or at least are not debated with such unkind pertinacity.

We have hitherto alluded to difference of opinion between pious men, men who are in earnest in their religion. But are there not men of little piety to be found, who side with one or the other party, and become the hottest controvertists, while they take little real interest in vital religion; who oppose without belief, and defend without conviction, merely because they wish to be appended to that side which they happen to think the most creditable, most popular, or most profitable?

Let us then love in each other now what God loves in us, and bear with the rest.—The cultivation of this spirit of kindness would so sanctify the temper, that we should forgive and overlook those inferior matters in others, which might not exactly coincide with our own views and opinions.

These discrepancies in sentiment are perhaps permitted for mutual advantage; and the cultivation of a candid disposition may be carried to a wider extent, and a spirit of forbearance in action, than if there were no such thing as diversity of sentiment. By the consent and reciprocal operation of this spirit of Christian kindness, we shall be made more meet for that state where all will be of one mind as well as one heart

where charity will have its full consummation, and forbearance its full reward.

Let us then prepare ourselves, and each other, by the exercise of the one for the fruition of the other. Let God be all in all now, as He will be hereafter, and there will be no room left in the heart of a Christian for animosity, or unkindness towards his fellow Christians. A cordial agreement in those essentials to which the Gospel has annexed salvation, should swallow up all the present petty, but dividing distinctions. —Could this most desirable object be accomplished, then should we hope to see a renovation of that spirit which, in the early ages of the church, provoked even its enemies to exclaim with admiring wonder, *See how these Christians love one another!*

On the Exertions of Pious Ladies.

We are now about to tread, which we do with a fearful and timid step, on tender ground. It is with mingled respect and reluctance we venture to touch on certain delicate points which affect the sincerely pious; persons who equally avoid all eccentricity in doctrine, and negligence in practice; yet among whom little errors may hereafter creep in, the very consequence, perhaps, of that increasing and inestimable blessing, religious society. It is to be feared they may incur the hazard of raising in others objections against religion, by their honest zeal to promote it.

The persons to whom we presume to allude are of that sex, in which, perhaps, most piety is to be found, and who are in so many respects essentially advancing its cause.—Their services are so materially useful, that it would be a subject of deep regret, if, by any slight inadvertence, their value should ever be diminished. We are too often led to complain of *deficiencies* in religion; we are now to speak—not of its excess, for we believe there is no such thing—but rather to guard the truly pious against the possibility of inconveniences, which, should they arise, would be a diminution of their usefulness.

The thoughtless and dissipated indeed, who haunt unsocial crowds, and lay out their talents for that world which they have chosen for their portion, find their reward where they seek it, in the admiration of that world where they flutter and shine.—The others patiently wait for theirs in that single sentence, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' Yet though it is painful to say a syllable which might look like disapprobation when only caution is intended, may we hazard a few words, not of censure but of friendly intimation?

May not those large portions of time, and strength, and spirit, so generously spent abroad by zealous Christians, in the most noble exertions of religious charity, be sometimes suffered to entrench, in some measure, upon the imperious course of domestic life, upon those pleasing and sacred duties for which HOME is a name so dear? May they not be so exhausted by external concerns, that they may be in danger of entering with diminished interest on the retired exercises of the closet. All business, even religious business, is apt to produce a hurry and bustle in the mind, and an agitation in the spirits, which the most serious persons lament, as being attended with some disqualification for personal improvement. 'My mother's children gave me their vineyards to keep, but mine own vineyard have I not kept,' was the pathetic lamentation of the ancient church. They had engaged her in labours and difficulties which she feared had in some measure impeded the progress of her own spiritual concerns. It was in her own house, at Bethany, that Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. We fully admit, however, not only the complete *compatibility*, but the expediency, of uniting what we owe to those abroad, and to ourselves and families at home; the highest characters are those who combine both. We are not combatting, but applauding a zeal, which we fervently hope may never be suppressed, if it should ever require to be somewhat regulated.

There is no part of Christian duty which more requires us to look well to the motive by which our actions are set a-going. It is of importance to examine whether our most useful, if busy pursuits, are not influenced by a natural fondness for bustle, an animal activity, a love of notice. Whether even the charitable labours grow not more from a restless spirit than from real piety. Let us observe, however, that though these defective motives may at first excite the zeal of some, yet by a perseverance in well-doing, assisted by humble prayer, the motive may at length become as pure as the act is undoubtedly right.

It is asserted, but we trust with more severity than justice, that there is a growing tendency in some truly excellent persons to introduce show and display in their religion; a tendency, not quite consistent with the interior, spiritual nature of Christianity. It is not so much an evil *we* are guarding against, as the appearance of evil. Their sex, like their religion, is of a sober character; and the tendency to which we are alluding, may create a suspicion that religion, even among good people, is not so much considered as a thing between God and their own soul, as we know it really is; for we are far from suspecting the secret communion with their God and Saviour is not considered as their primary duty. And we are willing to believe that the effect of this duty will always be visible in producing that sobriety and simplicity, which so conspicuously, and so beautifully distinguish the religion of the New Testament.

The religion of Jesus is utterly without parade, it effects no publicity. It is enough for his servants to believe that their heavenly Father, who sees them in secret, sees them with an approving eye.

As they have got above acting from the fear of man, the next step is to get above acting for his praise;—the excessive applause and commendation of their Christian friends begin, in reality, still more to be watched against than the reproach of the irreligious. The one teaches them to be circumspect, the other may in time induce them to believe that circumspection is no longer necessary. This negligence, if it do not make them do wrong, may lead them to be too much elated with doing what is right.

But there are higher motives for the use of discreet reserve in the Christian's mind than what regards merely their personal character. However pure in motive, however innocent in action, they must be careful not to have their good evil spoken of. They must be scrupulously cautious of not bringing the least reproach on the cause dearest to their affections. Pious persons cannot but know, that with the utmost care to avoid adding to the offence, which Christian truth, however discreetly exhibited, necessarily gives, that many are looking out for pretences to discredit not only the professor but the profession itself. But if they should hereafter see any of those improprieties for which they are looking out; if any indiscretion should be found where it is sedulously sought, Christianity would suffer and impiety triumph.

We sincerely hope that certain sharp sighted observers, who are keenly on the watch for any thing that may discredit serious piety, who are peeping in at every crevice, through which they think they may detect any real or supposed ground of censure, may never be gratified with the discovery of what they so industriously seek. But it is obvious, that where they can detect no substantial fault, they take comfort in finding a foible; where there is no deformity they triumphantly carry away a blemish, and are ready to make the most of the slightest imperfection. And a speck which would not be perceived in an ordinary form, is conspicuous on that which is white and pure.

This, by a little perversion, and not a little exaggeration, not only of fact but of conjecture, is propagated till it becomes a mischief. In the detection of the slightest flaw in characters of eminent piety, they go away rejoicing, as if they had found some hidden treasure. And it is well perhaps, even for the best Christians, that there are such critical inspectors; and the knowledge that they are watched will answer an excellent purpose, if it set them on watching themselves.

Am I then an enemy to Christian exertion? God forbid! It is the glory of our age, that among the most useful and zealous servants of our Divine Master, are to be found, of 'devout and honourable women not a few.' Ladies, whose own education not having been limited to the harp and the sketch-book, though not unskilled in either, are competent to teach others what themselves have been taught; who disdain not to be employed in the humblest offices of Christian charity, to be found in the poorest cottage, at the bed-side of the sick and dying; whose daughters, if not the best *waltzers*, are the best *catechists*; whose houses are houses of prayer, whose closets are the scene of devout meditation; who, not contented with the stinted modish measure of a single attendance on public worship, so contrive to render the hours of repast subservient to those of duty, as to make a second visit to the temple of their God; and who endeavour to retain the odour of sanctity, shed on the sacred day, through the duties of the week.

But to pursue the subject in a different, though not distant direction, we cannot too much commend those valuable persons, whom neither fortune, rank, nor any temporal advantages have been able to seduce to follow those vain pursuits, whose light, and, in some cases, dangerous amusements, so eagerly sought by the votaries of pleasure. We cannot but admire, that all these energies which others are wasting in idle diversions, or employments little better than idleness, are, by those excellent persons, devoted to purposes of religion, and religious or useful charities.

If, indeed, like the females attached to the new school of theology, they deserted the established proprieties, and prescribed decorums, which have ever been considered as the safeguard, as well as the ornament, of their sex; if they assisted to propagate novel opinions; if they undertook to share the office of directors in spiritual concerns; if they diverted to public purposes, the talents given them for the more appropriate and subordinate, but not less useful offices of private life; if they attempted to clear difficulties in divinity, which the wisest and most learned men had approached with awe and reverence, and had receded, for fear of 'darkening counsel by words without knowledge; if they undertook to decide between contending creeds while they considered the commandments as antiquated—new-modelling the one and rescinding the other without ceremony; if they allowed themselves to determine the right and the wrong on points too abstruse, not only for female, but even for human intelligence, to decide upon, and to get rid of those they did not like or did not comprehend; if they had quitted plain, practical, intelligible religion, for misleading theories, and, like the apostate Galatians, 'removed from Him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel;' if all these things had taken place, then they would indeed deserve even more censure than they have incurred; then, though we should pity their error and lament their apostacy, we should be among the last to apologise for the one, or excuse the other. It has been brought, as a charge, against the valuable ladies whose cause we are advocating, as if it were a departure from the delicacy of the sex, to attend at the annual meetings of certain religious and charitable societies; but we know not what reasonable objection can be made to their being modest and silent auditors on these occasions. They do not attend the resort of the unemployed or the ill-employed—they do not attend to hear the idle news of the neighbourhood, but to hear 'good news from a far country,'—news, which the angels in heaven stoop down to hear,—not the conversion of one sinner, but the conversion of many,—to hear that best news, the extension of Christianity to the extremities of the globe,—to hear that

> 'All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
> Flock to that light;'—

To hear

> 'That eastern Java to the farthest west,
> And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand,
> And worships!'

Compare now these inoffensive and quiet auditors, with the gay multitudes of their own sex

which crowd the resort of pleasure.—Here, they are the peaceful listeners; there, they are the busy performers. The others are not, as here, passive recipients of entertainment, but the entertainers, but the exhibitors. Yet, who among the worldly censures one of these classes? who, among the prejudiced does not censure the other?

So much for the difference in the *act;* let us examine the difference in point of *time;* for, as in our pleasurable pursuits, the consumption of time, that precious material of which life is made, forms a very considerable object, it cannot be thought unfair to compare the two classes on this ground.

Did the pursuits of both, in point of health, sobriety in dress, security of morals, preservation of delicacy, more nearly approach each other than the most strenuous advocate for dissipation can pretend; yet the prodigious inequality of the two as to the waste of time, must settle the matter at once with those who know the value of this fugitive, this irretrievable talent.

Compare then the few hours in the day, and the very few days in the years, given up by the one to these serious pleasures, with the uncounted hours of the countless nights, spent by the other in the *anti-social* crowds of turbulent pleasure—spent, we will not say in the *midnight* parties, for that would give a false impression of the season of those amusements. The midnight hour was heretofore used proverbially to express *late* revelling.—But from the present inversion of hours, that would give an idea not only of dulness and vulgarity, but it would also rather designate the hour when company met, than when they parted. Midnight was once the time which *closed* the scene of dissipation; it is now that of *commencing* it. And it is scarcely extravagant to say, that the morning frequenters of the charitable meetings join them not many hours after the others return from the scene of their unquiet pleasures. In the one case, no neighbourhood is kept awake by unseasonable noise and knockings, no servants are exposed to corruptions abroad, nor robbed of quiet rest at home.

To turn from the metropolis to the provinces. Compare the little absences from home of ladies who inspect the concerns, and give instruction to the poor, with the long and frequent desertion of another class, not of home only, but of country!

Upon the whole though we would carefully guard against both, yet we must confess, in the present state of things, it is not so much a little excess in zeal in one quarter, as the visible growth of dissipation in another, which 'has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished;' and truly happy should we be, if the pen of the ready writers, so frequently employed against the minor, would occasionally be exerted against the greater excess.

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The opening of the nineteenth century has been a period for the display of extraordinary energies, exerted in every sort of direction. They had been powerfully exerted in bringing on the late revolution. All the energies of France, whether in science, talent, wit, or wealth, were combined in one huge engine for the establishment of atheism on the proposed ruins of Christ and his kingdom. We hope this grand device was partly foiled, even *there*. In the general assault some skirmishes were fought in this country; but here a counter-attack was made. 'Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels, and prevailed.'—'The accuser of the brethren was cast down.'

Afterwards the human scourge of mankind in the same foreign country, by a singular energy of character, aided by an unprecedented combination of circumstances, to which the previous contempt of religion had led the way, projected the most exorbitant enterprises, and accomplished them by the most successful perseverance in every species of political and moral mischief. In imitation of one whom the enormity of his crimes would almost warrant us in calling his grand inspirer, his labours were perhaps more energetic, because 'his time was short.' Here again Michael made a counter-attack on the dragon. For it is to the same powerful energies, exerted in the contrary direction, that we may ascribe those numberless noble, and beneficial societies at home, which promise to effect a moral change in the condition, not of one country, not of one Continent, but of the whole Globe, and by which we hope finally, through the Divine blessing, 'to beat down Satan under our feet.'

But this has not only been a period for exerting the energies of countries and communities. They have been exerted under different situations by different characters, and to opposite purposes, by individuals; they have been remarkably exhibited in private persons, in a sex where energy is less expected to break out into fearless action; in Charlotte Corday, in Madame Roland, and other political enthusiasts abroad, all acting with the spirit of the heroines of pagan Rome, and actuated by a religion much resembling theirs.

At home, the best energies of the human mind have been exerted to the best purposes, by private individuals also, and exerted without any departure from modesty, prudence, and simplicity, the sacrifice of which would ill repay the accomplishment of the most popular action.

It would be unpardonable in our remarks on well-directed energies, to pass over one instance, on which, we trust there cannot be two opinions. If some of the novelties of the present period are its errors, others are its glory. It is cheering to the wearied pilgrim, in traversing the desert of this sinful world, to have the eye here and there refreshed with a verdant spot, yielding not only beauty, but fertility.

In alluding to certain recent undertakings which reflect honour on our country, it would be unjust to omit one which reflects honour on our sex. Justice, as well as gratitude, would be wounded, were no tribute to be paid to the most heroic of women.

The reader will have anticipated that we allude to the female Howard. Hers is almost (her sex considered) a higher strain of Christian heroism. Unprotected and alone, she dared to venture into scenes that would appal the stoutest

heart, and which the single principle alone by which she was actuated could have sustained hers. With true Christian courage, she ventured to explore the dreary abodes of calamity and crime, of execration and despair. She took 'the guage of misery,' not as a matter of curiosity, or philosophical speculation, but with the holy hope of relieving it. The favour of Him who stopped the mouths of the lions in the prophet's den, stopped those of these scarcely less savage beings. Her mild demeanour awed their rebellious spirits into peace.

Her visit was not the sudden ebullition of a charitable fit. It was the result of deliberate reflection, and doubtless of fervent prayer. She had long been projecting the means how to assist these most desperate and forlorn of human kind. She had conceived a hope, that what was flagitious might not be incorrigible; and adopted a well-digested plan for their religious instruction.

But she knew human nature too well, not to know that religious instruction would be very inefficacious, without correcting inveterately bad habits. Together with a few pious and able associates of her own sex,* she instituted a school of reform and industry, found manual employment for those who had never worked, and Christian instruction for those who had never been taught. The lips that had been seldom opened but to blaspheme their Maker, were taught to praise Him; the hands hitherto employed in theft were employed in honest labour. Infants, in a doubly lamentable sense, born in sin, and bred in vice, were snatched from a destruction which had appeared inevitable, and put into a train of improvement. The gloomy mansion which had lately been a scene of horror, only to be exceeded by those more dreadful future mansions to which it was conducting them changed its face. The loathsome prison which had witnessed nothing but intoxication and idleness; had heard no sounds but those of reviling and of imprecation, gradually became a scene of comparative decency, sobriety, and order.

If ever a charity of so extensive and public a nature could have been pleaded as some excuse for the remission of domestic duties, this might have been considered as the one exempt case, but it was not so. If she stole some hours from her family to visit the prison, she stole some hours from sleep to attend to her family.

Happily, goodness is contagious as well as sin. We may now say in a *good* sense, 'Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! Distant places have caught the flame. The bright example is already imitated by other ladies in some of our great towns, and will probably take a more ample range.

May we conclude this part of our subject by observing, that ladies of other religious professions would do well to copy, in certain respects, the example of the females of the society to which this distinguished lady belongs;—giving into no habits of dissipation, they have time; addicted to little expense in personal decoration, they have money; and the time and money thus snatched from vain and frivolous purposes, are more wisely directed together into the same right channel of Christian benevolence.

* Among these Mrs. Steinkopff stands in the first rank.

High Profession and Negligent Practice.

There has seldom been a period in which there was more talk of religion, than that in which we live; and we are disposed to believe, that the abundance of the heart in this instance produces its usual effect upon the lips. But it must also be observed, that, in an age of much vital religion, as it must be acknowledged this is, there will naturally be not a little false profession, or, at best, in many professors, more external show than inward piety—a religion that is sometimes more distinguished by peculiar phrases, and hot contention about opinions, than by much devotedness of heart and life.

One of the causes to which the growth of crime among our poor has been assigned, is the growth of our population; and some have undertaken to prove, that it is not because they are worse, but because they are more. This same way of judging may, perhaps be applied to the apparent growth of error in religion—that it is to be ascribed to its vast increase. As there is numerically a larger population in the religious ranks, may there not be naturally expected a larger proportion of error?

We now, therefore, venture a few remarks on another class of Christians, whose intentions, we hope, are not bad, though their charity is narrow, and their information small. We will distinguish them by the name of Phraseologists. These are persons who, professing to believe the whole of the Gospel, seem to regard only one half of it. They stand quite in opposition to the useful and laborious class whom we last considered. None will accuse these of that virtuous excess, of that unwearied endeavour to promote the good of others, on which we there animadverted. These are assiduous hearers, but indifferent doers; very valiant talkers for the truth, but remiss workers. They are more addicted to hear sermons than to profit by them.

Their religion consists more in a sort of spiritual gossiping, than in holiness of life. They diligently look out after the faults of others, but are rather lenient to their own.—They accuse of being legal, those who act more in the service of Christianity, and dispute less about certain opinions. They overlook essentials, and debate rather fiercely on, at best, doubtful points of doctrine; and form their judgment of the piety of others, rather from their warmth in controversy, than in their walking humbly with God.

They always exhibit in their conversation the idiom of a party, and are apt to suspect the sincerity of those whose higher breeding, and more correct habits, discover a better taste. Delicacy with them, is want of zeal; prudent reserve, want of earnestness; sentiments of piety, conveyed in others words than are found in their vocabulary, are suspected of error. They make no allowance for the difference of education, habits, and society: all must have one standard of language, and that standard is their own

Even if, on some points, you hold nearly the same sentiments, it will not save your credit; if you do not express them in the same language, you are in danger of having your principles suspected. By your proficiency or declension in this dialect, and not by the greater or less devotedness of your heart, the increasing or diminishing consistency in your practice, they take the guage of your religion, and determine the rise and fall of your spiritual thermometer. The language of these technical Christians indisposes persons of refinement, who have not had the advantage of seeing religion under a more engaging form, to serious piety, by leading them to make a most unjust association between religion and bad taste.

When they encounter a new acquaintance of their own school, these reciprocal signs of religious intelligence produce an instantaneous sisterhood; and they will run the chance of what the character of the stranger may prove to be, if she speaks in the vernacular tongue. With them, words are not only the signs of things, but things themselves.

If the phraseologists meet with a well-disposed young person, whose opportunities are slender, and to whom religion is new, they alarm her by the impetuosity of their questions. They do not examine if her principles are sound, but 'does she pray extempore?' This alarms her, if her too recent knowledge of her Bible and herself has not yet enabled her to make this desirable proficiency. 'Will she tell her experience?'—These interrogations are made without regard to that humility which may make her afraid to appear better than she is, and to that modesty which restrains a loud expression of her feelings. She does not, perhaps, even know the meaning of the term, in their acceptance of it.

Do we then ridicule experimental religion? Do we think lightly of that interior power of Divine grace upon the heart, which is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity? God forbid! But surely we may disapprove the treating it with flippancy and unhallowed familiarity; we may disapprove of their discussing it with as little reserve and seriousness, as if they were speaking of the state of the weather, or of the hour of the day; we may object to certain equivocal feelings being made the sole criterion of religion; feelings to which those who have them not may pretend; which those who have them may fear to communicate, before they have acquired a strength and permanency which may make them more decisive; we may blame such injudicious questions to incipient Christians, who barely know the first elements of Christianity.

By the apparent depth of their views, and this cant in the expression, the stranger is led to think there is something unintelligible in religion—some mysterious charm, which is too high for her apprehension. They will not hold out to her the consoling hope of progressive piety; for, with them growth in grace is no grace at all,—the starting-post and the goal are one and the same point. One of these consequences probably follows: she either falls into their peculiar views, or she is driven to seek wiser counsellors, or is led by the hopelessness of attaining to their supposed elevation, to give up the pursuit of religion altogether.

These technical religionists are so far from encouraging favourable tendencies, and 'the day of small things,' that they have no patience with persons professing hope, and despise every advance short of assurance.

To judge of them by their conversation, they seem to have as firm a certainty of their own security, as of the danger of all the rest of the world; that is, of all those who do not see with *their* eyes, hear with *their* ears, and discuss in *their* language. You would suppose salvation a very easy attainment, to see them got so much above hopes or fears.

Surely eternal happiness is not so cheap a thing, as that any should plead their claim to it on slight grounds. Some who talk confidently of this certainty, do not give strong indications in their life, of their having entered in at 'the strait gate' which leads to it. If it cost as few sacrifices, and required as little diligence, as some exhibit, there would not be so many who need doubt of their admission. Seek, strive, run, fight, labour, know thyself, humble thyself,—are imperatives not quite so easily or so generally obeyed, as to render 'the narrow way' a very crowded avenue. Self-knowledge, self-denial, self-abasement, are safer symptoms than undoubting confidence and exulting security.

The desire of hearing and speaking much on religious subjects, though Christian duties, are less unequivocal marks of improvement, than whether we love money less, and our neighbour more; whether there is any abatement in our pride, any victory over our passions; whether we are more disposed to conquer our own will, and to submit to that of God. A growth in candour, in charity, in kindness and forbearance, in meekness and self-distrust, will be the probable consequence of a close examination into our present deficiency in these amiable graces.

To these persons, the exclusive credit of their individual preacher is at least as valuable a consideration, as the glory of that God whom it may be *his* constant aim to glorify; and they do not think they exalt him sufficiently, if it be not done at the expense of others among his brethren, to whom he perhaps looks up with reverence. There is a wide difference between the kindness of praise and the grossness of adulation; between affection and worship; between gratitude and idolatry.

Since the human mind is so constituted as sometimes to require remission from its stricter engagements; since it feels the need of relaxing into some intervals of pleasure; it is no unimportant object to enquire what pleasures are dangerous, what are safe, and what may even be made instructive, even where improvement is not the professed object.

The persons in question have little turn for books; might it not usefully fill many a vacant gap were they to devote a little of their leisure to rational reading? There is much valuable literature which occupies an intermediate space between strictly religious and frothy books. History, well-chosen travels, select biographical works, furnish not only harmless but profitable

reading. The study of these would improve their views; and by expanding their minds, furnish them with topics of general conversation and useful reflection. It would enlarge their charity, by letting them see that many authors are not wicked, though they do not confine their works to religious discussion.

Whatever invigorates our capacity of receiving knowledge, whatever adds new and sound ideas to our stock, is not to be despised as useless, or rejected as sinful. Be it observed, however, that general literature must not be allowed to absorb our time, nor interfere with what is of indispensable obligation; yet, if it be clear from every thing light, sceptical, or unsound, it safely fills up the otherwise idle intervals of a religious life, which without it is liable to sink into meaner recreations, and inferior pursuits.

Objects of the first importance cannot be exclusively pursued even by higher capacities than those we are now considering. It is particularly necessary, therefore, for these last to supply their leisure with occupations which will furnish useful information, and matter of pleasing communication. For if the most elevated minds require the relief of change, much more does the ordinary and uncultivated intellect. It has but few images, which are soon exhausted, and must sink into weariness if it be not replenished by new ones.—Reading, such as we presume to recommend, might prevent the vacant mind from brooding over mysteries, which it has pleased the God of all wisdom, as well as all goodness, to hide from more enlightened minds than those we are contemplating. The want of something better to do, the want of resources of a higher order between the duties of the highest, reduces many persons to the most trifling ways of getting rid of time. They who allow of no intermediate reading between a sermon and a play, are often engaged in conversations, to which the most frivolous dialogues ever written would afford no adequate parallel: and they who would think it a sin to be studying the history of their country, are frequently, and perhaps eagerly, inquiring into the gossip of their own village, and contributing new anecdotes to its idle annals.

Many books are useful, that are not professedly religious, for we have minds as well as souls. We may be well instructed for the purpose of this world, without invading on the more important business of another.

If then they would adopt sober literature, in exchange for indolent trifling, their minds would improve in vigour, and their tempers in cheerfulness and candour. Every unoccupied mind lays itself open to the incursion of more dangerous enemies than those it intends to avoid; such a mind takes refuge in what is more injurious than the supposed evil, into which it congratulates itself that it has not fallen. A lively 'Spectator' of Mr. Addison, or a grave 'Guardian' of Bishop Berkeley, would be a pleasing resource. An 'Idler,' or a 'Rambler' of Dr. Johnson, might preserve them from realizing those characters in their own persons. Such writers would teach them the knowledge of mankind, and let them into many a snug secret which lies unmolested in their own heart. Such books might correct their taste, without deducting any thing from their stock of piety, except perhaps the phrases which disfigure it; would give them a relish for better society, and thus turn their waste moments to some profit. Be it observed, we speak of persons who have much leisure; those who have little, should give that little to the one Supreme object.

These religionists delight to speak of themselves as a persecuted people; so that a stranger not accustomed to their dialect, and having been in the habit of hearing the term applied to imprisonment, anathema, and proscription, is rejoiced when he afterwards finds it means no more than a little censure, and not a little ridicule; the latter perhaps more frequently drawn on them by their quaint phrases, injudicious language, and oddity of manner, than meant to express any contempt of religion itself.

We do not pretend to say, that there is not still to be encountered that lighter species of persecution which consists in reproach, supicion, and contempt; that there is not still an inferior kind of spiritual martyrdom, which those who would live godly in Christ Jesus must be content to suffer; a persecution which touches not the life but the fame: but this affects only Christians of a higher strain than those whom we are considering; persons who do not draw on themselves censure by their indiscretion, but by their sternness in principle, and their superiority in practice. This reproach, however, they esteem a light evil, and are contented that as it was with the master, so it must be with the servant. It is well, however, if attack makes *even them* more discreet, and reproach more humble.

In short, the religion of the phraseologists is easy, their acquisitions cheap, their sacrifices few, their stock small, but always ready for production. This stock is rather drawn from the memory than the mind; it consists in terms rather than ideas; in opinions rather than in principles; and is brought out on all occasions, without regard to time, place, person, or circumstance.

It has been triumphantly asserted, but probably with more confidence than truth, that the children of pious persons are not, in general, piously educated. We have known too many instances to the contrary to admit the charge.

Though a good man's religion cannot be always transmitted with his estate, yet much has been done, and is actually doing, towards this transmission: and if it is sometimes found that the fact is as has been asserted, it is, we suspect, chiefly, though perhaps not exclusively, to be found in the class we have been considering. It is perhaps in consistency with some tenets they maintain, that they neglect to prepare the ground, to sow the seed, and labour to eradicate the weeds; believing that education is of little use; trusting that whatever is good must come from above, and come in God's own time.

We, too, know that whatever is good must come from above; and that of whatever is good, God is the giver: but we know, also, that the ripening suns, and the gracious showers, and the refreshing dews, which descend from heaven, are not intended to spare the labour of cultivation, but to invigorate the plant, to fill the ear

to ripen the grain, and thus, without superseding, to reward and bless the labours of the cultivator

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Auricular Confession.

THERE are certain topics which are almost too serious to be overlooked in an undertaking of this nature, and are yet almost too delicate to be touched upon.

Though we are far from thinking auricular confession the worst part of another church, yet we do not wish to see it introduced into our own, especially under the circumstances to which we are about to allude. There are certain young ladies of good talents, and considerable cultivation, who have introduced, what we might be almost tempted to call the coquetry of religion. —To the friendship of men of superior reputation for abilities and piety, frequently to young men; they insinuate themselves, by making a kind of false confidence. Under the humble guise of soliciting instruction, and obtaining comfort, they propose to them doubts which they do not entertain, disclose difficulties which do not really distress them, ask advice which they probably do not intend to follow, and avow sensibilities with which they are not at all troubled.

This, it is to be apprehended, is a kind of pious fraud, a little stratagem to be thought better than they are, by the lowly affectation of appearing to be worse. They ask for consolation which they do not need, for they are really not unhappy; but it is gratifying to engage attention, and to excite interest. These fanciful afflictions, these speculative discontents, after having, to the sympathising friend, appeared to be removed, are poured, with an air equally contrite, and a mind equally at ease, into the ear of the next pious, and polite listener; though the penitent had gone away from the first confessor more than absolved, the mourner more than comforted.

This confidential opening of the mind, this warm pouring forth of the soul, might be perfectly right and proper, were the communication confined to *one* spiritual director. For, here the axiom is reversed; here, in the multitude of counsellors, there is not safety but danger. If the perplexity be real, if the distress sincere, why not confide it to the bosom of some experienced female friend, or some able, and *aged* divine? There all would be right and safe; there confession would bring relief, if relief and not admiration be wanted; and where the feeling of contrition is genuine, admiration will not be sought.

If the young persons in view were not really estimable, we should not have taken the liberty to guard them against this temptation to vanity and egotism. To vanity, because they go away not only with comfort, but exultation. To egoism, because they go away with an increased tendency to make self their subject.

A celebrated court* maxim-monger, who was deeply read in human nature, though he did not derive his knowledge from the best sources, nor always turn it to the best account, has however given a sound caution, from which communicative young persons might glean a lesson. 'Never talk of *yourself*, neither of your good, nor your bad qualities.'

It is true the Christian will know the above admonition to be carried too far. He who considers that the soul is liable to diseases as well as the body, will allow the necessity for a spiritual as well as bodily physician. Now if a patient must, in order to obtain relief, tell his case to a practitioner for the body, is it to be forbidden that the languishing and dejected soul should lean for advice on a moral counsellor, 'An interpreter, one of a thousand?' But if the graces of the person or manner, or the hope of attracting undue attention, added nothing to the skill or worth of the adviser in one case, let us take care they do not influence our choice of the confident in the other.

The writer has been induced to hint at the abuse of this practice, from actual instances, in which unsound confidence, and a piety too artificial, by exciting kindness and awakening sympathy, have led to ill-assorted connexions, formed on a misconception of the real state of mind of the confessing party.

These remarks are by no means intended to apply to that Christian communion at once so profitable and so delightful. When the intention is simple, the heart sincere, the motive pure, and the parties suitable, such intercourse cannot but be warmly recommended. The advantage is reciprocal. The doubting and distressed spirit receives the counsel and the consolation it seeks; while the pious counsellor gains a deeper knowledge of the human mind in its varieties, by the communication of the wants, the difficulties, and the sense of sin in the contrite heart. In other religious intercourse, where there is a nearer approach of character, the heart is warmed by the expansion, and improved by the interchange of pious sentiments. The prophet even annexes to it a reward: 'They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.'

* Le Duc de la Rochefoucault.

Unprofitable Reading.

WE have already ventured to allude to the disproportionate quantity of human life which is squandered in the ever multiplying haunts of public dissipation: but as this is an evil too notorious to require any fresh animadversion, we shall not stop to insist on the excess to which it is carried, but shall advert to another, which, if less ostensible, is scarcely less mischievous—we allude to the increased and increasing prevalence of idle reading.

For whether a large proportion of our probationary being—time that precious talent assigned us for providing for the treasures of eternity, be consumed in unprofitable reading at home, or in frivolous diversions abroad, the effect on the state of the mind is not very dissimilar,

The difference between private excess and public intoxication, is not very material as to its effects on the individual; the chief difference lies in the example and the expenses; for the mind is nearly as much unfitted for sober duties by the one, as by the other.

It is the same principle which influences the inveterate novel reader, and the never wearied pursuer of public dissipation: only its operation is different in different tempers. The active and lively trifler seeks to lose reflection in the bustling crowd; while the more indolent alienates her mind from what is right, without any exertion of the body. In one it is the imagination which is acted upon; in the other, the senses. In one sense, indeed, the domestic idleness is the worst; because it wraps itself up in its own comparative merit, and complacently reposes on its superior sobriety; for, if the spirits are more agitated in the one case, in the other they sink into a more perilous indolence. The scenes acted over by the imagination in private, have also a superiority in mischief over those of actual, busy gayety in others, as being more likely to be retained and repeated. Instances, however, are not rare, in which a thorough manager contrives to make both meet. In this union the injury is doubled.

But it will be urged by the too ready advocates, that *all* these books are not wicked. It is readily granted. Many works of fiction may be read with safety, some even with profit; but the constant familiarity even with such as are not exceptionable in themselves, relaxes the mind that wants hardening, dissolves the heart which wants fortifying, stirs the imagination which wants quieting, irritates the passions which want calming, and, above all, disinclines and disqualifies for active virtues, and for spiritual exercises. The habitual indulgence in such reading is a silent, mining mischief. Though there is no act, and no moment, in which any open assault on the mind, is made, as in the instances previously noticed, yet the constant habit performs the work of a mental atrophy; it produces all the symptoms of decay, and the danger is not less for being more gradual, and, therefore, less suspected.

The general manners are becoming more and more relaxed. Even the old restraints, which had a regard to appearances, were not without their use. The writer remembers to have heard Dr. Johnson reprove a young lady in severe terms, for quoting a sentiment from Tom Jones —a book, he said, which, if a modest lady had done so improper a thing as to read, she should not do so immodest a thing as to avow.

Many instances might be adducsd to prove, that the age is gradually grown less scrupulous. We will give only one. Another young lady, independent and rich, about the same time was tempted to send for Rousseau's Heloise. A very little progress in the work convinced her, that it was neither safe for her to read, nor, having read it, could she either modestly confess it, or conscientiously deny the perusal, if questioned. Her virtue conquered her curiosity; she sent away, unread, a book which may now be seen lying open on the tables of many who would be shocked at the slightest imputation on the delicacy of their minds, or the scrupulousness of their morals.

But to limit the evil of idle reading to the single article of *time:* It is, perhaps, not too much to assert, that if the hours spent by the higher and middle classes in this profitless perusal could be counted, they would, probably, far exceed in number those spent by the gay in more ostensible and public dissipation. Nay we are almost tempted to say, that if, to the account of time dissipated by the latter, were added the hours spent by both classes in acts of devotion and serious reading, perhaps the total aggregate would be exceeded in number by the hours thrown away in the retirement of idle readers.

We are the more earnest on this subject, from being in possession of some facts which evince beyond any persuasions, which confirm beyond any arguments, the perils which we may be thought too warm in deprecating. Among the overflowing number of fictitious writings, not a few are there in the English, and still more and worse in the French and German schools, in which the intrigue between the already married hero and heroine is opened by means so apparently innocent, and conducted so gradually, and with so much plausibility, as, for a time, to escape detection. Vicious scenes are artfully kept out of sight, while virtuous principles are silently, but systematically undermined, till the imagination, that notorious corrupter of the heart, has had time to prepare the work of destruction. Such fascinating qualities are lavished on the seducer, and such attractive graces on the seduced, that the images indulged with delight by the fancy, carry on the reader imperceptibly to a point which is not so far from their indulgence in the act as some imagine. Such soothing apologies for an amiable weakness, that is, in plain English, for the breach of the seventh Commandment, are made by the writer, that the reader begins to think her judgment is convinced, as well as her inclination gratified; and the polluted mind, brought into the state, of all others, the least willing, and the least able, to resist practical crime, is ready to exclaim, with the satyrist of political vices,

That *not* to be corrupt is the shame.

Thus the violation of as awful a prohibition as any in the decalogue, is softened down into a pardonable weakness. The stabbing the peace and honour of the husband, and the barbarous desertion of the innocent babes, or the still deeper wound given to the grown up daughters, is reduced to a venial fault, for which the irresistibleness of the temptation is shamelessly, but too successfully pleaded.

In tracing the effect, almost exclusively, of the unrestrained indulgence in these soothing pictures of varnished corruption, we could, were it prudent, produce actual instances of this breach of solemn vows, this total abandonment of all the proprieties, and all the duties of life; and it is too probable, that, besides the known instances to which allusion is here made, others might be adduced as having imbibed from the same sources the rudiments of moral misery, which has alarmingly swelled the recent list of

divorces, and thus render it more than probable, that the circulating library is no unfrequent road to Doctor's Commons.

There are distinctions and gradations maintained by the squanderers of time in their several ways, of which the well employed do not perceive the difference. Many who would turn with contempt from the card-table, think little of giving days and nights to these pernicious, or, at best, unimproving fictions—an exchange without being an improvement; for the volumes do not, like the cards, confine the mischief to the time they are in the hands, but, as we have observed, often leave impressions behind them when the others are forgotten.

How gladly should we limit these observations to persons whose time is turned to little account, and spent with little scruple, in *any* amusement which is not obviously corrupt! But it is with real reluctance we take the liberty to animadvert on the same error, though not carried to the same excess, in persons of a higher strain of character, persons of correct manners and considerable attainments. Do not many such tolerate in their families abundance of reading which, to say the least, is not improving, and of which, frequently, this would be too gentle a censure? Even where the books contain little that is coarse or corrupt, still it must be repeated, the prodigious quantity of life they consume must exceedingly deduct from that which would otherwise be allotted to more wholesome studies.

And this is not all.—We hear passages, not the most pure in point of delicacy, and quite unequivocal in point of impiety, repeated with enthusiasm by young ladies, from the works of a noble, but profligate and infidel poet: a poet rich in abused genius, and abounding in talents, ungratefully employed to dishonour Him who gave them.—But from the same fair lips, we hear little of Milton and of Spencer, of Cowper and of Young, of Thomson and of Goldsmith, of Gray and of Beattie, names once dear to every lover of enchanting song. Nor need we look back exclusively to departed genius, for the innocent and refreshing delights of poetry.—The muses have living votaries, who pour forth strains at once original, mellifluous, and chaste.

What shall we presume to say to sober-minded parents, even to grave clergymen, who not only do not prohibit the authors of the school in question; who not only do not restrain their daughters from being students in it, but who not unfrequently introduce, as part of the family reading, poetry, which if it contain not the gross expressions, and vulgar wickedness of the wits of Charles's days, is little less profane in principle, or corrupt in sentiment? There is some knowledge which it is a praise not to know; and the vice in this case being somewhat 'refined through certain strainers,' furnishes at once a temptation and an apology.

It may be urged, in vindication of this remissness, that as soon as young persons get out of their parents' hands, they will naturally choose their books for themselves. This is granted.—But is not every year which prolongs their precious innocence, a year gained? May not, within that period, the nascent libertinism be checked, the ardent imagination fixed to other pursuits, the sentiment of virtue kindled, the taste for purity confirmed, and the habit and love of prayer established? And, above all, is it not a pity that they should be able hereafter to plead as an apology for their intimacy with such books, that they were introduced to them by a fond and careful parent?

May we not take the liberty to ask of worthy, but, in this instance, injudicious parents, is this practice quite consistent with the command given to fathers, even under a darker dispensation that they should not limit the improvement of their children to any set hours, but that they should 'teach them diligently, sitting in the house, and walking by the way, rising up, and lying down?'

The Borderers.

Religion, and the world, used formerly to be considered as two different regions, situated separate and apart from each other.—They seldom maintained much unnecessary intercourse. One party shuddered at the strictness and severity of the other; which, in its turn, kept aloof from a communication which it feared might contaminate its own purity.

Between them lay a kind of neutral ground, which, though it divided them, was however, occasionally passed during any short interval of peace, for offices of necessity, of business, or of kindness; offices which, nevertheless, produced at no time entire reconciliation.

This neutral territory has been lately seized upon and occupied by a third party, a civil, obliging, and accommodating people, who are so perfectly well-bred, as to be desirous of keeping well with their neighbours on both sides the boundary. They are invited to intimacy by the gratifications held out by the one, and the reputation conferred by the other; present indulgence tempts on the left, future hope on the right. The present good, however, is generally too powerful a competitor for the future. They not only struggle to maintain their own interest in both countries, but are kindly desirous of accommodating all differences between the belligerent powers. Their situation, as borderers, gives them great local advantages on both sides. Though they keep on the same good terms with both, they have the useful and engaging talent, of seeming to belong exclusively to that party in which they happen to find themselves.

Their chief difficulty arises when they happen to meet the inhabitants of both territories together; yet so ingenious are they in the art of trimming, that they contrive not to lose much ground with either.

When alone with one party, they take care never to speak warmly of the absent. With the worldly they smile, and perhaps good-naturedly shake their head at some little scruples, and some excess of strictness in the absent party, though they do not go the length of actual censure.

When with the religious colony, they tenderly lament the necessity imposed on them of being

obliged to associate so much with neighbours from whom, they confess, there is not much to be learned, while they own there is something to be feared; but, as they *are quite sure* their inclination is not of the party, they trust there is no great danger.—They regret, that as they *must* live on terms with the world, they cannot, without a singularity to which ridicule would attach, avoid adopting some of their manners and customs. Thus they think it prudent to indulge in the same habits of luxury and expense; to conform to many of the same practices, doubtful at the best; and to attend on some places of diversion, for which, indeed, they profess to feel no great relish, and which, for the sake of propriety, are rather submitted to than enjoyed! 'One would not be particular, one does no good by singularity.'

By an invariable discretion, they thus gain the confidence and regard of both parties. The old settlers on the fashionable side are afraid of losing them, by opposition to their occasionally joining their enemies; while the religious colonies are desirous of retaining them, and rendering them service by courtesy and kindness, still charitably hoping their intentions are right, and their compliances reluctant. Thus their borders are every day extending, and their population increasing. As they can speak, as occasion requires, the language of both countries, they have the advantage of appearing to be always at home with each, who never suspect that the same facility in the dialect of the other, equally secures their popularity there.

In one respect, they carefully comply with the Apostle's injunction, applying to it, however, a meaning of their own, 'They let their moderation be known unto all men.'—They scrupulously avoid extremes. They keep a kind of debtor and creditor account with religion and the world, punctually paying themselves for some practice they renounce, by adopting some other which is a shade or two lighter: between these shades they discriminate nicely; and the pride they feel in what they have given up, is more sincere than the gratification at what they retain.

Thus, though hovering on the borders of both countries, they do not penetrate into the depths of either. The latitude they happen to be cast in varies according to circumstances. An awakening sermon will drive them, for a time, beyond the usual geographical degree; an amusing novel, or a new Canto of Childe Harold, will seduce them to retreat. Their intentions however, they flatter themselves, are generally on the right side, while their movements are too frequently on the other.

But though their language can accommodate itself to both parties, their personal appearance is entirely under the direction of one of them. In their external decorations, they are not behind the foremost of their fashionable friends; and truth obliges us reluctantly to confess, that their dress is as little confined within the bounds of strict delicacy, as that of women the rest of whose conduct is more exceptionable. The consequence is not unnatural; for to those who must *do* like other people, it is also necessary to *look* like other people. It does, however, seem a little incongruous to hear the language of one of the countries spoken, even with a strong accent, by ladies in the full costume of the other.

These borderers are frequently disposed to be benevolent, partly from a warm temperament, partly from a conviction that charity is a duty. They profess to give whatever they can spare, but of that proportion they allow vanity, and not piety, to be the arbiter. If personal ornament, if habits of luxury, did not swallow up their money, charity would have it. Charity is the next best thing to self-gratification.

Should they continue their present course, and their numbers increase, or, as is commonly the case, should continual motion accelerate progress, the land-marks of separation between the several countries will insensibly be lost, and it will be difficult to divine the exact limitations of the invading neighbours.

It has frequently been regretted that an amicable accommodation between the adverse parties could not be accomplished by the interference of this intermediate region. But whenever it has been attempted, it has not always been successful. The coalition, it has been found, could not readily be brought about. Prejudices on the one part, and rigorous demands on the other, have hitherto perpetuated the separation.

Terms of peace, indeed, cannot easily be made where one side expects so many sacrifices, and where the other has so much that must be parted with. The worldly territory having, beyond all comparison, the larger population, is of course the stronger, and therefore most likely to hold out.

But though no actual flag of truce has yet been sent out for a general peace, yet alliances are frequently contracted between individuals of the hostile countries, but on very unequal terms; for it unfortunately happens that the party from the more correct side, 'who come out to visit the daughters of the land,' have been seduced by the cheerful music, splendid banners, and gay attractions of the other; and have been prevailed upon to settle in the enemy's camp. To them it more frequently happens that they gradually forget all they learnt in their father's house, and insensibly adopt the manners of the strange country, than that they bring over the other party to their side. It may, therefore, perhaps be safer not to contract these *unholy alliances* till there is a conquest obtained by the small territory over the great one; an event which, if we may judge by the present state of the parties, seems at a very considerable distance.

But enough, and perhaps the scrupulous Christian will say too much, of this light manner of treating a serious subject. We acknowledge the charge; we bow to the correction: confessing that we scarcely knew how to approach this important and interesting class of persons, without the thin veil of something between fiction and fact, between allegory and true history. We felt an almost sinful reluctance to say any thing which might seem revolting to those pleasing characters who have shown some disposition to religion, who love its disciples, without having courage to imitate

them.—But real concern for their best interests will not allow those who assume to advocate the cause of Christianity, to conceal the distance at which they at present appear to stand from its constraining power, and from its practical consequences.

Perhaps your creed is not very erroneous. Probably the rectitude of your religious friends, whose doctrines are sound, and the indifference of your fashionable friends, who 'care for none of these things,' have preserved you pretty clear from errors of opinion. Whilst the occasional society of the pious has kept your sentiments in order, the amusements of the worldly have indemnified you for the severities of the other quarter. But opinions do little till they are ripened into principles. It is reputable to say with one party, 'strait is the gait and narrow is the way;' but the company of the other lets you see that it is not so easy to enter in at that gate, and to walk in that way, as you had flattered yourself you should have found it.

To you the *world* is by far the most formidable foe of the triple alliance, of the three confederated enemies, which the Scripture tells us war against the soul. We have presumed that opinions may not be very erroneous, but there are moral as well as speculative heresies, of which worldliness is the originating principle, and in which it is the practical operator. The WORLD is the grand heresiarch. There are many more who 'love the world, and the things of the world,' than who care whether doctrines are true or false. While they themselves are let alone to follow their own devices; while they are left undisturbed to their own pursuits; you may propound, or controvert, or adopt any opinion, sound or heretical, with equally little danger, or equally little benefit to them.

To the devotee of pleasure there is something harsh and repulsive in doctrines and dogmas; to take part with them would be going out of the way: while to those who can contrive to make right opinions live on friendly terms with wrong practices, it would be a gratuitous folly to add to the faults of conduct the errors of speculation.

In this affectionate remonstrance, we allude not to what might be called palpable and tangible offences; these the decorums of their condition set them above any temptation to commit. We speak not of any disbelief or contempt of religion; these are not the immediate perils of their position: it is not infidelity but indifference —a disinclination to Christianity, not as opposed to unbelief, but as it contradicts the maxims, the manners, the habits of their associates.—Their danger consists in a supreme attachment to present objects, and a neglect of such as are future; it consists in preferring the pleasures and the interests of the world to the service of Him who made it. They are governed by other principles than those of that gospel which has proclaimed that 'the friendship of the world is enmity against God.' They are influenced by its opinions, misled by its example, enslaved by its amusements; they fear lest any deviation from its prescribed code should bring their good sense and good taste in question; lest withdrawing from its practices should bring on them the imputation of narrowness or enthusiasm. 'In short, they go with 'the multitude that keep holiday,' not, indeed, in the Scriptural sense, but in direct conformity to the vulgar acceptation of that term.

Worldly allurements find in the unrenewed heart a willingness to meet them, a disposition accommodated to them by temperament, a readiness to pursue them, increased by habit. The natural heart is already on the world's side, Before the world has time to begin its attack. the citadel is disposed to yield. Before the assault is made, there is a mutual good understanding, a silent connivance between the besiegers and the besieged. As soon as the trenches are opened, the disposition to parley and to submit is nearly the same act.

You appeared, however, to take the first step in what is right, by occasionally joining religious society, and by the pleasure you expressed in it. By that introduction you seemed not undesirous of ranging yourself partly on that side. Having broken through that first obstruction, it was hoped that every subsequent step would have become less irksome.

That religion has its difficulties, we do not pretend to deny; but with a hearty concurrence of the will, nurtured by cordial prayer, strengthened by a full reliance on the Saviour, and sustained by the aid of His Spirit, which is offered you, the difficulties will daily diminish. Rest not, then, in that low state of religion which is satisfied with the hope of escaping punishment; calculate not how small a measure may suffice to effect that escape. Search not out for an imaginary intermediate state between the children of wrath and the children of God. Rest not till you have attained that entire consecration of heart, whose object, aim, and end, is eternal life. Forget not that they who run in a race, though they may come closer to the goal, yet, if they come short of it, fail of the prize as completely as those competitors whose distance is greater: and, if we come short of heaven, whether we lose it by more or fewer steps, the failure is equally decisive, the loss equally irreparable.

Those worldly persons with whom you associate are intrenched on every side by numbers; they therefore act as if they thought that the evil, supposing it to be evil, which is shared among so many, cannot be injurious to the individual; forgetting that every man must bear his own burden, and suffer for his own sin; for, though multitudes may give countenance to your errors here, they will not answer for you hereafter.

Do not follow those who have no settled course of their own—who are hurried to and fro by every breath of custom—whom fashion leadeth withersoever it listeth. The persons against whom we would guard you, though confident, are not without their fears; but it is worth observing, that their fears seldom lie on the same side with their dangers. They fear not great practical errors; these they soften down and treat with complacency; these are tenderly mentioned as the infirmities of nature—weaknesses to which we are all liable. Almost every excess in personal gratification is thus kindly palliated: 'Why did God give us both the dis

position and the means to indulge it, if indulgence were a sin?' There is but one excess they guard against—an excess, indeed, of which they are in little danger,—we mean a high degree of religion; for surely excess is little to be feared, where the thing has not yet even been entered upon!

Be assured, that whatever serves to keep the heart from God, is one and the same spirit of irreligion, whether it appear in the shape of coarse vice, or whether it is softened by the smoothness of decorum, and the blandishments of polished life. We are far from comparing them together, as if they were equally injurious to society, or equally offensive to decency; but we *must* compare them together as equally drawing away the heart from the worship and the love of God. Courteousness, which is unaccompanied by principle, will stand the most courteous in no stead, with Him who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Some of these well-bred persons, who exercise this large and liberal candour towards practical offences, and treat with tenderness certain vices, not thought disreputable by the world, and who even put a favourable construction on things very unjustifiable in the sight of God, lose all their kindness, put no favourable interpretation, when sound religion is in question. They are, indeed, too discreet to reprobate it under its own proper name, but the ready appellation of enthusiasm presents itself—is always at hand to vindicate the hastiest judgment, and the most contemptuous construction.

But though we think far better things of you, whom we are addressing, yet may you not, in this society, be tempted to disavow, or, at least, to conceal, even the measure of piety you actually have, for fear of exciting that dreaded suspicion, of 'being righteous over much?' May not this fear, strengthened by this society, keep you back till your pious tendencies, by being suppressed, may gradually come to be extinguished?

We are ready to acknowledge, and to love, all that is amiable in you: but we must not forget, that the fairest and most brilliant creature, the most engaging manners, and the most accomplished mind, stands in the same need of repentance, forsaking of sin, redemption by the Son of God, and renovation by His Spirit, as the least attractive. The more engaging the manners, and the more interesting the acquirements, the more is it to be lamented, that those very attractions, by your complacency in them, may have stood between you and heaven,—may, by your resting in them, have been the cause of your not pressing towards the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Bear then in mind, that you may be pleasing to others, while you have an unsanctified heart; that politeness, though it may put on the appearance of humility, is but a poor imitation of that prime grace; that good breeding, though the beautiful decoration of a pious mind, is but a wretched substitute for the want of it.

Be assured, however, at the same time, that true religion will in no wise diminish your natural or acquired graces; so far from it, those graces will be more estimable; they will be even more admired, when they are known no to be the best things you have. When you set less value on them yourself, they will be more pleasing to others; who, though they will not estimate them above their worth, will not depreciate them below it.

We are persuaded that you are too reasonable to expect that Christianity will change its character, or lower its requirements, or make the strait gate wider, or the narrow way broader, or hold out false colours, in order to induce you to embrace it. It is not that easy and superficial thing which some suppose, as requiring little more than a ceremonious attendance on its forms, and a freedom from the gross violation of its commands. This may be nominal, but it is not saving Christianity. It is not that spiritual, yet practical religion, for which the Son of God endured the cross, that He might establish it in the hearts of His followers,—which He is pleading with His Heavenly Father, to establish in your heart. He did not suffer that His children might be excused from self-denial; nor that, because He was holy, they might be negligent. He suffered, that 'the women that are at ease might rise up; that the careless daughters might hear His voice, and give ear unto His word.'

If you are disposed to think that what you must give up is great, compare it with what you will gain, and you will be ashamed of your miscalculation; you will think the sacrifice as small as the objects sacrificed were worthless; for Christianity, though a self-denying principle, yet denies you nothing which, even now, adds to your real happiness. It only disenchants you from an illusion, and gives you substantial peace in exchange. It will rob you of nothing which good sense and sound reason do not condemn, as well as the New Testament.

Perhaps you have just religion enough to render you occasionally uneasy. The struggle between the claims of the world and your casual convictions, is far from being a happy state. The flattery which delights, misleads; the diversions which amuse, will not console: the prospect which promises, disappoints. Continue not, then, 'working in the fire for very vanity.' Labour not to reconcile two interests, which, spite of your endeavours, will ever remain irreconcileable.

A life governed by Christianity differs in every thing from the worldly system. It is free from the turbulence and the agitation of its pursuits: it has none of the anxieties and jealousies of its competitions; consequently none of the lassitude and the vexation of its disappointing results. The further you proceed in its paths of pleasantness, the pleasanter they become. Its difficulties diminish, its delights increase. It has pleasures of its own, higher and better; satisfactions which depend not on human admiration, but on His favour, whom to know is eternal life.

Continue not, then, to live as if the great end for which you were sent into the world, was already accomplished. Continue not to act as if you thought you had done all for which God gave you an intelligent mind, reasoning faculties, aspiring thoughts, capacities for endless

happiness. Let not those powers which were meant to fit you not only for the society of angels, but for the vision of God, be any longer wasted on objects the most frivolous; on things which, at best, must end when this world ends. Oh! renounce pursuits, some of them below a rational, unsuited to an accountable, and altogether unworthy of a never-ending being! Renounce them for objects more becoming a candidate for an inheritance among the saints in light, better adapted to an immaterial, immortal spirit, and commensurate with eternity.

REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER,

AND ON THE ERRORS WHICH MAY PREVENT ITS EFFICACY.

On the Corruption of Human Nature.

The most original French writer of our own time, but who employed his powerful talents to the most pernicious purposes, abruptly begins his once popular work on education with this undeniable truth,—'All is good as it comes out of the hands of God, all is corrupted in the hands of man.'

In his first position, this sceptic bears a just testimony to the goodness of his Creator; but the second clause, his subsequent application of it, though also a truth, is not the whole truth. He ascribes all the evils of man to the errors of his education.

Now, though it cannot be denied that many of his faults are owing to a defect in education, yet his prime evil lies deeper, is radical, and must be traced to a more remote and definite cause.

Had the writer been as enlightened as he was ingenious, he would have seen that the principle of evil was antecedent to his education; that it is to be found in the inborn corruption of the human heart. If then, from an infidel, we are willing to borrow an avowal of the goodness of God in the creation of man, we must look to higher authorities to account for his degeneracy, even to the sacred oracles of God himself.

The subject of man's apostacy is so nearly connected with the subject of Prayer, being indeed that which constitutes the necessity of this duty, that some mention of the one ought to precede any discussion of the other. Let, then, the conviction, that we are fallen from our original state, and that this lapse furnishes the most powerful incentive to prayer, furnish an apology for making a few preliminary remarks on this doctrine.

The doctrine is not the less a fundamental doctrine, because it has been abused to the worst purposes: some having considered it as leaving us without hope, and others, as lending an excuse to unresisted sin. It is a doctrine which meets us in one unbroken series throughout the whole sacred volume; we find it from the third of Genesis, which records the event of man's apostacy, carried on through the history of its fatal consequences in all the subsequent instances of sin, individual and national, and running in one continued stream from the first sad tale of woe, to the close of the sacred canon in the Apocalyptic Vision.

And, to remove the groundless hope, that this quality of inherent corruption belonged only to the profligate and abandoned, the Divine Inspirer of the sacred writers took especial care, that they should not confine themselves to relate the sins of these alone.

Why are the errors, the weaknesses, and even the crimes of the best men recorded with equal fidelity? Why are we told of the twice repeated deceit of the father of the faithful? Why of the single instance of vanity in Hezekiah? Why of the too impetuous zeal of Elijah? Why of the error of the almost perfect Moses? Why of the insincerity of Jacob? Why of the far darker crimes of the otherwise holy David? Why of the departure of the wisest of men from that piety, displayed with sublimity unparalleled in the dedication of the Temple? Why seems it to have been invariably studied to record with more minute detail the vices and errors of these eminent men, than even those of the successive impious kings of Israel and of Judah; while these last are generally dismissed with the brief, but melancholy sentence, that they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; followed only by too frequent an intimation, that they made way for a successor worse than themselves? The answer is, that the truth of our universal lapse could only be proved by transmitting the record of those vices, from which even the holies' men were not exempt.

And as these affecting details unanswerably establish the truth of the doctrine, so they are not recorded for barren doctrinal information They are recorded to furnish Christians of every age with a salutary caution, with awful warning.

Surely the best man among us will hardly venture to say, that he is more holy than Abraham, Moses, David, or Peter. If, then, these saints exhibited such evidences of not having escaped the universal infection, will not every reflecting child of mortality yield to the conviction, that this doctrine is as true as the history which has recorded it? Will he not proceed further to say, 'How then shall I be high-minded! How shall I not fear? How shall I deny the cause of the evil tendencies of my own heart, the sins of my own life, the thoughts of foolishness, and the actings of iniquity within myself?' And will not such serious enquiry, by God's grace, acting on the study of the characters of these highly eminent, but not perfect worthies of old times, patriarchs, prophets, and saints, lead the enquirer, through the redemption, wrought for all, and faith in the operation of the blessed Spirit, to that effectual repentance and fervent

prayer, to which, in this same Divine history, such gracious promises are made?

Had the Holy Scriptures kept back from man the faithful delineations of the illustrious characters to which we have referred, the truth of the doctrine in question, though occasionally felt, and in spite of his resistance forced upon him, would not have been believed; or, if believed, would not have been acknowledged.

It is, then, one great end of the oracles of Divine truth, to humble man, under a sense of his inherent and actual corruptions. The natural man feels it repugnant to his pride to suppose this doctrine is addressed to him.

It is very true that this all-important doctrine of human corruption, is, like many other truths, both in the natural, moral, and spiritual world, liable to certain speculative objections, and metaphysical difficulties.—Laying hold on these, which, often, a child might discover, and no philosopher be able to answer, even upon merely philosophical subjects, we excuse ourselves altogether from studying the Divine book, and fearful, in secret, of the discoveries we should make, pretend that its Author has left truth so obscure, as to be impervious to human eyes; or so lofty, as to be above human reach.

But is it not making God unjust, and even the author of that sin which he charges on ourselves, to suppose that he had put truth and knowledge out of our reach, and then threatened to punish us for failing in that which he himself had made impossible? Is it probable that He, whose eyes you say are so pure, that he cannot look upon iniquity, should tolerate it, by tying our hands, and blinding our eyes, and thus abandon us to the unrestrained dominion of that which he hates?

The only real question which concerns us in our present imperfect and probationary state, is this:—Are the statements of revelation sufficient to establish this or that doctrine? And is the doctrine so established, a sufficient ground for the duties required? If this be answered in the affirmative, then to ask for fewer difficulties, clearer light, or stronger motives to action, is only to enter a vain contest with Almighty wisdom, and Divine supremacy. Our present disobedience proves that more light would only increase our guilt, stronger motives would only render us more inexcusable. We should reject then what we neglect now.—To refuse what we now have, is not for want of light, but of eyes; not for want of motives, but of faith; not for want of rules, but of obedience; not for want of knowledge, but of will. Let us then pity those blind eyes which do not see, and especially those wilful eyes which will not see.

The Christian revelation, as far as respects its professed practical purpose, is brought within the reach of the plainest understanding. We speak of the Gospel itself, and not of those metaphysical perplexities with which the schools have endeavoured to meet metaphysical objections; we speak of the fundamental truths on which God has made salvation to depend. The unlettered Christian lays hold on those truths which the philosopher misses. The former looks to the Holy Spirit for his teacher, the latter to his own understanding. The one lives holily, and thus 'by doing the will of God, he comes to know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'

Christianity hangs on a few plain truths; 'that God is, and that he is the rewarder of all that seek him;' that man has apostatised from his original character, and by it has forfeited his original destination; that Christ came into this world and died upon the cross to expiate sin, and to save sinners; that after his ascension into Heaven, he did not leave his work imperfect. He sent his Holy Spirit, who performed his first office by giving to the Apostles miraculous powers. His offices did not cease there; he has indeed withdrawn his miraculous gifts, but he still continues his silent but powerful operations, and that in their due order,—first, that of convincing of sin, and of changing the heart of the sinner, before he assumes the gracious character of the Comforter. What need, then, of heresies to perplex doctrines, or of philosophy to entangle, or of will-worshippers to multiply them?

We do not deny that there are, in Christianity, high and holy mysteries; but these 'secret things,' though they 'belong to God,' have their practical uses for us; they teach us humility, the prime Christian grace; and they exercise faith, the parent attribute of all other graces.

This religion of facts, then, the poorest listeners in the aisles of our churches understand sufficiently, to be made by it wise unto salvation. They are saved by a practical belief of a few simple, but inestimable truths.

By these same simple truths, martyrs and confessors, our persecuted saints, and our blessed reformers, were saved. By these few simple truths, Locke, and Boyle, and Newton, were saved; not because they saw their religion through the glass of their philosophy, but because theirs was not 'a philosophy, falsely so called;' nor their science, 'a science of opposition;' but a science and a philosophy which were made subservient to Christianity, and because their deep humility sanctified their astonishing powers of mind. These wonderful men, at whose feet the learned world is still satisfied to sit, sat themselves at the feet of Jesus. Had there been any other way but the cross by which sinners could be saved, they perhaps, of all men were best qualified to have found it.

The wise and the weak, the illiterate and the learned, cannot, indeed, equally discuss or expound these doctrines, but they are equally saved by them. In view of the simple means of salvation, talents lose their superiority, learning its dignity, and power its pre-eminence. While the sober Christian keeps on his safe, because prescribed course; the wise, and the disputer of this world, by deserting it fall into absurdities which plain men escape; they make the difficulties they do not find, and wander in the endless mazes of presumptuous deviation.

To return, then, to the particular doctrines under consideration:—Let us believe man is corrupt, because the Bible tells us he is so. Let us believe that such were so by nature, even the best, since we learn it from the Divine source. Let us from the same authority, trace the disorder to its source from a fallen parent, its seat in a corrupted heart, its extent through the whole man, its universality over the whole race.

All are willing to allow that we are subject to frailties, to imperfections, to infirmities; facts compel us to confess a propensity to crimes, but worldly men confine the commission of them to the vulgar. But to rest here would lead us to a very false estimate of the doctrine in question, contrary to the decisive language of Scripture; it would establish corruption to be an accident, and not a root. It would, by a division of offenders into two classes, deny that all offences are derived from one common principle.

Among the higher ranks there is little temptation to the commission of certain sins; murder is rare, fraud uncommon, robbery not found, yet the inborn principle is the same in all. Circumstances, rank, education, example, reputation, give advantages to one class, which, had they changed places, might have led to the vices so common in the other; while, had the notorious offenders against the laws and the Divine law-giver, changed situations with their superiors, we should then have heard only of *their* imperfections, *their* infirmities, their *frailties*.

Temptation does not make the sin, it lies ready in the heart. Accident does not create the propensity, it only brings it into action. It destroys the plea of exemption from natural corruption, but it does not put that corruption *into* the heart. It was there before, ready, without the grace of God, ready, without the restraint of religion, ready, without the bridle of an enlightened conscience, to break out into any excess. Yet there are many flagrant offences against God and against human laws, which the high-born, and the high-bred frequently commit with as little scruple as the lowest. The frequency of duelling, the breach of the seventh commandment, two offences frequently found in the same company, gaming, the violation of the Sabbath, with other enormities, would alone sufficiently prove the principle to exist, independently of rank, education, or fortune. Are not what, by way of distinction, we may call the metaphysical or spiritual sins, which are cherished without loss of character—is not ambition, which knows no bounds—envy, which knows no rest—avarice which destroys all feeling—jealousy, which is its own tormentor—ill-temper, which is the tormentor of others—ungoverned anger, which is murder in its first seeds; are not all these equally to be found in the high-born and the low-bred? Again, is not sensuality in the great, which, in the case of the poor, might have produced unfair means to indulge it—is not the love of splendour and ostentation, which are thought to add dignity to the rich, the very principle which leads the necessitous to forgery, the crime for which so many are now suffering capital punishment?

If then men would examine their own bosoms as closely, as they censure the faults of others loudly, we should all find there the incipient stirrings of many a sin, which, when brought into action, by the temptations of poverty, of ignorance, of unresisted passion, produce consequences the most appalling. Let us then bless God, not that we are better than other men, but that we are placed by Providence out of the reach of being goaded by that temptation, stimulated by that poverty, which, had they been our lot, might have led to the same termination.

Let then the fear of God, the knowledge of his word, and the knowledge of ourselves, teach us that there is not, by nature, so wide a difference between ourselves and the men we abhor as we fondly fancy; that there is not, by nature, a great gulf fixed, that they who are on this side might not have passed over to the other. Let us not look to any superior virtue, to any native strength of our own, but let us look with a lively gratitude to that mercy of God which has preserved us from such temptations; to his unmerited goodness, which has placed us in circumstances that have put us above necessity —'the devil's plea.' But, above all, let us look to that preventing and restraining grace which is withheld from none who ask it, and we shall not be so very forward to say, contemptuously, to the worst of our fellow-creatures, 'stand by, I am holier than thou.' A thorough belief in this doctrine would lead us to pray more fervently to be delivered in 'all time of our wealth, as in all time of our tribulation.'

It is not enough that God has *revealed* the way of salvation, he must also incline us to *accept* it. It is this gift, and this acceptance, which makes the distinction between the best men and the worst. Without this all-powerful grace, Latimer might have led Bonner to the stake; with it, Bonner might have ascended the scaffold a martyr to true religion. Without this grace, Luther might have fattened on the sale of indulgences; and with it, Leo the Tenth might have accomplished the blessed work of the reformation.

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False Notions of the Dignity of Man, shown from his Helplessness and Dependance.

Man is not only a sinful, he is also a helpless, and therefore a dependant being. This offers new and powerful motives for the necessity of prayer, the necessity of looking continually to a higher power, to a better strength than our own. If that Power sustain us not, we fall; if He direct us not, we wander. His guidance is not only perfect freedom, but perfect safety. Our greatest danger begins from the moment we imagine we are able to go alone.

The self-sufficiency of a man, arising from his imaginary dignity, is a favourite doctrine with the nominal Christian. He feeds his pride with this pernicious aliment. The contrary opinion is so closely connected, indeed is so intimately blended, with the subject of the preceding chapter, that we shall have the less occasion to extend our present observations to any length.

We hear much, and we hear falsely, of the dignity of human nature. Prayer, founded on the true principles of Scripture, alone teaches us wherein our true dignity consists. The dignity of a fallen creature is a perfect anomaly. True dignity, contrary to the common opinion, that it is an inherent excellence, is actually a sense of the want of it; it consists not in our valuing ourselves, but in a continual feeling of

our dependence upon God, and an unceasing aim at conformity to his image.

Nothing but a humbling sense of the sinfulness of our nature, of our practised offences, of our utter helplessness, and constant dependence, can bring us to fervent and persevering prayer. How did the faith of the saints of old flourish under a darker dispensation, through all the clouds and ignorance which obscured their views of God. 'They looked unto Him and were enlightened! How do their slender means and high attainments reproach us!

David found that the strength and spirit of nature which had enabled him to resist the lion and the bear, did not enable him to resist his outward temptations, nor to conquer his inward corruptions. He therefore prayed, not only for deliverance 'from blood guiltiness,' for a grievously remembered sin, he prayed for the *principle* of piety, for the *fountain* of holiness, for 'the creation of a clean heart,' for 'the renewing of a right spirit,' for 'truth in the inward parts,' that the 'comfort of God's help might be granted him.' This uniform avowal of the secret workings of sin, this uniform dependence on the mercy of God to pardon, and the grace of God to assist, render his precatory addresses, though they are those of a sovereign and a warrior, so universally applied to the case of every private Christian.

One of our best poets—himself an unsuccessful courtier—from a personal experience of the mortifying feelings of abject solicitation, has said, that if there were the man in the world whom he was at liberty to hate, he would wish him no greater punishment than attendance and dependence. But he applies the heavy penalty of this wish to the dependants on mortal greatness.

Now, attendance and dependence are the very essence both of the safety and happiness of a Christian. Dependence on God is his only true liberty, as attendance on Him is his only true consolation. The suitor for human favour is liable to continual disappointment; if he knock at the door of his patron, there is probably a general order not to admit him. In the higher case, there is a special promise, that 'to him that knocks it shall be opened.' The human patron hates importunity; the Heavenly Patron invites it. The one receives his suitor according to his humour, or refuses his admission from the caprice of the moment; with the other, 'there is no variableness nor shadow of turning:' 'Come unto me,' is his uniform language.

The man in power has many claims on his favour, and comparatively few boons to bestow. The God of Power has all things in His gift, and only blames the solicitor for coming so seldom, or coming so late, or staying so little a while. He only wishes that his best gifts were more earnestly sought.

When we solicit an earthly benefactor, it is often upon the strength of some pretence to his favour—the hope of some reward for past services: even if we can produce little claim, we insinuate something like merit. But when we approach our heavenly Benefactor, so far from having any thing like claim, any thing like merit to produce, our only true, and our only acceptable plea, is our utter want of both claim and merit—is the utter destitution of all that can recommend us; yet we presume to ask favour, when we deserve nothing but rejection; we are encouraged to ask for eternal happiness when we deserve only eternal punishment. Though we have nothing to produce but disloyalty, we ask for the privilege of subjects; though nothing but disobedience to offer, we plead the privileges of children—we implore the tenderness of a father.

In dependence on God there is nothing abject; in attendance on Him, nothing servile. He never, like the great ones of the world, receives the suitor with a petrifying frown, or what is worse, never dismisses him with a cruel smile and a false promise.

Even if the petitioner to human power escape the vexation of being absolutely rejected; even if his suit be granted, the grant it may be, is accompanied with a mortifying coldness, with an intelligible hint that the donor expects to be no further troubled. The grant may be attended with such a tedious delay as may make it no benefit. The boon granted does not, perhaps, prove so valuable as the applicant expected; or he finds he might have spent the long season of his attendance, his watching, and his waiting to better purpose; or he might have employed his interest in another quarter, in obtaining something more important; or, after all, he may have received it too late in life to turn it to the profitable account he had expected.

But the Almighty Donor never puts off His humble petitioner to a more convenient season. His Court of Requests is always open. He receives the petition as soon as it is offered; He grants it as soon as it is made; and, though he will not dispense with a continuance of the application, yet to every fresh application He promises fresh support. He will still be solicited, but it is in order that He may still bestow. Repeated gifts do not exhaust His bounty, nor lessen His power of fulfilment. Repeated solicitation, so far from wearying His patience, is an additional call for His favour.

Nor is the lateness of the petition any bar to its acceptance: He likes it should be early, but He rejects it not though it be late.

With a human benefactor the consciousness of having received former favours, is a motive with a modest petitioner for preventing his making an application for more; while, on the contrary, God even invites us to call on Him for future mercies, by the powerful plea of His past acts of goodness—'even mercies which have been ever of old.' And as past mercies on God's part, so, to the praise of His grace be it said, that past offences on our own part are no hindrance to the application of hearty repentance or the answer of fervent prayer.

The petitioner to human power, who may formerly have offe ded his benefactor, contrives to soften his displeasure, by representing that the offence was a small one. The devout petitioner to God uses no subterfuge. In the boldness of faith, and the humility of repentance, he cries 'Pardon my iniquity, for it is *great*.'

It is no pardon, then, to assert that dependence on God is the only true safety depend-

ence upon Him, the only true freedom—freedom from doubt and fear, and sin; freedom from human dependence; above all, freedom from dependence on ourselves. As pardoned sinners, through the redemption wrought for them, find, in the renewed nature, a restoration to that dignity they had forfeited, so those who are most destitute of the dignity which arises from this dependence, missing the reality, deceive themselves with the shadow.

He who does not believe this fundamental truth, on which the other doctrines of the Bible are built,—even he who does nominally profess to assent to it as a doctrine of Scripture; yet, if he does not experimentally acknowledge it; if he does not feel it in the convictions of his own awakened conscience, in his discovery of the evil workings of his own heart, and the wrong propensities of his own nature, all bearing their testimony to its truth—such a one will not pray earnestly for its cure—will not pray with that feeling of his own helplessness, with that sense of dependence on Divine assistance, which alone makes prayer efficacious.

Of this corruption he can never attain an adequate conception, till his progress in religion has opened his eyes on what is the natural state of man. Till this was the case, he himself was as far from desiring the change, as he was from believing it necessary. He does not even suspect its existence, till he is in some measure delivered from its dominion.

Nothing will make us truly humble, nothing will make us constantly vigilant, nothing will entirely lead us to have recourse to prayer so fervently or so frequently, as this ever abiding sense of our corrupt nature,—as our not being able to ascribe any disposition in ourselves, to any thing that is good, or any power to avoid, by our own strength, any thing that is evil.

The obligation of Prayer universal—Regular seasons to be observed.—The sceptic and the sensualist reject prayer.

Among the many articles of erroneous calculation, to which so much of the sin and misery of life may be attributed, the neglect or misuse of prayer will not form the lightest. The prophet Jeremiah, in his impassioned address to the Almighty makes no distinction between those who acknowledge no God, and those who live without prayer. 'Pour our thy fury, O Lord, upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.'

Some duties are more incumbent on some persons, and some on others; depending on the difference of talents, wealth, leisure, learning, station, and opportunities; but the duty of prayer is of imperative obligation; it is universal, because it demands none of any of the above requisites; it demands only a willing heart, a consciousness of sin, a sense of dependence, a feeling of helplessness. Those who voluntarily neglect it, shut themselves out from the presence of their Maker. 'I know you not,' must assuredly be the sentence of exclusion on those who thus 'know not God.' Nothing, it is true, can exclude them from His inspection, but they exclude themselves from his favour.

Many nearly renounce prayer, by affecting to make it so indefinite a thing, as not to require regular exercise. Just as many, also, unhallow the Sabbath, who pretend they do nothing on week-days, which they should fear to do on Sundays. The truth is, instead of sanctifying the week-days by raising them to the duties of Sunday—which is, indeed, impracticable, let men talk as they please,—they desecrate the Sunday to secular purposes, and so contrive to keep no Sunday at all.

Stated seasons for indispensable employments, are absolutely necessary for so desultory, so versatile a creature as man. That which is turned over to any chance time is seldom done at all; and those who despise the recurrence of appointed times and seasons, are only less censurable than those who rest in them.

Other duties and engagements have their allotted seasons; why, then, should the most important duty in which an immortal being can be employed, by being left to accident, become liable to occasional omision, liable to increasing neglect, liable to total oblivion?

All the other various works of God know their appointed times;—the seasons, the heavenly bodies, day and night, seed-time and harvest,—all set an example of undeviating regularity. Why should man, the only thinking, be the only disorderly, work of Almighty power!

But whilst we are asserting the necessity of seasons of prayer, let us not be suspected of attaching undue importance to them; for all these are but the frame work, the scaffolding, the mere mechanical and subsidiary adjuncts; they are but the preparation for Christian worship; they remind us, they intimate to us, that an important work is to be done, but are no part of the work itself.

They, therefore, who most insist on the value of stated devotions, must never lose sight of that grand, and universal prime truth, that wherever we are, still we are in God's presence; whatever we have is His gift; whatever we hope is his promise; feelings which are commensurate with all time, all places, and limited to no particular scenes or seasons.

There is in some, in many it is to be feared, a readiness to acknowledge this general doctrine, which miscalled natural religion teaches but who are far from including in their system the peculiarities, the duties, the devotions of Christianity. These are decorous men of the world who, assuming the character of philosophical liberality, value themselves on having shaken off the shackles of prejudice, superstition, and system.—They acknowledge a Creator of the universe, but is in a vague and general way. They worship a Being, 'whose temple is all space;' that is, every where but in the human heart. They put Him as far as possible from themselves. Believing that He has no providential care of them, they feel no personal interest in Him. God and nature are with them synonymous terms. That the creation of the world was His work, they do not go the length of denying; but that its government is in His hands, is with them very problematical.

In any case, however, they are assured that a Being of such immensity requires not the little-

ness of superstitious forms, nor the petty limitation, of stated seasons, and regular devotions; that he is infinitely above attending to our paltry concerns, though he himself anticipated this objection, when he condescended to declare, 'He that offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me.'

One says *he* can adore the Author of nature in the contemplation of his works; that the mountains and the fields are *His* altar for worship. Another says, that his notion of religion is to deal honestly in his commerce with the world; both insist that they can serve God any where and every where.—We know they can, and we hope they do; but our Saviour, who knew the whole make of man, his levity, instability, and unfixedness, and who was yet no friend to the formalist or the superstitious, not only commands, at the hour of prayer, our entering into the closet; but our shutting the door, a tacit reproof perhaps of the indevotion of the Sadducean, as well as the publicity of the Pharisaic religion, but certainly, an admonition of general obligation.

This, indeed, is not the place to enter on that mass of concurring evidence which so irresistibly confirms the especial truth of Christianity. But is it not extraordinary that these men who overlook, or rather inquire not into, that accumulation of evidence in the exhibition of miracles, and the fulfilment of prophecy—that is, who do not read the Bible—should not at least attend to one species of evidence more immediately within their reach, and more intelligible to common observation; we mean the confirmation derived to the proofs of Scripture, from the history of the world, from their avowal of moral evil, their careful cultivation, where it suits them, of habits of an opposite nature, their practical and prudential maxims, where they have an end to pursue, an interest to gain. Do not similar rules, applied to Christian principles, and delivered in the Divine record, prove clearly that our Divine teacher 'knew what was in man?'

In treating of prayer, it would be a superfluous labour to address unbelievers with the same arguments or persuasions which we would humbly propose to such as aver, with whatever degree of conviction, their belief in Christianity. It would be folly to address them with motives drawn from a book which they do not believe, or do not read. With those who are ignorant of the first principles of religion, or those who reject them, we have no common ground on which to stand. St. Paul, with his usual discrimination, has left us an example in this as well as in all other cases. With the philosophical Athenians he confined his reasonings to natural religion. To the Jewish king, Agrippa, who 'believed the prophets,' in telling the story of his own conversion, he most judiciously introduced the great doctrines of remission of sins and justification by faith.

If the Pyrrhonist in question were to see a genuine Christian character delineated in all its dimensions, marked with its fair lineaments, and enlivened by its quickening spirit, such, for instance, as is exemplified in the character of St. Paul, he would consider it as a mere picture of the imagination; and would no more believe its reality than he does that of Xenophon's Prince, the Stoic's Wise Man, Quintilian's Perfect Orator, or any other Platonic or Utopian representation. Or could he be brought to believe its actual existence, he would set such a man far above the necessity of prayer; he would emancipate him from any such humbling practice; he would enthrone him on his own independent worth; for how should he ever suspect that such a man would ever pray at all, much less would be in prayer more abundant, in humiliation more profound, in self-renunciation more abased?

Is it not probable that some of those enquiring minds, who adorned the porch and the academy, as well as those more favoured men who saw the future, through the dim and distant perspective of prophecy, would have rejoiced to see the things which you see, and have not believed?

How gratefully would many of these illustrious spirits have accepted advantages which you overlook! How joyfully would they have received from Him who cannot lie, the assurance that if they would seek of Him that truth after which they 'were feeling,' they should find it! How gladly would that sublime and elegant spirit, whose favourite theme was pure spiritual love, have listened to the great apostle of love; to him who caught the flame as he leaned on the bosom of his affectionate master!

How would this same exalted genius, who taught the immortality of the soul to the bright, yet blind Athenians—he, whose penetrating mind rather guessed, than knew what he taught—whose keen eye caught some glimpses of a brighter state through the darkness which surrounded him—how would he have gloried in in that light and immortality which the gospel revelation has brought to light!—but with what unspeakable rapture would he have learned that He who revealed the life could give it: that He who promised immortality could bestow it! With what obedient transport would he have heard this touching apostrophe, at once a strong reproof and a tender invitation—'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!—'Ye philosophising cavillers, who live in the meridian splendour of this broad day, 'how will *you* escape, if you neglect so great a salvation?'

But if pride, the dominant intellectual sin, keeps the sceptic aloof from the humiliating duties of devotion; the habitual indulgence of the senses, in another class, proves an equal cause of alienating the heart from prayer.

The man absorbed by ease and enjoyment, and sunk in the relaxing softness of a voluptuous life, has a natural distaste to every thing that stands in opposition to the delights of that life. It is the smoothness of his course which makes it so slippery. He is lost before he feels that he is sinking. For whether we plunge at once from a precipitous height, or slide down from it on an inclined plane, still, while there is a yawning gulf at the bottom, our destruction is equally inevitable.

The systematic but decorous sensualist is one whose life is a course of sober luxury, of measured indulgence. He contrives to reconcile an abandonment of sound principle with a kind of

orderly practice. He enquires rather what is decent than what is right, what will secure the favourable opinion of the world, especially his own class, rather than what will please God. His object is to make the most of this world. Selfishness has established its throne in his heart. His study is to make every thing and every person subservient to his own convenience, or pleasure, or profit, yet without glaringly trespassing on the laws of propriety or custom. Self is the source and centre of all his actions; but though this governing principle is always on the watch for its gratification, yet, as part of that gratification depends on a certain degree of reputation, it frequently leads him to do right things though without right motives; for the main-spring sometimes sets the right a-going as well as the wrong.

He goes to church on all public occasions, but without devotion; gives alms without charity; subscribes to public institutions without being interested in their prosperity, except as they are frequently succeeded by a pleasant dinner and good company, and as the subscription list of names he knows will be published. He lives on good terms with different, and even opposite classes, of men, without being attached to any; he does them favours without affection, knowing that he shall have occasion to solicit favours in return, for he never does a small kindness without a view to asking a greater.

He deprecates excess in every thing, but always lives upon its confines.

Prayer enters not into his plan—he has nothing to ask, for he has all in himself—thanksgiving is still less his practice, for what he has he deserves.

He has read that 'to enjoy is to obey,' and he is always ready to give this cheerful proof of the most unlimited obedience. He respects the laws of the country, especially such as guard property and game, and eagerly punishes the violators of both. But as to the laws of God, he thinks they were made to guard the possessions of the rich, to punish the vicious poor, and to frighten those who have nothing to lose. Yet he respects some of the commandments, and would placard on every post and pillar that which says 'thou shalt not steal;' whilst he thinks that which says 'thou shalt not covet' might be expunged from the decalogue.

If you happen to speak of the helplessness of man, he thinks you are alluding to some paralytic; if of his dependence, to some hanger-on of a great man; if of his sinfulness, he adopts your opinion, for he reads the Newgate calendar. But of sin, as an inherent principle, of the turpitude of sin, except as it disturbs society, he knows nothing; but religion as a principle of action, but prayer as a source of peace or a ground of hope, he neither knows nor desires to know. The stream of life glides smoothly on without it; why should he ruffle its placid flow? why should he break in on the course of enjoyment with self-imposed austerities? He believes himself to be respected by his fellow-men, and the favour of God is not in all his thoughts. His real character the great day of decision will discover. Till then he will have two characters.

'Soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee,' is perhaps the state of all others, which most disqualifies and unfits for prayer. Not only the apostrophe excites the bodily appetite, but the soul is called upon to contemplate, to repose on, the soothing prospect, the delights of that voluptuousness for which the 'much goods are laid up.' Thou fool! that soul which thou wouldest quicken to such base enjoyment, that soul shall this night be required of thee.

Thus we sec what restrains prayer in these two classes of characters. The sceptic does not pray, because he does not believe that God is a hearer of prayer. The voluptuary, because he believes that God is such a one as himself, and because he has already gotten all that he wants of Him. His gold, and the means of gratifying his sensuality, would not be augmented by the dry duties of devotion; and with an exercise which would increase neither, he can easily dispense.

Errors in Prayer, which may hinder its being answered.—The proud man's Prayer.—The patient Christian—False Excuses under the pretence of Inability.

All desire the gifts of God, but they do not desire God. If we profess to love him, it is for our sake: when shall we begin to love him for himself? Many who do not go the length of omitting prayer, but pray merely from custom, or education, frequently complain that they find no benefit from prayer; others, that they experience not the support and comfort promised to it. May not those who thus complain, and who perhaps are far from being enemies to religion, find, on a serious examination of their own hearts and lives, some irregularity in desire, similar to that just mentioned, to be the cause of their discontent, and alleged disappointment?

We are more disposed to lay down rules for the regulation of God's government, than to submit our will to it as he has settled it. If we do not now see the efficacy of the prayer which he has enjoined us to present to him, it may yet be producing its effect in another way. Infinite wisdom is not obliged to inform us of the manner, or the time of his operations; what he expects of us is to persevere in the duty. The very obedience to the command is no small thing, whatever be its perceptible effects.

Under the apparent failure of our prayers, the source of our repinings must be looked for in the fact of our own blindness and imperfection; for the declarations of the Gospel are sure; their answer must be found in the grace of God in Christ Jesus, for his mercies are infallible. Wherever there is disappointment, we may be assured that it is not because he is wanting to us, but because we are wanting to ourselves.

The prophet's expression, 'the iniquity of our holy things,' will not be thoroughly understood except by those who thus seriously dive into the recesses of their own heart, feel their deficiencies, mark their wanderings, detect and lament their vain imaginations and impertinent thoughts. It is to be regretted that these worldly trifles are far more apt to intrude on us in prayer, than the devout affections excited by prayer are to follow us into the world. Busi-

ness and pleasure break in on our devotions; when will the spirit of devotion mix with the concerns of the world?

You who lament the disappointment of your requests, suffer a few friendly hints.—Have you not been impatient because you receive not the things that you asked, at your own time? How do you know that if you had persevered God might have bestowed them in His time? He certainly would, had He not in his wisdom foreseen they would not have been good for you; and therefore, in His mercy withheld them. Is there not some secret, unsuspected infidelity lurking behind such impatience? Is it not virtually saying, there is no God to hear, or that He is unfaithful to His promises? For is it not absolute impiety to insinuate an accusation that the Supreme Judge of men and angels is capable of injustice, or liable to error? God has pleasure in the prosperity of His children. He neither grants nor denies any thing which is not accurately weighed and measured; which is not exactly suited to their good, if not to their request.

If we pray aright, it may please God not only to grant that for which we pray, but that for which we do not pray. Supplicating for the best things, we may receive inferior and unrequested things, as was the case with Solomon in his prayer for wisdom. God will not forget our labour of love. If he does not seem to notice it at present, he may lay it by for a time when it may be more wanted.

In prayer we must take care not to measure our necessities by our desires; the former are few, the latter may be insatiable. A murmuring spirit is a probable cause why our petitions are not granted. The certain way to prevent our obtaining what we desire, or enjoying what we have, is to feel impatient at what we do not receive, or to make an improper use of what has been granted to our prayers.

Or you may perhaps address God with sinister and corrupt views; as if you had left his omniscience out of his attributes; as if you thought him such an one as yourself; as if he might be entrapped with the 'secret ambush of a specious prayer.' Your design in the application of the boon you solicit may not be for his glory. It may be the prayer of ambition, cloaked under the guise of more extensive usefulness; it may be the prayer of covetousness, under the pretext of providing for your family. It may be the prayer of injustice, a petition for success in some undertaking for yourself, to the circumvention of another's fairer claim. God, in mercy to our souls, refuses the gift which would endanger them.

Thus, then, if we ask and receive not, because we ask deceitfully or blindly, we must not wonder if our prayers are not answered. Or, if we obtain what we solicit, and turn it to a bad account, or to no account at all, we must not be surprised if Divine grace is withheld, or withdrawn.

The same ill results may be expected if we ask formally, or carelessly. Who has not felt, that there is a kind of mechanical memory in the tongue, which runs over the form, without any aid of the understanding, without any concurrence of the will, without any consent of the affections? For do we not sometimes implore God to hear a prayer, to which we ourselves are not attending? And is not this presumptuously to demand from him that attention, which we ourselves are not giving to our own requests, even while we were in the act of making them?

A mere superficial form, by lulling the conscience, hardens the heart. The task is performed, but in what manner, or to what result is not inquired. Genuine prayer is the homage of the soul to God, and not an expedient to pacify Him.

If you observe the form, but forget the dispositions it is intended to produce, it is evident the end of such prayer is not answered. Yet be not so far discouraged by feeling no sensible effect from prayer as to discontinue it; it is still a right thing to be found in the way of duty.

But, perhaps, you neglect to implore the Spirit of Christ towards the direction of your prayers, and His intercession for their acceptance. As there is no other name through which we can be saved, so there is no other through which we can be heard: we must not sever his mediation from his atonement. All His divine offices are not only in perfect harmony, but in inseparable union.* Or, perhaps, you have used the name of the Redeemer for form's sake, or as an accustomed close to your petitions, without imploring his efficacious grace in changing your heart, as well as in pardoning your sins.

Perhaps you think it is a sufficient qualification for acceptable prayer, that you are always forming good intentions; now, though these make up the value of good actions, yet good intentions, not acted upon when occasion invites and duty calls, will not lessen, but inflame the reckoning. For does it not look as if you had resisted the offer of that Holy Spirit, which had originally prompted the intention? And may it not induce Him to withdraw his blessed influences, when they have been both invited and rejected?

Do you never, by unwholesome reading, fill the mind with images unfavourable to serious exercises? The children of the pure and holy God should feed on the bread of their father's house, and not on the husks of the prodigal!

Do you never use profanely or lightly, that name, which is above every name? He who made the ear, shall he not hear? and if he has heard, during the day, his awful name used by the thoughtless as an expletive, or an imprecation, will he in the morning be called on as a Saviour, and in the evening as an intercessor?

But no profession of faith, however orthodox, no avowal of trust in Christ, however confident, no intreaty for the aid of the Spirit, however customary, will avail, if it be not such an influential faith, such a practical trust, such a living devotedness, as shall be productive of holiness of heart and life, as shall tend to produce obedience to the commands, and submission to the will of God.—This is an infallible test, by which you may try every doctrine, every principle of the gospel. We do not mean the truth of them,

* We observe with regret, that, in many forms of prayer, the aid of his mediation is much more frequently implored, than the benefits of his death and merits. He is, indeed, our divine Intercessor, but his mere intercession is not the whole source of our dependence on him.

for that is immutable; but your own actual belief, your own actual interest in them. If no such effects are visible, we deceive ourselves, and the principles we defend, are not those by which we are governed.

Prayer is so obviously designed to humble the proud heart of the natural man, by giving him a feeling sense of his misery, his indigence, and his helplessness, that we should be unwilling to believe, that even the proudest man can carry his pride to the Throne of Grace, except to supplicate deliverance from it; yet such a character is actually drawn by him who knew the thoughts and intents of the heart of man, and a little consideration will teach us, that the 'two men who went up into the temple to pray,' were not intended as individual portraits, but as specimens of a class.

The proud man does not perhaps always thank God that he is not guilty of adultery, or extortion, to which vices he may have little temptation; nor does he glory in paying tithes and taxes, to which the law would compel him. Yet is he never disposed, like the Pharisee, to proclaim the catalogue of his own virtues? to bring in his comparative claims, as if it were a good thing to be better than the bad? Is he never disposed to carry in his eye, (as if he would remind his Maker of his superiority,) certain persons who are possibly less the objects of Divine displeasure, than he, by his pride and selfishness may have rendered himself; although his regularity in the forms of devotion may have made him more respectable in the world, than the poor reprobated being whom he praises God he does not resemble. It is the abasement, the touching self-condemnation, the avowed poverty, the pleaded misery of the destitute beggar that finds acceptance. It is the hungry whom God's mercy fills with good things, it is the rich in his own conceit, whom his displeasure sends empty away.

Whenever you are tempted to thank God that you are not like other men, compare your own condition with that of the afflicted and the bereaved among your own friends; compare yourself with the paralytic on his couch, with the blind beggar by the way-side, with the labourer in the mine; think on the wretch in the galleys; on the condemned in the dungeons of despotic governments; on the miserable beings in our own prisons, those loathsome abodes of sin and wretchedness. Above all, think, and this is the intolerable acme of sin in the inflictor, and of misery in the sufferer; think on the wretched negro chained in the hold of a slave ship! Think seriously on these, and put pride into your prayer if you can. Think on these, not to triumph in your own superiority, but to adore the undeserved mercy of God, in giving you advantages to which you have no higher claim, and let your praise of yourself be converted into prayer for them.

For there are no dispositions of the heart which are more eminently promoted by prayer, than contentment and patience. They are two qualities of the same colour, but of different shades, and are generally, when found at all, found in the same breast. Both are the offspring of genuine religion, both nurtured by cordial prayer. The cultivation of the one, under easy circumstances, prepares for the exercises of the other under more trying situations. Both emanate from the same divine principle, but are drawn out by different occasions, and varying circumstances.

Content is the tranquillity of the heart, prayer is its aliment; it is satisfied under every dispensation of Providence, and takes thankfully its allotted portion, never enquiring whether a little more would not be a little better; knowing, that if God had so judged, it would have been as easy for him to have given the more as the less. That is not true content, which does not enjoy as the gift of infinite wisdom what it has, nor is that true patience, which does not suffer meekly the loss of what it had, because it is not his will that it should have it longer.

The contentment of the irreligious man is apathy, his patience either pride or insensibility. The language of the patient man under trials is, it is the Lord.—Shall a living man complain? is his interrogation. 'A good man,' says Solomon, 'is satisfied from himself.' Here the presumptuous might put in *his* claim to the title. But his pretension arises from his mistake, for his satisfaction is *with himself*, that of the Christian with Providence; it arises from the grace of God shed abroad in his heart, which is become a perennial spring of consolation and enjoyment; and which, by persevering prayer, is indented into his very soul. Content knows how to want and how to abound; this is the language of equanimity: 'shall I not receive evil from the hand of the Lord, as well as good,' this is the language of patience in speaking of Providence. Content is always praising God for what she possesses; patience is always justifying Him for what she suffers. The cultivation of the one effectually prepares us for the exercise of the other. But these dispositions are not inherent in the human heart. How are they generated? by the influences of the Holy Spirit. How are they kept alive? by heart-felt devotion.

The prosperous man of the world, exulting in any recent success, may acknowledge, 'the Lord gave,' but it is only Christian patience can say, 'the Lord taketh away,' and even bless Him for the resumption of His gift. The contented, patient Christian, has the same keen feelings, the same fond attachments with other men, for, though his passions are regulated by religion, they are not totally extinguished.

Under the pressure of any affliction, *thy will be done*, as it is the patient Christian's unceasing prayer, so it is the ground of his unvarying practice. In this brief petition he finds his whole duty comprised and expressed. It is the unprompted request of his lips, it is the motto inscribed on his heart, it is the principle which regulates his life, it is the voice which says to the stormy passions, 'Peace! be still!' Let others expostulate, he submits. Nay, even submission does not adequately express his feelings. We frequently submit, not so much from duty as from necessity; we submit, because we cannot help ourselves. Resignation sometimes may be mere acquiescence in the sovereignty, rather than conviction of the wisdom and goodness of God; while the patient Christian not

only yields to the dispensation, but adores the dispenser. He not only submits to the blow, but vindicates the hand which inflicts it; 'the Lord is righteous in all his ways.' He refers to the chastisement as a proof of the affection of the chastiser. 'I know that in very faithfulness thou hast caused me to be afflicted.' He recurs to the thoughtlessness of his former prosperity. 'Before I was afflicted I went astray,' and alludes to the trial less as a punishment than a paternal correction. If he prays for a removal of the present suffering, he prays also that it may not be removed from him, till it has been sanctified to him. He will not even part from the trial till he has laid hold on the benefit.

Perhaps the impediment which hinders the benefit of prayer in characters apparently correct, may be the fatal habit of indulging in some secret sin, the private cherishing of some wrong propensity, the entertaining of some evil imagination. Not being accustomed to control at other times, it intrudes when you would willingly expel it; for a guest which is unreservedly let in at other seasons, and cordially entertained, will too frequently break in when you desire to be alone.

The Scriptures are explicit on this subject. It is not merely the committing actual sin that ruins the comfort growing out of prayer; the divine prohibition runs higher; its interdiction is more intimately interior; it extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The door of heaven is shut against prayer under such circumstances. 'If I regard iniquity in my *heart*, the Lord will not hear me.' A cherished corruption in the mind is the more likely to interpose between God and the soul, because it does not assume the shape and bulk of crime. A practical offence, the effect of sudden temptation, is more likely to be followed by keen repentance, deep self-abasement, and fervent application for pardon; whereas to the close bosom sin, knowing that no human charge can be brought against it, the soul secretly returns with a fondness facilitated by long indulgence, and only whetted by a short separation. Vain, covetous, malignant, impure thoughts, habitually fostered by the imagination, are more likely to start out into action, are a more probable preparation for a bolder sin, than many who indulge them believe or intend.

It was, perhaps, this acute, experimental feeling which led David to pray to be delivered from 'secret sins;' these, he was probably conscious, had led to those 'presumptuous sins,' which had entangled his soul and embittered his life; and whose dominion he so frequently and fervently deprecates. This, it is to be feared, may be the case with some, whose language and exterior cause them to be ranked with the religious; these are, at least, the dangers to which they are most exposed. It is, therefore, that our Lord connects, in indissoluble union, watching with prayer.

Perhaps, when the conscience is more than usually awakened, you pray with some degree of fervour to be delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin. But, if you stop here, your devotion is most imperfect. If you do not also pray to be delivered from its power and dominion over your heart and life, you do not go much further than the heathens of old. They seem to have had a strong feeling of guilt, by their fond desire of expiating it by their sacrifices and lustrations.

Of their terror of its punishment we have many intimations in their fables; for what is fable to us, was probably to them obscure history, or wild tradition worked up into an absurd but amusing mythology. The eternity of their punishments is strongly implied in the insatiable thirst and ungratified appetites of Tantalus; his misery augmented by that flowing water and those tempting fruits which hung in his sight and mocked his appetites, not unlike the anguish of Dives, which was rendered more intolerable by beholding the blessedness of those on the other side of the great gulf. The profitless toils of Sisyphus, and of the daughters of Danaus, whose ever failing efforts prove their labours to be infinite, and their punishment eternal. The wheel of Ixion, which, as it was to be in perpetual motion, so the punishment was to have no end; a doctrine not so strongly held by many Christians, as it seems to be implied in this blind mythology.

Will you not then be most unweariedly fervent in prayer to the God of mercy for deliverance from the dominion of that sin which, if not forsaken as well as lamented, will be inevitably followed by that punishment which you deprecate, and which will never end? But such is the love of present ease, and the desire of respite, that you think, perhaps, it is better not 'to be tormented before the time.' How many now in a state of irreversible misery wish they had been tormented sooner, that they might not be tormented forever! But with you it is not yet too late. With you the day of grace, which to them is over, is not yet past. Use it then without delay, instead of persisting in laying up fresh regrets for eternity.

But too many deceive themselves, by imagining that when they have pronounced their prayer, the duty is accomplished with the task, the occult medicine being taken, the charm is to work of itself. They consider it as a duty quite distinct and unconnected with any other. They forget that it is to produce in them a principle which is to mix with all the occurrences of the day. Prayer, though not intended as a talisman, is yet proposed as a remedy. The effect of its operation is to be seen in assisting to govern the temper, in bridling the tongue, in checking, not only calumny but levity, not only impure, but vain conversation.

But we have a wonderful talent at deceiving ourselves. We have not a fault for which we do not find an apology. Our ingenuity on this head is inexhaustible. In matters of religion men complain that they are weak, a complaint they are not forward to urge in worldly matters. They lament that their reluctance to pray arises from being unable to do what God, in his word, expects them to do. But is not this virtual rebellion, only with a smooth face and a soft name? God is too wise not to know exactly what we *can* do, and too just to expect from us what we *cannot*.

This pretence of weakness, though it looks

like humility, is only a mask for indolence and a screen for selfishness.

We certainly *can* refuse to indulge ourselves in what pleases us, when we know it displeases God. We *can* obey his commandments with the aid of the infused strength which he has promised, and which we *can* ask. It is not He who is unwilling to give, but we who are averse to pray. The temptations to vice are strengthened by our passions, as our motives to virtue are weakened by them.

Our spiritual enemy would not be so potent, if we ourselves did not put arms into his hands. The world would not be so powerful an enchantress, if we did not assist the enchantment, by voluntarily yielding to it; by insensibly forsaking Him who is our strength. We make apologies for yielding to both by pleading their power and our own weakness. But the inability to resist is of our own making. Both enemies are indeed powerful but they are not irresistible. If we assert the contrary, is it not virtually saying 'greater are they who are against us than He that is for us?'

But we are traitors to our own cause; we are conquered by our own consent; we surrender, not so much because the conqueror is powerful, as because the conquered is willing.

Without diminishing any thing of *His* grace and glory, to whom every good thought we think, every victory over sin we obtain, is owing—may it not add to our happiness, even in heaven, to look back on every conflict we maintained with our grand spiritual enemy, every triumph over the world, every victory over ourselves? Will not the remembrance of one act of resistance then, far surpass every gratification now, which the three confederated enemies of our souls may present to us?

It is not merely by our prayers that we must give glory to God. Our Divine Master has expressly told us wherein His Father is glorified; it is 'when we bring forth much fruit.' It is by our works we shall be judged, and not by our prayers. And what a final consummation is it that obedience to the will of God, which is our duty here, shall be our nature hereafter! What is now our prayer shall then be our possession; there the obligation to obey shall become a necessity, and that necessity shall be happiness ineffable.

The various evils here enumerated with many others not touched upon, are so many dead weights on the wings of prayer; they cause it to gravitate to earth, obstruct its ascent, and hinder it from piercing to the throne of God.

God our Father.—Our Unwillingness to please Him.—Forms of Prayer.—Great and Little Sins.—All Sin an Offence against God.—Benefit of Habitual Prayer.

The distinction between the personal nature of Faith, and the universal character of Charity, as it is exercised in prayer, are specifically exhibited in the two pronouns which stand at the head of the Creed and of the Lord's Prayer. We cannot exercise faith for another, and therefore can only say, *I* believe. But when we offer up our petitions, we address them to *our* Father, implying that He is the author, governor, and supporter, not of ourselves only, but of his whole rational creation. It conveys also a beautiful idea of that boundless charity which links all mankind in one comprehensive brotherhood. The plural *us*, continued through the whole prayer, keeps up the sentiment with which it sets out, tends to exclude selfishness, and to excite philanthropy, by recommending to God the temporal as well as spiritul wants of the whole family of mankind.

The nomenclature of the Divinity is expressed in Scripture by every term which can convey ideas of grandeur or of grace, of power or of affection, of sublimity or tenderness, of majesty or benignity; by every name which can excite terror or trust, which can inspire awe or consolation.

But of all compellations by which the Supreme Being is designated in his holy word, there is not one more soothing, more attractive, more endearing than that of Father; it includes the idea of reconciliation, pardon, acceptance, love. It swallows up His grandeur in His beneficence. It involves also the inheritance belonging to our filial relation. It fills the mind with every image that is touching, and the heart with every feeling that is affectionate. It inspires fear softened by love, and authority mitigated by gratitude. The tenderest image the Psalmist could select from the abundant store-house of his rich conceptions to convey the kindest sentiment of God's pity towards them that fear Him, was that it resembles the pity of a 'father for his *own children*.' In directing us to pray to our Father, our Divine Master does not give the command without the example. He every where uses the term He recommends. 'I thank Thee, Oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth!' and in the 17th of St. John he uses this endearing name no less than seven times.

'Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth,' was the ill-understood prayer of the inquiring disciples. To us this petition is granted before it is made. Does He not show himself to all as a Father, in the wonders of his creation, in the wonders of our being, preservation, and support? Has he not, in a more especial manner, revealed Himself to us as a Father in the sublime wonders of his word, in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the perpetuated gift of the Holy Spirit? Does He not show Himself our Father, if, when we have done evil, He withholds His chastening hand; if, when we have sinned, He still bears with us; if, when we are deaf to his call He repeats it; if, when we delay, He waits for us; if, when we repent, He pardons us; if, when we return, He receives us; if, when in danger, He preserves us from falling; and if, when we fall, He raises us?

We have a beautiful illustration of the goodness of God as a merciful and tender Father in the deeply affecting parable of the Prodigal Son. Though the undone spendthrift knew that he had no possible claim on the goodness he had so notoriously offended, yet he felt that the endearing name of Father had an eloquence

that might plead forgiveness of his offence, though he feared not for a restoration to affection and favour. But while he only meekly aspired to a place among the servants, while he only humbly pleaded for a little of their redundant bread, he was received as a pardoned, reconciled, beloved child.

Yet the human heart is not easily warmed into gratitude, or softened into love, or allured to imitation, because it takes only slight and transient views of the divine benignity.—What God has done for us, and what we have really done against ourselves, will, in the great day of decision, crown Him with glory, and ourselves with shame. What we think we do for our own benefit in temporal concerns is so animated, so earnest, so unremitted—what are we called to do for God—which ultimately, indeed, would be done for ourselves—is so little, so reluctant, so heartless, as to bear no sort of comparison. In the former case, every thing is a gratification; in the latter every thing is a sacrifice.

We think much of the smallest instance of self-denial if it be for God; if it be an act of acknowledgment to the most gracious of all Fathers; if it be a tribute of homage to the King of Kings, however large or lasting the promised recompence. But we think little of any present privation of our own, if it insure to us a a longer subsequent enjoyment, though but for a season.

In speaking of the manner in which we should address our Heavenly Father, it is to be observed there may be evident differences in the state, both of the mind and circumstances, for which the best written forms of prayer can make no provision. We ourselves can alone know those varieties, and the petitions which expressly belong to them. We are sometimes under the influence of particular tempers, which we wish to cultivate and improve; in this case, we shall naturally use addresses very different from those which the prevalence of unfavourable tempers or wrong dispositions require.

As to the outward events in which we are concerned—for *accident* is a term which has no place in the Christian's vocabulary—God in every dispensation is at work for our good. In more prosperous circumstances He tries our gratitude; in mediocrity our contentment; in misfortunes our submision; and as every new situation calls into exercise some new virtue, by consequence it calls for some alteration in the mode of our devotions. The prayers of yesterday and to day will consequently be as different as the circumstances—these are some of the advantages of private over public prayer.

The great and general topics, are, however, of a fixed, unalterable nature, on which, though we may be more or less diffuse, according to the state of the mind, yet the term and spirit will require little variation. This is more especially the case with respect to praise and thanksgiving; and to express these, the use of stated forms may occasionally come in with much advantage, as the cardinal points to be expressed here must be ever the same. Invariably must the glory and honour of whatever is good be ascribed to the great source of light and life, the giver of every good and perfect gift; and the addition in secret, of particular clauses of praise for personal mercies, will not be difficult to find where gratitude is really felt.

A deep sense of his corruption will powerfully draw the real penitent to an humbling avowal of sin in prayer; but it is to be feared that some, who, because they cannot charge themselves with flagrant offences, do not consider a contrite confession of the sins of the heart, and of the daily life, an indispensable part of their devotions. But God will charge many with sin who neglect to charge themselves. Did they attend to the remonstrance of a conscience not laid asleep by neglect, or quieted by palliatives, they would find that were the daily *omissions* alone, of even their best days, registered and presented to them; they would form no inconsiderable catalogue for repentance.

There are too many who do not consider that all sins are equally a breach of the Divine law. Without pretending to bring all sins, small and great, to one common level, we should remember that *all* sin is an offence against a gracious Father.

In that profoundly self-abasing prayer of David, after the commission of the two black offences which disgraced his otherwise exemplary life; though he deeply felt his barbarous treatment of his brave general, in first dishonouring his wife, and then exposing him to meet inevitable death in fore-front of the hottest battle—yet, in praying to be delivered from this blood-guiltiness, he bequeathed an important lession to posterity, when in the lowly prostration at the throne of God, his first cry was, 'against *Thee*, *Thee* only, have I sinned, and done this evil in *Thy* sight,' plainly declaring, that all sin is, in the first instance, a sin against God.

While the most worldly are ready enough to exclaim against notorious sins, or against any sins carried to the greatest excess, to smaller offences they contrive to be tolerably reconciled. They think the commission of these not inconsistent with the profitable use of prayer in their formal way of using this customary exercise.

They are also sufficiently lenient to certain degrees of great sins; and various are the modifications and distinctions in their logic, and not over-correct the gradations in their moral scale of degrees. They do not consider that it is the extirpation, and not merely the reduction, of any sin, which is to procure them that peace and comfort for which they sometimes pray, and which they wonder they do not receive as an answer to their prayers.

They forget that the evil of sin is not to be measured by its magnitude only, but by the spirit of disobedience which it indicates towards a generous Father,—a Father whose commands are all founded in mercy and love, and who considers every voluntary fault as no light offence when committed against supreme authority, exercised with perfect tenderness.

But it is their reluctance to part with the remaining degrees, their wish to retain these modified sins; it is their favourite reserves to which they still cling, that prevent that peace which is promised to the victory, I had almost said to the omnipotence, of prayer.

For it is not so much the nicely measured quantity, as the nature of sin, which constitutes its malignity, and obstructs the benefit of prayer. The inferior degree which is cherished, will, without earnest supplication to God, be ready to become the excess which is deprecated, whenever the appropriate temptation shall present itself. For, however our compassionate Father may pardon the unpremeditated fault, yet how can we expect Him to forgive any degree of sin that is allowed, that is even, in a certain measure, intended to be committed? Diminution, however, is a favourable step, if, by perseverance in prayer, it leads gradually to extirpation.

Habitual prayer may prove a most effectual check to any doubtful or wrong action, to which circumstances may invite us during the day on which we are entering—the very petition to our Heavenly Father—'deliver us us from evil,' forcibly felt and sincerely expressed, may preserve us from being seduced into it. And is not the praying Christian less likely to 'fall into temptation,' than they who neglect to pray that they may not be led into it?

The right dispositions of the heart, and the fervour of devotion reciprocally excite each other. A holy temper sends us to prayer, and prayer promotes that temper. Every act of thanksgiving tends to make us more grateful, and augmented gratitude excites more devout thanksgiving.

The act of confession renders the heart more contrite, and deeper contrition induces a more humbling avowal of sin. Each, and all, send us more cordially to the Redeemer: the more fervent the prayer, the more entire is the prostration of the whole man at the foot of the cross.

The Doctrine of Imputed Sanctification, newly adopted.—The old one of Progressive Sanctification newly rejected.—Both Doctrines injurious to Prayer.—St. Paul's Character.

We have hitherto spoken of errors in prayer. We come now to errors of opinion, which supersede the necessity of prayer itself. There are moral as well as speculative corruptions gaining ground amongst us, and there is an involution of one in the folds of the other. When men once indulge themselves in any deviation from the course so plainly marked out, in that only unerring *road-book*, the gospel of Jesus Christ, they can never be sure where the first turning off may lead them.

When a man, with more ingenuity than sober judgment, wishes to introduce a novel error; in order to work successfully, and prevent the suspicion of his design, he commonly seizes on some acknowledged truth for his basis. On this truth he raises his own fanciful superstructure, but with little departure at first from his avowed design; so that his gradual deviation from it makes the error continue still to look so much like truth, that ordinary observers will not easily detect where the old truth ends, or where the new fabrication totally changes the character of the original edifice.

The great and glorious doctrine of the New Testament was to exalt the Saviour and to humble the sinner; the new doctrine is to exalt the sinner also, and in that proportion to establish and secure him in sin. For if the Saviour's righteousness by transfer becomes so far the believer's righteousness, as to become, in the new language, his own personal holiness, he has in his own person 'whereof to glory,' and any further attainment is anomalous; or at best this transfer is even less rational, and evidently more removed from common sense as well as from charity, than the doctrine of supererogation itself; for that only teaches that some men were rich in good works enough and to spare; but this, instead of the friendly disposal of such superfluous wealth, teaches that we have none worth keeping, and that if we had there is a provision made for rendering it utterly useless.

A distorted truth, then, is worse than an original falsehood, because it deceives the injudicious and ill-informed by retaining some little vestige of the truth they had been taught to venerate. Thus, they who pretend to add new glory to the character and offices of Christ, are in effect dishonouring by misrepresenting him. It is a fearful fact, that the holiest doctrine may be perverted, till, instead of its being the source of salvation, it becomes a fountain of impiety. Instead of humbling the sinner, it confirms him in sin; instead of purifying, it corrupts; instead of sobering, it inebriates; and lands him on a daring and presumptuous confidence. Instead of promoting the cause of God, as it professes, it advances that of Satan. It is a false light which leads to utter darkness, for 'if the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!'

This error is so much worse than any other sin, as by fair and legitimate deduction it renders all virtue anomalous, and consequently all prayer ridiculous. Virtue cannot be needed, where to be like-minded with Christ is replaced, or made synonymous with having his holiness substituted for our own; and prayer cannot be upheld in any one of its essential qualities, where no room is left in the heart for self-distrust, meekness, lowliness of spirit, the fear of offending God, and the sense of dependance on him for 'more grace.'

Much has also been advanced in favour of another kindred doctrine, a doctrine with which St. Peter must have been utterly unacquainted, when he exhorted his converts to 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.' The preceding opinion having encouraged the new proselytes, for they can create as well as destroy, has called another into existence, *that there is no such thing as progressive sanctification.* This novel doctrine, if practically adopted, would not fail to contribute its full share to the extermination of any remains of moral goodness, which its precursor might have left behind. It may indeed deserve some little toleration, when its founder shall have been able to produce one individual child of Adam, who is already as good as he ought to be, or even as he might have been.

If this doctrine be true, a large portion of Scripture must be abandoned to the clippers and mutilators of the sacred volume; for what becomes of the gracious promise of being 'renew-

ed from day to day?' what of the precept 'to increase and abound more and more?' what of the incessant inculcation of this command, repeated in all the various forms which language could supply; a command of which neither the variety of the illustration, nor of the language which conveys it, ever alters the idea, an idea which, like a golden thread, runs through the whole fabric of the New Testament.

We have been accustomed to hear that fervent prayer, through the influence of the Divine Spirit, is the grand instrument of this renewal; and it is on this ground that we have ventured to introduce the subject here as connected with the general design of these pages. But the present doctrine completes what the former had commenced, and renders prayer wholly inapplicable to all spiritual ends: it leaves us nothing to implore, but merely temporal advantages; to ask for things only which will end when this life ends. It would abolish the necessity of every petition in the Lord's prayer, except that for our daily bread.

Why will not those who profess to make the Bible the only rule of their faith and practice, learn from that Bible, that diffidence and reverential awe, a frank avowal of their own ignorance, a humble withholding from intruding into unrevealed things, and devout gratitude for the glorious things which are revealed, best become blind, ignorant and dependent creatures?

If this newly invented doctrine were true, what would become of the useless interval of life, useless as to all possibility of improvement, which is the great end of life, the interval between the decisive moment of complete sanctification and our closing scene?

The unanswerable argument in favour of progressive holiness, is the progress itself. The man to whom it wss asserted, that there was no such thing as motion, made the most definitive answer,—he got up and walked.

Every advance of the Christian inclines him to push on to still further advances. But under the influence of this stationary principle the busy current of life would become a stagnant pool. It is motion which gives the sense of spiritual, as well as natural life. It is progress which gives the sustaining feeling; not of independent, but of infused strength. Hope, which is the pulse of spiritual life, would not only intermit, but stand still. 'Is this all,' would the disappointed Christian say? 'Shall I never be more holy than I now am? I do not find the right sort of rest in being a fixture.' Torpor is not ease, numbness is not relief. It is exercise, not indolence, which induces safe and wholesome repose.

New difficulties, fresh trials, unknown temptations may yet assail us in our mortal journey, which will require new applications to the Throne of Grace for support. With that support promised to prayer, though 'Alps on Alps arise,' we need not be discouraged. For if our progress be an upward, it is an onward path, and the acclivity diminishes the higher we ascend. Difficulties may be great, but with the grace of God they will not be insuperable. God is not only strong, but Strength. Yet let us not aim at an assent above our promised support. In aspiring to reach a visionary elevation, we lose the height we had actually gained.

It is curious to observe, how naturally one invention involves another. We find an instructive illustration of this truth in a Pagan fable. Dædalus was not only made a prisoner himself in the labyrinth of his own projecting, but like the projectors of the new theological metaphysics, he was no sooner involved in its mazes, than he went on to study a new and still wilder contrivance. But his next invention, his wings of wax, in which he trusted to secure his flight, in their ultimate result betrayed their insufficiency. His incautious companion, by mounting above the prescribed region of safety, exposed his artificial wings to be melted by the sun, as a punishment for approaching it too nearly. His fate was the inevitable consequence of his temerity.

If we were completely and instantaneously sanctified, such a state would boldly contradict the character of our human condition, every where described in Scripture, namely, that life is to the end a journey, a conflict, a race, a warfare, whereas in the new scheme all would be peace; the Christian would have no more to tempt, no more to fear, no more to resist, in short, earth would be heaven.

Every thing that is great is progressive.—The noblest things are the longest in attaining their perfection. This analogy subsists in nature, and in grace. Surely, then, there is no assignable period, when our virtues will be incapable of addition; when our duties will be finished; when our piety will have soared to such a pitch as to render a higher elevation impossible, as to render prayer, not only unnecessary, but absurd.

Saint Paul's conversion was indeed instantaneous, but it was miraculous. Yet though it was attended with circumstances peculiar to itself; though the shining light from heaven surrounded him; though, to evidence the miracle, he heard the voice of the Lord Jesus himself; though his natural sight was taken from him, preparatory to the opening of his spiritual eyes; though his change was of this distinguished character, yet did he stop short there? So far from it, he only began to cry out, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do*? Thus we see, that the instantaneous conversion was prayer; practical prayer; prayer with involved doing; prayer which denoted progress.

If ever progressive sanctification was exhibited in the life, as well as writings, of any one man more than another, it was in this heroic champion of divine truth. If ever one man more than another had a right to depend on his own safe state, it was the divinely illuminated Saint Paul.

Yet did *he* spend his after-life in self-satisfaction and indolent security? Did *he* ever cease to watch, or pray, or labour? Did *he* ever cease to press the duty of prayer on his most established converts? Did *he*, in the confidence of supremely eminent gifts, ever cease himself to pray? Were *his* exertions ever abridged? *his* self-denial ever diminished? Did *he* rest satisfied with present, though supernatural attainments? Did *he* remember the things which were behind? Did *he* live upon the good he

had already done, or the grace he had already received? Did *he* count himself to have attained? Did he stop in the race set before him? Did not he press forward? Did not his endeavours grow with his attainments? Did not his humility, and sense of dependence outstrip both? If *he* feared being a castaway, after the unutterable things he had seen and heard, and after the wonders he had achieved, shall the best man on earth be contented to remain as he is? If it were attempted, the most sanguine man on earth would find it to be impossible; nothing either in nature or in grace 'continueth in one stay.' He who does not advance, is already gone back. —This glorious, because humble Apostle, went on in progressive sanctification, he continued to grow and to pray, till he at length attained to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

But what enabled this unparalleled man to maintain to the end, this painful conflict? It was the same support which is still offered to the meanest Christian. It was humble, fervent, persevering prayer. It was the spirit of supplication, infused and sustained by 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost,' and presented through the divine Mediator.

And what the Apostle did in his own person, we repeat, he unwearyingly pressed upon all his converts. He exhorted them to pray for themselves, and for each other, in the same spirit in which 'he bowed his own knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that they might be rooted and grounded in love; that they might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that they might be filled with all the fulness of God.'

It is obvious why God does not give us the full measure of his grace; it is in order that we may be induced to pray for it; and that prayer which we are commanded continually to repeat for greater degrees of grace, is a standing proof of that imperfection in us which requires it, is a perpetual intimation, that we stand in need of fresh supplies, and larger measures of this super-induced strength than we have yet attained.

A sincere Christian must know, because he must feel, that he is an imperfect Christian; and to rest satisfied in a state of imperfection is not 'fighting the good fight,' is not 'finishing our course' in the way our beginning promised. As we advance, Providence assigns us new employments, new trials. Sanctification will never have reached its ultimate point, without that persevering progress which the Scriptures every where inculcate. Do we not rob ourselves of the reward promised to those who strive to go on unto perfection, if we are stopped short by the fatal delusion, that we have already reached it?

There is a fearful denunciation in the Apocalypse, and it is made the closing passage of the sacred canon; it is made a fence, as it were to shield divine truth from the additions and mutilations of bold intruders; no less than a tremendous menace, that 'to him who adds unto these things, God shall add to him the plagues written in this book. To him that takes away, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.'

Character of those who expect salvation for their Good Works.—Of those who depend on a Careless Nominal Faith.—Both these characters unfavourable to Prayer.—Christianity a Religion of Love which disposes to Prayer, exhibited in a third character.

We proceed now to make some observation on two different classes of Christians, who, without neglecting prayer, obstruct its efficacy by certain opinions in immediate connection with their practice; opinions, which, though in direct opposition to each other, yet, if Christianity be true, are neither of them safe.

The one, with a pretence of faith, profess to know God; but in works, in a great measure deny him; the other are working out their own salvation, but it is without fear or trembling; they work in their own strength, without looking unto God to enable them 'to will and to do of His good pleasure.'

While multitudes are ruining themselves by a fatal reliance on the merit of their own works, it is, perhaps, not saying too much to assert that more are undone by a loose, traditional, unexamined dependence on the Saviour. If many are wrong who think to purchase heaven by their own industry, more err by this cheaper mode of an indefinite and careless reliance on the ill-understood promises of the Gospel. If we cannot, of these two evils, determine which is greatest, it would not be difficult to prove that both are equally unfavourable to fervent prayer.

The careless liver who trusts in an unfounded hope, deceives, himself, because he thinks his trust, though he never inquires into it, looks more like grace.

Good works are rather less likely to deceive always, because those who maintain their superiority as a doctrine, cannot but see how far they fall themselves in practice, short of their profession; so far as to render it evident, that good works are with much greater sedulity performed by that sound class of Christians, who utterly reject any confidence in the performance of them. The former make salvation the easiest possible acquisition; the other believe it to be difficult, but fancy that the difficulty is to be overcome by a few more good deeds; which shall we say is the more misleading opinion?

Yet it must be confessed, that in this age of speculative religion, many do not sufficiently insist on these indispensable indications of a true and lively faith. For, after all, are not the right actions of a consistently holy life, the most unequivocal outward signs of an inward and spiritual grace? Not to insist on them, is to despise the value of those substantial evidences which our Lord himself made the criterion by which to judge of men,—'by their fruits ye shall know them.' The tree of life is no barren tree; it bears all manner of fruits.

There is indeed less necessity than ever to decry good works. Men are not so violently addicted to them, as, by the warnings given against them, one might be led to suppose. To exalt good works as the procuring cause of salvation, is to put them in the place of Christ. To depreciate good works, is to depreciate such a life as Christ has given us both the command, and

the example to lead; that command, of which the language was always one, 'if ye love me, keep my commandments;' and that example which presents such a tissue of holy actions, as nothing but Divinity could exhibit, yet enlightened and assisted humanity may and must aspire to imitate.

With this command and this example, devotion was always indissolubly connected.—Previously to giving his Divine pattern for the due performance of prayer, he alluded to the actual duty as already well understood and regularly practised; for doubtless he had habituated them to the duty, before he said, '*when* we pray,'—'After this manner therefore pray you.'

Faith is the principle which first led the sinner to apply for grace and mercy to the Redeemer of sinners. It is the same principle, which, by its gradual operation, leads to the renewing of his nature, the purifying his heart, and the sanctifying his conduct. This faith, with its practical consequences, must be sought for, by the only means through which it can be obtained, the influence of the Holy Spirit on humble, fervent, spiritual prayer.

But there is another, and, it is to be feared, a large class, who do good without being good. Though this may be too frequently the case; though it is the motive which determines on the quality of the action, yet, if the best action will not save the best man, there is little hope of its efficacy towards the salvation of a bad one.

Perhaps the man in question is charitable; but his charity may be stimulated by his vanity —a too common, but most misleading motive. Perhaps he does a deed of bounty from the too usual hope that this good action may be thrown into the opposite scale against a bad one; perhaps he hopes that his acts of benevolence may atone for the irregularities of a disorderly life—but, be this as it may, do not discourage his giving, let him continue to give, the act may improve the principle, he may in time detect the difference of his internal feelings in the performance of a good and bad action.—Perhaps the repetition of his good deeds may lead to a diminution of his bad ones. The passion of shame sometimes operates usefully, and every passion being under the control of God, may eventually be made the instrument of good.

And who does not remember instances in which the frequently repeated bounty was the unprompted feeling of a compassionate and liberal heart, of a heart tender and kind, though yet unsanctified by religion?

Yet who would restrain the right action? Who would forbid the gentle deed of charity? Who would wish to aggravate his perhaps awful account by withholding his hand? Who would willingly add this omission of what is right to his aggregate sum of what is wrong? Who would not even hope that it may prove a leading step to what is better? Who would not hope that, as good principles naturally tend to good actions, yet though it is reversing the usual order, for the stream to lead back to the fountain, yet who knows but the repetition of good actions may not only deter him from such as are bad, but may put his mind into such a frame as may lead him to examine the true principle of action, and thus to find, that though he has unhappily begun at the wrong end, that the right end is not even yet unattainable? Who can say that he may not be brought to examine his own heart, and be thus brought to the exercise of cordial prayer; by that he will be taught to know that 'if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'

Our compassionate Redeemer cherished every hopeful appearance. When he saw some symptoms of goodness in the young Ruler 'He loved him.' But his amiableness was not religion Though his obedience to the commandments was less defective than that of many a high professor; like others, who confidently trust in their own merit, he inquired not, it is to be feared, so much for improvement, as from a sense of conscious integrity and the hope of commendation—he inquired what was yet wanting to the perfection of his character.

He who knew all things, already knew that his love of money was greater than his love of God. Here he saw that this promising character was vulnerable. The one thing he wanted was more than the many things he possessed. He failed in the trial. He had some concern about his soul, but more about his money; 'he went away sorrowing,' because he could not secure the one without the sacrifice of the other.

This is, with *us*, as much a test of character now, as it was then. It is not until we see a man acting in direct opposition to his predominant sin that we can venture to hope that he is renewed in the spirit of his mind, that he is even got on right ground. Zaccheus, who probably set out worse than the ruler, obtained this grand victory which the other missed.

This promising young man, in proclaiming his obedience to the commands, did not, however, boast of his devotion; yet, in so moral a character, we cannot suppose that prayer was altogether neglected—but it must have been that prayer of which our Lord says 'this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, their heart is far from me.' Had it been sincere prayer, it would have been influential prayer. No slave to avarice *can* worship God in spirit and in truth, and it is such that the Father seeketh to worship him. While the heart remains unchanged, the temper unsanctified, and the life unfruitful, the prayer has not been 'the effectual fervent prayer which availeth much.'

But there is a third character, who, thinking both the others lately noticed to be wrong, is determined himself to be right. He divides the difference, and adopts half of the scheme of each. He approves of works, but doubts their unassisted efficacy to obtain salvation. He honours the Redeemer, and places confidence in His sacrifice; but it is not a full, entire, unmeasured confidence. He thinks the Saviour so far competent towards effecting part of his salvation that he cannot be saved without Him, but dares not trust Him with the whole. So, without intending to be profane, he enters into a kind of partnership with Him whose blood was made a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He pro-

poses to contribute his own share to a contract of his own making, trusting that, as the Saviour knows he is not perfect, He will graciously supply whatever is deficient in his services, and make up what is lacking to their perfection, he himself continuing to be the working partner.

But if he be a thinking and a feeling character, if he be sincere in his desire after divine truth, though ignorant of its true nature, he at length begins to find that the plan, which he once thought so admirably contrived, does not answer. He finds that his spiritual interests do not advance. He begins to discover that his faith is cold, even his work is sluggish, and its progress unsatisfactory. His exertions want the inspiring principle, they want a genuine faith. He begins to discover, that even his good actions, on which he had been accustomed to rest half his salvation, are exceeded by those persons who do more, and put no trust in them. He at length through the influence of divine grace, begins to discover, or rather to feel, that while one party is exclusively exalting faith and the other works, both seem to have forgotten, or rather not to have known, that there is a third, a heavenly principle, a sacred cement without which their separation might be eternal, and even their junction would be imperfect. This sacred principle is LOVE. He now knows, experimentally, that Christianity is a religion of the affections, a sentiment of the heart—that it demands and confers that charity without which faith is dead, and works are vain. It is that heavenly sentiment, the love of God in Christ shed abroad in the heart, without which he that liveth is counted dead—that principle, without which the gift of prophecy, of mysteries, and all knowledge are unavailing—without which, giving all the goods to the poor, and even the body to be burned, will not profit—it is that indestructible attribute, which, when prophecies shall fail, and tongues shall cease, and knowledge vanish away, will *never* fail—it is that perfect thing which shall subsist when 'that which is in part shall be done away.' Love will survive when faith shall become sight, and hope shall be fruition. It shall constitute our happiness when we shall know God 'even as we are known. We shall possess it in its plenitude, when we shall wake up after His likeness. For love, like every other holy disposition, is but an emanation of the perfections of God, a spark from the original flame, an assimilation to his nature; since God is love.

In faith there may be fear; in works there may be constraint; but the inspiring, invigorating, endearing principle of love, changes the fearful slave into the affectionate child; transforms *Him* whom he had degraded as a hard master into a tender father.—This love makes labour light, service freedom, dependence safety, duty delight, sufferings easy, obedience pleasure, submission choice. By the warmth with which he now cultivates this 'Unction from the Holy One,' he will be rendered more meet for that fulness of joy which is at His right-hand for evermore.

He has now completely found his own utter insufficiency for this great work. He is in the situation of the newly converted apostle, who had doubtless previously exercised a regular but formal devotion, but it never would have been said of him before—'behold he prayeth!' He begins with lowly prostration to besiege the throne of grace; he now prays with a fervour he never felt before. He goes on to feel, not only its necessity, but its efficacy; gradually acknowledges its transforming power, and in time becomes sensible that its consolations are neither few nor small.

He now sees objects with other eyes, the visual ray is purged; to his rectified optics—'trees are become men.' He now exclaims, 'not of works, lest any man should boast.' But though he has left off boasting, he is so far from having left off working, that he is far more active in good deeds than when he trusted they would carry him to heaven; superinduced humility has completely led him to the secrets of his own heart. He feels wants and desires of which he was never before sensible; and wants felt readily find a tongue, readily suggest unbidden prayer, unprompted praise. Prayer is become the very breath of his being; praise is so much his delight, that he almost forgets it is his duty. It is no longer his task, but his refreshment. What lately seemed a necessary drudgery, the severe injunction of a hard master, is now the pleasant service of an affectionate child.

He is deeply grieved at the time he has lost, but he is no less disposed to retrieve than to lament the past. He has found that the soul will not be saved where the heart is not renewed. Of that renewal, by the influence of the Divine Spirit, he is become more and more sensible in his devotional exercises. With a deeper sense of imperfection as he becomes less imperfect, he is yet sensible of new dispositions, of new energies, of a heart to trust, and a will to obey. He feels an increasing desire of conformity to his Divine Saviour, and such a growth in grace, that with him to will and to do is almost become the same thing.

All the faculties which God has given him are filled with the idea of God. He retains Him in his *memory* by the recollection of His mercies—he retains Him in his *understanding*, by meditating on His perfections. By this intelligent faculty he reflects on what God is in himself, in His word, and to his own soul. In his *will*, he loves God, and laments that he ever loved any thing in comparison of Him. Thus all his intellectual powers, voluntarily as it were, press into the worship of God, or, in the fewer and better words of the Psalmist, he summons them all to assist in his devotions, saying, 'Let all that is within me praise the Lord.'

Prayer.—The Condition of its Attendant Blessings.—Useless Contention about Terms.

MEN contend more about words than about things. A misunderstanding respecting them causes more disputes than the subjects of which they are the signs. In speaking, for instance, of the connexion between prescribed duties and promised blessings, are there not certain inoffensive and well-meaning words which seem

to have brought more reproach on those who use them than their harmless, if not legitimate character, may be thought to deserve. One of them, indeed, might expect more gentle treatment on the single ground that it is very frequently to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

The obnoxious terms to which we here allude are *rewards* and *conditions*. We have in general avoided the use of them, not for any harm discoverable in them when used and understood in the scriptural sense, but for fear of creating an idea contrary to what was intended to be conveyed. In the legal sense they are very exceptionable, for in the one case we deserve nothing from God, and in the other we can do nothing of *ourselves*.

We do not presume to make conditions with God, but He condescends to propose them to us. In this latter case, it is free grace imposes the reasonable condition: his free grace bestows the unmerited reward.—Are not all the promises of the Gospel conditional? The beatitudes include both the condition and the reward. Our blessed Saviour, in his sermon, multiplies, and individualizes his promises. He gives us a string of articles of blessedness and recompence; the specific recompence to the specific duty; amongst others, mercy to the merciful; the kingdom of heaven to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; the vision of God to the pure in heart.

The Holy Spirit consecrates the doctrine of *rewards*, by teaching the Apostle to connect it even with the very being of Omnipotence. God *is*,' and it immediately follows, that 'he is a *rewarder* of them that seek him.' Surely this is a condition, as much as the threat that he will punish those 'who know not God.' Every where, and particularly in the Psalms, prayer is made the condition of obtaining. In asking, seeking, and knocking, the condition and the reward most appropriately meet.

To those who come to the Redeemer, he has declared that 'they shall in no wise be cast out.' Their coming is the condition of their being accepted. 'Rest,' again, is the consoling promise which he makes to 'the heavy laden' who come to him. 'He that honoureth me I will honour,' is both a condition and a reward. What is the promise of pardon to repentance, but a condition? The negative denunciation is a condition. 'Ye will *not* come to me, that ye might have life.' 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord; without faith it is impossible to please God.' Do not these imply the blessings attending the contrary temper? State the question thus: Shall we be heard, if we do not pray? Shall we be pardoned, if we do not repent?

'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' It is the love of God then, which is the condition of obtaining those things which the heart of man cannot conceive.

All the promises made to faith are conditions, as are those made to holiness. The good and faithful servants who well employed their ten and five talents, were rewarded by having their talents doubled; the punishment of their unprofitable companion was a conditional punishment. He had made no use of what was committed to him.

Why is that bright variety of promises, 'to him that overcometh,' repeated with such unwearied iteration, in the sublime visions of the Saint at Patmos? What is it but a beautiful concatenation of conditions and rewards, closed with that joyful climax, 'he that overcometh shall be a pillar in the temple of the Lord, and shall go no more out.' If language more clear can be found, if assurance more explicit can be given, if promises more distinct can be produced, we confess we know not where to look for them. Did not Moses himself, the most disinterested of men, look to the recompence of the reward? And did not a greater than Moses, 'for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame?'

Promises like these were the support, and triumph of his immediate apostles, and of their remotest successors; of Ridley, and Latimer, and Cranmer. They will still be the consolation of the Christian sufferer for righteousness sake to the end of time.—Let us not then forfeit our inheritance by slighting the promise.

'This is a reward wholly of grace in respect of our deserving, but of justice, on account of the purchase of it by the sacred treasures of Christ's blood, and the unchangeable tenor of the Gospel wherein God promises heaven to all obedient and true believers.'

The things may be called by other names, but they amount to the same meaning.—There is a proud disinterestedness which would seem to intimate, that, because we deserve nothing we expect nothing. Our expectation, it is true, arises entirely from God's goodness, and not at all from our merit. It arises especially from his fidelity, which leads him to make good his own engagement. He has Himself said, 'faithful is He that has promised.'

This view of the subject deducts nothing from that free salvation purchased for us by the death of the Redeemer. We repeat, it deducts nothing from the sovereignty of God. All the promises are the gracious offers of an amnesty by an insulted King, who condescends to offer a treaty to his rebellious subjects. We deserve nothing at his hands. He owes us nothing. Punishment we do indeed deserve 'if He were extreme to mark what is done amiss;' yet he declares that punishment is his strange work. He has reversed the attainder, by the sacrifice of his Son. The attainted rebel, instead of disputing about the terms of reconciliation, instead of proposing terms of his own, thankfully accepts what the king offers. Though our pardon hangs on a firm belief in the great truths he has revealed, let us not so explain these as to hazard or neglect the duties he has enjoined us to perform. If our faith, though sincere, is often weak, let us remember, that our obedience is even more imperfect than our faith; and let us, by fervent and unremitting prayer, labour at once to build up our faith which is weak, and to perfect our obedience which is defective.

God not only pardons as a merciful king, He enacts laws as a wise legislator; still the old revolutionary principles are continually

breaking out; to check which the sovereign proposes *terms* as proofs of our allegiance.—He does by no means annex salvation to them, but he requires them as marks of our repentance, as confirmation of our loyalty. He requires them as evidences, both of our faith and of our submission. By the infusion of a new spirit of life consequent on His pardon, the acquitted rebel adopts a new set of principles which show themselves by overt acts, suggested and nourished by fervent prayer.

We are aware that the term 'evidences' used above, is to many no less revolting, than those which we have previously noticed, but by this excessive affectation of disinterestedness and refining on the promises, we shall come to do away all moral obligation, we shall attenuate the substantial realities of Christianity into a meagre theory, reduce the fruitful principle of practical religion, to a dry and unproductive speculation, a barren thing to which nothing that is perceptible, palpable, tangible, and practical, is necessarily appended.

On the other hand, it is but too notorious, that the terms here humbly attempted to be vindicated and restored to their true signification, are too frequently made the sum and substance, the whole of religion, till the spirituality of the Gospel, and the great peculiarities of the religion of Jesus, are smothered in the heap of frigid human ethics.

It is by the promises annexed to these conditions, that the Christian is gradually brought to consider prayer not merely as a duty, but to value it as a privilege; and the more earnestly he cultivates the spirit of supplication, the more deeply will it enable him to penetrate into the recesses of his own heart. The more he discovers the evils which he there finds, he will be so far from being deterred by the discovery, from approaching to the fountain of mercy, that it will lead him to be more diligent as well as more fervent, in his application there. Nothing so favourably discovers to us our spiritual exigencies, nothing can quicken our petitions for their relief so powerfully, as the conviction of their actual existence.—In this full conviction, in this earnest application, the Christian at length feels the efficacy of prayer in its consolations, its blessedness, in its transforming power.

Vain Excuses for the Neglect of Prayer.—The Man of Business.—Case of Nehemiah.—Prayer against the Fear of Death.—Characters to whom this Prayer is recommended.

THERE are not a few, who offer apologies for the neglect of spiritual duties, by saying they believe them to be right, but that they are tempted from the exercise of them by idleness, or business, by company, or pleasure. This may be true, but temptations are not compulsions. The great adversary of souls may fill the fancy with alluring images of enjoyment, so as to draw us away from any duty, but it is in our own choice to indulge, and through grace to repel them. He may act upon the passions through outward objects, which introduce them to the mind through the senses, but the grace of God enables all who faithfully ask it, to withstand them.

If we were not at liberty to reject temptation, sin would be no sin. It is the offer of the grace of resistance not used, which makes the offender to be without excuse. All the motives and allurements to sin would be ineffectual, would we keep up in our minds what are its 'wages'—death; death spiritual, death eternal!

Of all the excuses for the neglect of prayer, the man of business justifies his omission to himself by the most plausible apologies.—Many of this class, active for themselves, and useful to the world, are far from disputing either the propriety, or the duty of prayer; they are willing however for the present, to turn over this duty to the clergy, to the idle, to women and children. They allow it to be an important thing, but not the most important. They acknowledge, if men have time to spare, they cannot spend it better; but *they* have no time. It is indeed a duty, but a duty not to be compared with that of the court, the bar, the public office, the counting-house, or the shop.

Now, in pleading for the importance of the one, we should be the last to detract from that of the other. We only plead for their entire compatability.

We pass over the instance of Daniel, a man of business and a statesman, and of many other public characters, recorded in Scripture, and confine ourselves to the example of Nehemiah. He was not only an officer in the court of the greatest king of the East, but it was his duty to be much in the royal presence. He was on a particular occasion, under deep affliction; for Jerusalem was in ruins! On a certain day his sadness was so great, as to be visible to the king, at whose table he was attending.

The monarch enquired the cause of his sorrow, and what request he had to make.—He instantly 'prayed to the God of heaven,' doubtless to strengthen him, and then made his petition to the king for no less a boon, than to allow him to rebuild the walls of the sacred city. His prayer preceded his request. It was that prayer, which gave him courage to present that petition, and which perhaps induced the sovereign to grant it. What a double encouragement is here given to the courtier, both to pray to God, and to speak truth to a king!

Though the plea of the man of business, for his own particular exemption, can by no means be granted, yet it is the sense he entertains of the value of his professional duties, which deceives him. It leads him to believe, that there can be no evil in substituting business for devotion. He is conscious that he is industrious, and he knows that industry is a great moral quality. He is rightly persuaded, that the man of pleasure has no such plea to produce. He therefore imposes on himself, with the belief that there *can* be no harm in substituting a moral for a religious exercise; for he has learned to think highly of morality, while he assigns to religion only an inferior degree in his scale of duties.

He usually goes to church once on the Sunday; but it does not at all infringe on his religious system to examine his accounts, to give

a great dinner, or to begin a journey on that day.

Now it is a serious truth, that there is no man to whom prayer is more imperatively a duty, or more obviously a necessity, than to the man of business; whether in the higher or the middle classes of society. There is no man who more stands in need of quieting his anxities, regulating his tempers, cooling his spirits by a devout application for the blessing of God; none to whom it is more necessary to implore the divine protection for the duties, or preservation from the dangers of the scene in which he is about to engage; none to whom it is more important to solicit direction in the difficulties which the day may produce; none on whom it is more incumbent to solicit support against the temptations which may be about to assail him; none to whom the petition for an enlightened conscience, an upright intention, a sound probity, and an undeviating sincerity, is of more importance.

What is so likely as prayer to enable him to stand prepared to meet the accidental fluctuations in his affairs, to receive without inebriation, a sudden flow of prosperous fortune, or to sustain any adverse circumstance with resignation?

Even persons in more retired situations, even those who have made considerable advances in religion cannot but acknowledge how much the ordinary and necessary cares of daily life, especially, how much any unexpected accession to them, are likely to cause absence and distraction in their devotions:—how much then ought they, whose whole life is business, to be on their guard against these dangers, to double their vigilance against them, and to implore direction under them.

Were the Christian soldier accustomed never to engage in the moral battle of daily life, without putting on this panoply, the shafts of temptation would strike with a feeble and erring blow; they would not so deeply pierce the guarded heart. And were fervent humble daily prayer once conscientiously adopted, its effects would reach beyond the week-day engagements. It would gradually extend its benign influence to the postponing of settling accounts, the festive dinner, and the not absolutely necessary journey, to one of those six days in which we are enjoined to labour. It would lead him to the habit of doing 'no manner of work' on that day, in which the doing of it was prohibited by the great Lawgiver in his own person.

We have more than once alluded to the diversities of character, occasional events, difference in the state of mind as well as of circumstances, which may not only render the prayer which is suitable to one man unsuitable to another, but unsuitable to the same man under every alteration of circumstances.

But among the proper topics for prayer, there is one which, being of universal interest ought not to be omitted. For by whatever dissimilarity of character, capacity, profession, station, or temper, the condition of man, and, of course, the nature of prayer, is diversified—there is one grand point of union, one circumstance, one condition, in which they must all meet; one state, of which every man is equally certain; one event which happeneth to all,—'it is appointed unto every man once to die.' The rugged road of sorrow, the flowery path of pleasure, as well as

'The paths of glory, lead but to the grave.'

In praying, therefore, against the fear of death, we do not pray against a contingent but a certain evil; we pray to be delivered from the overwhelming dread of that house which is appointed for all living—we are put in mind that all who are born must die!

'The end of all things is at hand.' To what purpose does the apostle convert this awful proclamation? Does he use it to encourage gloomy tempers, to invite to unprofitable melancholy? No: he uses the solemn admonition to stir us up to moral goodness—therefore, 'be sober'—he does more, he uses it to excite us to religious vigilance,—'and watch unto prayer.'

Some men, and they are not the best men, talk boldly of death, especially while they suppose it to be at a distance; but this boastful heroism is a very equivocal symptom of their being in a proper state to meet it. Others of a less confident, but not more serious cast of mind, take pains to keep it as far as possible from their thoughts, lest the indulging such gloomy reflections should make them uneasy, and embitter their present enjoyments. They banish it, indeed, from their thoughts, as they do other unpleasant subjects; but it is no proof that we do not fear a thing, because we manage to keep it out of sight; on the contrary, the effort betrays the very fear which it denies.

There is an inconsistency in the character of man, so preposterous, that we should not believe it, if we did not feel as well as see it. We continue eagerly to catch at the things which are always sliding from us, and which no grasp of ours can retain, whilst we forget the things that are not only hastening to meet us, but which will remain with us, not through time only, but eternity.

Others are afraid to think of death for the same reason, that they are afraid to make their will, lest it should bring it nearer: but we know that we will keep up the remembrance without accelerating the approach; familiarity with the thought is the best means of conquering the fear. It is not pusillanimity, but prudence, so to fear death as to fear to meet it in an unprepared state of mind; and that fear will always be safe and salutary, which leads to the preparation.

Prayer against the fear of death, by keeping up in us a constant remembrance of our mortality, will help to wean us from a too intimate attachment to the things we are so soon to quit. By this habitual preparation to meet our Judge, we shall be brought to pray more earnestly for an interest in the great Intercessor; and to strive more effectually against every offence which may aggravate the awfulness of that meeting.—Above all, such a prayer will more emphatically remind us that it was sin which brought death into the world, which introduces that original principle and first act of sin, from which all our natural evil, and practical offences are derived.

But let us not be accustomed to think of death

as a detached and separate object, as the mere insulated circumstance of its closing our eyes for ever on all we have been accustomed to cherish; let us not think of it only as a consignment to the narrow chambers of the tomb, but let us ever connect with the idea of death, the consoling assurance that to the real Christian, its sting is drawn out; this will fill the heart with boundless love and endless gratitude to Him who has extracted it. This thought of death, though it will keep up in the mind the anticipation of that night, which as to this world shall know no morning, will also keep up the glorious prospect of that eternal day which shall know no night.

Fervent prayer, that divine grace may prepare us for death, will, if cordially adopted, answer many great moral purposes. It will remind every individual of every class that 'the time is short'—that 'there is no repentance in the grave.'

To the *man of opulence*, who heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them, prayer will be a constant memento: it will remind him that he walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; it will remind him of laying up treasures where thieves cannot enter, nor rust corrode.

The habit of praying against the fear of death, would check the pride of youthful *beauty*, by reminding her how soon it must say to the worm, Thou art my father, and to corruption, Thou art my mother and sister.

The *man of genius*, he who thought that of making many books there would be no end; who, in his zeal to write, had neglected to pray; who had thought little of any immortality but that which was to be conferred by the applause of dying creatures like himself; who, in the vanity of possessing talents, had forgotten that he must one day account for the application of them; if happily he should be brought to see the evil of his own heart, to feel the wants of his own soul, how intense will be his repentance, that he had loved the praise of men more than the praise of God! how fervently will he pray that his mercies may not aggravate the account of his sins; that his talents may not become the instrument of his punishment! How earnestly will he supplicate pardon, how devoutly will he 'give glory to God, before his feet stumble on the dark mountains!'

The *man of business*, to whom we have already adverted, who thought his schemes so deeply laid, his speculations so prudently planned, that nothing could frustrate them; who calculated that the future was as much in his power as the present, forgot that death, that grand subverter of projects, might interpose his *veto*. This man, who could not find time to pray, must find time to die—he may at length find—happy if he ever find it, that he cannot meet his end with a peaceful heart, and a resigned spirit, without the preparation of prayer for support in that awful period, 'when his purposes shall be broken off and all his thoughts perish.'

The *man of pleasure*, alas! what shall we say for *him*? He is sunk to the lowest step of degradation in the moral scale; he has not even human supports; he has robbed himself even of the ordinary consolations resorted to by ordinary men. He has no stay on which to lay hold, no twig at which to catch, no pretence by which to flatter himself into a false peace; no recollection of past usefulness; he has neither served his country; nor benefitted society—what shall we say for him? If he pray not for himself, we must pray for him—with God all things are possible.

The *patriot*, indefatigable in the public service, distinguished for integrity; but neglecting the offices of Christianity; whose lofty character power had not warped, nor cupidity debased, but whose religious principles, though they had never been renounced, had not been kept in exercise; a spirit of rare disinterestedness; a moralist of unblanched honour, but who pleaded that duty had left him little time for devotion! Should divine grace incline him at last to seek God, should he begin to pray to be prepared for death and judgment, he will deeply regret with the contrite cardinal, not that he served his king faithfully, but that his higher services had not been devoted to their highest object. In this frame of mind, that ambition which was satisfied with what earth could give, or kings reward, will appear no longer glorious in his eyes. True and just to his king, devoted to his country, faithful to all but his God and himself, he now laments that he had neglected to seek a better country, neglected to serve the King Eternal, the blessed and only Potentate; neglected to obtain an interest in a kingdom which shall not be moved, He feels that mere patriotism, grand as is its object, and important as is its end, will not afford support to a soul sinking at the approach of the inevitable hour, at the view of final judgment.

The *hero*, who, in the hot engagement, surrounded with the 'pride, pomp, and circumstance of war,' bravely defied death; forgot all that was personal, and only remembered—nobly remembered, his country, and his immediate duty;—animated with the glory that was to be acquired with his arm, and almost ready to exclaim with the Roman patriot;

'——————What pity
That we can die but once to serve our country!'

yet this hero, if he had ever made a conscience of prayer, may he not hereafter find, that the most successful instrumentality is a distinct thing in itself, and will be different in its results, from personal piety? May he not find that, though he saved others, himself he cannot save?

If, however, in after-life, in the cool shade of honourable retirement, he be brought through the grace of God, to habituate himself to earnest prayer, he will deeply rsgret that he never entered the field of battle without imploring the favour of the God of battles; that he had ever returned alive from slaughtered squadrons, without adoring the Author of his providential preservation. If his penitence be sincere, his prayer will be effectual. It will fortify him under the mere depressing prospect of that death which is soon to be encountered in the solitude of his darkened chamber, without witnesses, without glory, without the cheering band, without the

spirit-stirring drum; without the tumultuous acclamation; with no objects to distract his attention; no conflicting concerns to divide his thoughts; no human arm, either of others or his own, on which to depend. This timely reflection, this late, though never *too* late prayer, may still prepare him for a peaceful dying-bed; may lead him to lean on a stronger arm than his own, or that of an army; may conduct him to a victory over his last enemy, and thus dispose him to meet death in a safer state than when he despised it in the field, may bring him to acknowledge, that while he continued to live without subjection to the Captain of his salvation, though he had fought bravely, he had not yet fought the good fight.

The Consolations of Prayer—Its Perpetual Obligation.

In addition to what has already been observed, as to convenient seasons for prayer, we cannot but remark, that many Christians have been enabled to convert their trials into blessings, by gradually bringing themselves to devote the hours of wakeful and even painful nights to devout meditation and prayer. By doing at first some violence to their inclinations, they have afterwards found in it both profit and pleasure. The night has been made to them a season of heart-searching thought and spiritual consolation. Solitude and stillness completely shut out the world; its business, its cares, its impertinences. The mind is sobered, the passions are stilled, it seems to the watchful Christian as if there were in the universe only God and his own soul. It is an inexpressible consolation to him to feel that the one Being in the universe, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, is the very Being to whom he has free access, even in the most unseasonable hours. The faculties of the mind may not, perhaps, be in their highest exercise, but the affections of the heart, from the exclusion of distracting objects, more readily ascend to their noblest object. Night and darkness are no parasites: conscience is more easily alarmed. It puts on fewer disguises. We appear to ourselves more what we really are. This detection is salutary. The glare which the cheerful day-light, business, pleasure and company, had shed over all objects, is withdrawn. Schemes which, in the day had appeared plausible, now present objections. What had then appeared safe, now, at least, seems to require deliberation. This silent season of self-examination, is a keen detector of any latent evil, which, like the fly in the box of perfume, may corrupt much that is pure.

When this communion with God can be maintained, it supplies deficiencies of devotion to those who have little leisure during the day; and, by thus rescuing these otherwise lost hours, it snatches time from oblivion, at once adds to the length of life, and weans from the love of it.

If the wearied and restless body be tempted to exclaim 'would God it were morning,' the very term suggests the most consoling of all images. The quick mind shoots forward beyond this vale of tears, beyond the dark valley of the shadow of death; it stretches onward to the joyful morning of the Resurrection; it anticipates that blessed state where there is no more weeping and no more night—no weeping, for God's own hand shall wipe away the tears; no night, for the Lamb himself shall be the light.

If disqualifying pain, or distressing languor, prevent the utterance of supplication, patience is itself a prayer, and a prayer which will not fail to be heard. We have a striking instance of an answer to silent prayer, in the case of Moses. In a situation of extreme distress, when he had not uttered a word, 'the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy crying.'

The tender mercy of our compassionate Father will make sense, and find meaning in a prayer which is almost unintelligible to the languid sufferer who offers it. God wants not to be informed, he wants only to be remembered, to be loved, to be sought.

If, however, in the conduct of this nightly watching, and this nightly prayer, your own stock of thought or expression is absolutely deficient, prophets and apostles will not only afford you the most encouraging examples, but most perfect assistance. More especially the royal treasury of king David lies open to you; and whatever are your wants, there your resources are inexhaustible.

What joyful appeals does the psalmist make to Him to whom the darkness and the light are both alike! 'Have I not remembered Thee in my bed, and thought upon thee when I was waking?' 'In the night,' he again exclaims, 'I commune with my own heart, and search out my spirit.' And of this holy practice was he so little weary, that he resolved to persevere in it. 'As long as I live will I magnify Thee in this manner.' Similar to this is the apostrophe of the evangelical prophet—'With my soul have I desired Thee in the night.'

The Psalms of David exhibit the finest specimen of experimental religion in the world. They are attended with this singular advantage and this unspeakable comfort, that in them God speaks to us and we speak to Him. This delightful interlocution between the King of saints and the penitent sinner; this interchange of character, this mixture of prayer and promise, of help implored and grace bestowed, of weakness pleaded and strength imparted, of favour shown and gratitude returned, of prostration on one part and encouragement on the other, of abounding sorrow, and overflowing mercy, this beautiful variety of affecting intercourse between sinful dust and infinite goodness, lifts the abased penitent into the closest and most elevating communion with his Saviour and his God.

Yet, inestimable as are the Psalms of David, in every point of view, and especially for the purpose here recommended, as a refuge for the suffering body, the wakeful mind, the praying spirit, and the oppressed heart—that very sanctity, and depth of devotional feeling, which is their life-blood, may lead to a dangerous misapplication in the mouth of the irreligious. Holy expressions in prayer, and ebullitions of grateful praise, are more easily committed to the memo-

ry, than impressed upon the heart. And is there not some danger, that not only the mere formalist, but even the immoral man may apply to himself sentiments, declarations, assurances, and comforts, which can only belong to the real Christian? For instance; the arrogant man, as if, like the dervise in the Persian fable, he had shot his soul into the character he assumes, repeats with complete self-application, 'Lord, I am not high-minded;' the trifler says, 'I hate vain thoughts;' the irreligious, 'Lord how I love thy law.' He who seldom prays at all, confidently repeats, 'All the day long I am occupied in thy statutes.' The covetous, in the words of Paul or David, with as much self-complacency deprecates avarice, as if the anathema against it had ever opened either his heart or his purse.

On the other hand, as the hardest substances, by continual attrition, are at length penetrated, it is the pleasing task of charity to hope, that the habitual repetition of such feelings, sentiments, and principles may sink into the hard heart, may lead its possessor to look into himself, to compare what he feels with what he reads, and by discovering the discrepancy between his life and his prayers, may open his eyes on his own danger, till by the grace of God the holy vehicle of his hypocrisy may be made that of his conversion.

Perhaps you are a doubting, weak, and trembling penitent; not indeed doubting of the mercies of God, but of your own interest in them. This feeling may arise from a deep and humbling sense of your own sins and infirmities, rather than from any criminal unbelief. Here comes in to your relief a whole host of gracious promises, peculiarly adapted to your case. The tender images of 'the smoking flax,' and 'the bruised reed,' the promised acceptance of 'the contrite spirit, and the broken heart.' But beyond all praise is the consoling assurance of our great High Priest, that 'he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' Touched with them, not only when he was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' but now when he is even 'ascended to the glory which he had with his Father before the world began.'

How soothing is this expression of the Divine compassion! It is not barely the hearing or the seeing, it is the *feeling* of our infirmities. He was in all points tempted like as we are This is the most exquisite touch of sympathy; he not only suffered but was tempted; here indeed the resemblance has its limitation: for he was without sin. He knew the condition of 'being tempted,' but not that of yielding to it. It is this feeling of being tempted, which gives him such an intimate concern in the feeble fearful Christian. He sends the angel of his presence, and saves them. What a striking confirmation of the blessed truth, that in all our afflictions he is afflicted, is the awful interrogation, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou,'—not my church, but '*me*?'

It is a further encouragement to the dejected spirit, that the Almighty was not contented to show his willingness to pardon by single declarations, however strong and full. He has heaped up words, he has crowded images, he has accumulated expressions, he has exhausted language, by all the variety of synonymes which express love, mercy, pardon, and acceptance. They are graciously crowded together, that the trembling mourner who was not sufficiently assured by one, might be encouraged by another. And it is the consummation of the Divine goodness that this message is not sent by his ambassador, but that the King of kings, the blessed and only Potentate, condescends himself to pronounce this royal proclamation, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin!' Forgiving indeed, but in consonance with his just demand of repentance and reformation, 'who will by no means clear the guilty.'

The ardent and affectionate Apostle of the Gentiles, within a very few verses, has also represented the Almighty under every character that is endearing and consoling. He denominates him 'the God of patience and of comfort,' 'the God of hope and of peace;' titles which are peculiarly addressed to all the exigencies of man, and graciously expressive of God's will and power to supply them. There is an appropriation of the terms to the state of the fallen children of mortality, calculated to take away all fear, and to fill the vacant room with love, and peace, and gratitude unspeakable.

Refuse not then to take comfort from the promises of God, when perhaps you are easily satisfied with the assurance of pardon from a frail and sinful creature like yourself whom you had offended. Why is God the only being who is not believed? who is not trusted? O thou that hearest prayer, why unto Thee will not all flesh come?

But though God's pardoning grace knows no bounds, his sanctifying grace is given by measure, is given as we use what we have already received. God seems to reserve in his own hands a provision for our humility, and thus keeps prayer in full exercise. The one is progressive in its operation, the other is full and free, bestowed, not for any righteousness in the receiver, but for that full and perfect oblation once made for sin. Is it not a most fallacious trust to expect that our sins will be blotted out without that habitual repentance annexed to the promise? It is vain to offer the bribe of burnt offerings, the thousands of rams, or the rivers of oil. God desires not to be paid for our pardon, nor profited by our offerings. He never sells his favours. The riches of the universe, which are indeed already his, could not procure the pardon of a single sinner, but he prescribes the duty, when he promises the pardon. 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.'

It would therefore supply ample matter for habitual prayer, had we only the sins of our nature to lament; but when to these we add our practical offences, oh, how great is the sum of them! Yet though they are more than we can express, they are not greater than God can forgive; not more than the blood which was shed for them can wash out.

But he to whom the duty of prayer is unknown, and by whom the privilege of prayer is unfelt, or he by whom it is neglected, or he who

uses it for form and not from feeling, may probably say, Will this work, wearisome even if necessary, never know an end? Will there be no period when God will dispense with its regular exercise? Will there never be such an attainment of the end proposed, as that we may be allowed to discontinue the means?

To these interrogatories there is but one answer, an answer which shall be also made, by an appeal to the enquirer himself.

If there is any day in which we are quite certain that we shall meet with no trial from Providence, no temptation from the world, any day in which we shall be sure to have no wrong tempers excited in ourselves, no call to bear with those of others, no misfortune to encounter, and no need of Divine assistance to endure it, on that morning we may safely omit our prayer.

If there is any evening in which we have received no protection from God, and experienced no mercy at his hands; if we have not lost a single opportunity of doing or receiving good, if we are quite certain that we have not once spoken unadvisedly with our lips, nor entertained one vain or idle thought in our heart, on that night we may safely omit praise to God, and the confession of our own sinfulness, on that night we may safely omit humiliation and thanksgiving. To repeat the converse would be superfluous.

When we can conscientiously say, that religion has given a tone to our conduct, a law to our actions, a rule to our thoughts, a bridle to our tongue, a restraint to every wrong passion, a check to every evil temper, then, some will say, we may safely be dismissed from the drudgery of prayer, it will then have answered all the end which you so tiresomely recommend. So far from it, we really figure to ourselves, that if we could hope to hear of a being brought to such perfection of discipline, it would unquestionably be found that this would be the very being who would continue most perseveringly in the practice of that devotion, which had so materially contributed to bring his heart and mind into so desirable a state, who would most tremble to discontinue prayer, who would be most appalled at the thought of the condition into which such discontinuance would be likely to reduce him. Whatever others do, he will continue forever to 'sing praises unto Thee, O Thou most Highest; he will continue to tell of Thy loving kindness early in the morning, and of Thy truth in the night season.'

It is true that while he considered religion as something nominal and ceremonial, rather than as a principle of spirit and of life, he felt nothing encouraging, nothing refreshing, nothing delightful in prayer. But since he began to feel it as the means of procuring the most substantial blessings to his heart; since he began to experience something of the realization of the promises to his soul, in the performance of this exercise, he finds there is no employment so satisfactory, none that his mind can so little do without; none that so effectually raises him above the world, none that so opens his eyes to its empty shadows, none which can make him look with so much indifference on its lying vanities; none that can so powerfully defend him against the assaults of temptation, and the allurements of pleasure, none that can so sustain him under labour, so carry him through difficulties; none that can so quicken him in the practice of every virtue, and animate him in the discharge of every duty.

But if prayer be so exhilirating to the soul, what shall be said of praise? Praise is the only employment, we had almost said, it is the only duty, in which self finds no part. In praise we go out of ourselves, and think only of Him to whom we offer it. It is the most purely disinterested of all services. It is gratitude without solicitation, acknowledgment without petition. Prayer is the overflowing expression of our wants, praise of our affections. Prayer is the language of the destitute, praise of the redeemed, sinner. If the angelic spirits offer their praises exempt from our mixture of infirmity or alloy, yet we have a motive for gratitude, unknown even to the angels. They are unfallen beings; they cannot say as we can, 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us.'—Prayer is prospective. Praise takes in, in its wide range, enjoyment of present, remembrance of past, and anticipation of future blessings. Prayer points the only way to heaven, 'praise is already there.'

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On Intercessory Prayer.

The social affections were given us not only for the kindliest, but the noblest purposes. The charities of father, son, and brother, were bestowed, not only to make life pleasant, but to make it useful; not only that we might contribute to the present comfort, but to the eternal benefit of each other.

These heaven-implanted affections are never brought into exercise more properly, nor with more lively feelings, than in intercessory prayer. Our friends may have wants which we cannot remove, desires which we cannot gratify, afflictions which we cannot relieve, but is always in our power to bring them before God; to pray for them whenever we pray for ourselves. This, as it is a most pleasant and easy, so it is an indispensable obligation. It is a duty which brings the social affections into their highest exercise, and which may be reciprocally paid and received.

The same Scriptures which expressly enjoin that supplication, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for all men, furnish also numerous examples of the efficacy of intercessory prayer. We need not dwell on the instance of the rain obtained by the prayers of Elijah, or the earlier availing intercessions of Moses, with other public deliverances effected in the same manner.

Though the perseverance of Abraham's prayer did not prevent the extermination of the polluted city, yet doubtless the blessing he solicited for it returned unto his own bosom, and the successive promises made by the Almighty Judge to the successively reduced number of the righteous, for whose sake the petition for preservation was offered, afford a proof of the Divine appro-

bation and a striking encouragement to persist in the duty of intercessory prayer. The promise of God was not withdrawn. The prayer was conditional, and could the petitioner have made up his very lowest compliment, the city had been saved. The interceding heart in any event is sure to gain something for itself.

Prayer is such an enlarger of the affections, such an opener of the heart, that we cannot but wonder how any who live in the practice of it, should be penurious in their alms; or, if they do give, should do it 'grudgingly or of necessity.' Surely if our prayer be cordial, we shall be more ready to assist as well as to love those for whom we are in the habit of making supplication to God. It is impossible to pray sincerely for the well-being of others, without being desirous of contributing to it. We can hardly conceive a more complete species of self-deception than that practised by an avaricious professor of religion, one who goes on mechanically to pray for the poor, whilst his prayer has neither opened his heart nor his purse. He may value himself on this, as on other instances of his ingenuity, in having found out so cheap a way of doing good, and go on contentedly, till he hear those tremendous words of exclusion, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.'

There is a generosity in religion. The same principle which disposes a Christian to contribute to the temporal interests of those he loves, inclines him to breathe his earnest supplication for their spiritual benefit. Not only does prayers for others promote natural affection, not only does it soften the heart of him who intercedes, but it is hoped that they for whom the intercession is made, may reap the benefit.

But our intercessions must neither dwell in generalities for the public nor in limitations to the wants of our particular friends.

The Christian is the friend of every description of the children of mortality. In the fulness of our compassion for the miseries of mankind, we pour out our hearts in prayer for the poor and destitute, and we do well. But there is another and a large class who are still more objects of our pity, and consequently should be of our prayer. We pray for those who have no portion in this world, but do we not sometimes forget to pray for those who have their whole portion in it? We pray for the praying servants of God, but perhaps we neglect to pray for those who never pray for themselves. These are the persons who stand most in need of the mercy of the Almighty, and of our Christian importunity in their favour.

Is it not affecting, that even into our devotions we are disposed to carry the regard we too highly indulge of the good things of this life, by earnestly imploring mercy upon those who want them; and by forgetting to offer our supplications in favour of those who are blinded by the too full enjoyment of them. If the one duty be done, should the other be left undone?

Happily we live in an age presenting many instances, where neither high station, nor great riches impede piety, or obstruct devotion. Yet, it is to be feared, that the general tendency of rank, and especially of riches, is to withdraw the heart from spiritual exercises, more than the hand from pecuniary bounty.

Let us then fervently include among the objects of our supplication that very pitiable and very necessitous class among the rich and great, if such a class there be, who live without any sensible feeling of the presence of God as acknowledged in prayer:—for those persons who never entertain a doubt of their own deserts, even if they do not deny Him who is the giver of the boundless blessings which lead them to forget Him.—Strange! that the very overflowing cup which ought to ensure gratitude should induce forgetfulness! strange! that prayer to God should be neglected in proportion to the magnitude of His bounties.

May the writer be permitted to enrich the penury of her own meagre composition with a beautiful extract from one whose unequalled rhetoric was always warmed by a deep sensibility, and occasionally tinctured with religious feeling—the eloquent and almost prophetic author of Reflections on the Revolution in France:—

'The English people are satisfied, that to the great, the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They too are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestic sorrow. In these they have no privilege, but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this sovereign balm under their gnawing cares and anxieties, which being less conversant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diversified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to these our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void that reigns in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear; something to relieve in the killing langour and overlaboured lassitude of those who have nothing to do; something to excite an appetite to existence in the palled satiety which attends on all pleasures which may be bought, where nature is not left to her own process, where even desire is anticipated, and therefore, fruition defeated by meditated schemes and contrivances of delight; and no interval, no obstacle, is interposed between the wish and the accomplishment.'

O you great ones of the earth, whom riches ensnare and prosperity betrays—be largely liberal, even from self-insterest. Not, indeed, expecting to make the liberality you bestow a remuneration for the devotions you withhold. Scatter your superfluities, and more than your superfluities, to the destitute, if not to vindicate Providence, yet to benefit yourselves. Not, indeed, to revive the old pious fraud of depending for salvation on the prayers of others; yet still you may hope to be repaid, with usurious interest, from the pious poor, by the very tender charity of their prayers for you. Their supplications may possibly be so heard, that you may at length, be brought to the indispensable necessity, and the bounden duty of praying for yourselves.

As to the commanding duty of praying for our enemies, the most powerful example bequeathed to us in Scripture, next to that of his Divine master on the cross, is that of St. Stephen.

Even *after* the expiring martyr had ejaculated 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit,' he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.' Let every instance of Roman greatness of mind, let every story of Grecian magnanimity be ransacked, and produce, who can, such another example. Theirs is tumour, this is grandeur; their is heroism, this is Christianity; *they* died for their country, Jesus for his enemies; *they* implored the gods for themselves, Stephen for his murderers.

The praying Christian in the World.—The Promise of Rest to the Christian.

As the keeping up a due sense of religion, both in faith and practice, so materially depends on the habit of fervent and heart-felt devotion, may we be permitted, in this place, to insist on the probable effects which would follow the devout and conscientious exercise of prayer, rather than on prayer itself?

As soon as religion is really become the earnest desire of our hearts, it will inevitably become the great business of our lives; the one is the only satisfactory evidence of the other: consequently the religion of the heart and life will promote that prayer by which both have been promoted.

They, therefore, little advance the true interest of mankind, who, under the powerful plea of what great things God has done for us in our redemption by His Son, neglect to encourage our active services in His cause. Hear the words of inspiration, 'Be not slothful;' 'run the race;' 'fight the good fight;' 'strive to enter in;' give diligence;' 'work out your own salvation;' 'God is not unmindful to forget your labour of love;' 'but when ye have done all, say, Ye are unprofitable servants, ye have done that which was your duty to do.'

But if, after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, what shall we be if we have done nothing? Is it not obvious that the Holy Spirit, who dictated these exhortations, clearly meant that a sound faith in the word of God was meant to produce holy exertion in his cause? The activity in doing good of the Son of God was not exceeded by his devotion, and both gloriously illustrated his doctrines, and confirmed his divinity. Until we make then our religion a part of our common life, until we bring Christianity, as an illustrious genius is said to have brought philosophy, from its retreat to live in the world, and dwell among men; until we have brought it from the closet to the active scene, from the church to the world, whether that world be the court, the senate, the exchange, the public office, the private counting-house, the courts of justice, the professional departments, or the domestic drawing-room, it will not have fully accomplished what it was sent on earth to do.

We do not mean the introduction of its language, but of its spirit: the former is frequently as incompatible with public, as it is unsuitable to private business; but the latter is of universal application. We mean that the temper and dispositions which it is the object of prayer to communicate, should be kept alive in society, and brought into action in its affairs. That the integrity, the veracity, the justice, the purity, the liberality, the watchfulness over ourselves, the candour towards others, all exercised in the fear of the Lord, and strengthened by the word of God and prayer, should be brought from the retirement of devotion to the regulation of the conduct.

Though we have observed above, that it is rather the spirit than the language of religion that should be carried into business, yet we cannot forbear regretting, that we seem to decline much from the sober usages of our ancestors. Formerly testamentary instruments were never made the mere conveyance of worldly possessions. They were also made the vehicles of pious sentiments, and always at least opened with a devout offering of the soul to Him who gave it. Indeed it is difficult to imagine how a man *can* write the words *my last will* without a solemn reflection on that *last act* which must inevitably follow it, and in view of which act he is making it. May not this alteration in the practice be partly ascribed to the decline of habitual prayer.*

But what fair opportunities have certain of the great officers of the law, especially in their *charges*, of giving to them a solemnity the most impressive, by adverting more frequently to the awful truths of Christianity! Even if such awakening appeals to the conscience should fail of their effects on the unhappy convicts to whom they are addressed, they may be of incalculable benefit to some of the numerous persons present. A counsel, a caution, a reproof, and exhortation, all on pure Christian principles, and thus coming from a profession to which it appears not immediately to belong, may especially from not being expected, produce consequences the most salutary. The terribly affecting circumstances of the moment, the appalling scene so soon to follow, must give an unspeakable weight to the most touching admonition. He who is judging the condemned violator of divine and human laws, stands as a kind of representative of the future Judge of quick and dead and will himself soon be judged by

* I beg leave to strengthen my own sentiments on this head, by quoting a passage from an eminent and truly pious barrister, with an extract from the last will of one of the greatest men of our age.

'Of late years, it has been the fashion (for there is a fashion even in the last act of a man's life) to omit these solemn preambles. I confess myself an approver of them, as believing it to be useful to the surviving relatives of the testator to draw their attention to the tremendous consequences of the separation of soul and body at seasons of impressibility and reflection.' By the following extract, from the will of the late Mr. Burke, it will be seen, that his sentiments, on this point, coincided with those above expressed. 'First according to the ancient good and laudable custom, of which my heart and understanding recognise the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for His mercy through the only merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire, if I should die at any place very convenient for its transport thither, (but not otherwise,) to be buried at the church of Baconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying that, as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have part in the resurrection of the just.'—Roberts on Wills, vol. ii. p. 376.

Him, a consideration which makes his responsibility peculiarly tremendous.*

But to return,—Though we must not, in accommodation to the prevailing prejudices and unnecessary zeal against abstinence and devotion, neglect the imperative duties of retirement, prayer, and meditation; yet, perhaps, as prayer makes so indispensable an article in the Christian life, some retired contemplative persons may apprehend that it makes the whole; whereas prayer is only the operation which sets the machine going. It is the sharpest spur to virtuous action, but not the act itself. The only infallible incentive to a useful life, but not a substitute for that usefulness. Religion keeps her children in full employment. It finds them work for every day in the week, as well as on Sundays.

The praying Christian, on going into the world, feels that his social and religious duties are happily comprised in one brief sentence—'I will *think* upon the commandments to do them.' What the Holy Spirit has so indissolubly joined, he does not separate.

He whose heart has been set in motion in the morning by prayer, who has had his spiritual pulse quickened by a serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures, will find his work growing upon him in regular proportion to his willingness to do it. He is diligently exact in the immediate duties of the passing day. Though procrastination is treated by many as a light evil, he studiously avoids it, because he has felt its mischiefs; he is active even from the love of ease, for he knows that the duties which would have cost him little, if done on the day they were due, may, by the accumulation of many neglected days, cost him much. The fear of this rouses him to immediate exertion. If the case in question be doubtful, he deliberates, he inquires, he prays; if it be clear and pressing, what his hand finds to do, he does with all his might, and in the calls of distress he always acts on his favourite aphorism, that giving soon is giving twice.

Abroad how many duties meet him! He has on his hands the poor that want bread, the afflicted who want comfort, the distressed who want counsel, the ignorant who want teaching, the depressed who want soothing. At home he has his family to watch over. He has to give instruction to his children, and an example to his servants. But his more immediate, as well as more difficult work is with himself, and he knows that this exercise, well performed, can alone enable him wisely to perform the rest. Here he finds work for every faculty of his understanding, every conquest over his will, for every affection of his heart. Here his spirit truly labours. He has to watch, as well as to pray, that his conscience be not darkened by prejudice; that his bad qualities do not assume the shape of virtues, nor his good ones engender self-applause; that his best intentions do not mislead his judgment; that his candour do not degenerate into indifference; nor his strictness into bigotry; that his moderation do not freeze, nor his zeal burn. He has to controul his impatience at the defeat of his most wisely conceived plans. He will find that in his best services there is something that is wrong, much that is wanting; and he feels, that whatever in them is right, is not his own, but the gift of God.

He finds that his obedience is incomplete, that his warmest affections are languid, perhaps his best intentions not realized, his best resolves not followed up. In this view, though he is abased in dust and ashes in looking up to God as the fountain of perfection, he is cheered in looking up to him also as the fountain of mercy in Christ Jesus. He prays, as well as strives, that the knowledge of his own faults may make him more humble, and his sense of the divine mercies more grateful.

He will find that his faith, even though it does not want sincerity, will too frequently want energy. He has, therefore, to watch against cold and heartless prayer; though, perhaps, the humility arising from this consciousness is a benefit in another way. He feels it difficult to bring every 'thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,' yet he goes on cheerily, willing to believe that what may be difficult is not impossible. He has to struggle against over anxiety for temporal things. He has to preserve simplicity of intention, consistency, and perseverance. He has, in short, to watch against a long list of sins, errors, and temptations, which he will find heavier in weight, and more in number, the more closely he looks into his catalogue.

The praying Christian in the world has, above all, to watch against the fear of men, as he may find it more easy to endure the cross than to despise the shame. Even if he have in a good degree conquered his temptation, he may still find a more dangerous enemy in the applause of the world than he found in its enmity. He has observed, that many amiable and even pious persons who are got above the more vulgar allurements of the world, who have surmounted all the temptations of a more sensual kind, who are no longer subdued by its softening luxuries, its seducing pleasures, its dazzling splendours, nor its captivating amusements, have not yet quite escaped this danger. The keen desire of its good opinion, the anxiety for its applause, ensnares many who are got above any thing else which the world has to offer. This is, perhaps, the last lingering sin which cleaves even to those who have made a considerable progress in religion, the still unextinguished passion of a mind great enough to have subdued many other passions.

The danger of the Christian in the world is *from* the world. He is afraid of the sleek, smooth, insinuating, and not discreditable vices; he guards against self-complacency. If his affairs prosper, and his reputation stands high, he betakes himself to his only sure refuge, humble prayer. He knows it is more easy to perform a hundred right deeds, and to keep many virtues in exercise, than 'to keep himself unspotted from the world,' than to hold the things of the world with a loose hand. Even his best ac-

* The late Lord Kenyon was neither afraid nor ashamed to introduce both the doctrine and language of Christianity on these occasions; and we have lately seen other valuable instances of the adoption of this practice.

tions, which may bring him most credit, have their dangers; they make him fear that 'while he has a name to live, he is dead.'

Though much above feeling any joy in vulgar acclamation, he is not insensible to the praise of those who are praised by others; but though not indifferent to the good opinion of good men, the praise even of the best is not his object: he knows that to obtain it, is not the end for which he was sent into the world. His ambition is of a higher order, it has a loftier aim. The praise of man cannot satisfy a spirit which feels itself made for immortality.

He feels that if he had no sin but vanity, the consciousness of that alone, would be sufficient to set him on his guard, to quicken him in prayer, to caution him in conduct.—He does not fear vanity as he fears any other individual vice; as a single enemy against which he is to be on the watch, but as that vice which, if indulged, would poison all his virtues. Among the sins of the inner man, he knows that 'this kind goeth not out but by prayer.' When he hears it said of any popular, and especially of any religious character, 'he is a good man, but he is vain.' He says within himself, he is vain, and therefore, I fear he is not a good man. How many right qualities does vanity rob of their value, how many right actions of their reward!

Every suspicion of the first stirring of vanity in himself, sends him with deeper prostration before his Maker. Lord what is man! shall the praise of a fellow-creature, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose ashes, must soon be mingled with my own, which may even before my own be consigned to kindred dust, shall *his* praise be of sufficient potency to endanger the humility of a being, who is not only looking forward to the applause of those glorious spirits which surround the throne of God, but to the approbation of God himself?

When those with whom he occasionally mixes, see the praying Christian calm and cheerful in the world, they little suspect the frequent struggles, the secret conflicts he has within. Others see his devout and conscientious life, but he alone knows the plague of his own heart. For this plague he seeks the only remedy; to prayer, that balm of hurt minds, he constantly repairs.

The praying Christian endeavours to make even what to some might seem casual expression in Scripture, matter of improvement. He is not contented to devote to the distressed his mere superfluities, he makes requisitions on his frugality to add to his contributions, and he learns this lesson from the highest model.

He observes that He who could feed thousands by a word of His mouth, yet took care not to let the miracle pass without grafting on it a moral maxim, for general use, a religious duty for general practice.—He who could have multiplied to any extent the twelve baskets, as He had done the five loaves, condescended to say, 'gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost; and that he might set an example of prayer in every possible form, He had previously *blessed* the simple but abundant meal, presenting, in this single instance, an union of three great qualities—generosity, economy, and devotion.

The practical Christian observes with grateful admiration, how Scripture has, as it were, let down to the plainest apprehension the habitual duty of constantly looking to God, by a familiar allusion taken from domestic life.—The fidelity, the diligent attention, the watchful observance of 'the eyes of a servant looking to the hand of his Master, and the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress,' is a simple illustration of the Christian's duty, equally intelligible to him who serves, and obligatory on him who is served.

To a worldly man, his own sin appears less than it is; to a good man, greater; not that he sees through a false medium; or aggravates the truth, or forgets the apostle's direction to think soberly; but while the nominal Christian weighs his offences in the scales of the world, the praying Christian brings him to the balance of the sanctuary. The former judges of sin only as he sees it in others; and the worst men in the rank above the vulgar, do not always appear so bad as they are. In his own heart he sees little, because with that heart he is not acquainted. Whereas his own bosom is the very place where the good man looks for sin, and his perceptions of what is wrong are so delicate, that he sees it in its first seed; in short, the one thinks himself worse than others, because he knows himself well; the other thinks himself better, because he knows himself not at all.

When we consider the conflicts and the trials of the conscientious, watchful, praying Christian, we shall estimate aright the value of the consoling promise of that eternal rest from his labours, which supports him under them. And though *rest* is one of the lowest descriptions of the promised bliss of heaven, yet it holds out a cheering prospect of relief and satisfaction to a feeling being, who is conscious of the fallen condition of his mortal nature in all its weakness and imperfection. *Rest*, therefore, is of itself, a promise sufficiently inviting to make him desire to depart and to be with Christ, even independently of his higher hope. The joy unspeakable, the crown of glory, and all those other splendid images of the blessedness of heaven exalt and delight his mind. But it is, though with a higher, yet with a more indefinite delight. He adores without fully comprehending the mighty blessing. But the promise of rest is more intelligible to the heavy-laden Christian; he better understands it, because it is so exactly applicable to his present want and feelings:—*this* is not our rest. It offers the relief longed for by a weary, frail, and feverish being. He who best knows what man wanted, promised to His disciples *peace and rest*, and His Divine Spirit has represented the state of heaven under this image more frequently than any other, as being in more direct contrast to its present state—a state of care, anxiety, and trouble, and a state of sin, the cause of all his other troubles. Perhaps this less elevated view of heaven may occur more rarely to persons of high-wrought feelings in religion, yet to the Christian of a contrary character, it is a never-failing consolation, a home-felt solace, the object of his fervent prayer. What a support to be persuaded that 'the work of righteousness is peace, and the

effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever!'

The Lord's Prayer, a model both for our devotion and our practice.—It teaches the duty of promoting schemes to advance the Glory of God.

It is not customary for kings to draw up petitions for their subjects to present to themselves; much less do earthly monarchs consider the act of petitioning worthy of reward, nor do they number the petitions so much among the services done them, as among the burthens imposed on them. Whereas it is a singular benefit to our fallen race that the King of kings both dictates our petitions, and has promised to recompense us for making them.

In the Lord's prayer may be found the seminal principle of all the petitions of a Christian, both for spiritual and temporal things; and however in the fulness of his heart he will necessarily depart from his model in his choice of expressions: into whatever laminæ he may expand the pure gold of which it is composed, yet he will still find the general principle of his own more enlarged application to God, substantially contained in this brief but finished compendium.

Is it not a striking proof of the divine condescension, that knowing our propensity to err, our blessed Lord should himself have dictated our petitions, partly perhaps as a corrective of existing superstitions, but certainly to leave behind Him a *regulator* by which all future ages should *set* their devotions; and we might perhaps establish it as a safe rule for prayer in general, that any petition which cannot in some shape, be accommodated to the spirit of some part of the Lord's prayer may not be right to be adopted. Here temporal things are kept in their due subordination; they are asked for in great moderation, as an acknowledgment of our dependence on the Giver. The request for the divine intercession we must of course offer for ourselves as the intercessor had not yet assumed his mediatorial office.

There is in this prayer a concatenation of the several clauses, what in human composition the critics call concealed method. The petitions rise out of each other. Every part also is, as it were, fenced round, the whole meeting in a circle; for the desire that God's name may be hallowed, His will be done, and His kingdom come, is referred to, and confirmed by the ascription at the close. If the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are His, then his ability to do and to give, are declared to be infinite.

But, as we have already observed, if we do not make our prayer the ground of our practice, if we do not pray as we believe, and act as we pray, we must not wonder if our petitions are not heard, and consequently not answered.

In the tremendous scene in the Apocalyptic vision, where the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened; the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books; were judged according—not to their prayers, but 'their works.' Surely then Christianity is a practical religion, and in order to use aright the prayer our Lord has given us, we must model our life by it as well as our petitions.

If we pray that the name of God may be hallowed, yet neglect to hallow it ourselves, by family as well as personal devotion, and a conscientious attendance on all the ordinances of public worship, we defeat the end of our praying, by falling short of its obligation.

The practical discrepancies between our prayers and our practice do not end here. How frequently are we solemnly imploring of God, that 'His kingdom may come,' while we are doing nothing to promote his kingdom of grace here, and consequently His kingdom of glory hereafter.

If we pray that God would 'give His Son the heathen for His inheritance,' and yet make it a matter of indifference, whether a vast proportion of the globe should live heathens or die Christians; if we pray that 'the knowledge of the Lord may cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea,' yet act as if we were indifferent whether Christianity ended as well as began at home. If we pray that 'the sound may go out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world,' and yet are satisfied to keep the sound within our own hearing, and the words within our own island, is not this a prayer which goeth out of feigned lips?

When we pray that 'His will may be done,' we know that His will is, that 'all should be saved, that not one should perish.' When, therefore, we assist in sending the Gospel to the dark and distant corners of the earth, then, and not till then, may we constantly desire of God in our prayers, that 'His saving health may be known to all nations.'

For we must vindicate the veracity of our prayer by our exertions, and extend its efficiency by our influence: if we contribute not to the accomplishment of the object for which we pray, what is this but mocking Omniscience, not by unmeaning, but unmeant petitions? If we do nothing we are inconsistent; but if we do worse than nothing, if we oppose, and by our opposition hinder the good which we do not think proper to support, may we not possibly bring on ourselves the appalling charge of being 'found fighting against God!'

It is indeed an easier and a cheaper way, to quiet the conscience by that common anodyne, 'that the heathen are very well as they are, that the morals of the Hindoos are not inferior to those of Christians.' With what sort of Christians these assertors of the rival innocence of Idolators associate, we will not pretend to determine.

But, allowing that we do not always send abroad the very best samples of Christianity, the very best representatives of its practical effects, allowing also that too many who remain at home, and who profess and call themselves Christians, are guilty of crimes which disgrace human nature, yet Christianity renounces them. Christian governments inflict on them capital punishments. Whil among these poor idola-

tors all these social duties are trampled on, all the suggestions of natural conscience are stifled, rites the most obscene, sacrifices the most bloody are offered; and these crimes are not only committed, but sanctioned, but enjoined; they do not violate religion, they make a part of it. Surely then, politically connected with them as we are, and yet contentedly to leave them in their degraded state of morals, without any attempt for their improvement, do we not by this neglect virtually pronounce, and awfully anticipate their dreadful sentence, 'let him that is unjust, be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.'

Again, it is an easier and a cheaper way to throw the weight off our own shoulders by the cool remark, 'that these things belong not to us, human efforts are superfluous; God must bring them about by a mircle.'—God, it is true, introduced Christianity by miracles, but He established it by means. Miracles, indeed, are His prerogative, but man is his instrument. Had He not sent His gospel and His ministers, it is probable that the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bythinia, and all proconsular Asia, had never heard of Christianity to this day, which is, indeed, still the case of too many parts of that region.

But is it not equally the effect of divine grace, I had almost said, is it not equally a miracle, when, in the hottest season of the most unrelenting warfare, in the most calamitous period of unusual scarcity, when Britain had the whole civilized world in arms against her, so that she could emphatically say, 'there is none that fighteth for us but only Thou O God—.' When it might seem business enough for any but Christians to take care of themselves, even then Britain raised the banner of the cross, not in the most unprofitable crusade for the most fruitless object, but that she might carry the knowledge of Him who suffered on it, to the ends of the habitable globe. Not to redeem His sepulchre from infidels, but to communicate to them the tidings of His resurrection, and of redemption through His blood. Is it not the effect of grace, and still more nearly approaching to a miracle when in a period immediately subsequent, while their fields were yet red with slaughter, and their rivers ran blood, their cities plundered, and their kingdoms desolated, God disposed the hearts of hostile sovereigns, ruling over opposing nations and the tenacious professors of different religions, yet as if actuated by one universal feeling, simultaneously to rise up in one common cause for the accomplishment of this mighty object—when the first use they made of the termination of war was to disseminate the gospel of peace; the first tribute they paid to the glory of God was to publish abroad that grand instrument of good will to men! Let us not then indulge groundless imaginations, as if miracles were wrought to justify indolence! as if a man were to be excused the trouble of being the active agent of Divine Providence.

The miracles wrought at Ephesus seem rather to have been intended as a confirmation of the truth of St. Paul's doctrine, than as the actual instrument of conversion. Many rejected the gospel who saw the miracles. The miracles wrought did not supersede the necessity of the apostle's 'speaking boldly for the space of threo months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.' They did not supersede the necessity at another time, of his continuing to preach among them, for the space of two years, the two great doctrines of his mission, 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' Nor did they prevent his thinking it his bounden duty to send to the Ephesians his exquisite epistle, for the furtherance of their faith in the gospel. Here we behold the union of the Bible and the missionary—of the gospel sent and the gospel preached.

'Many,' says the sagacious bishop Butler, 'think there is but one evil, and that evil is superstition; and we know that the epithets of superstitious and enthusiastic have been unsparingly lavished on the most sober and well digested plans for the dispersion of the scriptures abroad. We know that very trifling errors, errors inseparable from all great undertakings, every petty indiscretion, the inevitable consequence of employing a number of inferior agents, have been carefully collected, minutely set down in the note book of observation, and triumphantly produced as unanswerable objections to the whole plan. 'But,' says the profound prelate above-named, in his very able defence of missions, preached before the venerable society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts,* 'many well-disposed persons want much to be admonished what a dangerous thing it is to discountenance what is good, because it is not better, by raising objections to some under parts of it.'

The truth is, *they* are neither enthusiasts nor superstitious, who believe that well-concerted and prudently conducted societies for the promotion of this great object, acting with a deep sense of human imperfection, and in dependence upon the favour of God, will, in due time, with His blessing, without which nothing is strong, nothing is holy, accomplish the great end of bringing all the kingdoms of the world to become the kingdoms of the Redeemer. But *he* is the superstitious, he is the enthusiast, who indulges unfounded expectations, who looks for the fulfilment of declarations which have never been made, who depends upon miracles which have never been announced, who looks for consequences without their predisposing causes, who believes that the unassisted heathen, sunk in intellectual and spiritual darkness, shall call on Him of whom they have not heard, or that they shall hear without a preacher, or that the preacher will be found without being sent.

We might just as reasonably expect to see the beautiful imagery of Oriental metaphor, as displayed in the highly figurative language of the prophets, actually realized. We might as reasonably expect that the rose of Sharon shall literally blossom in the wilderness of Arabia, or the cedars of Lebanon spring up in the sandy vallies of Africa; that the thirsty desert should produce spontaneous springs of water; that the tame and savage animals should live together in friendly compact; that the material hills shall really sink and the vallies rise of themselves;

* Preached at their anniversary meeting, February 16th, 1738—9.

we might, I say, as rationally hope to see these lively illustrations of the fulfilment of the Divine promises literally verified, as to expect Christianity to make its own unassisted way into the distant and desolate corners of the earth. God has committed Christianity into the hands of Christians for universal diffusion.

Let it be observed, that it appears to be no real departure from the subject with which this chapter opened, that reference is not more frequently made in its progress to prayer. This seems to be the less necessary, as we are not reasoning with the irreligious man, but with the Christian, with him who professes to use the Lord's prayer as the pattern of his own devotions; and from the premises of that prayer, these observations are not forced interpretations, but natural deductions.

The Almighty is consistent in all his operations. They always exhibit simplicity and economy. He never works a superfluous miracle. There is also analogy in his works. Christ wrought miracles to relieve the bodily wants of the poor; he works miracles for them no longer, he turns them over to the rich. He wrought miracles on the first conversion of the heathen; He works miracles for them no longer, he now turns them over to Christians. He resigns to human agency, under his blessing, to provide for the spiritual wants of the ignorant, as well as for the temporal wants of the indigent. Christianity and riches are deposited in the hands of Christians, for the more general dispersion of both to the respectively destitute.

And when, if ever, through the unmerited mercy of God, that glorious and devoutly desired day shall arrive, which warms the heart even in the distant perspective of prophecy, when nation shall no more rise against nation, and they shall learn war no more; what is so likely to hasten that triumphant period, what is so likely to turn the sword into a pruning-hook, and to establish lasting peace throughout the world, as that spirit of love and concord which the universal diffusion of gospel light is calculated to impart? What is so likely to produce charity among all the children of the same common Father, as when subjects as well as sovereigns, shall be brought to know God, from the greatest to the least.

Those admirable institutions, whose object it is to lead to this blessed consummation, have already enlarged the borders of Christian charity to an almost indefinite extent, by bringing into contact from every point of the compass, and from almost every city in the civilized world, Christians, who had not so much as heard of each others existence; it has already shown them that whatever difference of education and of government, whatever modifications of opinion had hitherto divided them, the great fundamental principles of love to God, of faith in his Son, and charity to the souls of men, are at length beginning to draw them into a nearer connexion. These general principles of agreement, are already bringing into one point of union, persons whom difference of sentiment had kept asunder as widely as seas had separated, and are the only means, as far as human penetration can foresee, of drawing the cords of amity into still closer bonds.

Already, even in the early stage of this vast enterprize, may we not perceive that it has had a considerable share in promoting mutual good will, reciprocal kindness, and growing confidence, and this with foreigners, who, though they had subdued their enmity, might not so soon have conquered their jealousy? Has it not a powerful tendency to cure any remaining distrust, to confirm good faith, to promote confidence and attachment between nations, whose respect was not perhaps, altogether untinctured with suspicion? May it not break down the wall of partition, which has so long kept us asunder? May it not bring those who were aforetime separated in heart as well as country, to unite in Christian brotherhood, till we become at length of one mind in doctrine, as we already are in regard to this institution. May not the probable results of this Christian confederacy become a ratification between monarchs, firmer than any political compact, stronger than any diplomatic convention? For is it not an instrument of confederation of which the GREAT SEAL IS THE WORD OF GOD? Does it not embrace the two sublime objects of the angelic hosts, by uniting 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will towards men?' For what means, we repeat, are so likely to bring churches, who have been hitherto kept in spiritual darkness, to a gradual and devoutly desired reformation, as to disperse that darkness, as our being the honoured instruments of causing the full beams of divine truth to shine more directly upon them?

To descend to the very minutest wheels of this mighty engine; with whatever derision that which has been denominated popular charity may have been treated; its inferior divisions have this advantage, that they set in motion the young and the poor. To the young female of fortune, this subordinate part of the great whole, furnishes a kind of novitiate to her future and more extended sphere of charity, for the details of which this sex has the most leisure. To the poor, like the admirable institutions of the Savings Bank, though for different purposes, it gives them a little and a safe lift in the scale of society. For will they not be less likely to follow in the turbulent train of the seditious demagogue, less disposed by his pernicious but persuasive outcry, to give their stated penny for the promotion of riot and the maintenance of rioters, when that penny has been pre-engaged for the circulation of that Volume, which forbids them to speak evil of dignities, which commands to avoid those who are given to change; to work, to be quiet, to mind their own business; which imperatively says, 'I exhort that prayers and intercessions be made for kings and all in authority;' and above all, will not the Bible be the surest antidote against the infection of the poison contained in that profusion of books, pamphlets, and placards, which, without such a specific threatens both our moral and political destruction.

It is the nature of man to delight in party, he delights to belong to something, to hold to his fellow-creatures, though by the least and lowest

link in the chain of society; let us then take advantage of this his natural weakness. For is it not better to attach him to something that is useful to himself and to others, that he may be less likely to be drawn into such schemes as are destructive of his temporal, as well as of his own highest interests, and dangerous to the security of the state, and of the country. To be connected, though by the lowest and slighest tie, with his superiors, is to the poor man at once an encouragement and a security. To belong to societies of which princes are the patrons, is at once a gratification and a guard; for will not this connexion, remote as it may seem, confirm his abhorrence of those revolutionary societies whose aim is the overthrow of princes?

Let us not then grudge to the poor who have so few pleasures, that pure, and to them that hitherto untasted pleasure, that almost sacred feeling, how much more blessed is it to give than to receive. Let us not deny them the gratification of being humble contributors towards conveying that word of life to others, by which their own souls have been benefited; and to which they are indebted for the knowledge, that it is the duty of Christians to teach others what themselves have been gratuitously taught.

It is, however, most important to recommend that the petty contributions of the poor should never be extorted, nor even wrung from them by undue influence. It must be a willing offering, not pinched from their necessities, but cheerfully accepted, as the thankful tribute of successful industry. With respect to such as are in distress, and especially in debt, it would neither be honest in themselves to give, nor in the collector to receive. A very few indiscretions of this kind have given too inviting a handle, which has been unfairly laid hold of to bring the plan itself into discredit.

To venture one more passage from the prelate already quoted—and who will accuse Bishop Butler of enthusiasm?—'If the gospel had its proper influence in the Christian world in general, as this country is the centre of trade, and the seat of learning, a very few years, in all probability, would settle Christianity in every country in the world *without miraculous assistance.*'

If we, then, in this highly favoured land, are blessed with the volume of Divine Revelation, let us impart it to others with the greater alacrity, from the humiliating recollection that it was no merit of our own which brought the news of eternal life to an island of barbarians and idolaters. Freely we have received, freely let us give.

The sun of righteousness which first arose in the east, rejoicing as a giant to run his course, has travelled in the greatness of his strength, till having made the circuit of the globe, having illuminated the western world, he is once again rising to shed the glories of his orient beams, where they first dawned.

> 'So sinks the day-star in the ocean-bed,
> And yet again repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky,'

Let Commerce, then, wherever she speads her sails, be assured that whether she carries the wealth of Ormus, or of Ind, barbaric pearl and gold from the East; or from the West, the mines of Potosi or Peru, the most precious merchandize with which her vessels can be freighted, is that pearl of great price which the merchantman in the Gospel sold all that he had to purchase.

Let Discovery, wherever she pushes her bold and perilous adventure, wherever she lights on an inhabited nook of land, even should she succeed in exploring the secrets of the polar world, let her be assured that all the wonders for which gaping curiosity impatiently waits, are not to be compared with the wonders contained in that Gospel, which, it is to be hoped, she will make part of her provision for the voyage. Let her be assured, that if she carries the Bible, she will, at return, bring back no news of equal value with that she carries out; will bring back to her native home no tidings of equal joy to the glad tidings of the Gospel she has carried abroad.

Let Conquest, though her garments have been rolled in blood, make the vanquished the only reparation in her power, not merely like the conquering Cæsar and Alexander, by carrying civilization in her train, but Christianity; by carrying them this charter of our own immortal hopes. If this mighty boon will not fully expiate the offences of the injurer, it will more than mitigate, it will even more than repay the wrongs of the injured.

Conclusion.

'I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh unto me,' says the Almighty by his Prophet. We must, therefore, when we approach him in our devotions, frequently endeavour to warm our hearts, raise our views, and quicken our aspirations with a recollection of His glorious attributes,—of that Omnipotence which can give to all without the least deduction from any, or from Himself; of that ubiquity which renders Him the constant witness of our actions; of that Omniscience which makes him a discerner of our intentions, and which penetrates the most secret disguises of our inmost souls; of that perfect holiness, which should at once be the object of our adoration, and the model of our practice; of that truth, which will never forfeit any of His promises; of that faithfulness, which will never forsake any that trust in Him; of that love, which our innumerable offences cannot exhaust; of that eternity which had place 'before the mountains were brought forth, from everlasting to everlasting He is God;' of that grandeur which has set his glory above the heavens; of that long suffering of God, who is strong and patient, and who is provoked every day; of that justice which will by no means clear the guilty, yet of that mercy which forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin; of that compassion which waits to be gracious; of that goodness which leadeth to repentance; of that purity, which, while it hates sin, invites the sinner to return.

All these attributes are his in the abstract.

He is not only strong, but our strength, not only the giver of life, but life itself, he not only bestows, but *is* salvation, he not only teaches truth, but *is* truth, he not only shows the way to heaven, but *is* the way, not only communicates light, but *is* light.

When we reflect that even His incommunicable attributes are employed, in never-ceasing exercise for the common benefit and happiness of mankind, adoration is melted into gratitude. When we consider, that even His justice, that flaming sword which threatened our eternal exclusion from Paradise, the attribute at which the best may tremble, for who is he that lives and sins not, is turned in our favour by the great propitiation made for sin; that heart must be hard, indeed, which is not softened into love. It is because we are so little accustomed to indulge these reflections, that our natural hardness acquires additional obduracy.

Whatever good there is even in the renewed man, is but a faint adumbration of the perfections of God. The best created things, light itself, lose all their brightness when compared with the uncreated glory from which all they have is borrowed. The heavens are not pure in His sight, behold the moon and it shineth not. He chargeth His angels with folly. The sublimest intellectual intelligences, and the brightest visible operations of His power, are swallowed up in the contemplation of His underived original perfection. The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man, and the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of man.

Yet though the highest conceivable created excellence is thrown into utter darkness, in the comparison with this surpassing splendour, yet these remote resemblances serve to convey some idea, but Oh how weak! some reminding, but Oh how inadequate! some conception, but Oh how faint! of the Divine perfections.

Hence in the highest qualities of the best Christian we have a hint, a rudiment which serves to recal to our mind the Divine excellence, of which they are an emanation.—We use it, not as a means of overvaluing the creature, but of raising our adoration of the infinite, inexhaustible, overflowing fountain of natural, intellectual, and spiritual good. Thus, though we cannot 'search out the Almighty to perfection;' yet these faint traces, are constant intimations to us to imitate, in our low measure and degree, all the imitable attributes of Almighty goodness.—He would never have said, 'be ye holy as I am holy,' if holiness had been absolutely unattainable. There must be an aim, however low, at this conformity to our divine pattern.

The life which the Lord of glory condescended to lead on earth, has introduced us to the nearest possible view of the Divine perfections, and exhibited a clearer prospect of the possibility of a closer imitation of them, than could have been conveyed to us by any other means. His actions are not merely objects of human admiration. They all, with the exception of his miracles, imperatively demand to be imitated, as well as admired. His meekness under reproaches the most contumelious; His patience under sufferings the most exquisite; His combination of active beneficence with unremitting devotion,—for, after days spent in successive acts of charity, He continued all night in prayer to God; His union of constant self-denial, with unwearied bounty; His enduring hunger, who could have relieved it by one of those miracles, so often performed for the relief of others; his compassion for sinners joined with His hatred of sin; His supplication for His enemies, extenuating their guilt by pleading their ignorance. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'

If this religion be not practical, if this practice be not a pattern for our's, we know not what is. While we obey him then in praying for our fellow-creatures, let us remember that we must imitate his Divine philanthropy in assisting them; while we rank ourselves among his admirers by praising his excellences, let us remember we shall only be known to be his disciples when we love one another.

If good works then be indispensable, and Faith be their great influencing principle, both must be kept alive, and kept in exercise by the aliment of prayer. Prayer is the chain of communication with God himself.—The readiest way to be assimilated to his likeness, the best means of promoting our conformity to His will, of advancing our love to Him and to each other. If we neglect prayer, we rob our souls of the prescribed means of our serving him here, and of the fairest foretaste of that communion with Him, which will be our highest happiness hereafter.

The obedience of the heart which grows out of a sound faith, rooted good desires, well-weighed resolutions of fidelity, formed in a higher strength than our own; a belief in the sacred Scriptures so confirmed as not to be shaken by any objections brought against them, by any difficulties to be found in them; the comparing faithfully all we have heard urged against Religion, with all we have seen of its effects, and experienced of its benefits, all this is the solid ground on which future attainments must hereafter be built, a ground to be tried by prayer in the enquiring mind and the seeking heart.

And when our reason is become as strong on the side of Christianity as our belief—when our faith is as enlightened as it is implicit—when the growth of the one only confirms the dominion of the other, this is such an obedience of the heart as will infallibly produce obedience in the life; an obedience which will be both the cause and the consequence of effectual prayer.

The renewing of the soul after the image of God is not otherwise to be obtained than by true spiritual heart-searching prayer. There may be a form of unfelt petitions, a ceremonious avowal of faith, a customary profession of repentance, a general acknowledgment of sin, uttered from the lips to God; but where is His image and superscription written upon the heart? Where is the transforming power of Religion in the life? Where is the living transcript of the Divine original? Where is that holiness to which the vision of the Lord is specifically promised? Where is the light, and life, and grace of the Redeemer exhibited in the temper and

conduct? Yet we are assured, that if we are Christians, there must be an aim at this conformity.

As for the genuine Christian, however weak in faith and defective in obedience, yet he is still seeking, though with slow and faultering steps, the things which are above; he is still striving, though with unequal progress, for the prize of his high calling; he is still looking, though with a dim and feeble eye, for glory, honour, and immortality; He is still waiting, though not with a trust so lively as to annihilate the distance,—to see his eternal redemption drawing nigh.—Though his aims will always be far greater than his attainments, yet he is not discouraged; his hope is above, his heart is above, his treasure is above; no wonder then that his prayers are directed, and a large portion of his wealth sent forward thither, where he himself hopes soon to be. It is but transmitting his riches of both kinds, not only to his future, but his eternal home.

Even if prayer were as worthless, with respect to present advantages, and religion as burthensome as some suppose, it would be a sufficient vindication of both that they lead to eternal bliss. When by a distant journey, we have been long separated from our own beloved habitation, we do not call that the most desirable road back to it which abounds with the gayest objects, but that which will bring us the most safely home. If, indeed, we can amuse ourselves with the scenery, without slackening our pace, or diverging from our path, it is well. It is no offence against the law of love, if we catch in passing, such innocent and safe delights as his bounty has scattered in our path. And if our journey have so many refreshments showered down by the hand of Divine beneficence, what shall be the delights of our home?

If the heavens grow black with clouds, and storms arise, these only serve to quicken our pace, and make us avoid digression. If sickness or accident befal us, our heart is still cheered with the thought that we are nearer home—the future supports us under the present; a little further say we—a little more fatigue, and we shall see the desire of our heart. If we are bent on security rather than amusement, the straightest and the safest way will determine our choice. Heaven is worth more sacrifices of pleasure and of profit than those to which a religious life may subject us; though, after all, it often calls for fewer and lighter than a worldly one imposes. But if it were as rough and thorny as those who have never tried it believe, it would be a sufficient apology for voluntarily encountering its hardships, that it is the only road to heaven.

When the prosperous fool says, 'soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee,'—the prosperous Christian says, 'soul tremble at thine ease—be on thy guard.—Thou hast, indeed, much goods laid up for thee, but it is in a future world. Lose not a large inheritance for a paltry possession; forfeit not an unalienable reversion for a life interest,—a life which this very night may be required of thee.'

Perhaps even the worldly and thoughtless man, under an occasional fit of dejection, or an accidental disappointment, may be brought to say, 'When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God.'—Oh, think upon Him now, now, when you are in prosperity, now, when your fortunes are flourishing, now when your hill is so strong that you think it shall never be moved—think upon Him when the scene is the brightest, when the world courts, flatteries mislead, and pleasures betray you; think on Him while you are able to think at all, while you possess the capacity of thinking. The time may come, when, 'He may turn his face from you, and you will be troubled.' Think of God when the alluring images of pleasure and of profit would seduce you from him. Prosperity is the season of peculiar peril. 'It is the bright day that bringeth forth the adder.' Think of God when the tempting world says, 'All this will I give thee. Trust not the insolvent world, it has cheated every creditor that ever trusted. It will cheat you.

To those who are yet halting between two opinions, or rather between an opinion and an inclination, to those who approve the right, but pursue the wrong, those who are not without convictions, but which convictions pleasure stifles, or business overrules, those who are balancing between the world and Him who made it, who resolve to reform, but make the resolution a substitute for the performance; and oh how large, and in many points how respectable a class this is!—to these, to the doubting, and the dilatory, we would take the liberty to speak plainly.

It is much to be feared, that secret, unconscious infidelity lies at the bottom of the little progress you make in your spiritual attainments. If the truth, certainty, and inconceivable importance of eternal things were once rooted and grounded in the heart, it would infallibly quicken both devotion and practice. We know, but we do not act upon the knowledge, that our great business in this world is to determine our choice for eternity. This is not a bye work, which may be deferred to any time at the hazard of its not being done at all; it is the imperious business of the present hour, the next may not be granted us. It is not an affair to be kept in reserve, an affair to be postponed till other affairs are settled, for how many souls has this dilatory delusion ruined!

The resolution you may make at this moment, and the practical effect of this resolution may determine your fate for ever. The decision, if delayed, may never be made; the call, now given, may never be repeated. Think what you put to hazard by delay.—There is not an hour in our lives on which eternal life, or eternal death may not depend. Shall we then, for a single moment, make it a matter of debate what our everlasting condition shall be? If it were a decision between two temporal concerns which you wese called upon to make, deliberation might be wisdom, because there might be degrees of comparison between their value, and consequently a doubt as to the predominance of the object, and the prudence of your choice. But the inequalities of created things are levelled when brought into comparison with the things of eternity—the difference of more or less, richer or poorer, prosperity or privation,

no longer exists; the distinction is swallowed up when contemplated in the view of endless happiness or endless misery. Here then, if you hesitate, you have already taken your part; irresolution is decision; deliberation is destruction; you have already resolved.

The hand which now holds the pen dares not denounce anathemas, but trembles as it transcribes the divinely inspired denunciation of the prophet Zephaniah. 'The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, it hasteth greatly; it is the voice of the day of the Lord, when the mighty man shall cry bitterly. That day is a day of wrath; a day of trouble and distress; a day of wasteness and desolation; a day of darkness and gloominess; a day of clouds and thick darkness; a day of the trumpet and alarm!'

The awful ruins of imperial Rome, the still more defaced vestiges of learned Athens, present a deeply touching spectacle of departed glory. Still more affecting is it to contemplate in the study of history on the destruction of Carthage, of Babylon, of Memphis, whose very ruins are no longer to be found! How affecting to meditate on ancient Troy, whose very scite can no longer be determined! Yet here no wonder mixes with our solemn feeling. All these noble monuments of human grandeur were made of destructible materials, they could not, from their very nature, last for ever.—But, to a deeply reflecting mind, what is the ruin of temples, towers, palaces, and cities, what is the ruin of 'the great globe itself' compared with the destruction of one soul meant for immortality—a soul furnished by its bountiful Creator with all the means for its instruction, sanctification, redemption, and eternal bliss? And what presents the most mournful picture to us, and is in itself the most dreadful aggravation, is that its consciousness cannot be extinguished; the thought of what he might have been will magnify the misery of what he is—a reflection which will accompany and torment the inextinguishable memory through a miserable eternity. Whether in the instance of the rich man, who 'in hell lifted up his eyes, being in torment,' we might dare believe that some remains of human tenderness for his relatives might survive in a ruined soul; or, whether his anguish was made more bitter, from the reflection, that he had been their corrupter, and therefore dreaded that their punishment might hereafter aggravate his own, we pretend not to say. In any event, it offers a lesson pregnant with instruction. It admonishes every impenitent offender, of the dreadful addition that may be made to his own misery, by that corrupt example which has ruined others. And it will be the consummation of his calamity that he can see nothing but justice in his condemnation.—For it is worth observing, that the man in the parable brings no accusation against the equity of his sentence. Thus shall every condemned sinner 'justify God in his saying, and clear him when he is judged.'

But though the anguish of an undone futurity, and the specific nature of the punishment, are exhibited with awful clearness and explicit exactness, in the gospel; how wisely has the Holy Spirit who dictated it, avoided all particulars of that heavenly happiness which we are yet assured will be without measure and without end; whilst the Elysian groves of the Pagan, and the paradise of the Mahometan have been graphically represented, the former by their poets, the latter in their religious code. The one describes the inhabitants reposing in gloomy bowers in cheerless indolence, with the alternative of a restless activity exercised in contemptible pursuits, and renewing on inferior objects the busy feats in which they had delighted here below! The heroes who during life had slaughtered men, make war on beasts! The mighty warriors, who had made the earth to tremble, con descend in heaven to tame horses! The departed Mussulman receives *his* celestial rewards in scenes of revelry and banquets of voluptuousness! What gratifications for an immaterial, immortal spirit!

The whole scheme of future happiness exhibited in these two systems, is a preposterous provision for the perishable part of man, to the entire exclusion of the immortal principle; both schemes stand in direct opposition to the laws of infinite wisdom, and the express word of Scripture. Both intimate as if the body were the part of our nature which is to exist after death, while the soul is the portion which is to be extinguished. Of a spiritual heaven, neither the obsolete mythology, nor the existing Koran, affords the slightest information.

The Scripture views of heaven are given rather to quicken faith than to gratify curiosity. There the appropriate promises to spiritual beings are purely spiritual. It is enough for believers to know that they shall be for ever with the Lord; and though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like Him. In the vision of the Supreme Good, there must be supreme felicity. Our capacities of knowledge and happiness shall be commensurate with our duration. On earth, part of our enjoyment—a most fallacious part—consists in framing new objects for our wishes; in heaven there shall remain in us no such disquieting desires, for all which *can* be found we shall find in God. We shall not know our Redeemer by the hearing of the ear, but we shall see Him as he is; our knowledge, therefore, will be clear, because it will be intuitive.

It is a glorious part of the promised bliss, that the book of prophecy shall be realized; the book of providence displayed, every mysterious dispensation unfolded, not by conjecture, but by vision. In the grand general view of Revelation, minute description would be below our ideas; circumstantial details would be disparaging; they would debase what they pretend to exalt. We cannot conceive the blessings prepared for us, until he who has prepared reveal them.

If, indeed, the blessedness of the eternal world could be described, new faculties must be given us to comprehend it. If it could be conceived, its glories would be lowered, and our admiring wonder diminished. The wealth that can be counted has bounds; the blessings that can be calculated have limits. We now rejoice in the expectation of happiness inconceivable. To have conveyed it to our full apprehension, our con-

ceptions of it must then be taken from something with which we are already acquainted, and we should be sure to depreciate the value of things unseen, by a comparison with even the best of the things which are seen. In short, if the state of heaven were attempted to be let down to human intelligence, it would be far inferior to the glorious but indistinct glimpses which we now catch from the oracles of God, of joy unspeakable, and full of glory. What Christian does not exult in that grand outline of unknown, unimagined, yet consummate bliss —In Thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at *Thy* right hand are pleasures for evermore?

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

SELECTED AND COMPILED BY THE AUTHOR, FROM VARIOUS PORTIONS OF HER WORKS EXCLUSIVELY ON THAT SUBJECT.

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle."
"I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." 2 Peter, c. i.

PREFACE.

From a sick, and, in all human probability, a dying bed, the writer of these pages feels an earnest desire to be enabled, with the blessing of God, to execute a little plan which has at different times crossed her mind, but which she never found leisure to accomplish, till the present season of incapacity.

"The importunity of friends,"—that hackneyed apology for works of inferior merit, is not, in the present instance, the less true for being worn threadbare. By many partial friends she has frequently been desired to write a volume exclusively on Prayer. With this request she has always declined complying; because, among other reasons, she was aware that she had previously exhausted—not the subject itself, which is indeed inexhaustible,—but the slender resources of her own mind.

In her, perhaps too numerous, printed works, written on different subjects, and at distant periods, there are very many volumes, in which not only some reference has been made, but some distinct portions assigned, to the all-important subject of Prayer.

It is now her latest and warmest wish to be permitted to collect and examine some of those portions which treat more directly of this great duty; to unite the scattered members into one compact body, and to bring each under its proper head, into one point of view. All she is herself able to do, is to hear these extracts read by kind friends, and to adopt such passages as she may think proper for selection.

Perhaps the silence and solitude of her present nightly watchings may, through Divine grace, impress her own heart with a still deeper sense of the unspeakable importance and value of Prayer, and of the support and consolation which may be granted in answer to this exercise, when every other support and consolation must inevitably fail.

However small may be the use of this compilation to the reader, the writer at least is already reaping one benefit herself from what she has presumed to suggest to others,—the benefit of feeling, as she reviews these pages, how sadly she herself has fallen short in the duties she has so repeatedly recommended. In this re-examination she has sensibly felt how easy it is to be good upon paper, and how difficult in practice.

At the same time she humbly trusts that her very failures may have enabled her to touch these subjects more experimentally than she might have done had her own deficiencies been less powerfully recollected, and less acutely felt.

The Author ventures to hope that her valued friends, to whom this selection is more especially dedicated, will consider it as the last bequest of one, who, about to quit this transitory scene, and feeling the deepest interest in their spiritual prosperity, as also for that of all her fellow Christians, is desirous, by this her final act, to testify at least her affectionate anxiety for their eternal happiness.

The present weak state of the Author must apologize for inaccuracies and repetitions.

Barley-Wood.

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

CHAP. I.

The necessity of Prayer founded on the corruption of human nature.

The subject of man's apostacy is so nearly connected with the subject of Prayer, being indeed that which constitutes the necessity of this duty, that some mention of the one ought to precede any discussion of the other. Let, then, the conviction that we have fallen from our original

state, and that this lapse presents the most powerful incentive to prayer, furnish an apology for making a few preliminary remarks on this great article of our faith.

The doctrine is not the less a fundamental doctrine, because it has been abused to the worst purposes; some having erroneously considered it as leaving us without hope, and others as lending an excuse to unresisted sin.—It is a doctrine which meets us in one unbroken series throughout the whole sacred volume; we find it from the third of Genesis, which records the event of man's apostacy, carried on through the history of its fatal consequences in all the subsequent instances of sin, individual and national, and running in one continued stream from the first sad tale of woe, to the close of the sacred canon in the Apocalyptic Vision.

And, to remove the groundless hope, that this quality of inherent corruption belonged only to the profligate and abandoned, the Divine Inspirer of the sacred writers took especial care, that they should not confine themselves to relate the sins of these alone.

Why are the errors, the weaknesses, and even the crimes of the best of men recorded with equal fidelity? Why are we told of the twice repeated deceit of the father of the faithful? Why of the single instance of vanity in Hezekiah? Why of the too impetuous zeal of Elijah? Why of the error of the almost perfect Moses? Why of the insincerity of Jacob? Why of the far darker crimes of the otherwise holy David? Why of the departure of the wisest of men from that piety displayed with sublimity unparalleled in the dedication of the Temple? Why seems it to have been invariably studied, to record with more minute detail the vices and errors of these eminent men, than even those of the successive impious kings of Israel, and of Judah; while these last are generally dismissed with the brief, but melancholy sentence, that they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; followed only by too frequent an intimation that they made way for a successor worse than themselves? The answer is, that the truth of our universal lapse could only be proved by transmitting the record of those vices, from which even the holiest men were not exempt.

Had the Holy Scriptures kept back from man the faithful delineations of the illustrious characters to which we have referred, the truth of the doctrine in question, though occasionally felt, and in spite of his resistance, forced upon him, would not have been believed; or, if believed, would not have been acknowledged.

Christianity hangs on a few plain truths; 'that God is, and that he is the rewarder of all that seek him;' that man has apostatised from his original character, and by it has forfeited his original destination: that Christ came into this world and died upon the cross to expiate sin, and to save sinners; that after his ascension into Heaven, he did not leave his work imperfect. He sent his Holy Spirit, who performed his first office by giving to the Apostles miraculous powers. His offices did not cease there; he has indeed withdrawn his miraculous gifts, but he still continues his silent but powerful operations, and that in their due order;—first, that of convincing of sin, and of changing the heart of the sinner, before he assumes the gracious character of the Comforter. What need, then, of heresies to perplex doctrines, or of philosophy to entangle, or of will-worshippers to multiply them?

We do not deny that there are, in Christianity, high and holy mysteries; but these 'secret things,' though they 'belong to God,' have their practical uses for us; they teach us humility, the prime Christian grace; thy send us to prayer, and they exercise faith, the parent attribute of all other graces.

This religion of facts, then, the poorest listeners in the aisles of our churches understand sufficiently, to be made by it wise unto salvation. They are saved by a practical belief of a few simple but inestimable truths.

By these same simple truths, martyrs and confessors, our persecuted saints, and our blessed reformers were saved. By these few simple truths, Locke, and Boyle, and Newton, were saved; not because they saw their religion through the glass of their philosophy, but because theirs was not a 'philosophy, falsely so called;' nor their science, 'a science of opposition;' but a science and a philosophy which were made subservient to Christianity, and because their deep humility sanctified their astonishing powers of mind. These wonderful men, at whose feet the learned world is still satisfied to sit, sat themselves at the feet of Jesus. Had there been any other way but the cross by which sinners could be saved, they, perhaps of all men were best qualified to have found it.

To return, then, to the particular doctrine under consideration:—Let us believe man is corrupt, because the Bible tells us he is so. Let us believe that all were so by nature, even the best, since we learn it from Divine authority. Let us, from the same authority, trace the disorder to its source from a fallen parent, its seat in a corrupt heart, its extent through the whole man, its universality over the entire race.

All are willing to allow that we are subject to frailties, to imperfections, to infirmities; facts compel us to confess a propensity to crimes, but worldly men confine the commission of them to the vulgar. But to rest here would lead us to a very false estimate of the doctrine in question, contrary to the decisive language of Scripture; it would establish corruption to be an accident, and not a root. It would by a division of offenders into two classes, deny that all offences are derived from one common principle.

If, then, men would examine their own bosoms as closely as they censure the faults of others loudly, we should all find there the incipient stirrings of many a sin, which, when brought into action by circumstances, produce consequences the most appalling. Let us then bless God, not that we are better than other men, but that we are placed by Providence out of the reach of being goaded by that temptation, stimulated by that poverty, which, had they been our lot, might have led to the same termination.

Let, then, the fear of God, the knowledge of His Word, and the knowledge of ourselves, teach us, that there is not, by nature, so wide a difference between ourselves and others as we

fondly imagine; that there is not by nature, a great gulf fixed, that they who are on this side might not pass over to the other. Let us not look to any superior virtue, to any native strength of our own, but let us look with a lively gratitude to that mercy of God which has preserved us from the temptations to which they have yielded. But, above all, let us look to that preventing and restraining grace which is withheld from none who ask it: without this all-powerful grace, Latimer might have led Bonner to the stake; with it Bonner might have ascended the scaffold a martyr to true religion. Without this grace, Luther might have fattened on the sale of indulgences; and with it Leo the Tenth might have accomplished the blessed work of Reformation.

CHAP. II.

The duty of Prayer inferred from the helplessness of man.

Man is not only a sinful, he is also a helpless, and therefore a dependent being. This offers new and powerful motives for the necessity of prayer, the necessity of looking continually to a higher power, to a better strength than our own. If that Power sustain us not, we fall, if he direct us not, we wander. His guidance is not only perfect freedom, but perfect safety. Our greatest danger begins from the moment we imagine we are able to go alone.

The self-sufficiency of man arising from his imaginary dignity, is a favourite doctrine with the nominal Christian. He feeds his pride with this pernicious aliment. And, as we hear much, so we hear falsely, of the dignity of human nature. Prayer, founded on the true principles of Scripture, alone teaches us wherein our true dignity consists. The dignity of a fallen creature is a perfect anomaly. True dignity, contrary to the common opinion, that it is an inherent excellence, is actually a sense of the want of it; it consists not in our valuing ourselves, but in a continual feeling of our dependence upon God, and an unceasing aim at conformity to his image.

Nothing but a humbling sense of the sinfulness of our nature, of our practised offences, of our utter helplessness, and constant dependence, can bring us to fervent and persevering prayer. How did the faith of the saints of old flourish under a darker dispensation, through all the clouds and ignorance which obscured their views of God! 'They looked unto Him, and were enlightened!' How do their slender means and high attainments reproach us!

David found that the strength and spirit of nature which had enabled him to resist the lion and the bear, did not enable him to resist his outward temptations, nor to conquer his inward corruptions. He therefore prayed, not only for deliverance 'from blood-guiltiness,' for a grievously remembered sin, he prayed for the *principle* of piety, for the *fountain* of holiness, for 'the creation of a clean heart,' for 'the renewing of a right spirit,' for 'truth in the inward parts,' that the 'comfort of God's help might be granted him.' This uniform avowal of the secret workings of sin, this uniform dependence on the mercy of God to pardon, and the grace of God to assist, render his precatory addresses, though they are those of a sovereign and a warrior, so universally applicable to the case of every private Christian.

One of our best poets,—himself an unsuccessful courtier,—from a personal experience of the mortifying feelings of abject solicitation, has said, that if there were the man in the world whom he was at liberty to hate, he would wish him no greater punishment than *attendance and dependence*. But he applies the heavy penalty of this wish to the dependants on *mortal* greatness.

Now, attendance and dependence are the very essence both of the safety and happiness of a Christian. Dependence on God is his only true liberty, as attendance on Him is his only true consolation. The suitor for human favour is liable to continual disappointment; if he knock at the door of his patron, there is probably a general order not to admit him. In the higher case, there is a special promise, that 'to him that knocks it shall be opened.' The human patron hates importunity; the Heavenly Patron invites it. The one receives his suitor according to his humour, or refuses his admission from the caprice of the moment; with the other, 'there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.' 'Come unto me,' is His uniform invitation. The Almighty Donor never puts off His humble petitioner to a more convenient season. *His* Court of Requests is always open. He receives the petition as soon as it is offered; He grants it as soon as it is made; and though he will not dispense with a continuance of the application, yet to every fresh application He promises fresh support. He will still be solicited, but it is in order that he may still bestow. Repeated gifts do not exhaust His bounty, nor lessen His power of fulfilment. Repeated solicitation, so far from wearing His patience, is an additional call for His favour.

Nor is the lateness of the petition any bar to its acceptance; He likes it should be early, but He rejects it not though it be late.

And as past mercies on God's part, so, to the praise of his grace be it said, that past offences on our own part are no hindrance to the application of hearty repentance, or the answer of fervent prayer.

The man in power has many claimants on his favour, and comparatively few boons to bestow. The God of Power has all things in His gift, and only blames the solicitor for coming so seldom, or coming so late, or staying so little a while. He only wishes that his best gifts were more earnestly sought.

When we solicit an earthly benefactor, it is often upon the strength of some pretence to his favour,—the hope of some reward for past services: even if we can produce little claim, we insinuate something like merit. But when we approach our Heavenly Benefactor, so far from having any thing like claim, any thing like merit, to produce, our only true, and our only acceptable plea, is our utter want both of claim

and merit,—is the utter destitution of all that can recommend us; yet we presume to ask favour, when we deserve nothing but rejection, we are encouraged to ask for eternal happiness, when we deserve only eternal punishment. Though we have nothing to produce but disloyalty, we ask for the privileges of subjects; though nothing but disobedience to offer, we plead the privileges of children,—we implore the tenderness of a father.

The petitioner to human power who may formerly have offended his benefactor, contrives to soften his displeasure by representing that the offence was a small one. The devout petitioner to God uses no such subterfuge. In the boldness of faith, and the humility of repentance, he cries, 'Pardon my iniquity, for it is *great*.'

He who does not believe this fundamental truth, 'the helplessness of man,' on which the other doctrines of the Bible are built,—even he who does nominally profess to assent to it as a doctrine of Scripture; yet, if he does not experimentally acknowledge it; if he does not feel it in the convictions of his own awakened conscience, in his discovery of the evil workings of his own heart, and the wrong propensities of his own nature, all bearing their testimony to its truth,—such a one will not pray earnestly for its cure,—will not pray with that feeling of his helplessness, with that sense of dependence on Divine assistance, which alone makes prayer efficacious.

Of this corruption he can never attain an adequate conception, till his progress in religion has opened his eyes on what is the natural state of man. Till this was the case, he himself was as far from desiring the change as he was from believing it necessary. He does not even suspect its existence, till he is in some measure delivered from its dominion.

Nothing will make us truly humble, nothing will make us constantly vigilant, nothing will entirely lead us to have recourse to prayer, so fervently or so frequently, as this ever-abiding sense of our corrupt and helpless nature, as our not being able to ascribe any disposition in ourselves to any thing that is good, or any power to avoid, by our own strength, any thing that is evil.

CHAP. III.

Prayer. Its Definition.

Prayer is the application of want to Him who alone can relieve it, the voice of sin to Him who alone can pardon it. It is the urgency of poverty, the prostration of humility, the fervency of penitence, the confidence of trust. It is not eloquence, but earnestness; not figures of speech, but compunctions of soul. It is the 'Lord save us, we perish,' of drowning Peter; the cry of faith to the ear of mercy.

Adoration is the noblest employment of created beings; confession, the natural language of guilty creatures; praise, the spontaneous expression of pardoned sinners.—Prayer is desire; the abasement of contrition; the energy of gratitude. It is not a mere conception of the mind nor an effort of the intellect, nor an act of the memory; but an elevation of the soul towards its Maker. It is the devout breathing of a creature struck with a sense of its own misery, and of the infinite holiness of Him whom it is addressing, experimentally convinced of its own emptiness, and of the abundant fulness of God, of his readiness to hear, of his power to help, of his willingness to save. It is not an emotion produced in the senses, nor an effect wrought by the imagination; but a determination of the will, an effusion of the heart.

Prayer is the guide to self-knowledge, by prompting us to look after our sins, in order to pray against them; it is a motive to vigilance, by teaching us to guard against those sins which, through self-examination, we have been enabled to detect.

Prayer is an act both of the understanding and of the heart. The understanding must apply itself to the knowledge of the Divine perfections, or the heart will not be led to the adoration of them. It would not be a *reasonable* service if the mind was excluded. It must be rational worship, or the human worshipper would not bring to the service the distinguishing faculty of his nature, which is reason. It must be spiritual worship, or it would want the distinctive quality to make it acceptable to Him who is a spirit, and who has declared that he will be worshipped 'in spirit and in truth.'

Prayer is right in itself as the most powerful means of resisting sin and advancing in holiness. It is above all right, as every thing is which has the authority of Scripture, the command of God, and the example of Christ.

There is a perfect consistency in all the ordinations of God; a perfect congruity in the whole scheme of his dispensations. If man were not a corrupt creature, such prayer as the Gospel enjoins would not have been necessary. Had not prayer been an important means for curing those corruptions, a God of perfect wisdom would not have ordered it. He would not have prohibited every thing which tends to inflame and promote them, had they not existed; nor would he have commanded every thing that has a tendency to diminish and remove them, had not their existence been fatal.—Prayer, therefore, is an indispensable part of his economy and of our obedience.

It is a hackneyed objection to the use of Prayer, that it is offending the omniscience of God to suppose he requires information of our wants. But no objection can be more futile. We do not pray to inform God of our wants, but to express our sense of the wants which he already knows. As he has not so much made his promises to our necessities as to our requests, it is reasonable that our requests should be made before we can hope that our necessities will be relieved.—God does not promise to those who want that they shall 'have,' but to those who 'ask;' nor to those who need that they shall 'find,' but to those who 'seek.' So far, therefore, from his previous knowledge of our wants being a ground of objection to Prayer, it is, in fact, the true ground for our application. Were he not Knowledge itself, our information would

be of as little use, as our application would be, were he not Goodness itself.

We cannot attain to a just notion of Prayer while we remain ignorant of our own nature, of the nature of God as revealed in Scripture, of our relation to Him, and dependence on Him. If, therefore, we do not live in the daily study of the Holy Scriptures, we shall want the highest motives to this duty, and the best helps for performing it; if we do, the cogency of these motives, and the inestimable value of these helps, will render argument unnecessary, and exhortation superfluous.

One cause, therefore, of the dulness of many Christians in Prayer, is their slight acquaintance with the sacred volume. They hear it periodically, they read it occasionally, they are contented to know it historically, to consider it superficially; but they do not endeavour to get their minds imbued with its spirit. If they store their memory with its facts, they do not impress their hearts with its truths. They do not regard it as the nutriment on which their spiritual life and growth depend. They do not pray over it: they do not consider all its doctrines as of practical application; they do not cultivate that spiritual discernment, which alone can enable them judiciously to appropriate its promises, and apply its denunciations to their own actual case. They do not use it as an unerring line to ascertain their own rectitude, or detect their own obliquities.

In our retirements we too often fritter away our precious moments—moments rescued from the world—in trivial, sometimes, it is to be feared in corrupt thoughts. But if we must give the reins to our imagination, let us send this excursive faculty to range among great and noble objects. Let it stretch forward, under the sanction of faith and the anticipation of prophecy, to the accomplishment of those glorious promises and tremendous threatenings which will soon be realized in the eternal world. These are topics which, under the safe and sober guidance of Scripture, will fix its largest speculations, and sustain its loftiest flights. The same Scripture, while it expands and elevates the mind, will keep it subject to the dominion of truth; while at the same time it will teach it, that its boldest excursions must fall infinitely short of the astonishing realities of a future state.

Though we cannot pray with a too deep sense of sin, we may make our sins too exclusively the object of our prayers. While we keep, with a self-abasing eye, our own corruptions in view, let us look with equal intentness on that mercy which cleanseth from all sin. Let our prayers be all humiliation, but let them not be all complaint. When men indulge no other thought but that they are attainted rebels, the hopelessness of pardon hardens them into disloyalty. Let them look to the mercy of the King, as well as to the rebellion of the subject. If we contemplate his grace as displayed in the Gospel, then, though our humility will increase, our despair will vanish. Gratitude in this, as in human instances, will create affection, 'We love him because he first loved us.'

Let us, therefore, always keep our unworthiness in view, as a reason why we stand in need of the mercy of God in Christ; but never plead it as a reason why we should not draw nigh to him to implore that mercy. The best men are unworthy for their own sakes; the worst, on repentance, will be accepted for his sake, and through his merits.

In prayer, then, the perfections of God, and especially, his mercies in our redemption, should occupy our thoughts, as much as our sins; our obligations to him as much as our departures from him. We should keep up in our hearts a constant sense of our own weakness, not with a design to discourage the mind and depress the spirits, but with a view to drive us out of ourselves, in search of the Divine assistance. We should contemplate our infirmity, in order to draw us to look for his strength, and to seek that power from God which we vainly look for in ourselves: we do not tell a sick friend of his danger in order to grieve or terrify him, but to induce him to apply to his physician, and to have recourse to his remedy.

Among the charges which have been brought against serious piety, one is, that it teaches men to despair. The charge is just, in one sense, as to the fact; but false in the sense intended. It teaches us to despair, indeed, of ourselves, while it inculcates that faith in a Redeemer, which is the true antidote to despair. Faith quickens the doubting, while it humbles the presumptuous spirit. The lowly Christian takes comfort in the blessed promise, that God will never forsake them that are his. The presumptuous man is equally right in the doctrine; but wrong in applying it. He takes that comfort to himself which was meant for another class of characters. The mal-appropriation of Scripture promises and threatenings is the cause of much error and delusion.

Some devout enthusiasts have fallen into error by an unnatural and impracticable disinterestedness, asserting that God is to be loved exclusively for himself, with an absolute renunciation of any view of advantage to ourselves; yet that prayer cannot be mercenary, which involves God's glory with our own happiness, and makes his will the law of our requests. Though we are to desire the glory of God supremely; though this ought to be our grand actuating principle; yet he has graciously permitted, commanded, invited us, to attach our own happiness to this primary object. The Bible exhibits not only a beautiful, but an inseparable combination of both, which delivers us from the danger of preposterously imagining, than an absolute renunciation of all benefit to ourselves is necessary for the promotion of God's glory on the one hand; and on the other, from seeking any happiness independent of him, and underived from him. In enjoining us to love him supremely, he has connected an unspeakable blessing with a paramount duty,-the highest privilege with the most positive command.

What a triumph for the humble Christian to be assured, that 'the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth,' is the God of his life, to know that he is even invited to take the Lord for his God. To close with God's offers, to accept his invitations, to receive God

as our portion must surely be more pleasing to our heavenly Father, than separating our happiness from his glory. To disconnect our interests from his goodness, is at once to detract from his perfections, and to obscure the brightness of our own hopes. The declarations of the inspired writers are confirmed by the authority of the heavenly hosts. They proclaim that the glory of God and the happiness of his creatures, so far from interfering, are connected with each other. We know but of one anthem composed and sung by angels, and this most harmoniously combines 'the glory of God in the highest, with peace on earth, and good will to men.'

'The beauty of Scripture,' says the great Saxon reformer, 'consists in pronouns.' This God is *our* God; God, even our *own* God shall bless us. How delightful the appropriation! to glorify him as being in himself consummate excellence, and to love him from the feeling that his excellence is directed to our felicity! Here modesty would be ingratitude, disinterestedness rebellion. It would be severing ourselves from him, in whom we live, and move, and are; it would be dissolving the astonishing connection which he had condescended to establish between himself and his rational creatures.

The Scripture Saints make this union the chief ground of their grateful exultation: '*My* strength,' '*my* rock,' '*my* fortress,' '*my* deliverer!' Again, 'let the God of *my* salvation be exalted!' Now take away the pronoun, and substitute the article *the*, how comparatively cold is the impression! The consummation of the joy arises from the peculiarity, the intimacy, the endearment of the relation.

Nor to the liberal Christian is the grateful joy diminished, when he blesses his God as 'the God of them that trust in him.' All general blessings, will he say, all providential mercies, are mine individually, are mine as completely as if no other shared in the enjoyment—life, light, the earth and heavens, the sun and stars, whatsoever sustains the body, and recreates the spirits? My obligation is as great as if the mercy had been made purely for me; as great? nay, it is greater; it is augmented by a sense of the millions who participate in the blessing. The same enlargement of personal obligation holds good, nay, rises higher, in the mercies of Redemption. The Lord is *my* Saviour, as completely as if he had redeemed only me. That he has redeemed 'a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,' is diffusion without abatement; it is general participation without individual diminution. Each has all.

In adoring the providence of God, we are apt to be struck with what is new and out of course, while we too much overlook long habitual, and uninterrupted mercies. But common mercies, if less striking, are more valuable, both because we have them always, and for the reason above assigned, because others share them. The ordinary blessings of life are overlooked for the very reason that they ought to be most prized, because they are most uniformly bestowed. They are most essential to our support, and when once they are withdrawn, we begin to find that they are also most essential to our comfort. Nothing raises the pride of a blessing like its removal, whereas it was its continuance which should have taught us its worth. We require novelties to awaken our gratitude, not considering that it is the duration of mercies which enhances their value. We want fresh excitements. We consider mercies long enjoyed as things of course, as things to which we have a sort of claim by prescription; as if God had no right to withdraw what he has once bestowed, as if he were obliged to continue what he has once been pleased to confer.

But that the sun has shown unremittingly from the day that God created him, is not a less stupendous exertion of power, than that the hand which fixed him in the heavens, and marked out his progress through them, once said by his servant, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gideon.' That he has gone on in his strength, driving his uninterrupted career, and 'rejoicing as a giant to run his course,' for six thousand years, is a more astonishing exhibition of Omnipotence than that he should have been once suspended by the hand which set him in motion. That the ordinances of Heaven, that the established laws of nature, should have been for one day interrupted to serve a particular occasion, is a less real wonder, and certainly a less substantial blessing, than that in such a multitude of ages they should have pursued their appointed course, for the comfort of the whole system.

As the affections of the Christian ought to be set on things above, so it is for them that his prayers will be chiefly addressed. God, in promising to 'give those who delight in him the desire of their heart,' could never mean temporal things; for these they might desire improperly as to the object, and inordinately as to the degree. The promise relates principally to spiritual blessings. He not only gives us these mercies, but the very desire to obtain them is also his gift. Here our prayer requires no qualifying, no conditioning, no limitation. We cannot err in our choice, for God himself is the object of it; we cannot exceed in the degree, unless it were possible to love him too well, or to please him too much.

God shows his munificence in encouraging us to ask most earnestly for the greatest things, by promising that the smaller 'shall be added unto us.' We therefore acknowledge his liberality most, when we request the highest favours. He manifests His infinite superiority to earthly fathers, by chiefly delighting to confer those spiritual gifts which *they* less solicitously desire for their children, than those worldly advantages on which God sets so little value.

We should endeavour to render our private devotions effectual remedies for our own particular sins. Prayer against sin, in general, is too indefinite to reach the individual case. We must bring it home to our own hearts, else we may be confessing another man's sins, and overlooking our own. If we have any predominant fault, we should pray more especially against the fault. If we pray for any virtue of which we particularly stand in need, we should dwell on our own deficiencies in that virtue, till our souls become deeply affected with our want of it. Our prayers should be circumstantial, not

as was before observed, for the information of Infinite Wisdom, but for the stirring up of our own dull affections. And as the recapitulation of our wants tends to keep up a sense of our dependence, the enlarging on our especial mercies will tend to keep alive a sense of gratitude; while indiscriminate petitions, confessions, and thanksgiving, leave the mind to wander in indefinite devotion, and unaffecting generalities, without personality, and without appropriation. It must be obvious, that we except th se grand universal points in which all have an equal interest, and which must always form the essence of family, and, especially, of public prayer.

As we ought to live in a spirit of obedience to his commands, so we should live in a frame of waiting for his blessings on our prayers, and in a spirit of gratitude when we have obtained it. This is that 'preparation of the heart' which would always keep us in a posture for duty. If we desert the duty because an immediate blessing does not visibly attend it, it shows that we do not serve God out of conscience, but selfishness; that we grudge expending on Him that service which brings us in no immediate interest. Though he grants not our petition, let us never be tempted to withdraw our application.

Our reluctant devotions may remind us of the remark of a certain great political wit,* who apologized for his late attendance in parliament, by his being detained while a party of soldiers were *dragging a volunteer* to his duty. How many excuses do we find for not being in time! How many apologies for brevity! How many evasions for neglect! How unwilling, too often, are we to come into the Divine presence, how reluctant to remain in it! Those hours which are least valuable for business, which are least seasonable for pleasure, we commonly give to religion. Our energies, which were so readily exerted in the society we have just quitted, are sunk as we approach the Divine presence. Our hearts, which were all alacrity in some frivolous conversation, become cold and inanimate, as if it were the natural property of devotion to freeze the affections. Our animal spirits, which so readily performed their functions before, now slacken their vigour, and lose their vivacity. The sluggish body sympathizes with the unwilling mind, and each promotes the deadness of the other; both are slow in listening to the call of duty; both are soon weary in performing it. How do our fancies rove back to the pleasures we have been enjoying! How apt are the diversified images of those pleasures to mix themselves with our better thoughts, to pull down our higher aspirations! As prayer requires all the energies of the compound being of man, so we too often feel as if there were a confederacy of body, soul, and spirit, to disincline and disqualify us for it.

When the heart is once sincerely turned to religion, we need not, every time we pray, examine into every truth, and seek for conviction over and over again; but assume that those doctrines are true, the truth of which we have already proved. From a general and fixed impression of these principles, will result a taste, a disposedness, a love so intimate, that the convictions of the understanding will become the affections of the heart.

To be deeply impressed with a few fundamental truths, to digest them thoroughly, to meditate on them seriously, to pray over them fervently, to get them deeply rooted in the heart, will be more productive of faith and holiness, than to labour after variety, ingenuity, or elegance. The indulgence of imagination will rather distract than edify. Searching after ingenious thoughts will rather divert the attention from God to ourselves, than promote fixedness of thought, singleness of intention, and devotedness of spirit. Whatever is subtle and refined, is in danger of being unscriptural. If we do not guard the mind, it will learn to set more value on original thoughts than devout affections. It is the business of prayer to cast down imaginations which gratify the natural activity of the mind, while they leave the heart unhumbled.

We should confine ourselves to the present business of the present moment; we should keep the mind in a state of perpetual dependence; we should entertain no long views. '*Now* is the accepted time.' 'To-day we must hear his voice.' 'Give us *this* day our daily bread.' The manna will not keep till to-morrow: to-morrow will have its own wants, and must have its own petitions. To-morrow we must seek anew the bread of heaven.

We should, however, avoid coming to our devotions with unfurnished minds. We should be always laying in materials for prayer, by a diligent course of serious reading, by treasuring up in our minds the most important truths. If we rush into the Divine presence with a vacant, or ignorant, or unprepared mind, with a heart full of the world; as we shall feel no disposition or qualification for the work we are about to engage in, so we cannot expect that our petitions will be heard or granted.' There must be some congruity between the heart and the object, some affinity between the state of our minds and the business in which they are employed, if we would expect success in the work.

We are often deceived both as to the principle and the effect of our prayers. When, from some external cause, the heart is glad, the spirits light, the thoughts ready, the tongue voluble, a kind of spontaneous eloquence is the result; with this we are pleased, and this ready flow we are willing to impose on ourselves for piety.

On the other hand, when the mind is dejected, the animal spirits low, the thoughts confused; when apposite words do not readily present themselves, we are apt to accuse our hearts of want of fervour, to lament our weakness, and to mourn that, because we have had no pleasure in praying our prayers have, therefore, not ascended to the throne of mercy. In both cases we, perhaps, judge ourselves unfairly. These unready accents, these faltering praises, these ill-expressed petitions, may find more acceptance than the florid talk with which we were so well satisfied: the latter consisted, it may be, of shining thoughts, floating on the fancy, eloquent words dwelling on the lips; the former might be the sighing of a contrite spirit abased by the feeling of its own unworthiness, and

* Mr Sheridan.

awed by the perfections of a holy and heart-searching God. The heart is dissatisfied with its own dull and tasteless repetitions which, with all their imperfections, Infinite Goodness may, perhaps, hear with favour.*—We may not only be elated with the fluency but even with the fervency of our prayers. Vanity may grow out of the very act of renouncing it, and we may begin to feel proud at having humbled ourselves so eloquently.

There is, however, a strain and spirit of prayer equally distinct from that facility and copiousness for which we certainly are never the better in the sight of God, and from that constraint and dryness for which we may be never the worse. There is a simple, solid, pious strain of prayer, in which the supplicant is so filled and occupied with a sense of his own dependence, and of the importance of the things for which he asks, and so persuaded of the power and grace of God through Christ to give him those things, that while he is engaged in it, he does not merely imagine, but feels assured that God is nigh to him as a reconciled Father, so that every burden and doubt are taken off from his mind. 'He knows,' as St. John expresses it, 'that he has the petitions he desired of God,' and feels the truth of that promise, 'while they are yet speaking I will hear. This is the perfection of Prayer.

CHAP. IV.

On the Effects of Prayer.

It is objected by a certain class, and on the specious ground of humility too, though we do not always find the objector himself quite as humble as his plea would be thought, that it is arrogant in such insignificant beings as we are to presume to lay our petty necessities before the Great and Glorious God, who cannot be expected to condescend to the multitude of trifling and even interfering requests which are brought before him by his creatures. These and such like objections arise from mean and unworthy thoughts of the Great Governor of the Universe. It seems as if those who make them considered the Most High as 'such a one as themselves;' a Being, who can perform a certain given quantity of business, but who would be overpowered with an additional quantity. Or, at best, is it not considering the Almighty in the light, not of an Infinite God, but of a great man, of a minister, or a king, who, while he superintends public and national concerns, is obliged to neglect small and individual petitions; because his hands being full, he cannot spare that leisure and attention which suffice for every thing? They do not consider him as that infinitely gracious Being, who, while he beholds at once all that is doing in heaven and in earth, is at the same time as attentive to the prayer of the poor destitute, as present to the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner, as if each of these forlorn creatures were individually the object of his undivided attention.

These critics, who are for sparing the Supreme Being the trouble of our prayers, and who, if I may so speak without profaneness, would relieve Omnipotence of part of his burden, by assigning to his care only such a portion as may be more easily managed, seem to have no adequate conception of his attributes.

They forget that infinite wisdom puts him as easily within reach of all knowledge, as infinite power does of all performance; that he is a Being in whose plans complexity makes no difficulty, variety no obstruction, and multiplicity no confusion; that to ubiquity distance does not exist; that to infinity space is annihilated; that past, present, and future, are discerned more accurately at one glance of His eye, to whom a thousand years are as one day, than a single moment of time or a single point of space can be by ours.

Another class continue to bring forward, as pertinaciously as if it had never been answered, the exhausted argument, that seeing God is immutable, no petitions of ours can ever change Him: that events themselves being settled in a fixed and unalterable course, and bound in a fatal necessity, it is folly to think that we can disturb the established laws of the universe, or interrupt the course of Providence by our prayers; and that it is absurd to suppose these firm decrees can be reversed by any requests of ours.

Without entering into the wide and trackless field of fate and free will, we would only observe, that these objections apply equally to all human actions as well as to prayer. It may therefore with the same propriety be urged, that seeing God is immutable and his decrees unalterable, therefore our *actions* can produce no change in Him or in our own state. Weak as well as impious reasoning! It may be questioned whether even the modern French and German philosophers might not be prevailed upon to acknowledge the existence of God, if they might make such a use of his attributes.

How much more wisdom as well as happiness results from a humble Christian spirit! Such a plain practical text as 'Draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you,' carries more consolation, more true knowledge of his wants and their remedy to the heart of a penitent sinner, than all the tomes of casuistry, which have puzzled the world ever since the question was first set afloat by its original propounders.

And as the plain man only got up and walked, to prove there was such a thing as motion, in answer to the philosopher who, in an elaborate theory, denied it; so the plain Christian, when he is borne down with the assurance that there is no efficacy in prayer, requires no better argument to repel the assertion than the good he finds in prayer itself. A Christian knows, because he feels, that prayer is, though in a way to him inscrutable, the medium of con-

* Of these sort of repetitions, our admirable Church Liturgy has been accused as a fault; but this defect, if it be one, happily accommodates itself to our infirmities. Where is the favoured being whose attention never wanders, whose heart accompanies his lips in every sentence? Is there no absence of mind in the petitioner, no wandering of the thoughts, no inconstancy of the heart, which these repetitions are wisely calculated to correct, to rouse the dead attention, to bring back the strayed affections?

nexion between God and his rational creatures, the method appointed by Him to draw down his blessings upon us. The Christian knows that prayer is the appointed means of uniting two ideas, one of the highest magnificence, the other of the most profound lowliness, within the compass of the imagination; namely, that it is the link of communication between 'the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity,' and that heart of the 'contrite in which he delights to dwell.' He knows that this inexplicable union between beings so unspeakably, so essentially different, can only be maintained by prayer; that this is the strong but secret chain which unites time with eternity, earth with heaven, man with God.

The plain Christian, as was before observed, cannot explain why it is so; but while he *feels* the efficacy, he is contented to let the learned *define* it; and he will no more postpone prayer till he can produce a chain of reasoning on the manner in which he derives benefit from it, than he will postpone eating till he can give a scientific lecture on the nature of digestion: he is contented with knowing that his meat has nourished him: and he leaves to the philosopher, who may choose to defer his meal till he has elaborated his treatise, to starve in the interim.—The Christian *feels* better than he is able to explain, that the functions of his spiritual life can no more be carried on without habitual prayer, than those of his natural life without frequent bodily nourishment. He feels renovation and strength grow out of the use of the appointed means, as necessarily in the one case as in the other. He feels that the health of his soul can no more be sustained, and its powers kept in continual vigour by the *prayers* of a distant day, than his body by the *aliment* of a distant day.

But there is one motive to the duty in question, far more constraining to the true believer than all others that can be named; more imperative than any argument on its utility, than any conviction of its efficacy, even than any experience of its consolations. *Prayer is the command of God;* the plain, positive, repeated injunction of the Most High, who declares, 'He will be inquired of.' This is enough to secure the obedience of the Christian, even though a promise were not, as it always is, attached to the command. But in this case, to our unspeakable comfort, the promise is as clear as the precept: '*Ask*, and ye shall *receive*.' This is encouragement enough for the plain Christian. As to the *manner* in which prayer is made to coincide with the general scheme of God's plan in the government of human affairs; how God has left himself at liberty to reconcile our prayer with his own predetermined will, the Christian does not very critically examine, his precise and immediate duty being to pray, and not to examine.

In the mean time it is enough for the humble believer to be assured, that the Judge of all the earth is doing right; it is enough for him to be assured in that word of God 'which cannot lie,' of numberless actual instances of the efficacy of prayer in obtaining blessings and averting calamities, both national and individual; it is enough for him to be convinced experimentally by that internal evidence which is perhaps paramount to all other evidence, the comfort he himself has received from prayer, when all other comforts have failed and, above all, to end with the same motive with which we began, the only motive indeed which *he* requires for the performance of any duty; it is motive enough for him,—that *Thus saith the Lord.*

Others there are, who, perhaps not controverting any of these premises, yet neglect to build practical consequences on the admission of them; who neither denying the duty nor the efficacy of prayer, yet go on to live either in the irregular observance or the total neglect of it, as appetite, or pleasure, or business, or humour, may happen to predominate; and who by living almost without prayer, may be said, 'to live almost without God in the world.' To such we can only say, that they little know what they lose. The time is hastening on when they will look upon those blessings as invaluable, which now they think not worth asking for; when they will bitterly regret the absence of those means and opportunities which now they either neglect or despise. 'O that they were wise! that they understood this! that they would consider their latter end!'

There are again, others, who it is to be feared, having once lived in the habit of prayer, yet not having been well grounded in those principles of faith and repentance on which genuine prayer is built, have by degrees totally discontinued it. 'They do not find,' say they, 'that their affairs prosper the better or are the worse; or perhaps they were unsuccessful in their affairs even before they dropt the practice, and so had no encouragement to go on.' They do not *know* that they had no encouragement; they do not *know* how much worse their affairs might have gone on, had they discontinued it sooner, or how their prayers helped to retard their ruin. Or they do not *know* that perhaps 'they asked amiss,' or that, if they had obtained what they asked, they might have been far more unhappy. For a true believer never 'restrains prayer,' because he is not certain that he obtains every individual request; for he is persuaded that God, in compassion to our ignorance, sometimes in great mercy withholds what we desire, and often disappoints his most favoured children by giving them not what they ask, but what he knows is really good for them. The froward child, as a pious prelate* observes, cries for the shining blade, which the tender parent withholds, knowing it would cut his fingers.

Thus to persevere when we have not the encouragement of visible success, is an evidence of tried faith. Of this holy perseverance Job was a noble instance. Defeat and disappointment rather stimulated than stopped *his* prayers Though in a vehement strain of passionate eloquence he exclaims, 'I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment:' yet so persuaded was he notwithstanding of the duty of continuing this holy importunity, that he persisted against all human hope, till he attained to that exalted pitch of

* Bishop Hall

unshaken faith, by which he was enabled to break out into that sublime apostrophe, 'Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.'

But may we not say that there is a considerable class, who not only bring none of the objections which we have stated against the use of prayer; who are so far from rejecting, that they are exact and regular in the performance of it; who yet take it up on as low ground as is consistent with their ideas of their own safety; who, while they consider prayer as an indispensable form, believe nothing of that change of heart and of those holy tempers which it is intended to produce? Many, who yet adhere scrupulously to the letter, are so far from entering into the spirit of this duty, that they are strongly inclined to suspect those of hypocrisy or fanaticism who adopt the true scriptural views of prayer. Nay, as even the Bible may be so wrested as to be made to speak almost any language in support of almost any opinion, these persons lay hold on Scripture itself, to bear them out in their own slight views of this duty; and they profess to borrow from thence the ground of that censure which they cast on the more serious Christians. Among the many passages which have been made to convey a meaning foreign to their original designs, none have been seized upon with more avidity by such persons than the pointed censures of our Saviour on those 'who for a *pretence* make long prayers;' as well as on those 'who use vain repetitions, and think they shall be heard for much speaking.' Now the things here intended to be reproved were the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the ignorance of the heathen, together with the error of all those who depended on the success of their prayers, while they imitated the deceit of the one, or the folly of the other. But our Saviour never meant that those severe reprehensions should cool or abridge the devotion of pious Christians, to which they do not at all apply.

More or fewer words, however, so little constitute the true value of prayer, that there is no doubt but one of the most affecting specimens on record is the short petition of the Publican, full fraught as it is with that spirit of contrition and self-abasement which is the very principle and soul of prayer. And this specimen, perhaps, is the best model for that sudden lifting up of the heart which we call ejaculation. But we doubt, in general, whether the few hasty words, to which these frugal petitioners would stint the scanty devotions of others and themselves, will be always found ample enough to satisfy the humble penitent, who, being a sinner, has much to confess; who, hoping he is a pardoned sinner, has much to acknowledge. Such a one, perhaps, cannot always pour out the fulness of his soul within the prescribed abridgments.

Even the sincerest Christian, when he wishes to find his heart warm, has often to lament its coldness though he feels that he has received much, and has, therefore, much to be thankful for, yet he is not able at once to bring his wayward spirit into such a posture as shall fit it for the solemn duty. Such a one has not merely his form to repeat, but he has his tempers to reduce to order, his affections to excite, and his peace to make. His thoughts may be realizing the sarcasm of the Prophet on the idol Baal, 'they may be gone a journey,' and must be recalled; his heart, perhaps, 'sleepeth, and must be awaked.' A devout supplicant, too, will labour to affect and warm his mind with a sense of the great and gracious attributes of God, in imitation of the holy men of old. Like Jehosaphat, he will sometimes enumerate 'the power and the might, and the mercies of the Most High,' in order to stir up the sentiments of awe, and gratitude, and love, and humility in his own soul.* He will labour to imitate the example of his Saviour, whose heart dilated with the expression of the same holy affections. 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.' A heart thus animated, thus warmed with Divine love, cannot always scrupulously limit itself to the mere *business* of prayer, if I may so speak. It cannot content itself with merely spreading out its own necessities, but expands in contemplating the perfections of Him to whom he is addressing them.

The humble supplicant, though he be no longer *governed* by a love of the world, yet, grieves to find that he cannot totally exclude it from his thoughts. Though he has on the whole a deep sense of his own wants and of the abundant provision which is made for them in the Gospel; yet, when he most wishes to be rejoicing in those strong motives for love and gratitude, alas! even then he has to mourn his worldliness, his insensibility, his deadness. He has to deplore the littleness and vanity of the objects which are even then drawing away his heart from his Redeemer. The best Christian is but too liable during the temptations of the day, to be ensnared by 'the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' and is not always brought without effort to reflect that he is but dust and ashes. How can even good persons, who are just come, perhaps, from listening to the flattery of their fellow worms, acknowledge before God, without any preparation of the heart, that they are miserable sinners? They require a little time to impress on their own souls the truth of that solemn confession of sin which they are making to him, without which, brevity, and not length might constitute hypocrisy.

Even the sincerely pious have in prayer grievous wanderings to lament, from which others mistakingly suppose the advanced Christian to be exempt. Such wanderings that, as an old divine has observed, it would exceedingly humble a good man, could he, after he had prayed, be made to see his prayers written down, with exact interlineations of all the vain and impertinent thoughts which had thrust themselves in amongst them. So that such a one will, indeed, from a strong sense of these distractions, feel deep occasion, with the Prophet, to ask forgiveness for 'the iniquity of his *holy* things;' and would find cause enough for humiliation every night, had he to lament the sins of his prayers only.

We know that such a brief petition, as 'Lord

* Bishop Hall.

* 2 Chron. xx. 5, 6.

help my unbelief,' if the supplicant be in so happy a frame, and the prayer be darted up with such strong faith, that his very soul mounts with the petition, may suffice to draw down a blessing which may be withheld from the more prolix petitioner: yet if by prayer we do not mean a mere form of words, whether it be long or short; but that secret communion between God and the soul which is the very breath and being of religion; then is the Scripture so far from suggesting that short measure of which it is accused, that it expressly says, 'Pray without ceasing;'—'Pray evermore;'—'I will that men pray every where;'—'Continue instant in prayer.'

If such 'repetitions' as these objectors reprobate, stir up desires as yet unawakened, or protract affections already excited (for '*vain* repetitions' are such as awaken or express no new desire, and serve no religious purpose;) then are 'repetitions' not to be condemned. And that our Saviour did not give the warning against 'long prayers and repetitions,' in the sense these objectors allege, is evident from his own practice; for once we are told 'he continued *all night* in prayer to God.' And again, in a most awful crisis of his life, it is expressly said, 'He prayed the *third* time, using *the same words*.'

All habits gain by exercise; of course the Christian graces gain force and vigour by being called out, and, as it were, mustered in prayer. Love, faith, and trust in the Divine promises, if they were not kept alive by this stated intercourse with God, would wither and die.

CHAP. V.

Vain Excuses for the Neglect of Prayer.

There are not a few, who offer apologies for the neglect of spiritual duties, by saying they believe them to be right, but that they are tempted to neglect the exercise of them by idleness, or business, by company, or pleasure. This may be true, but temptations are not compulsions. The great adversary of souls may fill the fancy with alluring images of enjoyment, so as to draw us away from any duty, but it is in our own choice either to indulge, or through grace to repel them. He may act upon the passions through outward objects, which introduce them to the mind through the senses, but the grace of God enables all who faithfully ask it, to withstand them.

If we were not at liberty to reject temptation, sin would be no sin. It is the offer of the grace of resistance not used, which makes the offender to be without excuse. All the motives and the allurements to sin would be ineffectual, would we keep up in our minds what are its 'wages'—death; death spiritual, death eternal!

Of all the excuses for the neglect of prayer, the man of business justifies his omission to himself by the most plausible apologies.—Many of this class, active for themselves, and useful to the world, are far from disputing either the propriety, or the duty of prayer; they are willing however for the present, to turn over this duty to the clergy, to the idle, to women and children. They allow it to be an important thing, but not the most important. They acknowledge, if men have time to spare, they cannot spend it better; but *they* have no time. It is indeed a duty, but a duty not to be compared with that of the court, the bar, the public office, the counting-house, or the shop.

Now, in pleading for the importance of the one, we should be the last to detract from that of the other. We only plead for their entire compatability.

We pass over the instance of Daniel, a man of business and a statesman, and of many other public characters, recorded in Scripture, and confine ourselves to the example of Nehemiah. He was not only an officer in the court of the greatest king of the East, but it was his duty to be much in the royal presence. He was on a particular occasion, under deep affliction; for Jerusalem was in ruins! On a certain day his sadness was so great, as to be visible to the king, at whose table he was attending.

The monarch enquired the cause of his sorrow, and what request he had to make.—He instantly 'prayed to the God of heaven,' doubtless to strengthen him, and then made his petition to the king for no less a boon, than to allow him to rebuild the walls of the sacred city. His prayer preceded his petition. It was that prayer, which gave him courage to present that petition, and which probably induced the sovereign to grant it. What a double encouragement is here given to the courtier, both to pray to God, and to speak truth to a king!

Though the plea of the man of business, for his own particular exemption, can by no means be granted, yet it is the sense he entertains of the value of his professional duties, which deceives him. It leads him to believe, that there can be no evil in substituting business for devotion. He is conscious that he is industrious, and he knows that industry is a great moral quality. He is rightly persuaded, that the man of pleasure has no such plea to produce. He therefore imposes on himself, with the belief that there *can* be no harm in substituting a moral for a religious exercise; for he has learned to think highly of morality, while he assigns to religion only an inferior degree in his scale of duties.

He usually goes to church once on the Sunday; but it does not at all infringe on his religious system to examine his accounts, to give a great dinner, or to begin a journey on that day.

Now it is a serious truth, that there is no man to whom prayer is more imperatively a duty, or more obviously a necessity, than to the man of business; whether in the higher or the middle classes of society. There is no man who more stands in need of quieting his anxieties, regulating his tempers, cooling his spirits by a devout application for the blessing of God; none to whom it is more necessary to implore the divine protection for the duties, or preservation from the dangers of the scene in which he is about to engage; none to whom it is more important to solicit direction in the difficulties which the day may produce; none on whom it

is more incumbent to solicit support against the temptations which may be about to assail him; none to whom the petition for an enlightened conscience, an upright intention, a sound probity, and an undeviating sincerity, is of more importance.

What is so likely as prayer to enable him to stand prepared to meet the accidental fluctuations in his affairs, to receive without inebriation, a sudden flow of prosperous fortune, or to sustain any adverse circumstances with resignation?

Even persons in more retired situations, even those who have made considerable advances in religion cannot but acknowledge how much the ordinary and necessary cares of daily life, especially, how much any unexpected accession to them, are likely to cause absence and distraction in their devotions:—how much then ought they, whose whole life is business, to be on their guard against these dangers, to double their vigilance against them, and to implore direction under them.

Were the Christian militant accustomed never to engage in the moral battle of daily life, without putting on this panoply, the shafts of temptation would strike with a feeble and erring blow; they would not so deeply pierce the guarded heart. And were fervent humble daily prayer once conscientiously adopted, its effects would reach beyond the week-day engagements. It would gradually extend its benign influence to the postponing of settling accounts, the festive dinner, and the not absolutely necessary journey, to one of those six days in which we are enjoined to labour. It would lead him to the habit of doing 'no manner of work' on that day, in which the doing of it was prohibited by the great Lawgiver in his own person.

We have more than once alluded to the diversities of character, occasional events, difference in the state of mind as well as of circumstances, which may not only render the prayer which is suitable to one man unsuitable to another, but unsuitable to the same man under every alteration of circumstances.

But among the proper topics for prayer, there is one which, being of universal interest ought not to be omitted. For by whatever dissimilarity of character, capacity, profession, station, or temper, the condition of man, and, of course, the nature of prayer, is diversified—there is one grand point of union, one circumstance, one condition, in which they must all meet; one state, of which every man is equally certain; one event which happeneth to all,—'it is appointed unto every man once to die.' The rugged road of sorrow, the flowery path of pleasure, as well as

'The paths of glory, lead but to the grave.'

In praying, therefore, against the fear of death, we do not pray against a contingent but a certain evil; we pray to be delivered from the overwhelming dread of that house which is appointed for all living—we are put in mind that all who are born must die!

'The end of all things is at hand.' To what purpose does the apostle convert this awful proclamation? Does he use it to encourage gloomy tempers, to invite to unprofitable melancholy? No: he uses the solemn admonition to stir us up to moral goodness—therefore, 'be sober'—he does more, he uses it to excite us to religious vigilance,—'and watch unto prayer.'

Prayer against the fear of death, by keeping up in us a constant remembrance of our mortality, will help to wean us from a too intimate attachment to the things we are so soon to quit. By this habitual preparation to meet our Judge, we shall be brought to pray more earnestly for an interest in the great Intercessor; and to strive more effectually against every offence which may aggravate the awfulness of that meeting.

Fervent prayer, that divine grace may prepare us for death, will, if cordially adopted, answer many great moral purposes. It will remind every individual of every class that 'the time is short'—that 'there is no repentance in the grave.'

Perhaps even the worldly and thoughtless man, under an occasional fit of dejection, or an accidental disappointment, may be brought to say, 'When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God.'—Oh, think upon Him, call upon Him, *now*,—now, when you are in prosperity; now, when your fortunes are flourishing; now, when your hill is so strong that you think it shall never be removed: think upon Him, call upon Him, when the scene is the brightest, when the world courts, flatteries invite, and pleasures betray you; think on Him, while you are able to think at all, while you possess the capacity of thinking. The time may come, when 'He may turn his face from you, and you will be troubled.' Think of God, when the alluring images of pleasure and of profit would seduce you from Him. Prosperity is the season of peculiar peril. 'It is the bright day that brings forth the adder.' Think of God when the tempting world says, 'All this I will give thee.' Trust not the insolvent world, it has cheated every creditor that ever trusted it. It will cheat you.

To the *man of opulence*, who heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them, prayer will be a constant memento: it will remind him that he walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; it will remind him of laying up treasures where thieves cannot enter, nor rust corrode.

The habit of praying against the fear of death, would check the pride of youthful *beauty*, by reminding her how soon it must say to the worm, Thou art my father, and to corruption, Thou art my mother and sister.

The *man of genius*, he who thought that of making many books there would be no end; who, in his zeal to write, had neglected to pray; who thought little of any immortality but that which was to be conferred by the applause of dying creatures like himself; who, in the vanity of possessing talents, had forgotten that he must one day account for the application of them; if happily he should be brought to see the evil of his own heart, to feel the wants of his own soul, how intense will be his repentance, how deep his remorse, that he had loved the praise of men more than the praise of God! how fervently will he pray that his mercies may not aggravate the account of his sins; that his talents may not become the instrument of his

punishment! How earnestly will he supplicate for pardon, how devoutly will he 'give glory to God, before his feet stumble on the dark mountains!'

The *man of business*, to whom we have already adverted, who thought his schemes so deeply laid, his speculations so prudently planned, that nothing could frustrate them; who calculated that the future was as much in his power as the present, forgot that death, that grand subverter of projects, might interpose his *veto*. This man, who could not find time to pray, must find time to die—he may at length find—happy if he ever find it, that he cannot meet his end with a peaceful heart, and a resigned spirit, without the preparation of prayer for support in that awful period, 'when his purposes shall be broken off and all his thoughts perish.'

The *man of pleasure*, alas! what shall we say for *him?* He is sunk to the lowest step of degradation in the moral scale; he has not even human supports; he has robbed himself even of the ordinary consolations resorted to by ordinary men. He has no stay on which to lay hold, no twig at which to catch, no pretence by which to flatter himself into a false peace; no recollection of past usefulness; he has neither served his country; nor benefited society—what shall we say for him? If he pray not for himself, we must pray for him—with God all things are possible.

The *statesman*, indefatigable in the public service, distinguished for integrity; but neglecting the offices of Christianity; whose lofty character power had not warped, nor cupidity debased, but whose religious principles, though they had never been renounced, had not been kept in exercise; a spirit of rare disinterestedness; a moralist of unblanched honour, but who pleaded that duty had left him little time for devotion! Should divine grace incline him at last to seek God, should he begin to pray to be prepared for death and judgment, he will deeply regret with the contrite cardinal, not that he served his king faithfully, but that his higher services had not been devoted to their highest object. In this frame of mind, that ambition which was satisfied with what earth could give, or kings reward, will appear no longer glorious in his eyes. True and just to his sovereign, devoted to his country, faithful to all but his Saviour and himself, he now laments that he had neglected to seek a better country, neglected to serve the King Eternal, the blessed and only Potentate; neglected to obtain an interest in a kingdom which shall not be moved, He feels that mere patriotism, grand as is its object, and important as is its end, will not afford support to a soul sinking at the approach of the inevitable hour, awed at the view of final judgment.

But these great and honourable presons are the very men to whom superior cares, and loftier duties, and higher responsibilities render prayer even more necessary, were it possible than to others. Nor does this duty trench upon other duties, for the compatabilities of prayer are universal. It is an exercise which has the property of incorporating itself with every other; not only not impeding, but advancing it. If secular thoughts and vain imaginations, often break in on our devout employments, let us allow Religion to vindicate her rights, by uniting herself with our worldly occupations. There is no crevice so small at which devotion may not slip in; in no other instance of so rich a blessing being annexed to so easy a condition; no other case in which there is any certainty, that to ask is to have. This the suitors to the great do not always find so easy from them as the great themselves may find from God.

Not only the elevation on which they stand makes this fence necessary for their personal security, by enabling them to bear the height without giddiness, but the guidance of God's hand is so essential to the operations they conduct, that the public prosperity, no less than their own safety, is involved in the practice of habitual prayer. God will be more likely to bless the hand which steers, and the head which directs, when both are ruled by the heart which prays. Happily we need not look out of our own age or nation for instances of public men, who, while they govern the country, are themselves governed by a religious principle; who petition the Almighty for direction, and praise Him for success.

The *hero*, who, in the hot engagement, surrounded with the 'pride, pomp, and circumstance of war,' bravely defied death; forgot all that was personal, and only remembered—nobly remembered, his country, and his immediate duty;—animated with the glory that was to be acquired with his arm, and almost ready to exclaim with the Roman patriot;

> '——————————What pity
> That we can die but once to serve our country!'

yet this hero, if he had ever made a conscience of prayer, may he not hereafter find, that the most successful instrumentality is a distinct thing in itself, and will be different in its results, from personal piety? May he not find that, though he saved others, himself he cannot save?

If, however, in after-life, in the cool shade of honourable retirement, he be brought, through the grace of God, to habituate himself to earnest prayer, he will deeply regret that he ever entered the field of battle without imploring the favour of the God of battles; that he had ever returned alive from slaughtered squadrons, without adoring the Author of his providential preservation. If his penitence be sincere, his prayer will be effectual. It will fortify him under the more depressing prospect of that death which is soon to be encountered in the solitude of his darkened chamber, without witnesses, without glory, without the cheering band, without the spirit-stirring drum; without the tumultuous acclamation; with no objects to distract his attention; no conflicting concerns to divide his thoughts; no human arm, either of others or his own, on which to depend. This timely reflection, this late, though never *too* late prayer, may still prepare him for a peaceful dying-bed; may lead him to lean on a stronger arm than his own, or that of an army; may conduct him to a victory over his last enemy, and thus dispose him to meet death in a safer state than when he despised it in the field, may bring him

to acknowledge, that while he continued to live without subjection to the Captain of his salvation, though he had fought bravely, he had not yet fought the good fight.

CHAP. VI.

Characters who reject Prayer.

Among the many articles of erroneous calculation, to which so much of the sin and misery of life may be attributed, the neglect or misuse of prayer will not form the lightest. The prophet Jeremiah, in his impassioned address to the Almighty, makes no distinction between those who acknowledge no God, and those who live without prayer. 'Pour out thy fury, O Lord, upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.'*

Some duties are more incumbent on some persons, and some on others; depending on the difference of talents, wealth, leisure, learning, station, and opportunities; but the duty of prayer is of imperative obligation; it is universal, because it demands none of any of the above requisites; it demands only a willing heart, a consciousness of sin, a sense of dependence, a feeling of helplessness. Those who voluntarily neglect it, shut themselves out from the presence of their Maker. 'I know you not,' must assuredly be the sentence of exclusion on those who thus 'know not God.' Nothing, it is true, can exclude them from His inspection, but they exclude themselves from his favour.

Many nearly renounce prayer, by affecting to make it so indefinite a thing, as not to require regular exercise. Just as many, also unhallow the Sabbath, who pretend they do nothing on week-days, which they should fear to do on Sundays. The truth is, instead of sanctifying the week-days by raising them to the duties of Sunday—which is indeed impracticable, let men talk as they please,—they desecrate the Sabbath to secular purposes, and so contrive to keep no Sunday at all.

Stated seasons for indispensable employments are absolutely necessary for so desultory, so versatile a creature as man. That which is turned over to any chance-time is seldom done at all; and those who despise the recurrence of appointed times and seasons are only less censurable than those who rest in them.

Other duties and engagements have their allotted seasons; why, then, should the most important duty in which an immortal being can be employed, by being left to accident, become liable to occasional omission, liable to increasing neglect, liable to total oblivion?

All the other various works of God know their appointed times;—the seasons, the heavenly bodies, day and night, seed-time and harvest;—all set an example of undeviating regularity. Why should man, the only thinking, be the only disorderly, work of Almighty power?

But whilst we are asserting the necessity of seasons of prayer, let us not be suspected of attaching undue importance to them; for all these are but the frame work, the scaffolding, the mere mechanical and subsidiary adjuncts; they are but the preparations for Christian worship; they remind us, they intimate to us, that an important work is to be done, but are no part of the work itself.

They, therefore, who most insist on the value of stated devotions, must never lose sight of that grand, and universal prime truth, that wherever we are, still we are in God's presence; whatever we have is His gift; whatever we hope is His promise; feelings which are commensurate with all time, all places, and limited to no particular scenes or seasons.

There is in some, in many it is to be feared, a readiness to acknowledge this general doctrine, which what is miscalled natural religion teaches; but who are far from including in their system the peculiarities, the duties, the devotions of Christianity. These are decorous men of the world, who, assuming the character of philosophical liberality, value themselves on having shaken off the shackles of prejudice, superstition, and system. They acknowledge a Creator of the universe, but it is in a vague and general way. They worship a Being 'whose temple is all space;' that is, every where but in the human heart. They put him as far as possible from themselves. Believing He has no providential care of them, they feel no personal interest in Him. God and nature are with them synonymous terms. That the creation of the world was His work, they do not go the length of denying; but that its government is in His hands, is with them very problematical.

In any case, however, they are assured that a Being of such immensity requires not the littleness of superstious forms, nor the petty limitations of stated seasons, and regular devotions; that he is infinitely above attending to our paltry concerns, though God himself anticipated this objection, when he condescended to declare, 'He that offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me.'

One says, *he* can adore the Author of nature in the contemplation of his works; that the mountains and the fields are *his* altar for worship. Another says, that his notion of religion is to deal honestly in his commerce with the world; both insist that they can serve God any where, and every where.—We know they can and we hope they do; but our Saviour, who knew the whole make of man, his levity, instability, and unfixedness, and who was yet no friend to the formalist or the superstitious, not only commands, at the hour of prayer, our entering into the closet, but our shutting the door, —a tacit reproof, perhaps, of the devotion of the Sadducean, as well as the publicity of the Pharisaic religion, but certainly an admonition of general obligation.

In treating of prayer, it would be a superfluous labour to address unbelievers with the same

* We have not thought it necessary to touch upon family or public worship, assuming that those who habitually observe private prayer will conscientiously attend to the more public exercises of devotion; and when it is recollected that the Divine Being, who performed a miracle to feed the multitude, that He might set an example of prayer in every possible form, previously blessed the simple but abundant meal, how shall a *dependent* creature dare omit a duty so sanctified.

arguments or persuasions which we would humbly propose to such as aver, with whatever degree of conviction, their belief in Christianity. It would be folly to address them with motives drawn from a book which they do not believe or do not read. With those who are ignorant of the first principles of religion, or those who reject them, we have no common ground on which to stand. St. Paul, with his usual discrimination, has left us an example in this as well as in all other cases. With the philosophical Athenians, he confined his reasonings to natural religion. To the Jewish king Agrippa, who 'believed the prophets,' in telling the story of his own conversion, he most judiciously introduced the great doctrines of remission of sins and justification by faith.

If the Pyrrhonist in question were to see a genuine Christian character delineated in all its dimensions, marked with its fair lineaments, and enlivened by its quickening spirit, such, for instance, as is exemplified in the character of St. Paul, he would consider it as a mere picture of the imagination; and would no more believe its reality than he believes that of Xenophon's Prince, the Stoic's Wise Man, Quintilian's Perfect Orator, or any other Platonic or Utopian representation. Or could he be brought to believe its actual existence, he would set such a man far above the necessity of prayer; he would emancipate him in his own independent worth: for how should he ever suspect that such a man would ever pray at all, much less would be in prayer more abundant, in humiliation more profound, in self-renunciation more abased?

Is it not probable that some of those inquiring minds, who adorned the Porch and the Academy, as well as the more favoured men under the old dispensation, who saw the future through the dim and distant perspective of prophecy, would have rejoiced to see the things which you see, and have not believed?

How gratefully would many of these illustrious spirits have accepted advantages which you overlook! How joyfully would they have received from Him who cannot lie the assurance, that if they would seek of Him that truth after which they 'were feeling,' they should find it! How gladly would that sublime and elegant spirit, whose favourite theme was pure spiritual love, have listened to the great apostle of love; to him who caught the flame as he leaned on the bosom of his affectionate Master!

How would this same exalted genius, who taught the immortality of the soul to the bright, yet blind Athenians,—he, whose penetrating mind rather guessed than knew what he taught, —whose keen eye caught some glimpses of a brighter state through the darkness which surrounded him,—how would he have gloried in that light and immortality which the Gospel revelation has brought to light?—but with what unspeakable rapture would he have learned that He who revealed the life could *give* it, that he who promised immortality could *bestow* it! With what obedient transport would he have heard this touching apostrophe, at once a strong reproof and a tender invitation,—'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!'—Ye philosophising cavillers, who live in the meridian splendour of this broad day, 'how will *you* escape, if you neglect so great salvation?'

But if pride, the dominant intellectual sin keeps the sceptic aloof from the humiliating duties of devotion, the habitual indulgence of the senses, in another class, proves an equal cause of alienating the heart from prayer.

The man absorbed by ease and enjoyment, and sunk in the relaxing softness of a voluptuous life, has a natural distaste to every thing that stands in opposition to the delights of that life. It is the smoothness of his course which makes it so slippery. He is lost before he feels that he is sinking. For whether we plunge at once from a precipitous height, or slide down from it on an inclined plane, still, while there is a yawning gulf at the bottom, our destruction is equally inevitable.

The systematic but decorous sensualist is one whose life is a course of sober luxury, of measured indulgence. He contrives to reconcile an abandonment of sound principle with a kind of orderly practice. He inquires rather what is decent than what is right; what will secure the favourable opinion of the world, especially his own class, rather than what will please God. His object is to make the most of this world. Selfishness has established his throne in his heart. His study is to make every thing and every person subservient to his own convenience, or pleasure, or profit, yet without glaringly trespassing on the laws of propriety or custom. Self is the source and centre of all his actions; but though this governing principle is always on the watch for its gratification, yet, as part of that gratification depends on a certain degree of reputation it frequently leads him to do right things, though without right motives; for the main spring sometimes sets the right in motion as well as the wrong.

He goes to church on all public occasions, but without devotion; gives alms without charity; subscribes to public institutions without being interested in their prosperity, except as they are frequently succeeded by a pleasant dinner and good company, and as the subscription-list of names he knows will be published. He lives on good terms with different, and even opposite classes of men, without being attached to any; he does them favours with affection, knowing that he shall have occasion to solicit favours in return, for he never does a small kindness without a view to asking a greater.

He deprecates excess in every thing, but always lives upon its confines.

Prayer enters not into his plan,—he has nothing to ask, for he has all in himself,—thanksgiving is still less his practice, for what he has he deserves.

He has read that 'to enjoy is to obey,' and he is always ready to give you this cheerful proof of the most unlimited obedience. He respects the laws of the country, especially such as guard property and game, and eagerly punishes the violators of both. But as to the laws of God, he thinks they were made to guard the possessions of the rich, to punish the vicious poor, and to frighten those who have nothing to lose. Yet he respects some of the commandments, and would placard on every post and pillar that

which says, 'Thou shalt not steal;' whilst he thinks that which says, 'Thou shalt not covet,' might be expunged from the Decalogue.

If you happen to speak of the helplessness of man, he thinks you are alluding to some paralytic; if of his dependence, to some hanger-on of a great man; if of his sinfulness, he adopts your opinion, for he reads the Newgate Calender; but of sin, as an inherent principle, of the turpitude of sin, except as it disturbs society, he knows nothing; but religion as a principle of action, but prayer as a source of peace or a ground of hope, he neither knows nor desires to know. The stream of life glides smoothly on without it; why should he ruffle its placid flow! why should he break in on the course of enjoyment with self-imposed austerities? He believes himself to be respected by his fellow-men, and the favour of God is not in all his thoughts. His real character the great day of decision will discover. Till then he will have two characters.

'Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee,' is perhaps the state of all others which most disqualifies and unfits for prayer. Not only the apostrophe excites the bodily appetite, but the SOUL is called upon to contemplate, to repose on, the soothing prospect, the delights of that voluptuousness for which the 'much goods are laid up.'

But when the prosperous fool says, 'soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for thee,'—the prosperous Christian says, 'soul tremble at thine ease—be on thy guard.—Thou hast, indeed, much goods laid up for thee, but it is in a future world. Lose not a large inheritance for a paltry possession; forfeit not an unalienable reversion for a life interest,—a life which this very night may be required of thee.'

Thus we see what restrains prayer in these two classes of character. The sceptic does not pray, because he does not believe that God is a hearer of prayer. The voluptuary, because he believes that God is such a one as himself, and because he has already gotten all that he wants of Him. His gold, and the means of gratifying his sensuality, would not be augmented by the dry duties of devotion; and with an exercise which would increase neither, he can easily dispense.

CHAP. VII.

Errors in Prayer

IT has lately been observed by a distinguished Christian orator, that 'many profess to believe the Bible to be true, who do not believe the truths *in* the Bible;' so may we not say, that all desire the gifts of God, but they do not desire God. If we profess to love Him, it is for our own sake; when shall we begin to love Him for himself? Many who do not go the length of omitting prayer, but pray merely from custom, or education, frequently complain that they find no benefit from prayer; others that they experience not the support and comfort promised to it. May not those who thus complain, and who, perhaps, are far from being enemies to religion, find, on a serious examination of their own hearts and lives, some irregularity in desire to be the cause of their discontent, and alleged punishment?

We are more disposed to lay down rules for the regulation of God's government, than to submit our will to it as he has settled it. If we do not now see the efficacy of the prayer which he has enjoined us to present to him, it may yet be producing its effect in another way. Infinite wisdom is not obliged to inform us of the manner, or the time, of his operations; what he expects of us is to persevere in the duty. The very obedience to the command is no small thing whatever be its imperceptible effects.

Under the apparent failure of our prayers, the source of our repinings must be looked for in the fact of our own blindness and imperfection; for the declarations of the Gospel are sure; their answer must be found in the grace of God in Christ Jesus, for his mercies are infallible. Wherever there is disappointment, we may be assured that it is not because he is wanting to us, but because we are wanting to ourselves.

The prophet's expression, 'the iniquity of our holy things,' will not be thoroughly understood except by those who thus seriously dive into the recesses of their own heart, feel their deficiencies, mark their wanderings, detect and lament their vain imaginations and impertinent thoughts. It is to be regretted that these worldly trifles are far more apt to intrude on us in prayer, than the devout affections excited by prayer are to follow us into the world. Business and pleasure break in on our devotions: when will the spirit of devotion mix with the concerns of the world?

You who lament the disappointment of your requests, suffer a few friendly hints.—Have you not been impatient because you receive not the things that you asked for immediately? How do you know, but that if you had persevered, God might have bestowed them? He certainly would, had He not in His wisdom foreseen they would not have been good for you; and, therefore, in His mercy withheld them. Is there not some secret, unsuspected infidelity lurking behind such impatience? Is it not virtually saying, there is no God to hear, or that he is unfaithful to his promises? For is it not absolute impiety to insinuate an accusation that the Supreme Judge of men and angels is capable of injustice, or liable to error? God has pleasure in the prosperity of His children. He neither grants nor denies any thing which is not accurately weighed and measured; which is not exactly suited to their wants, if not to their requests.

If we pray aright, it may please God, not only to grant that for which we pray, but that for which we do not pray. Supplicating for the best things as we before observed, we may receive inferior and unrequested things, as was the case with Solomon in his prayer for wisdom. God will not forget our labour of love. If he does not seem to notice it at present, he may lay it by for a time when it may be more wanted.

In praver we must take care not to measure our necessities by our desires: the former are few, the latter may be insatiable. A murmur-

ing spirit is a probable cause why our petitions are not granted. He who murmurs, distrusts the truth of God; and from distrust to infidelity the distance is not great. The certain way to prevent our obtaining what we desire, or enjoying what we have, is to feel impatient at what we do not receive, or to make an improper use of what has been granted to our prayers.

Or you may perhaps address God with sinister and corrupt views; as if you had left his omniscience out of his attributes; as if he might be entrapped with the 'secret ambush of a specious prayer. Your design in the application of the boon you solicit may not be for his glory. It may be the prayer of ambition, cloaked under the guise of more extensive usefulness; it may be the prayer of covetousness, under the pretext of providing for your family. It may be the prayer of injustice, a petition for success in some undertaking for yourself, to the circumvention of another's fairer claim. God, in mercy to our souls, refuses the gift which would endanger them.

Thus, then, if we ask and receive not, because we ask deceitfully or blindly, we must not wonder if our prayers are not answered. Or if we obtain what we solicit, and turn it to a bad account, or to no account at all, we must not be surprised if Divine grace is withheld, or withdrawn.

The same ill results may be expected if we ask formally or carelessly. Who has not felt, that there is a kind of mechanical memory in the tongue which runs over the form, without any aid of the understanding, without any concurrence of the will, without any consent of the affections? For do we not sometimes implore God to hear a prayer, to which we ourselves are not attending? And is not this presumptuously to demand from him that attention, which we ourselves are not giving to our own requests, even while we are in the act of making them?

A mere superficial form, by lulling the conscience, hardens the heart. The task is performed; but in what manner, or to what result, is not enquired. Genuine prayer is the homage of the soul to God, and not an expedient to pacify Him.

If you observe the form, but forget the dispositions it is intended to produce, it is evident the end of such prayer is not answered. Yet be not so far discouraged by feeling no sensible effect from prayer as to discontinue it; it is still a right thing to be found in the way of duty.

But, perhaps, you neglect to implore the Spirit of Christ towards the direction of your prayers, and His intercession for their acceptance. As there is no other name through which we can be saved, so there is no other through which we can be heard: we must not sever his mediation from His atonement. All His divine offices are not only in perfect harmony, but in inseparable union.* Or, perhaps, you have used the name of the Redeemer for form's sake, or as an accustomed close to your petitions, without imploring his efficacious grace in changing your heart, as well as in pardoning your sins.

Perhaps you think it is a sufficient qualification for acceptable prayer, that you are always forming good intentions; now, though these make up the value of good actions, yet good intentions, not acted upon, when occasion invites and duty calls, will not lessen, but inflame the reckoning. For does it not look as if you had resisted the offer of that Holy Spirit, which had originally prompted the intention; and may it not induce Him to withdraw His blessed influences, when they have been both invited and rejected?

Do you never, by unwholesome reading, fill the mind with images unfavourable to serious exercises? The children of the pure and holy God should feed on the bread of their Father's house, and not on the husks of the prodigal.

Do you never use profanely or lightly that name which is above every name? He who made the ear, shall He not hear? and, if He has heard during the day His awful name used by the thoughtless as an expletive, or by the impious as an interjection, or by the presumptuous as an imprecation, will He in the morning be called on as a Saviour, and in the evening as an Intercessor?

But it cannot be too frequently repeated, that no profession of faith, however orthodox; no avowal of trust in Christ, however confident; no entreaty for the aid of the Spirit, however customary, will avail, if it be not such an influential faith, such a practical trust, such a living devotedness, as shall be productive of holiness of heart and life, as shall tend to produce obedience to the commands, and submission to the will of God. This is an infallible test, by which you may try every doctrine, every principle of the Gospel. We do not mean the truth of them, for that is immutable; but your own actual belief, your own actual interest in them. If no such effects are visible, we deceive ourselves, and the principles we profess are not those by which we are governed.

Prayer is so obviously designed to humble the proud heart of the natural man, by giving him a feeling sense of his misery, his indigence, and his helplessness, that we should be unwilling to believe, that even the proudest man can carry his pride to the Throne of Grace, except to supplicate deliverance from it: yet such a character is actually drawn by Him who knew the thoughts and intents of the heart of man; and a long consideration will teach us, that the 'two men who went up into the temple to pray' were not intended as individual portraits, but as specimens of a class.

The proud man does not, perhaps, always thank God that he is not guilty of adultery or extortion, to which vices he may have little temptation; nor does he glory in paying tithe and taxes, to which the law would compel him Yet is he never disposed, like the Pharisee, to proclaim the catalogue of his own virtues? to bring in his comparative claims, as if it were a good thing to be better than the bad? Is he never disposed to carry in his eye, (as if he would remind his Maker of his superiority,) certain persons who are possibly less the objects of Di

* We observe with regret, that, in many public forms of prayer, the aid of his mediation is much more frequently implored, than the benefits of his death and merits. He is, indeed, our divine Intercessor, but his mere intercession is not the whole source of our dependence on Him.

vine displeasure than he, by his pride and selfishness, may have rendered himself; although his regularity in the forms of devotion may have made him more respectable in the world, than the poor reprobated being whom he praises God he does not resemble? It is the lowly abasement, the touching self-condemnation, the avowed poverty, the pleaded misery, of the destitute beggar that finds acceptance. It is the hungry whom God's mercy fills with good things, it is the rich in his own conceit whom His displeasure sends away empty.

Whenever you are tempted to thank God that you are not like other men, let it be in comparing your own condition with that of the afflicted and bereaved among your own friends; compare yourself with the paralytic on his couch; with the blind beggar by the way-side; with the labourer in the mine; think on the wretch in the galleys; on the condemned in the dungeons of despotic governments. Above all, think, and this is the intolerable *acme* of sin in the inflictor, and of misery in the sufferer,—think on the wretched negro chained in the hold of a slave-ship! Think seriously on these, and put pride into your prayer if you can.—Think on these, not to triumph in your own superiority, but to adore the undeserved mercy of God, in giving you blessings to which you have no higher claim, and let your praise of yourself be converted into prayer for them.

For there are no dispositions of the heart which are more eminently promoted by prayer than contentment and patience. They are two qualities of the same colour, but of different shades, and are generally, when found at all, found in the same breast. Both are the offspring of genuine religion, both nurtured by cordial prayer. The cultivation of the one, under easy circumstances, prepares for the exercise of the other in more trying situations. Both emanate from the same Divine principle, but are drawn out by different occasions and exercised under varying circumstances.

Content is the tranquillity of the heart, prayer is its aliment: it is satisfied under every dispensation of Providence, and takes thankfully its allotted portion, never inquiring whether a little more would not be a little better; knowing that if God had so judged, it would have been as easy for him to have given the more as the less. That is not true content, which does not enjoy as the gift of Infinite Wisdom what it has, nor is that true patience, which does not suffer meekly the loss of what it had, because it is not His will that it should have it longer. The language of the patient man under trials is, It is the Lord. Shall a living man complain? is his interrogation. 'A good man,' says Solomon, 'is satisfied from himself.' Here the presumptuous might put in *his* claim to the title. But his pretension arises from his mistake, for his satisfaction is *with himself*, that of the Christian with Providence; it arises from the grace of God shed abroad in his heart, which is become a perennial spring of consolation and enjoyment; and which by persevering prayer, is indented into his very soul. Content knows how to want and how to abound; this is the language of equanimity: 'Shall I not receive evil from the hand of the Lord, as well as good?—This is the language of patience. Content is always praising God for what she possesses, patience is always justifying him for what she suffers. The cultivation of the one effectually prepares us for the exercise of the other. But these dispositions are not inherent in the human heart. How are they generated? By the influences of the Holy Spirit. How are they kept alive? By heart felt devotion.

Perhaps the impediment which hinders the benefit of prayer in characters apparently correct, may be the fatal habit of indulging in some secret sin, the private cherishing of some wrong propensity, the fondly entertaining of some evil imagination. Not being accustomed to controul at other times, it intrudes when you would willingly expel it; for a guest which is unreservedly let in at other seasons, and cordially entertained, will too frequently break in when you desire to be alone.

The Scriptures are explicit on this subject. It is not merely the committing actual sin that ruins the comfort growing out of prayer; the Divine prohibition runs higher; its interdiction is more intimately interior; it extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The door of heaven is shut against prayer under such circumstances. 'If I regard iniquity in my *heart*, the Lord will not hear me.' A cherished corruption in the mind is more likely to interpose between God and the soul, because it does not assume the shape and bulk of crime. A practical offence, the effect of sudden temptation, is more likely to be followed by keen repentance, deep self-abasement, and fervent application for pardon; whereas to the close bosom-sin, knowing that no human charge can be brought against it, the soul secretly returns with a fondness facilitated by long indulgence, and only whetted by a short separation.

It was, perhaps, this acute experimental feeling which led David to pray to be delivered from 'secret sins;' these, he was probably conscious had led to those 'presumptuous sins,' which had entangled his soul and embittered his life; and whose dominion he so frequently and fervently deprecates. This, it is to be feared, may be the case with some, whose language and exterior cause them to be ranked with the religious; these are, at least, the dangers to which they are most exposed. It is, therefore, that our Lord connects, in indissoluble union, watching with prayer.

Perhaps when the conscience is more than usually awakened, you pray with some degree of fervour to be delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin. But if you stop here your devotion is most imperfect. If you do not also pray to be delivered from its power and dominion over your heart and life, you do not go much farther than the heathens of old. They seem to have had a strong feeling of guilt, by their fond desire of expiating it by their sacrifices and lustrations.

But such is the love of present ease, and the desire of respite, that you think, perhaps, it is better not 'to be tormented before the time.' How many now in a state of irreversible misery wish they had been tormented sooner, that they

might not be tormented forever! But with you it is not yet too late. With you the day of grace, which to them is over, is not yet past. Use it, then, without delay, instead of persisting in laying up fresh regrets for eternity.

But too many deceive themselves, by imagining, that when they have pronounced their prayer the duty is accomplished with the task; the occult medicine being taken, the charm is to work of itself. They consider it as a duty quite distinct and unconnected with any other. They forget that it is to produce in them a principle which is to mix with all the occurences of the day. Prayer, though not intended as a talisman, is yet proposed as a remedy. The effect of its operation is to be seen in subduing the passions, assisting to govern the temper, in bridling the tongue, in checking not only calumny, but levity; not only impure, but vain conversation.

But we have a wonderful talent at deceiving ourselves. We have not a fault for which we do not find an apology. Our ingenuity on this head is inexhaustible. In matters of religion men complain that they are weak; a complaint they are not forward to urge in worldly matters. They lament that their reluctance to pray arises from being unable to do what God, in his word, expects them to do. But is not this virtual rebellion, only with a smooth face and a soft name? God is too wise not to know exactly what we *can* do, and too just to expect from us what we *cannot*.

This pretence of weakness, though it looks like humility, is only a mask for indolence, and a screen for selfishness.

We certainly *can* refuse to indulge ourselves in what pleases us, when we know it displeases God. We *can* obey his commandments with the aid of the infused strength which He has promised, and which we *can* ask. It is not He who is unwilling to give, but we who are averse to pray. The temptations to vice are strengthened by our passions, as our motives to virtue are weakened by them.

Our great spiritual enemy would not be so potent, if we ourselves did not put arms into his hands. The world would not be so powerful an enchantress, if we did not assist the enchantment, by voluntarily yielding to it; by insensibly forsaking him who is our strength. We make apologies for yielding to both by pleading their power and our own weakness. But the inability to resist is of our own making. Both enemies are indeed powerful, but they are not irresistible. If we assert the contrary, is it not virtually saying 'Greater are they that are against us than He that is for us?'

But we are traitors to our own cause: we are conquered by our own consent; we surrender not so much because the conqueror is powerful, as because the conquered is willing.

Without diminishing any thing of *His* grace and glory to whom every good thought we think, every victory over sin we obtain, is owing, may it not add to our happiness, even in heaven, to look back on every conquest we here obtained by prayer over our grand spiritual enemy, every triumph over the world, every victory over ourselves? Will not the remembrance of one act of resistance then, far surpass every gratification now, which the three confederate enemies of our souls may present to us?

It is not merely by our prayers that we must give glory to God. Our Divine Master has expressly told us wherein His Father is glorified; it is 'when we bring forth much fruit.' It is by our works we shall be judged, and not by our prayers. And what a final consummation is it that obedience to the will of God, which is our duty here, shall be our nature hereafter! What is now our prayer shall then be our possession; there the obligation to obey shall become a necessity, and that necessity shall be happiness ineffable.

The various evils here enumerated, with many others not touched upon, are so many dead weights on the wings of prayer; they cause it to gravitate to earth, obstruct its ascent, and hinder it from piercing to the throne of God.

The Lord's Prayer.

CHAP. VIII.

It is not customary for kings to draw up petitions for their subjects to present to themselves; much less do earthly monarchs consider the act of petitioning worthy of reward, nor do they number the petitions so much among the services done them, as among the burthens imposed on them. Whereas it is a singular benefit to our fallen race that the King of kings both dictates our petitions, and has promised to recompense us for making them.

In the Lord's prayer may be found the seminal principle of all the petitions of a Christian, both for spiritual and temporal things; and however in the fulness of his heart he will necessarily depart from his model in his choice of expressions: into whatever laminæ he may expand the pure gold of which it is composed, yet he will still find the general principle of his own more enlarged application to God, substantially contained in this brief but finished compendium.

Is it not a striking proof of the divine condescension, that knowing our propensity to err, our blessed Lord should himself have dictated our petitions, partly perhaps as a corrective of existing superstitions, but certainly to leave behind Him a *regulator* by which all future ages should *set* their devotions; and we might perhaps establish it as a safe rule for prayer in general, that any petition which cannot in some shape, be accommodated to the spirit of some part of the Lord's prayer may not be right to be adopted.

The distinction between the personal nature of Faith, and the universal character of Charity, as it is exercised in prayer, is specifically exhibited in the two pronouns which stand at the head of the Creed and of the Lord's Prayer. We cannot exercise faith for another, and therefore can only say *I* believe. But when we offer up our petitions, we address them to *our* Father, implying that he is the Author, Governor, and Supporter, not of ourselves only, but of his whole

rational creation. It conveys also a beautiful idea of that boundless charity which links all mankind in one comprehensive brotherhood. The plural *us*, continued through the whole prayer, keeps up the sentiment with which it sets out, tends to exclude selfishness, and to excite philanthropy, by recommending to God the temporal as well as spiritual wants of the whole family of mankind.

The nomenclature of the Divinity is expressed in Scripture by every term which can convey ideas of grandeur or of grace, of power or of affection, of sublimity or tenderness, of majesty or benignity; by every name which can excite terror or trust, which can inspire awe or consolation.

But of all compellations by which the Supreme Being is designated in his holy word, there is not one so soothing so attractive, so interesting, as that of FATHER; it includes the idea of reconcilement, pardon, acceptance, love. It swallows up his grandeur in His beneficence. It involves, also, the inheritance belonging to our filial relation. It fills the mind with every image that is touching, and the heart with every feeling that is affectionate. It inspires fear softened by love, and exhibits authority mitigated by tenderness. The most endearing image the Psalmist could select from the abundant store-house of his rich conceptions, to convey the kindest sentiment of God's pity towards them that fear Him, was that it resembles the pity of a 'father for his *own children*.' In directing us to pray to our Father, our Divine Master does not give the command without the example. He every where uses the term he recommends. 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth!' And in the 17th of St. John he uses this tender name no less than seven times.

'Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us,' was the ill-understood prayer of the inquiring disciples. To us this petition is granted before it is made. Does he not show himself to all as a Father, in the wonders of his creation, in the wonders of our being, preservation, and support? Has He not, in a more especial manner revealed Himself to us as a Father in the sublime wonder of His word, in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the perpetual gift of the Holy Spirit? Does He not show Himself our Father, if, when we have done evil, He withholds His chastening hand; if, when we have sinned, He still bears with us; if, when we are deaf to His call, He repeats it; if, when we delay, He waits for us; if, when we repent, He pardons us; if, when we return, He receives us; if, when in danger, He preserves us from falling; and if, when we fall, He raises us?

We have a beautiful illustration of the goodness of God as a merciful and tender Father in the deeply affecting parable of the Prodigal Son. Though the undone spendthrift knew that he had no possible claim on the goodness he had so notoriously offended, yet he felt that the endearing name of Father had an eloquence that might plead for forgiveness of his offence, though he feared, not for restoration to affection and favour. But while he only meekly aspired to a place among the servants, while he only humbly pleaded for a little of their redundant bread, he was received as a pardoned, reconciled, beloved child.

Our Lord's Introduction, 'Pray ye therefore after this *manner*,' neither forbids digression nor amplification. The recollection that His dwelling-place is in Heaven, is calculated to remind us of the immeasurable distance between the petitioner and his God, and to encourage us to communicate with the Father of Spirits: with Him who is 'glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders;' and which of His wonders is more astonishing than this inconceivably marvellous condescension?

Christianity, we must repeat, is a practical religion, and in order to use aright the prayer our Lord has given us, we must model our life by it as well as our petitions.

If we pray that the name of God may be hallowed, yet neglect to hallow it ourselves, by family as well as personal devotion, and a conscientious attendance on all the ordinances of public worship, we defeat the end of our praying, by falling short of its obligation.

The discrepancies between our prayers and our practice do not end here. How frequently are we solemnly imploring of God, that 'His kingdom may come,' while we are doing nothing to promote his kingdom of grace here, and consequently His kingdom of glory hereafter.

If we pray that God would 'give His Son the heathen for His inheritance,' and yet make it a matter of indifference, whether a vast proportion of the globe should live heathens or die Christians; if we pray that 'the knowledge of the Lord may cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea,' yet act as if we were indifferent whether Christianity ended as well as began at home. If we pray that 'the sound may go out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world,' and yet are satisfied to keep the sound within our own hearing, and the words within our own island, is not this a prayer which goeth out of feigned lips? When we pray that 'His will may be done,' we know that His will is, that 'all should be saved, that no one should perish.' When, therefore, we assist in sending the Gospel to the dark and distant corners of the earth, then, and not till then, may we consistently desire of God in our prayers, that 'His saving health may be known to all nations.'

In praying, therefore, that 'His kingdom may come, do we not pray that all false religions, all idolatrous worship may be universally abolished, and the kingdom of Messiah be established throughout the world?

If praying for our 'daily bread' is a petition expressing our dependence, it is also a petition of temperance. It teaches us to subordinate our desires after worldly things, and to ask for them in great moderation. It is worth observing, that requests for temporal blessings and spiritual mercies are so interwoven in this perfect form, that in repeating it, we cannot pray for our 'daily bread' without imploring 'forgiveness of our trespasses.'

'Deliverance from evil' is a petition of indefinite extent, and is closely connected with that which precedes it. God cannot 'lead us into

temptation,' but His Providence may lead us into situations which, acting on the corruption of our hearts, may eventually produce the evil we deprecate.

When we pray, therefore, not to be 'led into temptation,' we are asking of God to cure those sinful propensities which are likely to expose us to it, and to preserve us from those circumstances which, by subjecting us to difficulty and danger, may terminate in sin.

Temptation, in the language of Scripture, frequently implies probation; a trial sent in order to lay open our real character. Thus God, in tempting Abraham, gave occasion to that illustrious exemplification of faith and obedience in this devoted Patriarch. God is also said to try Hezekiah. This trial led him into the vain display of magnificence and wealth before the foreign ambassadors. The Searcher of hearts already knew this infirmity, yet it is said by the sacred historian, that 'God left him to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart.' Doubtless the public exposure of his pride was calculated to lead Hezekiah to subsequent repentance and humility; for, in spite of this error he was eminently conspicuous among the awfully few pious kings of Judah.

There is in the Lord's prayer a concatenation of the several clauses, what in human composition the critics call concealed method. The petitions rise out of each other. Every part also is, as it were, fenced round, the whole meeting in a circle; for the desire that God's name may be hallowed, His will be done, and His kingdom come, with which the prayer opens, is referred to, and confirmed by the ascription at the close. If the kingdom, the power, and the glory, are His, then his ability to do and to give, is declared to be infinite.

CHAP. IX.

The Lord's Prayer continued.—'Thy Will be Done.'

THE Holy Scriptures frequently comprise the essence of the Christian temper in some short aphorism, apostrophe or definition. The essential spirit of the Christian life may be said to be included in this one brief petition of the LORD'S PRAYER, 'THY WILL BE DONE.'

There is a haughty spirit which, though it will not complain, does not care to submit. It arrogates to itself the dignity of enduring, without any claim to the meekness of yielding. Its silence is stubbornness, its fortitude is pride; its calmness is apathy without, and discontent within. In such characters it is not so much the will of God, which is the rule of conduct, as the scorn of pusillanimity. Not seldom, indeed, the mind puts in a claim for a merit to which the nerves could make out a better title. Yet the suffering which arises from acute feeling is so far from deducting from the virtue of resignation, that when it does not impede the sacrifice it enhances the value. True resignation is the hardest lesson in the whole school of Christ. It is the oftenest taught and the latest learnt. It is not a task which, when once got over in some particular instance, leaves us master of the subject. The necessity of following up the lesson we have begun, presents itself almost every day in some new shape, occurs under some fresh modification. The submission of yesterday does not exonerate us from the resignation of to-day. The principle, indeed, once thoroughly wrought into the soul, gradually reconciles us to the frequent demand for its exercise, and renders every successive call more easy.

We read dissertations on this subject, not only with the most entire concurrence of the judgment, but with the most apparent conviction of the mind. We write essays upon it in the hour of peace and composure, and fancy that what we have discussed with so much ease and self-complacence, in favour of which we offer so many arguments to convince and so many motives to persuade, cannot be very difficult to practise. But to convince the understanding and to correct the will is a very different undertaking; and not less difficult when it comes to our own case than it was in the case of those for whom we have been so coolly and dogmatically prescribing. It is not till we practically find how slowly our own arguments produce any effect on ourselves that we cease to marvel at their inefficacy on others. The sick physician tastes with disgust the bitterness of the draught, to the swallowing of which he wondered the patient had felt so much repugnance and the reader is sometimes convinced by the arguments which fail of their effect on the writer, when he is called, not to discuss but to act, not to reason but to suffer. The theory is so just, and the duty so obvious, that even bad men assent to it; the exercise so trying that the best men find it more easy to commend the rule than to adopt it. But he who has once gotten engraved, not in his memory but in his heart, this divine precept, THY WILL BE DONE, has made a proficiency which will render all subsequent instruction comparatively easy.

Though sacrifices and oblations were offered to God under the law by His own express appointment, yet he peremptorily rejected them by his prophets, when presented as substitutes instead of signs. Will He, under a more perfect dispensation, accept of any observances which are meant to supersede internal dedication,—of any offerings unaccompanied by complete desire of acquiescence in his will? 'My son give me thine *heart*,' is his brief but imperative command. But, before we can be brought to comply with the spirit of this requisition, God must enlighten our understanding, that our devotion may be rational; He must rectify our will, that it may be voluntary; He must purify our heart, that it may be spiritual.

Submission is a duty of such high and holy import that it can only be learnt of the Great Teacher. If it could have been acquired by mere moral institution, the wise sayings of the ancient philosophers would have taught it. But their most elevated standard was low: their strongest motives were the brevity of life, the instability of fortune, the dignity of suffering virtue, things within their narrow sphere of

judging; things true, indeed, as far as they go, but a substratum by no means equal to the superstructure to be built on it. It wanted depth, and strength, and solidity, for the purposes of support. It wanted the only true basis, the assurance that God orders all things according to the purposes of his will for our final good; it wanted that only sure ground of faith by which the genuine Christian cheerfully submits in entire dependence on the promises of the Gospel.

Nor let us fancy that we are to be languid and inactive recipients of the Divine dispensations. Our own souls must be enlarged, our own views must be ennobled, our own spirit must be dilated. An inoperative acquiescence is not all that is required of us;—and, if we must not slacken our zeal in doing good, so we must not be remiss in opposing evil, on the flimsy ground that God has permitted evil to infest the world. If it be his will to permit sin, it is an opposition to his will when we do not labour to counteract it. This surrender, therefore, of our will to that of God, takes in a large sweep of actual duties, as well as the whole compass of passive obedience. It involves doing as well as suffering, activity as well as acquiescence, zeal as well as forbearance. Yet the concise petition daily slips off the tongue without our reflecting on the weight of the obligation we are imposing on ourselves. We do not consider the extent and consequences of the prayer we are offering, the sacrifices, the trials, the privations it may involve, and the large indefinite obedience to all the known and unknown purpose of Infinite Wisdom to which we are pledging ourselves.

There is no case in which we more shelter ourselves in generalities. Verbal sacrifices cost little, cost nothing. The familiar habit of repeating the petition almost tempts us to fancy that the duty is as easy as the request is short. We are ready to think that a prayer rounded off in four monosyllables can scarcely involve duties co-extensive with our whole course of being; that, in uttering them we renounce all right in ourselves; that we acknowledge the universal indefeasible title of *the blessed and only Potentate;* that we make over to Him the right to do in us, and with us, and by us, whatever he sees good for ourselves, whatever will promote His glory, though by means sometimes as incomprehensible to our understanding, as unacceptable to our will, because we neither know the motive, nor perceive the end. These simple words, THY WILL BE DONE, express an act of faith the most sublime, an act of allegiance the most unqualified; and, while they make a declaration of entire submission to a sovereign the most absolute, they are at the same time, a recognition of love to a Father the most beneficent.

We must remember, that in offering this prayer, we may, by our own request, be offering to resign what we most dread to lose, to give up what is dear to us as our own soul; we may be calling on our heavenly Father to withhold what we are most anxiously labouring to attain, and to withdraw what we are most sedulously endeavouring to keep. We are solemnly renouncing our property in ourselves, we are distinctly making ourselves over again to Him whose we already are. We specifically entreat Him to do with us what He pleases, to mould us to a conformity to His image, without which we shall never be resigned to his will; in short, to dispose of us as His infinite wisdom sees best, however contrary to the scheme which our blindness has laid down as the path to unquestionable happiness.

To render this trying petition easy to us, is one great reason why God, by such a variety of providences, afflicts and brings us low. He knows that we want incentives to humility, even more than incitements to virtuous actions. He shows us in many ways, that self-sufficiency and happiness are incompatible; that pride and peace are irreconcilable; that following our own way, and doing our own will, which we conceive to be the very essence of felicity, is in direct opposition to it.

Under the pressure of any affliction, *Thy will be done*, as it is the patient Christian's unceasing prayer, so it is the ground of his unvarying practice. In this brief petition he finds his whole duty comprised and expressed. It is the unprompted request of his lips, it is the motto inscribed on his heart, it is the principle which regulates his life, it is the voice which says to the stormy passions, 'Peace! be still!' Let others expostulate, he submits. Nay, even submission does not adequately express his feelings. We frequently submit, not so much from duty as from necessity; we submit, because we cannot help ourselves. Resignation sometimes may be mere acquiescence in the sovereignty, rather than conviction of the wisdom and goodness of God; while the patient Christian not only yields to the dispensation, but adores the dispenser. He not only submits to the blow, but vindicates the hand which inflicts it: 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways.' He refers to the chastisement as a proof of the affection of the chastiser. 'I know that in very faithfulness thou hast caused me to be afflicted. He recurs to the thoughtlessness of his former prosperity. 'Before I was afflicted I went astray,' and alludes to the trial less as a punishment than a paternal correction. If he prays for a removal of the present suffering, he prays also that it may not be removed from him, till it has been sanctified to him. He will not even part from the trial till he has laid hold on the benefit.

'Christianity,' says Bishop Horsley, 'involves many paradoxes, but no contradictions.' To be able to say with entire surrender of the heart, 'Thy will be done,' is the true liberty of the children of God, that liberty with which Christ has made us free. It is a liberty, not which delivers us from restraint, but which, freeing us from our subjection to the senses, makes us find no pleasure but in order, no safety but in the obedience of an intelligent being to his rightful Lord. In delivering us from the heavy bondage of sin, it transfers us to the 'easy yoke of Christ,' from the galling slavery of the world to the 'light burden of him who overcame it.'

This liberty, in giving a true direction to the affections, gives them amplitude as well as elevation. The more unconstrained the will becomes, the more it fixes on one object; once fixed on the highest, it does not use its liberty

for versatility, but for constancy; not for change, but fidelity; not for wavering, but adherence.

It is, therefore, no less our interest than our duty, to keep the mind in an habitual posture of submission. 'Adam,' says Dr. Hammond, 'after his expulsion, was a greater slave in the wilderness than he had been in the inclosure.' If the barbarian ambassador came expressly to the Romans to negotiate from his country for permission to be their servants, declaring that a voluntary submission even to a foreign power, was preferable to a wild and disorderly freedom, well may the Christian triumph in the peace and security to be attained by a complete subjugation to Him who is emphatically called *the God of order.*

A vital faith manifests itself in vital acts.—'Thy will be done,' is eminently a practical petition. The first indication of the gaoler's change of heart was a practical indication. He did not ask, 'Are there few that be saved?' but 'What shall *I* do to be saved?'—The first symptom St. Paul gave of his conversion was a practical symptom: 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do?*' He entered on his new course, with a total renunciation of his own will. It seemed to this great Apostle to be the turning point between infidelity and piety, whether he should follow his own will or the will of God. He did not amuse his curiosity with speculative questions. His own immediate and grand concern engrossed his whole soul. Nor was his question a mere hasty effusion, an interrogative springing out of that mixed feeling of awe and wonder which accompanied his first overwhelming convictions. It became the abiding principle which governed his future life, which made him in labours more abundant. Every successive act of duty, every future sacrifice of ease, sprung from it, was influenced by it. His own will, his ardent, impetuous, fiery will, was not merely subdued, it was extinguished. His powerful mind indeed lost none of its energy, but his proud heart relinquished all its independence.

We allow and adopt the term *devotion* as an indispensable part of religion, because it is supposed to be limited to the act; but *devotedness*, from which it is derived, does not meet with such ready acceptation, because this is a habit, and a habit involves more than an act; it pledges us to consistency, it implies fixedness of character, a general confirmed state of mind, a giving up what we are, and have, and do, to God. Devotedness does not consist in the length of our prayers, nor in the number of our good works, for, though these are the surest evidences of piety, they are not its essence.—Devotedness consists in doing and suffering, bearing and forbearing, in the way which God prescribes. The most inconsiderable duty performed with alacrity, if it opposes our own inclination; the most ordinary trial, met with a right spirit is more acceptable to Him than a greater effort of our own devising. We do not commend a servant for his activity, if ever so fervently exercised, in doing whatever gratifies his own fancy; we do not consider his performance as obedience, unless his activity has been exercised in doing what we required of him. Now, how can we insist on his doing what contradicts his own humour, while we allow ourselves to feel repugnance in serving our heavenly Master, when His commands do not exactly fall in with our own inclination?

Nothing short, then, of this sincere devotedness to God can enable us to maintain an equality of mind under unequal circumstances. We murmur that we have not the things we ask amiss, not knowing that they are withheld by the same mercy by which the things that are good for us are granted.—Things good in themselves may not be good for us. A resigned spirit is the proper disposition to prepare us for receiving mercies, or for having them denied. Resignation of soul, like the allegiance of a good subject, is always in readiness, though not always in action; whereas an impatient mind is a spirit of disaffection, always prepared to revolt when the will of the sovereign is in opposition to that of the subject. This seditious principle is the infallible characteristic of an unrenewed mind.

We must also give God leave, not only to take His own way, but His own time. The appointment of seasons, as well as of events, is His. 'He waits to be gracious.' If he delays, it is because we are not yet brought to that state which fits us for the grant of our request. It is not He who must be brought about, but we ourselves. Or, perhaps, He refuses the thing we ask, in order to give us a better. We implore success in an undertaking, instead of which, He gives us content under the disappointment. We ask for the removal of pain; He gives us patience under it. We desire deliverance from our enemies: he sees that we have not yet turned their enmity to our improvement, and he will bring us to a better temper, by further exercise. We desire him to avert some impending trial; instead of averting it, he takes away its bitterness; he mitigates what we believed would be intolerable, by giving us a right temper under it. How, then, can we say he has failed of his promise, if he gives something more truly valuable than we had requested at his hands?

A sincere love of God will make us thankful when our prayers are granted, and patient and cheerful when they are denied. Every fresh disappointment will teach us to distrust ourselves, and confide in God. Experience will instruct us that there may be a better way of hearing our requests than that of granting them. Happy for us that He to whom they are addressed knows what is best and acts upon that knowledge.

CHAP. X.

A slight scheme of Prayer proposed for young persons on the model of the Lord's Prayer.

Will the pious mother pardon the liberty here taken of suggesting the few following hints? Those who are aware of the inestimable value of prayer themselves, will naturally be anxious, not only that this duty should be earnestly inculcated on their children, but that they should be taught it in the best manner; and

such parents need little persuasion or counsel on the subject. Yet children of decent and orderly (I will not say of strictly religious) families are often so superficially instructed in this important business, that when they are asked what prayers they use, it is not unusual for them to answer, 'The Lord's Prayer and the *Creed*.' And even some who are better taught, are not always made to understand with sufficient clearness the specific distinction between the two, that the one is the confession of their *faith*, and the other the model for their *supplications*. By this confused and indistinct beginning, they set out with a perplexity in their ideas, which is not always completely disentangled in more advanced life.

An intelligent mother will seize the first occasion which the child's opening understanding shall allow, for making a little course of lectures on the Lord's Prayer, taking every division or short sentence separately; for each furnishes valuable materials for a distinct lecture. Children should be led gradually through every part of this Divine composition; they should be taught to break it into regular divisions into which, indeed, it so naturally resolves itself. They should be made to comprehend, one by one, each of its short but weighty sentences: to amplify and spread them out for the purpose of better understanding them, not in their most extensive and critical sense, but in their most simple and obvious meanings; for in these condensed and substantial expressions, as we have before observed, every word is an ingot, and will bear beating out; so that the teacher's difficulty will not so much be what she shall say, as what she shall suppress; so abundant is the expository matter which this succinct pattern suggests.

When children have acquired a pretty good conception of the meaning of each division, they should then be made to observe the connection, relation, and dependence of the several parts of this Prayer, one upon another; for there is great method and connection in it. A judicious interpreter will observe how logically and consequently one clause grows out of another, though she will use neither the word logically nor consequence; for all explanations should be made in the most plain and familiar terms, it being words, and not things which commonly perplex children, if, as it sometimes happens, the teacher, though not wanting sense, wants perspicuity and simplicity.

Young persons, from being completely instructed in this short composition, (which, as it is to be their guide and model through life, too much pains cannot be bestowed on it,) will have a clear conception, not only of its individual contents, but of Prayer in general, than many ever attain, though their memory has been, perhaps, loaded with long and unexplained forms, which they have been accustomed to swallow in the lump, without scrutiny and without discrimination.

I would have it understood, that by these little comments I do not mean that children should be put to learn dry, and, to them, unintelligible expositions; but that the exposition is to be colloquial. And here I must remark in general, that the teacher is sometimes unreasonably apt to relieve herself at the child's expense by loading the *memory* of a little creature on occasions in which far other faculties should be put in exercise. Children themselves should be made to furnish a good part of this extemporaneous commentary by their answers; in which answers they will be much assisted by the judgment the teacher uses in her manner of questioning. And the youthful understanding, when its powers are properly set at work, will soon strengthen by exercise, so as to furnish reasonable, if not very correct, answers.

Written forms of prayer are not only useful and proper, but indispensably necessary to begin with. But I will hazard the remark, that if children are thrown *exclusively* on the best forms, if they are made to commit them to memory like a copy of verses, and to repeat them in a dry customary way, they will produce little effect on their minds. They will not understand what they repeat, if we do not early open to them the important *scheme* of prayer. Without such an elementary introduction to this duty, they will afterwards be either ignorant, or enthusiastic in both. We should give them *knowledge* before we can expect them to make much progress in *piety*, and as a due preparative to it: Christian instruction in this resembling the sun, who, in the course of his communication, gives light before he gives heat. And to labour to excite a spirit of devotion without first infusing that knowledge out of which it is to grow, is practically reviving the popish maxim, that ignorance is the mother of Devotion, and virtually adopting the popish rule, of praying in an unknown tongue.

Children, let me again observe, will not attend to their prayers if they do not understand them; and they will not understand them, if they are not taught to analyse, to dissect them, to know their component parts, and to methodise them.

It is not enough to teach them to consider prayer under the general idea that it is an application to God for what they want, and an acknowledgment to Him for what they have. This, though true in the gross, is not sufficiently precise and correct. They should learn to define and to arrange all the different parts of prayer. And as a preparative to prayer itself, they should be impressed with as clear an idea as their capacity and the nature of the subject will admit, of 'HIM with whom they have to do.' His omnipresence is, perhaps, of all his attributes, that of which we may make the first practical use. Every head of prayer is founded on some great Scriptural truths, which truths the little analysis here suggested will materially assist to fix in their minds.

On the knowledge that 'God is,' that he is an infinitely holy Being, and that 'he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him,' will be grounded the first part of prayer, which is *adoration*. The creature devoting itself to the Creator, or *self-dedication* next presents itself. And if they are first taught that important truth, that as needy creatures they want help, which may be done by some easy analogy, they will easily be led to understand how na-

turally *petition* forms a most considerable branch of prayer; and Divine grace being among the things for which they are to petition, this naturally suggests to the mind the doctrine of the influences of the Holy Spirit. And when to this is added the conviction which will be readily worked into an ingenuous mind that as offending creatures they want pardon, the necessity of *confession* will easily be made intelligible to them. But they should be brought to understand that it must not be such a general and vague confession as awakens no sense of personal humilation, as excites no recollection of their own more peculiar and individual faults. But it must be a confession founded on self-knowledge, which is itself to arise out of the practice of self-examination. On the gladness of heart natural to youth, it will be less difficult to impress the delightful duty of *thanksgiving*, which forms so considerable a branch of prayer. In this they should be habituated to recapitulate not only their general, but to enumerate their peculiar, daily, and incidental mercies, in the same specific manner as they should have been taught to detail their individual and personal *wants* in the petitionary, and their *faults* in the confessional part. The same warmth of feeling which will more readily dispose them to express their gratitude to God in thanksgiving, will also lead them more gladly to express their love to their parents and friends, by adopting another indispensable, and to an affectionate heart, pleasing part of prayer, which is *intercession*. It will be needful to inform them that the omission of this important clause in the *Lord's Prayer*, arises from the Divine Intercessor not having then assumed his mediatorial office.

When they have been made, by a plain and perspicuous mode of instruction, fully to understand the different nature of all these; and when they clearly comprehend that *adoration*, *self-dedication*, *confession*, *petition*, *thanksgiving*, and *intercession*, are distinct heads, which must not be involved in each other; you may exemplify the rules by pointing out to them these successive branches in any well written form. It is hardly needful to remind the teacher that our truly Scriptural Liturgy invariably furnishes the example of presenting *every* request in the name of the great Mediator. For there is no access to the Throne of Grace, but by *that new and living way*. In the Liturgy, too, they will meet with the best exemplifications of prayers, exhibiting separate specimens of each of the distinct heads we have been suggesting.

But in order that the minds of young persons may, without labour or difficulty, be gradually brought into such a state of preparation as to be benefited by such a little course of lectures as we have recommended, they should, from the time when they were first able to read, have been employing themselves, at their leisure hours, in laying in a store of provision for their present demands. And here the memory may be employed to good purpose; for being the first faculty which is ripened, and which is indeed perfected when the others are only beginning to unfold themselves, this is an intimation of Providence that it should be the first seized on for the best uses. It should, therefore, be devoted to lay in a stock of the more easy and devotional parts of Scripture, especially the Psalms.* Children, whose minds have been early well furnished from these, will be competent at nine or ten years old to produce from them, and to select with no contemptible judgment, suitable examples of all the parts of prayer; and will be able to extract and appropriate texts under each respective head, so as to exhibit, without help, complete specimens of every part of prayer. By confining them entirely to the sense, and nearly to the words of Scripture, they will be preserved from enthusiasm, from irregularity, and conceit. By being obliged continually, to apply for themselves, they will get a habit in all their difficulties, of 'searching the Scriptures,' which may be hereafter useful to them on other and more trying occasions. But I would at first *confine* them to the Bible; for were they allowed with equal freedom to ransack other books with a view to get helps to embellish their little compositions, or rather compilations, they might be tempted to pass off for their own what they pick up from others, which might tend at once to make them both vain and deceitful. This is a temptation to which they are too much laid open, when they find themselves extravagantly commended for any pilfered passage with which they decorate their little themes and letters. But in the present instance there is no danger of any similar deception, for there is such a sacred signature stamped on every Scripture phrase, that the owner's name can never be defaced or torn off from the goods, either by fraud or violence.

It would be well, if in those Psalms which children were first directed to get by heart, an eye were had to this their future application; and that they were employed, but without any intimation of your subsequent design, in learning such as may be best turned to this account. In the hundred and thirty-ninth, the first great truth to be imprinted on the young heart, the Divine omnipresence, as was before observed, is unfolded with such a mixture of majestic grandeur, and such an interesting variety of intimate and local circumstances, as is likely to seize on the quick and lively feeling of youth. The awful idea that that Being whom they are taught to reverence is not only *in general* 'acquainted with all their ways,' but that He is 'about their path, and about their bed,' bestows such a sense of real and present existence on Him, of whom they are apt to conceive as having his distant habitation only in heaven, as will greatly help to realize the sense of his actual presence.

The hundred and third Psalm will open to the mind rich and abundant sources of expression for gratitude and thanksgiving, and it includes the acknowledgment of spiritual as well as temporal favours. It illustrates the compassionate mercies of God by familiar tenderness and exquisite endearment, as are calculated to strike

* This will be so far from spoiling the cheerfulness, or impeding the pleasures, of childhood, that the Author knows a lady, who, when a little girl, before she was seven years old, had learnt the whole Psalter through a second time; and that without any diminution of uncommon gaiety of spirits, or any interference with the elegant acquirements suited to her station.

upon every chord of filial fondness in the heart of an affectionate child. The fifty-first supplies an infinite variety of matter in whatever relates to confession of sin, or to supplication for the aids of the Spirit. The twenty-third abounds with captivating expressions of the protecting goodness and tender love of their heavenly Father, conveyed by pastoral imagery of uncommon beauty and sweetness: in short, the greater part of these charming compositions overflows with materials for every head of prayer.

Children who, while they were engaged in learning these Scriptures, were not aware that there was any specific object in view, or any farther end to be answered by it, will afterwards feel an unexpected pleasure arising from the application of their petty labours, when they are called to draw out from their little treasury of knowledge the stores they have been insensibly collecting; and will be pleased to find that, without any fresh application to study, they are now obliged to exercise a higher faculty than memory, they have lying ready in their minds the materials with which they are at length called upon to work. Their judgment must be set about selecting one, or two, or more texts, which shall contain the substance of every specific head of prayer before noticed; and it will be a farther exercise to their understandings to concatenate the detached parts into one regular whole, occasionally varying the arrangement as they like; that is, changing the order, sometimes beginning with invocation, sometimes with confession; sometimes dwelling longer on one part, sometimes on another. As the hardships of a religious Sunday are often so pathetically pleaded, as making one of the heavy burdens of religion; and as the friends of religion are so often called upon to mitigate its intolerable rigours, by recommending pleasant employment, might not such an exercise as has been here suggested assist, by varying its occupations, to lighten its load!

The habits of the pupils being thus early formed, their memory, attention, and intellect being bent in a right direction, and the exercise invariably maintained, may we not reasonably hope that their *affections* also, through Divine grace, may become interested in the work, till they will be enabled 'to pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also?' They will now be qualified to use a well-composed form, with seriousness and advantage; for they will now use it not mechanically, but rationally. That which before appeared to them a mere mass of good words, will now appear a significant composition, exhibiting variety, regularity, and beauty; and while they will have the further advantage of being enabled, by their improved judgment, to distinguish and select for their own purpose such prayers as are more judicious and more scriptural, it will also habituate them to look for plan, and design, and lucid order, in other works.

CHAP. XI.

Of Perseverance in Prayer and Praise.

A DEEP sense of his corruptions will power-

fully draw the real penitent to a humble avowal of sin; but it is to be feared that there are some, who, because they cannot charge themselves with flagrant offences, do not consider a contrite confession of the sins of the heart and of the daily life an indispensable part of their devotions. But God will charge many with sin who neglect to charge themselves. Did they attend to the remonstrances of a conscience not laid asleep by neglect, or quieted by palliatives, they would find, that, were the daily *omissions* alone, whether in prayer or conduct, of even their best days registered and presented to them, they would form no inconsiderable catalogue for repentance.

There are too many who do not consider that all sins are equally a breach of the Divine law. Without pretending to bring all sins, small and great, to one common level, we should remember that *all* sin is an offence against a gracious Father.

In that profoundly self-abasing prayer of David, after the commission of the two black offences which disgraced his otherwise exemplary life, though he deeply felt his barbarous treatment of his brave general, in first dishonouring his wife, and then exposing him to meet inevitable death in the fore front of the hottest battle, —yet, in praying to be delivered from this 'blood-guiltiness,' he bequeathed an important lesson to posterity, when, in his lowly prostration at the throne of God, his first cry was, 'Against *Thee*, *Thee* only, have I sinned, and done this evil in *Thy* sight, plainly declaring, that all sin is, in the first instance, a sin against God.

While the most worldly are ready enough to exclaim against notorious sins, or against any sins carried to the greatest excess, to smaller offences they contrive to be tolerably reconciled. They think the commission of these not inconsistent with the profitable use of prayer in their formal way of using this customary exercise.

They are also sufficiently lenient to certain degrees of great sins; and various are the modifications and distinctions in their logic, and not over-correct the gradations in their moral scale of degrees. They do not consider that it is the extirpation, and not merely the reduction, of any sin, which is to procure them that peace and comfort for which they sometimes pray, and which they wonder they do not receive as an answer to their prayers.

They forget that the evil of sin is not to be measured by its magnitude only, but by the spirit of disobedience which it indicates towards a generous Father,—a Father whose commands are all founded in mercy and love, and who considers every voluntary fault as no light offence when committed against supreme power exercised with perfect tenderness.

But it is their reluctance to part with the remaining degrees, their wish to retain these modified sins; it is their favourite reserves to which they still cling, that prevent that peace which is promised to the victory, I had almost said to the omnipotence of prayer.

For it is not so much the nicely measured quantity, as to the nature of sin which constitutes its malignity, and obstructs the benefit of

prayer. The inferior degree which is cherished, will, without earnest supplication to God, be ready to become the excess which is deprecated, whenever the appropriate temptation shall present itself. For, however our compassionate Father may pardon the unpremeditated fault, yet how can we expect Him to forgive any degree of sin that is allowed, that is even, in a certain measure, intended to be committed? Diminution, however, is a favourable step, if, by perseverance in prayer, it lead gradually to extirpation. And this naturally leads to the important subject of Perseverance in Prayer.

Prayer is an act which seems to be so prepared in the frame of our nature, to be so congenial to our dependent condition, so suited to our exigencies, so adapted to every man's known wants, and to his possibilities of wants unknown, so full of relief to the soul, and of peace to the mind, and of gladness to the heart; so productive of confidence in God, and so reciprocally proceeding from that confidence, that we should think, if we did not know the contrary, that it is a duty which scarcely required to be enjoined; that he who had once found out his necessities, and that there was no other redress for them, would spontaneously have recourse, as a delight, to what he had neglected as a command; that he who had once tasted the bounties of God, would think it a hardship not to be allowed to thank him for them; that the invitation to pray to his Benefactor, was an additional proof of Divine goodness, that to be allowed to praise Him for his mercies, was itself a mercy.

The Apostle's precept, 'Pray always,'—pray evermore, pray without ceasing, men ought always to pray,—will not be criticised as a pleonasm, if we call to remembrance that there is no state of mind, no condition of life, in which prayer is not a necessity as well as an obligation. In danger, fear impels to it: in trouble, we have no other resource; in sickness, we have no other refuge; in dejection, no other hope; in death, no other comfort.

Saint Paul frequently shows the word *prayer* to be a term of great latitude, involving the whole compass of our intercouse with God. He represents it to include our adoration of his perfections, our acknowledgment of the wisdom of his dispensations, our obligation for his benefits, providential and spiritual; the avowal of our entire dependence on Him, our absolute subjection to Him, the declaration of our faith in Him, the expression of our devotedness to Him; the confession of our own unworthiness, infirmities, and sins; the petition for the supply of our wants, and for the pardon of our offences; for succour in our distress; for a blessing on our undertakings; for the direction of our conduct, and the success of our affairs.

If any should be disposed to think this general view too comprehensive, let him point out which of these particulars prayer does not embrace; which of these clauses a rational, a sentient, an enlightened, a dependent being can omit in his scheme of devotion.

But as the multifarious concerns of human life will necessarily occasion a suspension of the exercise, the Apostle, ever attentive to the principle of the act, and to the circumstances of the actor, reduces all these qualities to their essence when he resolves them into *the spirit* of supplication.

To pray, incessantly, therefore appears to be, in his view of the subject, to keep the mind in an habitual disposition and propensity to devotion; for there is a sense in which we may be said to *do* that which we are *willing* to do, though there are intervals of the thought as well as intermissions of the act, —'as a traveller,' says Dr. Barrow, 'may be said to be still on his journey, though he stops to take needful rest, and to transact necessary business.' If he pause, he does not turn out of the way; his pursuit is not diverted, though occasionally interrupted.

Constantly maintaining the disposition, then, and never neglecting the actual duty; never slighting the occasion which presents itself, nor violating the habit of stated devotion, may, we presume, be called 'to pray without ceasing.' The expression 'watching unto prayer,' implies this vigilance in finding, and this zeal in laying hold on these occasions.

The success of prayer, though promised to all, who offer it in perfect sincerity, is not so frequently promised to the cry of distress, to the impulse of fear, or the emergency of the moment, as to humble continuance in devotion; it is to patient waiting, to assiduous solicitation, to unwearied importunity, that God has declared that he will lend his ear, that he will give the communication of his Spirit, that he will grant the return of our requests. Nothing but this holy perseverance can keep up in our minds a humble sense of our dependence. It is not by a mere casual petition, however passionate, but by habitual application, that devout affections are excited and maintained, that our converse with Heaven is carried on. It is by no other means that we can be assured, with Saint Paul, that 'we are risen with Christ,' but this obvious one, that we thus seek the things which are above; that the heart is renovated, that the mind is lifted above this low scene of things; that the spirit breathes in a purer atmosphere; that the whole man is enlightened, and strengthened, and purified; and that the more frequently, so the more nearly, he approaches to the throne of God. He will find also that prayer not only expresses but elicits the Divine grace.

Yet do we not allow every idle plea, every frivolous pretence to divert us from our better resolves? Business brings in its grave apology pleasure its bewitching excuse.—But if we would examine our hearts truly, and report them faithfully, we should find the fact to be, that disinclination to this employment, oftener than our engagement in any other, keeps us from this sacred intercourse with our Maker.

Under circumstances of distress, indeed, prayer is adopted with comparatively little reluctance; the mind which knows not where to fly, flies to God. In agony, nature is no Atheist. The soul is drawn to God by a sort of natural impulse; not always, perhaps, by an emotion of piety, but from a feeling conviction that every other refuge is 'a refuge of lies.' Oh! thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, happy if thou art either drawn or driven

with holy David, to say to thy God, 'Thou art a place to hide me in.'

But if it is easy for the sorrowing heart to give up a world, by whom itself seems to be given up, there are other demands for prayer equally imperative. There are circumstances more dangerous, yet less suspected of danger, in which, though the call is louder, it is less heard; because the voice of conscience is drowned by the clamours of the world. Prosperous fortunes, unbroken health, flattering friends, buoyant spirits, a spring-tide of success,—these are the occasions when the very abundance of God's mercies is apt to fill the heart till it hardens it. Loaded with riches, crowned with dignities, successful in enterprise; beset with snares in the shape of honours, with perils under the mask of pleasures; then it is, that to the already saturated heart 'to-morrow shall be as this day, and more abundant,' is more in unison, than 'what shall I render to the Lord?'

Prayer draws all the Christian graces into its focus. It draws charity, followed by her lovely train, her forbearance with faults, her forgiveness of injuries, her pity for errors, her compassion for want. It draws Repentance, with her holy sorrows, her pious resolutions, her self-distrust. It attracts Faith, with her elevated eye, —Hope, with her grasped anchor,—Beneficence with her open hand,—Zeal, looking far and wide to serve,—Humility, with introverted eye, looking at home. Prayer, by quickening these graces in the heart, warms them into life, fits them for service, and dismisses each to its appropriate practice. Prayer is mental virtue; virtue is spiritual action. The mould into which genuine prayer casts the soul is not effaced by the suspension of the act, but retains some touches of the impression till the act is repeated.

When we consider how profusely God bestows, and how little He requires; that while He confers like Deity, He desires only such poor returns as can be made by indigent, mendicant mortality; that He requires no costly oblation; nothing that will impoverish, but, on the contrary, will inconceivably enrich the giver. When we consider this, we are ready to wonder that He will accept so poor a thing as impotent gratitude for immeasurable bounty. When we reflect, that our very desire to pray and to praise Him is His gift;—that His grace must purify the offering, before He condescends to receive it, must confer on it that spirit which renders it acceptable;—that He only expects we should consecrate to Him what we have received from Him;—that we should only confess, that of all we enjoy, nothing is our due;—we may well blush at our insensibility.

We think, perhaps, that had He commanded us 'to do some great thing,' to raise some monument of splendour, some memorial of notoriety and ostentation, something that would perpetuate our own name with His goodness, we should gladly have done it.—How much more when He only requires

'Our thanks how due!'

when He only asks the homage of the heart, the expression of our dependence, the recognition of His right!

But he to whom the duty of prayer is unknown, and by whom the privilege of prayer is unfelt, or he by whom it is neglected, or he who uses it for form and not from feeling, may probably say, Will this work, wearisome even if necessary, never know an end? Will there be no period when God will dispense with its regular exercise? Will there never be such an attainment of the end proposed, as that we may be allowed to discontinue the means?

To these interrogatories there is but one answer, an answer which shall be also made, by an appeal to the enquirer himself.

If there is any day in which we are quite certain that we shall meet with no trial from Providence, no temptation from the world, any day in which we shall be sure to have no wrong tempers excited in ourselves, no call to bear with those of others, no misfortune to encounter, and no need of Divine assistance to endure it, on that morning we may safely omit prayer.

If there is any evening in which we have received no protection from God, and experienced no mercy at his hands; if we have not lost a single opportunity of doing or receiving good, if we are quite certain that we have not once spoken unadvisedly with our lips, nor entertained one vain or idle thought in our heart, on that night we may safely omit to praise God, and to confess our own sinfulness; on that night we may safely omit humiliation and thanksgiving. To repeat the converse would be superfluous.

When we can conscientiously say, that religion has given a tone to our conduct, a law to our actions, a rule to our thoughts, a bridle to our tongue, a restraint to every evil temper, then, some will say, 'We may safely be dismissed from the drudgery of prayer, it will then have answered all the ends which you so tiresomely recommend.' So far from it, we really figure to ourselves, that if we could hope to hear of a human being brought to such perfection of discipline, it would unquestionably be found that this would be the very being who would continue most perseveringly in the practice of that devotion, which had so materially contributed to bring his heart and mind into so desirable a state, who would most tremble to discontinue prayer, who would be most appalled at the thought of the condition into which such discontinuance would be likely to reduce him. Whatever others do, he will continue forever to 'sing praises unto Thee, O Thou most Highest; he will continue to tell of Thy loving kindness early in the morning, and of Thy truth in the night season.'

It is true that while he considered religion as something nominal and ceremonial, rather than as a principle of spirit and of life, he felt nothing encouraging, nothing refreshing, nothing delightful in prayer. But since he began to feel it as the means of procuring the most substantial blessings to his heart; since he began to experience something of the realization of the promises to his soul, in the performance of this exercise, he finds there is no employment so satisfactory, none that his mind can so little do without; none that so effectually raises him above the world, none that so opens his eyes to its empty shadows, none which can make him

look with so much indifference on its lying vanities; none that can so powerfully defend him against the assaults of temptation, and the allurements of pleasure, none that can so sustain him under labour, so carry him through difficulties; none that can so quicken him in the practice of every virtue, and animate him in the discharge of every duty.

An additional reason why we should live in the perpetual use of prayer, seems to be that our blessed Redeemer, after having given both the example and the command, while on earth, condescends still to be our unceasing intercessor in Heaven. Can we ever cease petitioning for ourselves, when we believe that He never ceases interceding for us?

If we are so unhappy as now to find little pleasure in this holy exercise, that, however, is so far from being a reason for discontinuing it, that it affords the strongest argument for perseverance. That which was at first a form, will become a pleasure; that which was a burden, will become a privilege; that which we impose upon ourselves as a medicine, will become necessary as an aliment, and desirable as a gratification. That which is now short and superficial, will become copious and solid. The chariot wheel is warmed by its own motion. Use will make that easy which was at first painful. That which is once become easy will soon be rendered pleasant. Instead of repining at the performance we shall be unhappy at the omission. When a man recovering from sickness attempts to walk, he does not discontinue the exercise because he feels himself weak, nor even because the effort is painful. He rather redoubles his exertion; it is from his perseverance that he looks for strength. An additional turn every day diminishes his repugnance, augments his vigour, improves his spirits. That effort which was submitted to because it was salutary, is continued because the feeling of renovated strength renders it delightful.

But if prayer be so exhilirating to the soul, what shall be said of praise? Praise is the only employment, we had almost said, it is the only duty, in which self finds no part. In praise we go out of ourselves, and think only of Him to whom we offer it. It is the most purely disinterested of all services. It is gratitude without solicitation, acknowledgment without petition. Prayer is the overflowing expression of our wants, praise, of our affections. Prayer is the language of the destitute, praise of the redeemed, sinner. If the angelic spirits offer their praises exempt from our mixture of infirmity or alloy, yet we have a motive for gratitude, unknown even to the angels. They are unfallen beings; they cannot say as we can, 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us.' Prayer is the child of faith; praise of love. Prayer is prospective; praise takes in, in its wide range, enjoyment of present, remembrance of past, and anticipation of future blessings. Prayer points the only way to heaven, 'praise is already there.'

CHAP. XII.

On Intercessory Prayer.

As it is the effect of prayer to *expand* the affections as well as to *sanctify* them, the benevolent Christian is not satisfied to commend himself alone to the Divine favour. The heart which is full of the love of God will overflow with love to his neighbour. All that are near to himself he wishes to bring near to God. He will present the whole human race as objects of the Divine compassion, but especially the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Religion makes a man so liberal of soul, that he cannot endure to restrict any thing, much less divine mercies, to himself: he, therefore, spiritualizes the social affections, by adding intercessory to personal prayer: for he knows that petitioning for others is one of the best methods of exercising and enlarging our own love and charity, even if it were not to draw down those blessings which are promised to those for whom we ask them.

It is unnecessary to produce any of the numberless instances with which Scripture abounds, on the efficacy of intercession: in which God has proved the truth of his own assurance, that 'his ear was open to their cry.' I shall confine myself to a few observations on the benefits it brings to him who offers it. When we pray for the objects of our dearest regard, it purifies passion, and exalts love into religion: when we pray for those with whom we have worldly intercourse, it smooths down the swellings of envy, and bids the tumult of anger and ambition subside: when we pray for our country, it sanctifies patriotism: when we pray for those in authority, it adds a Divine motive to human obedience: when we pray for our enemies, it softens the savageness of war, and mollifies hatred into tenderness, and resentment into sorrow. There is no such softener of animosity, no such soother of resentment, no such allayer of hatred, as sincere cordial prayer. And we can only learn the duty so difficult to human nature of forgiving those who have offended us, when we bring ourselves to pray for them to Him whom we ourselves daily offend. When those who are the faithful followers of the same Divine Master pray for each other, the reciprocal intercession delightfully realizes that beautiful idea of 'the communion of Saints.' There is scarcely any thing which more enriches the Christian than the circulation of this holy commerce; than the comfort of believing, while he is praying for his Christian friends, that he is also repaying the benefit of their prayers for him.

Some are for confining their intercessions only to the good, as if none but persons of merit were entitled to our prayer. Good: who is good? 'There is none good but one, that is God.' Merit! who has it? Desert! who can plead it? in the sight of God, I mean. Who shall bring his own piety, or the piety of others, in the way of *claim*, before a Being of such transcendant holiness, that 'the heavens are not clean in his sight?' And if we wait for perfect holiness as a preliminary prayer, when shall such erring creatures pray *at all* to HIM 'who chargeth the angels with folly?'

The social affections were given us not only for the kindliest, but the noblest purposes. The charities of father, son, and brother, were bestowed, not only to make life pleasant, but to

make it useful; not only that we might contribute to the present comfort, but to the eternal benefit of each other.

These heaven-implanted affections are never brought into exercise more properly, nor with more lively feelings, than in intercessory prayer. Our friends may have wants which we cannot remove, desires which we cannot gratify, afflictions which we cannot relieve, but it is always in our power to bring them before God; to pray for them whenever we pray for ourselves. This, as it is a most pleasant and easy, so it is an indispensable obligation. It is a duty which brings the social affections into their highest exercise, and which may be reciprocally paid and received.

The same Scriptures which expressly enjoin that supplication, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for all men, furnish also numerous examples of the efficacy of intercessory prayer. We need not dwell on the instance of the rain obtained by the prayers of Elijah, or the earlier availing intercessions of Moses, with other public deliverances effected in the same manner.

Though the perseverance of Abraham's prayer did not prevent the extermination of the polluted city, yet doubtless the blessing he solicited for it returned unto his own bosom, and the successive promises made by the Almighty Judge to the successively reduced number of the righteous, for whose sake the petition for preservation was offered, affords a proof of the Divine approbation and a striking encouragement to persist in the duty of intercessory prayer. The promise of God was withdrawn. The prayer was conditional, and could the petitioner have made up his very lowest compliment, the city had been saved. The interceding heart in any event is sure to gain something for itself.

Prayer is such an enlarger of the affections, such an opener of the heart, that we cannot but wonder how any who live in the practice of it, should be penurious in their alms; or, if they do give, should do it 'grudgingly or of necessity.' Surely if our prayer be cordial, we shall be more ready to assist as well as to love those for whom we are in the habit of making supplication to God. It is impossible to pray sincerely for the well-being of others, without being desirous of contributing to it. We can hardly conceive a more complete species of self-deception than that practised by an avaricious professor of religion, one who goes on mechanically to pray for the poor, whilst his prayer has neither opened his heart nor his purse. He may value himself on this, as on other instances of his ingenuity, in having found out so cheap a way of doing good, and go on contentedly, till he hears that tremendous sentence of exclusion, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.'

> O impudence of Wealth! with all thy store,
> How dar'st thou let one worthy man be poor?

O you great ones of the earth, whom riches ensnare and prosperity betrays—be largely liberal, even from self-insterest. Not, indeed, expecting to make the liberality you bestow a remuneration for the devotions you withhold. Scatter your superfluities, and more than your superfluities, to the destitute, if not to vindicate Providence, yet to benefit yourselves. Not, indeed, to revive the old pious fraud of depending for salvation on the prayers of others; yet still you may hope to be repaid, with usurious interest, from the pious poor, by the very tender charity of their prayers for you. Their supplications may possibly be so heard, that you may at length, be brought to the indispensable necessity, and the bounden duty of praying for yourselves.

There is a generosity in religion. The same principle which disposes a Christian to contribute to the temporal interests of those he loves, inclines him to breathe his earnest supplication for their spiritual benefit. Not only does prayer for others promote natural affection, not only does it soften the heart of him who intercedes, but it is hoped that they for whom the intercession is made, may reap the benefit.

But our intercession must neither dwell in generalities for the public nor in limitations to the wants of our particular friends. The Christian is the friend of every description of the children of mortality. In the fulness of our compassion for the miseries of mankind, we pour out our hearts in prayer for the poor and destitute, and we do well. But there is another and a large class who are still more the objects of our pity, and consequently should be of our prayers. While we pray for those who have no portion in this world, do we not sometimes forget to pray for those who have their whole portion in it? We pray for the praying servants of God, but perhaps we neglect to pray for those who never pray for themselves. These are the persons who stand most in need of the mercy of the Almighty, and of our Christian importunity in their favour.

Is it not affecting, that even unto our devotions we are disposed to carry the regard we too highly indulge of the good things of this life, by earnestly imploring mercy upon those who want them; and by forgetting to offer our supplications in favour of those who are blinded by the too full enjoyment of them. If the one duty be done, should the other be left undone?

If we want an example of the most sublime kind of Charity, observe for what it is that the great Apostle of the Gentiles 'bows his knees to God' in behalf of his friends. Is it for an increase of their wealth, their power, their fame, or any other external prosperity?—No: it is that 'God would grant them according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man;'—it is, 'that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith;'—it is that 'they may be rooted and grounded in love,' and this to a glorious end,—'that they may be able with all Saints, to comprehend' the vast dimensions of the love of Christ;—that 'they may be filled with all the fulness of God.' These are the sort of petitions which we need never hesitate to present. These are requests which we may rest assured are always agreeable to the Divine will; here we are certain we cannot 'pray amiss.' These are intercessions of which the benefit may be felt, when wealth, and fame, and power, shall be forgotten things.

Why does Saint Paul 'pray day and night

that he might see the face of his Thessalonian converts?' Not merely that he might have the gratification of once more beholding those he loved,—though that would sensibly delight so affectionate a heart,—but 'that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith.'

These are instances of a spirit so large in its affections, so high in its object; of a man who had so much of Heaven in his friendships, so much of soul in his attachments, that he thought time too brief, earth too scanty, worldly blessings too low, to enter deeply into his petitions for those to whom time and earth, the transitory blessings of life, and life itself, would so soon be no more.

In exciting us to perpetual gratitude, the same Apostle stirs us up to the duty of keeping before our eyes the mercies which so peremptorily demand it. These mercies succeed each other so rapidly, or rather, are crowded upon us so simultaneously, that if we do not count them as they are received, and record them as they are enjoined, their very multitude, which ought to penetrate the heart more deeply, will cause them to slip out of the memory.

As to the commanded duty of praying for our enemies, the most powerful example bequeathed to us in Scripture, next to that of his Divine master on the cross, is that of St. Stephen. Even *after* the expiring martyr had ejaculated 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit,' he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.' Let every instance of Roman greatness of mind, let every story of Grecian magnanimity be ransacked, and produce, who can, such another example. Theirs is tumour, this is grandeur; theirs is heroism, this is Christianity; they implored the gods for themselves, Stephen for his murderers.

In closing the subject of Intercessory Prayer, may the author be allowed to avail herself of the feeling it suggests to her own heart? and, while she earnestly implores that Being who can make the meanest of his creatures instrumental to His glory, to bless this humble attempt to the reader, may she, without presumption, intreat that this work of Christian charity may be reciprocal, and that those who peruse these pages may put up a petition for her, that, in the great day, to which we are all hastening, and to which she is so very near, she may not be found to have suggested to others what she herself did not believe, or to have recommended what she did not desire to practice? In that awful day of everlasting decision, may both the reader and the writer be pardoned and accepted, 'not for any works of righteousness which they have done,' but through the merits of the GREAT INTERCESSOR.

CHAP. XIII.

The Practical Results of Prayer Exhibited in the Life of the Christian in the World.

As the keeping up a due sense of religion, both in faith and practice, so materially depends on the habit of fervent and heart-felt devotion, may we be permitted, in this place, to insist on the probable effects which would follow the devout and conscientious exercise of prayer, rather than on prayer itself?

As soon as religion is really become the earnest desire of our hearts, it will inevitably become the great business of our lives; the one is the only satisfactory evidence of the other: consequently the religion of the heart and life will promote that Spirit of prayer by which both have been promoted.

They, therefore, little advance the true interest of mankind, who, under the powerful plea of what great things God has done for us in our redemption by His Son, neglect to encourage our active services in His cause. Hear the words of inspiration, 'Be not slothful;' 'run the race;' 'fight the good fight;' 'strive to enter in;' 'give diligence;' 'work out your own salvation;' 'God is not unmindful to forget your labour of love;' 'but when ye have done all, Ye are unprofitable servants, ye have done that which was your duty to do.'

But if, after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, what shall we be if we have done nothing? Is it not obvious that the Holy Spirit, who dictated these exhortations, clearly meant that a sound faith in the word of God was intended to produce holy exertion for the advancement of His Glory? The activity in doing good of the Son of God was not exceeded by his devotion, and both powerfully illustrated his doctrines, and confirmed his divinity. Until then we make our religion a part of our common life, until we bring Christianity, as an illustrious genius is said to have brought philosophy, from its retreat to live in the world, and dwell among men; until we have brought it from the closet to the active scene, from the church to the world, whether that world be the court, the senate, the exchange, the public office, the private counting-house, the courts of justice, the professional departments, or the domestic drawing-room, it will not have fully accomplished what it was sent on earth to do.

We do not mean the introduction of its language, but of its spirit: the former is frequently as incompatible with public, as it is unsuitable to private business; but the latter is of universal application. We mean that the temper and dispositions which it is the object of prayer to communicate, should be kept alive in society, and brought into action in its affairs. That the integrity, the veracity, the justice, the purity, the liberality, the watchfulness over ourselves, the candour towards others, all exercised in the fear of the Lord, and strengthened by the word of God and prayer, should be brought from the retirement of devotion to the regulation of the conduct.

There may be a form of unfelt petitions, a ceremonious avowal of faith, a customary profession of repentance, a general acknowledgment of sin, uttered from the lips to God; but where is his image and superscription written upon the heart? Where is the transforming power of religion in the life?—Where is the living transcript of the Divine original? Where is that holiness to which the vision of the Lord is specifically promised? Where is the light,

and life, and grace of the Redeemer exhibited in the temper and conduct? Yet we are assured, that if we are Christians, there must be a constant aim at this conformity.

We should, therefore, endeavour to believe as we pray, to think as we pray, to feel as we pray, and to act as we pray. Prayer must not be a solitary, independent exercise; but an exercise incorporated with many, and inseparably connected with that golden chain of Christian duties, of which, when so connected, it forms one of the most important links. *They* will not *pray* differently from the rest of the world, who do not *live* differently.

But though we must not, in accommodation to the prevailing prejudices and unnecessary zeal against abstinence and devotion, neglect the imperative duties of retirement, prayer, and meditation; yet, perhaps, as prayer makes so indispensable an article in the Christian life, some retired contemplative persons may apprehend that it makes the whole; whereas prayer is only the operation which sets the machine going. It is the sharpest spur to virtuous action, but not the act itself. The only infallible incentive to a useful life, but not a substitute for that usefulness. Religion keeps her children in full employment. It finds them work for every day in the week, as well as on Sundays.

The praying Christian, on going into the world, feels that his social and religious duties are happily comprised in one brief sentence—'I will *think* upon thy commandments to DO them.' What the Holy Spirit has so indissolubly joined, he does not separate.

As the lawyer has his compendium of cases and precedents; the legislator his statutes; the soldier his book of tactics; and every other professor his *vade mecum* to consult in difficulties; the Christian to whichever of the professions he may belong, will take his morning lecture from a more infallible directory, comprehending not only cases and precedents, but abounding with those seminal principles which contain the essence of all actual duty, from which all practical evidence is deducible. This spirit of laws differs from all other legal institutes, some of which, from that imperfection inseparable from the best human things, have been found unintelligiblo, some impracticable, and some have become obsolete. The divine law is subject to no such disadvantages: it is perfect in its nature, intelligible in its construction, and eternal in its obligation.

This sacred institute he will consult in the spirit of prayer, not occasionally, but daily. Unreminded of general duty, unfurnished with some leading hint for the particular demand, he will not venture to rush into the bustle, trial, and temptation of the day. Of this aid he will possess himself with the more ease, and less loss of time, as he will not have to ransack a multiplicity of folios for a detached case, or an individual intricacy; for, though he may not find in the Bible specific instances, yet he will discover in every page some governing truth, some rule of universal application, the spirit of which may be brought to bear on almost every circumstance; some principle suited to every purpose, and competent to the solution of every moral difficulty

Scripture does not, indeed, pretend to include technical or professional peculiarities, but it exhibits the temper and the conduct which may be made applicable to the special concerns of every man, whatever be his occupation. He will find in it the right direction to the right pursuit; the straight road to the proper end; the duty of a pure intention; and the prohibition of false measures to attain even a laudable object. No hurry or engagement will ever make him lose sight of that sacred aphorism, so pointedly addressed to men of business, 'He that *maketh haste* to be rich shall hardly be innocent.'—The cautionary texts which he admired in his closet, he will not treasure up as classical mottos to amuse his fancy, or embellish his discourse; but will adopt as rules of conduct, and bring them into every worldly transaction, whether commercial, forensic, medical, military, or whatever else be his professed object. He will not adjust his scale of duty by the false standard of the world, nor by any measure of his own devising; he has but one standard of judging, but one measure of conduct,—the infallible Word of God. This rule he will take as he finds it, he will use as he is commanded; he will not bend it to his own convenience; he will not accommodate it to his own views, his own passions, his own emolument, his own reputation.

He whose heart has been set in motion by prayer, who has had his spiritual pulse quickened by a serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures, will find his work growing upon him in regular proportion to his willingness to do it. He is diligently exact in the immediate duties of the passing day. Though procrastination is treated by many as a light evil, he studiously avoids it, because he has felt its mischiefs; he is active even from the love of ease, for he knows that the duties which would have cost him little, if done on the day they were due, may, by the accumulation of many neglected days, cost him much. The fear of this rouses him to immediate exertion. If the case in question be doubtful, he deliberates, he inquires, he prays; if it be clear and pressing, what his hand finds to do, he does with all his might, and in the calls of distress he always acts on his favourite aphorism,—that giving soon is giving twice.

Abroad how many duties meet him! He has on his hands the poor who want bread, the afflicted who want comfort, the distressed who want counsel, the ignorant who want teaching, the depressed who want soothing. At home he has his family to watch over. He has to give instruction to his children, and an example to his servants. But his more immediate, as well as more difficult work is with himself, and he knows that this exercise, well performed, can alone enable him wisely to perform the rest. Here he finds work for every faculty of his understanding, every conquest over his will, for every affection of his heart. Here his spirit truly labours. He prays fervently, but he has to watch, as well as to pray, that his conscience be not darkened by prejudice; that his bad qualities do not assume the shape of virtues, nor his good ones engender self-applause; that his best intentions do not mislead his judgment; that his

candour do not degenerate into indifference; nor his strictness into bigotry; that his moderation do not freeze, nor his zeal burn. He has to controul his impatience at the defeat of his most wisely conceived plans. He will find that in his best services there is something that is wrong, much that is wanting; and he feels, that whatever in them is right, is not his own, but the gift of God.

Is your Christian, then, perfect? you will perhaps ask. Ask himself. With deep and sincere self-abasement he will answer in the negative. He will not only confess more failings than even his accusers ascribe to him, but he will own what they do not always charge him with,—sins. He will acknowledge that there is no natural difference between himself and his censurer, but that through Divine grace, the one prays and struggles against those corruptions, the very existence of which the other does not suspect.

There is nothing more humbling to the confirmed praying Christian than that whilst in his happier moments he is able to figure to himself a cheering image of the glory of the Redeemer, the blessedness of the redeemed, the beauty of Christian perfection; to feel himself not only awakened, but exalted; not merely enlightened, but kindled; almost possessing, rather than anticipating Heaven;—while he is enabled, in a joyful measure, to meditate upon these things, to feel his mind ennobled, and his soul expanded by the contemplation, yet to find how soon the bright ideas fade, the strong impression is effaced, the heavenly vision vanished; he mourns to reflect, that he does not more abidingly possess in his heart, that he does not more powerfully exhibit in his conversation, more forcibly display in his life, that spirit of which his mind has been sometimes so full, his heart so enamoured, when prostrate before his Maker.

To his grief he finds that his most perfect obedience is incomplete, that his warmest affections are often languid, perhaps his best intentions not realized, his best resolves not followed up. In this view, though he is abased in dust and ashes in looking up to God as the fountain of perfection, he is cheered in looking up to him also as the fountain of mercy in Christ Jesus. He prays, as well as strives, that the knowledge of his own faults may make him more humble, and his sense of the divine mercies more grateful.

But he will feel that his faith, even though it does not want sincerity, will too frequently want energy. He has, therefore, to watch against cold and heartless prayer; though, perhaps, the humility arising from this consciousness is a benefit in another way. He feels it difficult to bring every 'thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,' yet he goes on cheerily, willing to believe that what may be difficult is not impossible. He has to struggle against over anxiety for temporal things. He has to preserve simplicity of intention, consistency, and perseverance. He has, in short, to watch against a long list of sins, errors, and temptations, which he will find heavier in weight, and more in number, the more closely he looks into his catalogue.

The praying Christian in the world has, above all, to watch against the fear of man, as he may find it more easy to endure the cross than to despise the shame. Even if he have in a good degree conquered this temptation, he may still find a more dangerous enemy in the applause of the world than he found in its enmity. An eager desire of popularity is, perhaps, the last lingering sin which cleaves even to those who have made a considerable progress in religion, the still unextinguished passion of a mind great enough to have subdued many other passions.

The devout Christian endeavours to exemplify the emphatical description of the translated Saint in the Old Testament, 'he *walks* with God.' He does not merely bow down before his footstool at stated intervals: he does not ceremoniously address Him on great occasions only, and then retreat, and dwell at a distance; but he *walks* with him; his habitual intercourse, his natural motion, his daily converse, his intimate communication, is with his Redeemer. He is still seeking, though it may be with slow and faltering steps, the things which are above; he is still striving, though with unequal progress, for the prize of his high calling, he is still looking though with a dim and feeble eye, for glory, honour, and immortality; he is still waiting, though not with a trust so lively as to annihilate the distance, to see his eternal redemption drawing nigh. Though his aims will always be far greater than his attainments, yet he is not discouraged. His hope is above, his heart is above, his treasure is above: no wonder, then, that his prayers are directed, and a large portion of his wealth sent forward thither, where he himself hopes soon to be. It is but transmitting his riches of both kinds, not only to his future, but his everlasting home.

The grand danger of the Christian in the world is *from* the world. He is afraid of the sleek, smooth, insinuating, and not discreditable vices; he guards against self-complacency. If his affairs prosper, and his reputation stands high, he betakes himself to his only sure refuge, the throne of God; to his only sure remedy, humble prayer. He knows it is more easy to perform a hundred right deeds, and to keep many virtues in exercise, than 'to keep himself unspotted from the world,' than to hold the things of the world with a loose hand. Even his best actions, which may bring him most credit, have their dangers; they make him fear that 'while he has a name to live, he is dead.'

He feels that if he had no sin but vanity, the consciousness of that alone, would be sufficient to set him on his guard, to quicken him in prayer, to caution him in conduct.—He does not fear vanity as he fears any other individual vice; as a single enemy against which he is to be on the watch, but as that vice which, if indulged, would poison all his virtues. Among the sins of the inner man, he knows that 'this kind goeth not out but by prayer.' When he hears it said of any popular, and especially of any religious character, 'he is a good man, but he is vain.' He says within himself, he is vain, and therefore, I fear he is not a good man. How many right qualities does vanity rob of their value, how many right actions of their reward!

Every suspicion of the first stirring of vanity in himself, sends him with deeper prostration before his Maker. Lord what is man! shall the praise of a fellow-creature, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose ashes, must soon be mingled with my own, which may even before my own be consigned to kindred dust, shall *his* praise be of sufficient potency to endanger the humility of a being, who is not only looking forward to the applause of those glorious spirits which surround the throne of God, but to the approbation of God himself?

When those with whom he occasionally mixes, see the praying Christian calm and cheerful in society, they little suspect the frequent struggles, the secret conflicts he has within. Others see his devout and conscientious life, but he alone knows the plague of his own heart. For this plague he seeks the only remedy; to prayer, that balm of hurt minds, he constantly repairs.

The confirmed Christian will above all labour most assiduously after that *consistency of character*, which is a more unequivocal evidence of high Christian attainment, than the most prominent great qualities, which are frequently counteracted by their opposites. This consistency exhibits a more striking conformity to the image of his Maker; as in the works of creation, the wisdom of the Supreme Intelligence is more admirable in the agreement and harmony of one thing with another, than in the individual beauty and excellence of each. It is more conspicuous, in the fitness and proportion of its parts relatively, than in the composition of the parts themselves. By this uniformity, the results of religion are the most beautifully exhibited in the Christian character.

When we reflect on the conflicts and the trials of the conscientious, watchful, praying Christian, we shall estimate aright the value of the consoling promises of the gospel. It is by these promises, applied through Divine grace to the heart, that the Christian is gradually brought to consider prayer, not merely as a duty, but to value it as a privilege; and the more earnestly he cultivates this spirit of supplication, the more deeply will it enable him to penetrate into the recesses of his own heart. The more he discovers the evils which he there finds, he will be so far from being deterred by the discovery from approaching to the fountain of mercy, that it will lead him to be more diligent, as well as more fervent in his application there. Nothing so faithfully reveals to us our spiritual exigencies, nothing can quicken our petitions for their relief so powerfully, as the conviction of their actual existence. In this conviction, in this earnest application, the Christian at length feels the efficacy of prayer in its consolations, its blessedness, its transforming power.

CHAP. XIV.

The Consolations of Prayer in Affliction, Sickness, and Death.

The Pagan philosophers have given many admirable precepts, both for resigning blessings, and for sustaining misfortunes; but, wanting the motives and sanctions of Christianity, though they excite much intellectual admiration, they produce little practical effect. The stars which glittered in their moral night, though bright, imparted no warmth. Their most beautiful dissertations on death had no charm to extract its sting. We receive no support from their most elaborate treatises on immortality, for want of Him who 'brought life and immortality to light.' Their consolatory discussions could not strip the grave of its terrors; for to them it was not 'swallowed up in victory.' To conceive of the soul as an immortal principle, without proposing a scheme for the pardon of its sins, was but cold consolation. Their future state was but a happy guess: their Heaven but a fortunate *conjecture*.

When we peruse their finest compositions, we admire the manner in which the medicine is administered, but we do not find it effectual for the cure, nor even for the mitigation of our disease. The beauty of the sentiment we applaud, but our heart continues to ache.

To this cold scepticism let us oppose the heart-consoling, exhilirating, triumphant *certainties* of Christianity. 'I *know* that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth—In my flesh I shall see God, whom mine eyes shall behold and not another'—'I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.'—Here is the true balm of Gilead—here is the healing cordial for every human woe!

The hair-splitting casuist does not directly say that pain is not an evil, but by a sophistical turn professes that philosophy will never *confess* it to be an evil. But what consolation does the sufferer draw from this quibbling nicety?

Christianity knows none of these fanciful distinctions. She never pretends to insist that pain is not an evil, but she does more; she converts it into a good. Christianity, therefore, teaches a fortitude as much more noble than philosophy, as meeting pain with resignation to the hand that inflicts it, is more heroic than denying it to be an evil.

'I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh unto me,' says the Almighty, by his prophet. We must, therefore, when we approach him in our devotions, frequently endeavour to warm our hearts, raise our views, and quicken our aspirations with a recollection of His glorious attributes,—of that omnipotence which can give to all without the least deduction from any, or from Himself; of that ubiquity which renders Him the constant witness of our actions: of that omniscience which makes Him a discerner of our intentions, and which penetrates the most secret disguises of our inmost souls; of that perfect holiness which should at once be the object of our adoration, and the model of our practice; of that truth which will never forfeit any of His promises; of that faithfulness which will never forsake any that trust in Him; of that love which our innumerable offences cannot exhaust; of that eternity which had place 'before the mountains were brought forth;' of that grandeur which has set His glory above the heavens; of

that long-suffering of God, who is strong and patient, and who is provoked every day; of that justice which will by no means clear the guilty, yet of that mercy which forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin; of that compassion which *waits* to be gracious; of that goodness which *leadeth* to repentance; of that purity which, while it hates sin, invites the sinner to return.

In seasons of distress and trial, whether from the loss of health, or under whatever other afflictive dispensation he may be struggling, the Christian will endeavour to draw consolation, by reviewing the mercies of his past life, and anticipating the glorious promises of the life to come. If previously accustomed to unbroken health, he will bless God for the long period in which he has enjoyed it. If continued infirmity has been his portion, he will feel grateful that he has had such a long and gradual weaning from the world. From either state he will extract consolation. If pain be new, what a mercy to have hitherto escaped it! If habitual, we bear more easily what we have borne long.

He will review his temporal blessings and deliverances; his domestic comforts, his Christian friendships. Among his mercies, his now 'purged eyes' will reckon his difficulties, his sorrows, and his trials. A new and heavenly light will be thrown on that passage, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' It seems to him as if hitherto he had only heard it with the hearing of his ear, but now 'his eye seeth it.' If he be a real Christian, and has had enemies, he will always have prayed for them; but now he will be thankful for them. He will the more earnestly implore mercy for them, as instruments which have helped to fit him for his present state. He will look up with holy gratitude to the Great Physician, who, by a Divine chemistry, in mixing up events, has made that one unpalatable ingredient, at the bitterness of which he once revolted, the very means by which all things have worked *together* for good; had they worked separately, they would not have worked efficaciously.

If our souls have been truly 'sanctified by the word of God and Prayer,' we shall, under the sharpest trials, be apt to compare our own sufferings with the cup which our Redeemer drank for our sakes; drank to avert the Divine displeasure from us. Let us pursue the comparative view of our condition with that of the Son of God. *He* was deserted in his most trying hour, deserted probably by those whose limbs, sight, life, he had restored; whose souls he had come to save. *We* are surrounded by unwearied friends; every pain is mitigated by sympathy; every want not only relieved, but prevented: the 'asking eye' explored; the inarticulate sound interpreted; the ill-expressed wish anticipated; the but suspected want supplied. When *our* souls are 'exceeding sorrowful,' *our* friends participate our sorrow; when desired to 'watch' with us, they watch, not '*one* hour,' but *many;* not 'falling asleep,' but both flesh and spirit ready and willing; not forsaking us in our 'agony,' but sympathizing where they cannot relieve.

The night also will be made to the praying Christian a season of heart-searching thought, and spiritual consolation. Solitude and stillness completely shut out the world, its business, its cares, its impertinences. The mind is sobered, the passions are stilled; it seems to the watchful Christian, as if there were in the universe only God and his own soul. It is an inexpressible consolation to him to feel that the one Being in the universe who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, is the very Being to whom he has free access, even in the most unseasonable hours. The faculties of the mind may not, perhaps, be in their highest exercise; but the affections of the heart, from the exclusion of distracting objects, more readily ascend to their *noblest* object. Night and darkness are no parasites; conscience is more easily alarmed. It puts on fewer disguises. We appear to ourselves more what we really are. This detection is salutary. The glare which the cheerful daylight, business, pleasure, and company, had shed over all objects, is withdrawn. Schemes, which, in the day, had appeared plausible, now present objections. What had then appeared safe, now, at least seems to require deliberation. This silent season of self-examination is a keen detector of any latent sin, which, like the fly in the box of perfume, may corrupt much that is pure.

When this communion with God can be maintained, it supplies deficiencies of devotion to those who have little leisure during the day; and by thus rescuing these otherwise lost hours, it snatches time from oblivion, at once adds to the length of life, and weans from the love of it.

If the wearied and restless body be tempted to exclaim, 'Would to God it were morning!' the very term suggests the most consoling of all images. The quickened mind shoots forward beyond this vale of tears, beyond the dark valley and shadow of death; it stretches onward to the joyful morning of the Resurrection; it anticipates that blessed state where there is no more weeping and no more night; no weeping, for God's own hand shall wipe away the tears; no night, for the Lamb himself shall be the light.

If humbling doubts of his own state depress the real penitent, what comfort may he not derive from the assurance, that the acceptable sacrifice to the God of love, is the troubled spirit, and the broken and contrite heart?

It is a further encouragement to Prayer to the dejected spirit, that the Almighty was not contented to show his willingness to pardon by single declarations, however strong and full. He has heaped up words, he has crowded images, he has accumulated expressions, he has exhausted language, by all the variety of synonymes which express love, mercy, pardon, and acceptance. They are graciously crowded together, that the trembling mourner who was not sufficiently assured by one, might be encouraged by another. And it is the consummation of the Divine goodness, that this message is not sent by his ambassador, but that the King of kings, the blessed and only Potentate, condescends himself to pronounce this royal proclamation, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin!' Forgiving indeed, but in consonance

with his just demand of repentance and reformation, 'who will by no means clear the guilty.'

Refuse not, then, to take comfort from the promises of God, when, perhaps, you are easily satisfied with the assurance of pardon from a frail and sinful creature like yourself whom you had offended. Why is God the only being who is not believed? who is not trusted? 'O Thou that hearest Prayer, why unto Thee will not all flesh come?'

In the extremity of pain, the Christian feels there is no consolation but in humble acquiescence in the Divine will. It may be that he can pray but little, but that little will be fervent. He can articulate, perhaps, not at all, but his prayer is addressed to one who sees the heart; who can interpret its language; who requires not words, but affections. A pang endured without a murmur, or only such an involuntary groan as nature extorts, and faith regrets, is itself a Prayer. We have a striking instance of an answer to silent Prayer, in the case of Moses. In a situation of extreme distress, when he had not uttered a word, 'the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy crying.'

If, however, in the conduct of this nightly watching, and this nightly Prayer, our own stock of thought or expression be absolutely deficient, prophets and apostles will not only afford us the most encouraging examples, but the most profitable assistance. More especially the royal treasury of King David lies open to us; and whatever are our wants, there our resources are inexhaustible. The Psalms have supplied to all ages materials for Christian worship, under every supposable circumstance of human life. They have facilitated the means of negociation for the penitent, of gratitude for the pardoned. They have provided confession for the contrite, consolation for the broken hearted, invitation to the weary, and rest for the heavy laden. They have furnished petitions for the needy, praise for the grateful, and adoration for all. However indigent in himself, no one can complain of want, who has access to such a magazine of intellectual and spiritual wealth. These variously gifted compositions not only kindle the devoutest feelings, but suggest the aptest expressions: they invest the sublimest meanings with the noblest eloquence. They have taught the tongue of the stammerer to speak plainly; they have furnished him who was ready to perish for lack of knowledge, with principles as well as feelings; they have provided the illiterate with the form, and the devout with the spirit of prayer. To him who previously felt not his wants, they have imparted fervent desires; they have inspired the faint with energy, and the naturally dead with spiritual life.

The Psalms exhibit the finest specimen of experimental and devotional religion in the world. They are attended with this singular advantage, and this unspeakable comfort; that in them God speaks to us, and we speak to Him. 'Seek ye my face; Thy face, Lord will I seek.' This delightful interlocution between the king of saints and the penitent sinner; this interchange of character; this mixture of prayer and promise; of help implored, and grace bestowed; of weakness pleaded, and strength imparted; of favour shown, and gratitude returned; of prostration on one part, and encouragement on the other; of abounding sorrow, and overflowing mercy: this beautiful variety of affecting intercourse between sinful dust and infinite goodness, lifts the abased penitent into the closest and most sublime communion with his Saviour and his God.

The royal poet in these noble compositions has given us the most elevated character of Prayer, by showing us that supplication is the dialect of the poor in spirit; thanksgiving the idiom of the genuine Christian; praise, his vernacular tongue.

* * * * * * *

How cheering under every species of distress to reflect, that our blessed Redeemer not only suffered for us upon the cross, but is sympathizing with us now! that 'in all our afflictions He is afflicted.' The tenderness of the sympathy seems to add a value to the sacrifice; while the vastness of the sacrifice endears the sympathy by ennobling it.

If the intellectual powers be mercifully preserved, how many virtues may be brought into exercise on a sick bed, which had either lain dormant, or been considered of inferior worth in the prosperous day of activity. The Christian temper, indeed, seems to be that part of religion which is more peculiarly to be exercised under these circumstances. The passive virtues, the least brillant, but the most difficult, are then particularly called into action. To *suffer* the whole will of God on the tedious bed of languishing, is more trying than to perform the most shining exploit on the theatre of the world; the hero in the field of battle has the love of fame, as well as patriotism to support him. He knows that the witnesses of his valour will be the heralds of his renown. The martyr at the stake is divinely strengthened. Extraordinary grace is imparted for extraordinary trials. His pangs are exquisite, but they are short. The crown is in sight; it is almost in possession. By faith 'he sees the heavens opened. He sees the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. But to be strong in faith, and patient in hope, in a long and lingering sickness, is an example of more general use, and ordinary application, than even the sublime heroism of the martyr. The sickness is brought home to our own feelings; we see it with our eyes; we apply it to our hearts. Of the martyr, we read, indeed, with astonishment: our faith is strengthened, and our admiration kindled; but we read it without that special appropriation, without that peculiar reference to our own circumstances which we feel in cases that are likely to apply to ourselves. With the dying friend, we have not only a feeling of pious tenderness; but here is also a community of interests. The certain conviction that his case must soon be our own, makes it our own now. Self mixes with the social feeling, and the Christian death we are contemplating, we do not so much admire as a prodigy, as propose for a model. To the martyr's stake we feel that we are not likely to be brought. To the dying bed we must inevitably come.

Accommodating his state of mind to the na-

ture of his disease, the dying Christian will derive consolation in any case, either from thinking how forcibly a sudden sickness breaks the chain which binds him to the world, or how gently a gradual decay unties it. He will feel and acknowledge the necessity of all he suffers to wean him from life. He will admire the Divine goodness which commissions the infirmities of sickness to divest the world of its enchantments, and to strip death of some of its most formidable terrors. He feels with how much less reluctance we quit a body exhausted by suffering, than one in the vigour of health.

Sickness, instead of narrowing the heart, its worst effects on an unrenewed mind, enlarges his. He earnestly exhorts those around him to defer no act of repentance, no labour of love, no deed of justice, no work of mercy, to that state of incapacity in which he now lies.

How many motives has the Christian to restrain his murmurs! Murmuring offends God, both as it is injurious to his goodness, and as it perverts the occasion which God has now afforded for giving an example of patience. Let us not complain that we have nothing to do in sickness, when we are furnished with the opportunity, as well as called to the duty of resignation; the duty, indeed, is always ours, but the occasion is now more eminently given. Let us not say, even in this depressed state, that we have nothing to be thankful for. If sleep be afforded, let us acknowledge the blessing; if wearisome nights be our portion, let us remember they are 'appointed to us.' Let us mitigate the grievance of watchfulness, by considering it as a sort of prolongation of life; as the gift of more minutes granted for meditation and prayer. If we are not able to employ it to either of these purposes, there is a fresh occasion for exercising that resignation which will be accepted for both.

If reason be still continued, yet with sufferings too intense for any devotional duty, the sick Christian may take comfort that the business of life was accomplished before the sickness began. He will not be terrified if duties are superseded; if means are at an end; for he has nothing to do but to die. This is the act for which all other acts, all other duties, all other means, will have been preparing him. He who has long been habituated to look death in the face, who has often anticipated the agonies of dissolving nature; who has accustomed himself to pray for support under them, will now feel the blessed effect of those petitions, which have been long treasured in heaven. To those anticipatory prayers he may, perhaps, now owe the humble confidence of hope in this inevitable hour. Habituated to the contemplation, he will not, at least, have the dreadful addition of surprise and novelty to aggravate the trying scene. It has long been familiar to his mind, though hitherto it could only operate with the inferior force of a picture to a reality. He will not, however, have so much scared his imagination by the terrors of death, as invigorated his spirit by looking beyond them to the blessedness which follows. Faith will not so much dwell on the opening grave, as shoot forward to the glories to which it leads. The hope of Heaven will soften the pangs which lie in the way to it. On Heaven then, he will fix his eyes rather than on the awful intervening circumstances. He will not dwell on the struggle which is for a moment, but on the crown which is forever. He will endeavour to think less of death than of its conqueror; less of the grave than of its spoiler; less of the body in ruins than of the spirit in glory; less of the darkness of his closing day than of the opening dawn of immortality. In some brighter moments, when viewing his eternal redemption drawing nigh, as if the freed spirit had already burst its prison walls, as if the manumission had actually taken place, he is ready exultingly to exclaim, 'My soul is escaped, the snare is broken, and I am delivered.'

Eternal things now assume their proper magnitude, for he beholds them in the true point of vision. He has ceased to lean on the world, for he has found it both a reed and a spear; it has failed, and it has pierced him. He leans not on himself, for he has long known his own weakness. He leans not on his virtues, for his renewed mind has shown him that they can do nothing for him. Had he no better refuge, he feels that his sun would set in darkness; his life close in despair.

He suffers not his thoughts to dwell on life. His retrospections are at an end. His prospects as to this world are at an end also. He commits himself unreservedly to his heavenly Father. But though secure of the port, he may still dread the passage. The Christian will rejoice that his rest is at hand; the man may shudder at the unknown transit. If faith is strong, nature is weak. Nay, in this awful exigence, strong faith is sometimes rendered faint through the weakness of nature.

At the moment when his faith is looking round for every additional confirmation, he may rejoice in those blessed certainties, those glorious realizations which Scripture affords. He may take comfort that the strongest attestations given by the apostles to the reality of the heavenly state were not conjectural. They, to use the words of our Saviour, spake what they knew, and testified what they had seen. 'I reckon,' says St. Paul, 'that the afflictions of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.' He said this *after* he had been caught up into the third Heaven; *after* he had beheld the glories to which he alludes. The author of the Apocalyptic vision having described the ineffable glories of the new Jerusalem, thus puts new life and power into his description, 'I John, *saw* these things and *heard* them.'

The power of distinguishing objects increases with our approach to them. The Christian feels that he is entering on a state where every care will cease, every fear vanish, every desire be fulfilled, every sin be done away, every grace perfected. Where there will be no more temptations to resist, no more passions to subdue; no more insensibility to mercies, no more deadness in service, no more wandering in Prayer, no more sorrow to be felt for himself, nor tears to be shed for others. He is going where his devotion will be without languor; his love without alloy; his doubts, certainty; his expectation, en-

joyment nis hope, fruition. All will be perfect, for God will be all in all.

The period at length arrives when we must summon all the fortitude of the rational being, all the resignation of the devout Christian. The principles we have been learning, the prayers we have uttered, must now be made practical. The speculations we have admired, we must now realize. All that we have been studying was in order to furnish materials for this grand exigence. All the strength we have been collecting must now be brought into action. We must now draw to a point all the scattered arguments, all the several motives, all the individual supports, all the cheering promises of Christianity. We must exemplify all the rules we have given to others; we must embody all the resolutions we have formed for ourselves; we must reduce our precepts to experience; we must pass from discourses on submission to its exercise; from dissertations on suffering to sustaining it. We must heroically call up the determination of our better days. We must recollect what we have said of the supporters of faith and hope when our strength was in full vigour, when our heart was at ease, and our mind undisturbed. Let us collect all that remains to us of mental strength. Let us implore the aid of holy hope and fervent faith to show that religion is not a beautiful theory, but a soul-sustaining truth.

Let us endeavour without harassing scrutiny, or distressing doubt, to act on the principles which our sounder judgment formerly admitted. The strongest faith is wanted in the hardest trials. Under those trials, to the confirmed Christian, the highest degree of grace is commonly imparted. Let us not impair that faith on which we rested when our mind was strong, by suspecting its validity now it is weak. That which had our full assent in perfect health, which was then firmly rooted in our spirit, and grounded in our understanding, must not be unfixed by the doubts of an enfeebled reason, and the scruples of an impaired judgment. We may not be able to determine on the reasonableness of propositions, but we may derive strong consolation from conclusions which were once fully established in our mind.

Even if prayer were as worthless, with respect to present advantages, and religion as burthensome as some suppose, it would be a sufficient vindication of both that they lead to eternal bliss. Of the precise nature of that bliss, the Scripture account is calculated rather to quicken faith than gratify curiosity. There the appropriate promises to spiritual beings are purely spiritual. It is enough for believers to know that they shall be for ever with the Lord; and though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like Him. In the vision of the Supreme Good, there must be supreme felicity. Our capacities of knowledge and happiness shall be commensurate with our duration. On earth, part of our enjoyment—a most fallacious part—consists in framing new objects for our wishes: in heaven there shall remain in us no such disquieting desires, for all which *can* be found we shall find in God. We shall not know our Redeemer by the hearing of the ear, but we shall see Him as he is; our knowledge, therefore, will be clear, because it will be intuitive.

It is a glorious part of the promised bliss, that the book of prophecy shall be realized; the book of providence displayed, every mysterious dispensation unfolded, not by conjecture, but by vision. In the grand general view of Revelation, minute description would be below our ideas; circumstantial details would be disparaging; they would debase what they pretend to exalt. Those sublime negatives—'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him;' fill the soul with loftier conceptions of eternal joys than all the elaborate but degrading delineations which have been sometimes attempted. We cannot conceive the blessings prepared for us, until he who has prepared reveal them.

If, indeed, the blessedness of the eternal world could be described, new faculties must be given us to comprehend it. If it could be conceived, its glories would be lowered, and our admiring wonder diminished. The wealth that can be counted has bounds; the blessings that can be calculated have limits. We now rejoice in the expectation of happiness inconceivable. To have conveyed it to our full apprehension, our conceptions of it must then be taken from something with which we are already acquainted, and we should be sure to depreciate the value of things unseen, by a comparison with even the best of the things which are seen. In short, if the state of heaven were attempted to be let down to human intelligence, it would be far inferior to the glorious but indistinct glimpses which we now catch from the oracles of God, of joy unspeakable, and full of glory. What Christian does not exult in the grand outline of unknown, unimagined, yet consummate bliss —In THY presence is the fulness of joy, and at *Thy* right hand are pleasures for evermore!

ESSAYS

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

PRINCIPALLY DESIGNED FOR YOUNG LADIES.

"As for you, I shall advise you in a few words: aspire only to those virtues that are PECULIAR TO YOUR SEX; follow your natural modesty, and think it your greatest commendation not to be talked of one way or the other."—*Oration of Pericles to the Athenian Women.*

[First published in 1777.]

TO MRS. MONTAGU.*

MADAM,—If you were only one of the finest writers of your time, you would probably have escaped the trouble of this address, which is drawn on you, less by the lustre of your understanding, than by the amiable qualities of your heart.

As the following pages are written with an humble but earnest wish to promote the interests of virtue, as far as the very limited abilities of the author allow; there is, I flatter myself, a peculiar propriety in inscribing them to you, madam, who, while your works convey instruction and delight to the best informed of the other sex, furnish, by your conduct, an admirable pattern of life and manners to your own. And I can with truth remark, that those graces of conversation, which would be the first praise of almost any other character, constitute but an inferior part of yours.

I am, madam, with the highest esteem,
Your most obedient humble servant,

Bristol, May 20, 1777. HANNAH MORE.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is with the utmost diffidence that the following pages are submitted to the inspection of the public: yet however the limited abilities of the author may have prevented her from succeeding to her wish in the execution of her present attempt, she humbly trusts that the uprightness of her intention will procure it a candid and favourable reception. The following little Essays are chiefly calculated for the younger part of her own sex, who, she flatters herself, will not esteem them the less, because they were written immediately for their service. She by no means pretends to have composed a regular system of morals, or a finished plan of conduct: she has only endeavoured to make a few remarks on such circumstances as seemed to her susceptible of some improvement, and on such subjects as she imagined were particularly interesting to young ladies, on their first introduction into the world. She hopes they will not be offended if she has occasionally pointed out certain qualities and suggested certain tempers and dispositions, as *peculiarly feminine*, and hazarded some observations which naturally arose from the subject on the different characters which mark the sexes. And here again she takes the liberty to repeat that these distinctions cannot be too nicely maintained; for besides those important qualities common to both, each sex has its respective, appropriated qualifications, which would cease to be meritorious the instant they ceased to be appropriated. Nature, propriety, and custom, have prescribed certain bounds to each; bounds which the prudent and the candid will never attempt to break down; and indeed it would be highly impolitic to annihilate distinctions from which each acquires excellence, and to attempt innovations by which both would be losers.

Women therefore never understand their own interests so little, as when they affect those qualities and accomplishments, from the want of which they derive their highest merit. "The *porcelain* clay of human kind," says an admired writer, speaking of the sex: greater delicacy evidently implies greater fragility; and this weakness, natural and moral, clearly points out the necessity of a superior degree of caution, retirement, and reserve.

If the author may be allowed to keep up the allusion of the poet just quoted, she would ask if we do not put the finest vases and the costliest images in places of the greatest security, and most remote from any probability of accident or destruction? By being so situated, they find their protection in their weakness, and their safety in their delicacy. This metaphor is far from being used with a design of placing young ladies in a trival, unimportant light; it is only

* This ingenious lady's maiden name was Robinson, and her brother was the eccentric Lord Rokeby. She died in 1800, having been a widow many years. Her correspondence exhibits abundant proof of the goodness of her heart, as her "Essay on Shakspeare" does of taste and accomplishments.—ED.

introduced to insinuate, that where there is more beauty and more weakness, there should be greater circumspection and superior prudence.

Men, on the contrary, are formed for the more public exhibitions on the great theatre of human life. Like the stronger and more substantial wares, they derive no injury, and lose no polish, by being always exposed, and engaged in the constant commerce of the world. It is their proper element, where they respire their natural air, and exert their noblest powers, in situations which call them into action. They were intended by Providence for the bustling scenes of life; to appear terrible in arms, useful in commerce, shining in counsels.

The author fears it will be hazarding a very bold remark, in the opinion of many ladies, when she adds, that the female mind, in general, does not appear capable of attaining so high a degree of perfection in science as the male. Yet she hopes to be forgiven when she observes also, that as it does not seem to derive the chief portion of its excellence from extraordinary abilities of this kind, it is not at all lessened by the imputation of not possessing them. It is readily allowed that the sex have lively imaginations, and those exquisite perceptions of the beautiful and defective, which come under the denomination of taste. But pretensions to that strength of intellect which is requisite to penetrate into the abstruser walks of literature, it is presumed they will readily relinquish. There are green pastures, and pleasant valleys, where they may wander with safety to themselves, and delight to others. They may cultivate the roses of imagination, and the valuable fruits of morals and criticism; but the steeps of Parnassus few, comparatively, have attempted to scale with success. And when it is considered, that many languages and many sciences must contribute to the perfection of poetical composition, it will appear less strange. The lofty epic, the pointed satire, and the more daring and successful flights of the tragic muse, seem reserved for the bold adventurers of the other sex.

Nor does this assertion, it is apprehended, at all injure the interests of the women; they have other pretensions on which to value themselves, and other qualities much better calculated to answer their particular purposes. We are enamoured of the soft strains of the Sicilian and the Mantuan muse,* while to the sweet notes of the pastoral reed, they sing the contentions of the shepherds, the blessings of love, or the innocent delights of rural life. Has it ever been ascribed to them as a defect that their eclogues do not treat of active scenes, of busy cities, and of wasting war? No: their simplicity is their perfection, and they are only blamed when they have too little of it.

On the other hand, the lofty bards who strung their bolder harps to higher measures and sung the "wrath of Peleus' son," and "man's first disobedience,"† have never been censured for want of sweetness and refinement. The sublime, the nervous, and the masculine, characterize their compositions; as the beautiful, the soft, and the delicate, mark those of the others. Grandeur, dignity, and force, distinguish the one species; ease, simplicity, and purity, the other. Both shine from their native, distinct, unborrowed merits, not from those which are foreign, adventitious, and unnatural. Yet those excellences which make up the essential and constituent parts of poetry, they have in common.

Women have generally quicker perceptions; men have juster sentiments.—Women consider how things may be prettily said; men, how they may be properly said. In women (young ones at least), speaking accompanies and sometimes precedes reflection; in men, reflection is the antecedent.—Women speak to shine or to please; men, to convince or confute.—Women admire what is brilliant; men, what is solid.—Women prefer an extemporaneous sally of wit, or a sparkling effusion of fancy, before the most accurate reasoning, or the most laborious investigation of facts.—In literary composition, women are pleased with point, turn, and antithesis; men, with observation, and a just deduction of effects from their causes.—Women are fond of incident, men of argument.—Women admire passionately, men approve cautiously.—One sex will think they betray a want of feeling to be moderate in their applause, the other will be afraid of exposing a want of judgment by being in raptures with any thing.—Men refuse to give way to the emotions they actually feel, while women sometimes affect to be transported beyond what the occasion will justify.

As a farther confirmation of what has been advanced on the different bent of the understanding in the sexes, it may be observed, that we have heard of many female wits, but never of one female logician—of many admirable writers of memoirs, but never of one chronologer.—In the boundless and aerial regions of romance, and in that fashionable species of composition which succeeded it, and which carries a nearer approximation to the manners of the world, the women cannot be excelled: this imaginary soil they have a peculiar talent for cultivating, because here,

"Invention labours more, and judgment less."

The merit of this kind of writing consists in the *vraisemblance* to real life as to the events themselves, with a certain elevation in the narrative, which places them, if not above what is natural, yet above what is common. It farther consists in the art of interesting the tender feelings by a pathetic representation of those minute, endearing, domestic circumstances, which take captive the soul before it has time to shield itself with the armour of reflection. To amuse rather than to instruct, or to instruct indirectly by short inferences, drawn from a long concate-

* Theocritus in his Idyls, and Virgil in his Bucolics † Homer in the Iliad, and Milton in Paradise Lost.

nation of circumstances, is at once the business of this sort of composition, and one of the characteristics of female genius.*

In short, it appears that the mind in each sex has some natural kind of bias, which constitutes a distinction of character; and that the happiness of both depends, in a great measure, on the preservation and observance of this distinction. For where would be the superior pleasure and satisfaction resulting from mixed conversation, if this difference were abolished? If the qualities of both were invariably and exactly the same, no benefit or entertainment would arise from the tedious and insipid uniformity of such an intercourse; whereas considerable advantages are reaped from a select society of both sexes. The rough angles and asperities of male manners are imperceptibly filed, and gradually worn smooth, by the polishing of female conversation, and the refining of female taste; while the ideas of women acquire strength and solidity, by their associating with sensible, intelligent, and judicious men.

On the whole (even if fame be the object of pursuit), is it not better to succeed as women, than to fail as men? to shine by walking honourably in the road which nature, custom, and education seem to have marked out, rather than to counteract them all, by moving awkwardly in a path diametrically opposite? to be good originals, rather than bad imitators?—in a word, to be excellent women, rather than indifferent men?

ON DISSIPATION.

Doglie certe Allegrezze incerte!—PETRARCA.

As an argument in favour of modern manners, it has been pleaded, that the softer vices of luxury and dissipation belong rather to gentle and yielding tempers, than to such as are rugged and ferocious: that they are vices which increase civilization, and tend to promote refinement, and the cultivation of humanity.

But this is an assertion, the truth of which the experience of all ages contradicts. Nero was not less a tyrant for being a fiddler: he† who wished the whole Roman people had but one neck, that he might despatch them at a blow, was himself the most debauched man in Rome; and Sydney and Russel were condemned to bleed under the most barbarous, though most dissipated and voluptuous reign, that ever disgraced the annals of Britain.

The love of dissipation is, I believe, allowed to be the reigning evil of the present day. It is an evil which many content themselves with regretting, without seeking to redress. A dissipated life is censured in the very act of dissipation, and prodigality of time is as gravely declaimed against at the card-table as in the pulpit.

The lover of dancing censures the amusements of the theatre for their dulness, and the gamester blames them both for their levity. She whose whole soul is swallowed up in "opera ecstasies," is astonished that her acquaintance can spend whole nights in preying, like harpies, on the fortunes of their fellow-creatures: while the grave, sober sinner, who passes her pale and anxious vigils in this fashionable sort of pillaging, is no less surprised how the other can waste her precious time in hearing sounds for which she has no taste, in a language she does not understand.

In short, every one seems convinced that the evil so much complained of does really exist somewhere, though all are inwardly persuaded that it is not with themselves. All desire a general reformation, but few will listen to proposals of particular amendment; the body must be restored, but each limb begs to remain as it is; and accusations which concern all, will be likely to affect none. They think that sin, like matter, is divisible, and that what is scattered among so many, cannot materially affect any one; and thus individuals contribute separately to that evil which they in general lament.

The prevailing manners of an age depend more than we are aware, or are willing to allow, on the conduct of the women; this is one of the principal hinges on which the great machine of human society turns. Those who allow the influence which female graces have, in contributing to polish the manners of men, would do well to reflect how great an influence female morals must also have on their conduct. How much, then, is it to be regretted, that the British ladies should ever sit down contented to polish, when they are able to reform; to entertain, when they might instruct; and to dazzle for an hour, when they are candidates for eternity!

Under the dispensation of Mahomet's law, indeed, these mental excellences cannot be expected, because the women are shut out from all opportunities of instruction, and excluded from the endearing pleasures of a delightful and equal society; and, as a charming poet sings, are taught to believe, that

> "————— For their inferior natures,
> Form'd to delight, and happy by delighting,
> Heav'n has reserv'd no future paradise,
> But bids them rove the paths of bliss, secure
> Of total death, and careless of hereafter."
> *Dr. Johnson's Irene.*

These act consistently in studying none but exterior graces, in cultivating only personal attractions, and in trying to lighten the intolerable burden of time, by the most frivolous and vain

* The author does not apprehend it makes against her GENERAL position, that this nation can boast a female critic, poet, historian, linguist, philosopher, and moralist, equal to most of the other sex. To these particular instances others might be adduced; but it is presumed, that they only stand as exceptions against the rule, without tending to invalidate the rule itself.

[The ladies here indirectly complimented, appear to be Mrs. Montagu; Miss Aikin, afterward Mrs. Barbaud; Mrs. Macaulay; Mrs Elizabeth Carter; Mrs. Chapone; and perhaps Mrs Lennox.]—ED.

† The Emperor Caligula.

amusements. They act in consequence of their own blind belief, and the tyranny of their despotic masters; for they have neither the freedom of a present choice, nor the prospect of a future being

But in this land of civil and religious liberty, where there is as little despotism exercised over the minds as over the persons of women, they have every liberty of choice, and every opportunity of improvement; and how greatly does this increase their obligation to be exemplary in their general conduct, attentive to the government of their families, and instrumental to the good order of society!

She who is at a loss to find amusements at home, can no longer apologize for her dissipation abroad, by saying she is deprived of the benefit and the pleasure of books; and she who regrets being doomed to a state of dark and gloomy ignorance, by the injustice or tyranny of the men, complains of an evil which does not exist.

It is a question frequently in the mouths of illiterate and dissipated females—"What good is there in reading? to what end does it conduce?" It is, however, too obvious to need insisting on, that unless perverted, as the best things may be, reading answers many excellent purposes besides the great leading one, and is perhaps the safest remedy for dissipation. She who dedicates a portion of her leisure to useful reading, feels her mind in a constant progressive state of improvement, while the mind of a dissipated woman is continually losing ground. An active spirit rejoiceth, like the sun, to run his daily course; while indolence, like the dial of Ahaz, goes backwards. The advantages which the understanding receives from polite literature, it is not here necessary to enumerate; its effects on the moral temper is the present object of consideration. The remark may perhaps be thought too strong, but I believe it is true, that next to religious influences, a habit of study is the most probable preservative of the virtue of young persons. Those who cultivate letters have rarely a strong passion for promiscuous visiting, or dissipated society; study, therefore, induces a relish for domestic life, the most desirable temper in the world for women. Study, as it rescues the mind from an inordinate fondness for gaming, dress, and public amusements, is an economical propensity; for a lady may read at much less expense than she can play at cards; as it requires some application, it gives the mind a habit of industry; as it is a relief against that mental disease, which the French emphatically call *ennui*, it cannot fail of being beneficial to the temper and spirits, I mean in the moderate degree in which ladies are supposed to use it; as an enemy to indolence, it becomes a social virtue; as it demands the full exertion of our talents, it grows a rational duty; and when directed to the knowledge of the Supreme Being and his laws, it rises into an act of religion.

The rage for reformation commonly shows itself in a violent zeal for suppressing what is wrong, rather than in a prudent attention to establish what is right; but we shall never obtain a fair garden merely by rooting up weeds; we must also plant flowers; for the natural richness of the soil we have been clearing will not suffer it to lie barren; but whether it shall be vainly or beneficially prolific, depends on the culture. What the present age has gained on one side, by a more enlarged and liberal way of thinking, seems to be lost on the other, by excessive freedom and unbounded indulgence. Knowledge is not, as heretofore, confined to the dull cloister, or the gloomy college; but disseminated, to a certain degree, among both sexes, and almost all ranks. The only misfortune is, that these opportunities do not seem to be so wisely improved, or turned to so good an account, as might be wished. Books of a pernicious, idle, and frivolous sort are too much multiplied; and it is from the very redundancy of them that true knowledge is so scarce, and the habit of dissipation so much increased.

It has been remarked, that the prevailing character of the present age is not that of gross immorality; but if this is meant of those in the higher walks of life, it is easy to discern, that there can be but little merit in abstaining from crimes which there is but little temptation to commit. It is, however, to be feared, that a gradual defection from piety will in time draw after it all the bad consequences of more active vice; for whether mounds and fences are suddenly destroyed by a sweeping torrent, or worn away through gradual neglect, the effect is equally destructive. As a rapid fever and a consuming hectic are alike fatal to our natural health, so are flagrant immorality and torpid indolence to our moral wellbeing.

The philosophical doctrine of the slow recession of bodies from the sun, is a lively image of the reluctance with which we first abandon the light of virtue. The beginning of folly, and the first entrance on a dissipated life, cost some pangs to a well-disposed heart; but it is surprising to see how soon the progress ceases to be impeded by reflection, or slackened by remorse. For it is in moral as in natural things, the motion in minds as well as bodies, is accelerated by a nearer approach to the centre to which they are tending. If we recede slowly at first setting out, we advance rapidly in our future course; and to have begun to be wrong, is already to have made a great progress.

A constant habit of amusement relaxes the tone of the mind, and renders it totally incapable of application, study, or virtue. Dissipation not only indisposes its votaries to every thing useful and excellent, but disqualifies them for the enjoyment of pleasure itself. It softens the soul so much that the most superficial employment becomes a labour, and the slightest inconvenience an agony. The luxurious Sybarite must have lost all sense of real enjoyment, and all relish for true gratification before he complained that he could not sleep, because the rose-leaves lay double under him.

Luxury and dissipation, soft and gentle as their approaches are, and silently as they throw their silken chains above the heart, enslave it

more than the most active and turbulent vices. The mightiest conquerors have been conquered by these unarmed foes: the flowery fetters are fastened before they are felt. The blandishments of Circe were more fatal to the mariners of Ulysses, than the strength of Polypheme, or the brutality of the Læstrigons. Hercules, after he had cleansed the Augean stable, and performed all the other labours enjoined him by Eurisheus, found himself a slave to the softnesses of the heart; and he, who wore a club and a lion's skin in the cause of virtue, condescended to the most effeminate employments to gratify a criminal weakness. Hannibal, who vanquished mighty nations, was himself overcome by the love of pleasure; and he, who despised cold, and want, and danger, and death, on the Alps, was conquered and undone by the dissolute indulgences of Capua.

Before the hero of the most beautiful and virtuous romance that ever was written, I mean Telemachus, landed on the island of Cyprus, he unfortunately lost his prudent companion, Mentor, in whom wisdom is so finely personified. At first, he beheld with horror the wanton and dissolute manners of the voluptuous inhabitants; the ill effects of their example were not immediate: he did not fall into the commission of glaring enormities; but his virtue was secretly and imperceptibly undermined, his heart was softened by their pernicious society, and the nerve of resolution was slackened: he every day beheld, with diminished indignation, the worship which was offered to Venus; the disorders of luxury and profaneness became less and less terrible, and the infectious air of the country enfeebled his courage, and relaxed his principles. In short, he had ceased to love virtue long before he thought of committing actual vice; and the duties of a manly piety were burdensome to him, before he was so debased as to offer perfumes and burn incense on the altar of the licentious goddess.*

"Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered," said Solomon's libertine. Alas! he did not reflect that they withered in the very gathering. The roses of pleasure seldom last long enough to adorn the brow of him who plucks them; for they are the only roses which do not retain their sweetness after they have lost their beauty.

The heathen poets often pressed on their readers the necessity of considering the shortness of life as an incentive to pleasure and voluptuousness; lest the season for indulging in them should pass unimproved. The dark and uncertain notions, not to say the absolute disbelief, which they entertained of a future state, is the only apology that can be offered for this reasoning. But, while we censure their tenets, let us not adopt their errors; errors which would be infinitely more inexcusable in us, who, from the clearer views which revelation has given us, shall not have their ignorance or their doubts to plead. It were well if we availed ourselves of that portion of their precept, which inculcates the improvement of every moment of our time; but not, like them, to dedicate the moments so redeemed to the pursuit of sensual and perishable pleasures, but to the securing of those which are spiritual in their nature, and eternal in their duration.

If, indeed, like the miserable* beings imagined by Swift, with a view to cure us of the irrational desire after immoderate length of days, we were condemned to a wretched earthly immortality, we should have an excuse for spending some portion of our time in dissipation, as we might then pretend, with some colour of reason, that we proposed, at a distant period, to enter on a better course of action. Or, if we never formed any such resolution, it would make no material difference to beings whose state was already unalterably fixed. But of the scanty portion of days assigned to our lot, not one should be lost in weak and irresolute procrastination.

Those who have not yet determined on the side of vanity, who, like Hercules (before he knew the Queen of Lydia, and had learned to spin), have not resolved on their choice between virtue and pleasure, may reflect, that it is still in their power to imitate that hero in his noble choice, and in his virtuous rejection. They may also reflect, with grateful triumph, that Christianity furnishes them with a better guide than the tutor of Alcides, and with a surer light than the doctrines of pagan philosophy.

It is far from my design severely to condemn the innocent pleasures of life: I would only beg leave to observe, that those which are criminal should never be allowed; and that even the most innocent will, by immoderate use, soon cease to be so.

The women of this country were not sent into the world to shun society, but to embellish it; they were not designed for wilds and solitudes, but for the amiable and endearing offices of social life. They have useful stations to fill, and important characters to sustain. They are of a religion which does not impose penances, but enjoins duties; a religion of perfect purity, but of perfect benevolence also. A religion which does not condemn its followers to indolent seclusion from the world, but assigns them the more dangerous, though more honourable province, of living uncorrupted in it. In fine, a religion which does not direct them to fly from the multitude, that they may do nothing, but which positively forbids them to follow a multitude to do evil.

* Nothing can be more admirable than the manner in which this allegory is conducted; and the whole work, not to mention its images, machinery, and other poetical beauties, is written in the very finest strain of morality. In this latter respect, it is evidently superior to the works of the ancients, the moral of which is frequently tainted by the grossness of their mythology. Something of the purity of the Christian religion may be discovered even in Fenelon's heathens, and they catch a tincture of piety in passing through the hands of that amiable prelate.

THOUGHTS ON CONVERSATION.

It has been advised, and by very respectable authorities too, that in conversation, women

* The Struldbrugs. See Voyage to Laputa

should carefully conceal any knowledge or learning they may happen to possess. I own, with submission, that I do not see either the necessity or propriety of this advice. For if a young lady has that discretion and modesty, without which all knowledge is little worth, she will never make an ostentatious parade of it, because she will rather be intent on acquiring more, than on displaying what she has.

I am at a loss to know why a young female is instructed to exhibit, in the most advantageous point of view, her skill in music, her singing, dancing, taste in dress, and her acquaintance with the most fashionable games and amusements, while her piety is to be anxiously concealed, and her knowledge affectedly disavowed, lest the former should draw on her the appellation of an enthusiast, or the latter that of a pedant.

In regard to knowledge, why should she for ever affect to be on her guard lest she should be found guilty of a small portion of it? She need be the less solicitous about it, as it seldom proves to be so very considerable as to excite astonishment or admiration: for, after all the acquisitions which her talents and her studies have enabled her to make, she will, generally speaking, be found to have less of what is called learning, than a common schoolboy.

It would be to the last degree presumptuous and absurd, for a young woman to pretend to give the *ton* to the company; to interrupt the pleasure of others, and her own opportunity of improvement, by talking when she ought to listen; or to introduce subjects out of the common road, in order to show her own wit, or expose the want of it in others: but were the sex to be totally silent when any topic of literature happens to be discussed in their presence, conversation would lose much of its vivacity, and society would be robbed of one of its most interesting charms.

How easily and effectually may a wellbred woman promote the most useful and elegant conversation, almost without speaking a word! for the modes of speech are scarcely more variable than the modes of silence. The silence of listless ignorance, and the silence of sparkling intelligence, are perhaps as separately marked, and as distinctly expressed, as the same feelings could have been by the most unequivocal language. A woman, in a company where she has the least influence, may promote any subject by a profound and invariable attention, which shows that she is pleased with it, and by an illuminated countenance, which proves she understands it. This obliging attention is the most flattering encouragement in the world to men of sense and letters, to continue any topic of instruction or entertainment they happen to be engaged in: it owed its introduction perhaps to accident, the best introduction in the world for a subject of ingenuity, which, though it could not have been formally proposed without pedantry, may be continued with ease and good-humour; but which will be frequently and effectually stopped by the listlessness, inattention, or whispering of silly girls, whose weariness betrays their ignorance, and whose impatience exposes their ill-breeding. A polite man, however deeply interested in the subject on which he is conversing, catches at the slightest hint to have done: a look is a sufficient intimation; and if a pretty simpleton, who sits near him, seems *distraite*, he puts an end to his remarks, to the great regret of the reasonable part of the company, who perhaps might have gained more improvement by the continuance of such a conversation, than a week's reading would have yielded them; for it is such company as this, that give an edge to each other's wit, "as iron sharpeneth iron."

That silence is one of the great arts of conversation is allowed by Cicero himself, who says, there is not only an art, but even an eloquence in it. And this opinion is confirmed by a great modern,* in the following little anecdote from one of the ancients.

When many Grecian philosophers had a solemn meeting before the ambassador of a foreign prince, each endeavoured to show his parts by the brilliancy of his conversation, that the ambassador might have something to relate of the Grecian wisdom. One of them, offended, no doubt, at the loquacity of his companions, observed a profound silence; when the ambassador, turning to him, asked, "But what have you to say, that I may report it?" He made this laconic, but very pointed reply: "Tell your king, that you have found one among the Greeks who knew how to be silent."

There is a quality infinitely more intoxicating to the female mind than knowledge—this is, wit, the most captivating, but the most dreaded of all talents; the most dangerous to those who have it, and the most feared by those who have it not. Though it is against all the rules, yet I cannot find in my heart to abuse this charming quality. He who is grown rich without it, in safe and sober dulness, shuns it as a disease, and looks upon poverty as its invariable concomitant. The moralist declaims against it as the source of irregularity, and the frugal citizen dreads it more than bankruptcy itself, for he considers it as the parent of extravagance and beggary. The cynic will ask of what use it is? Of very little, perhaps: no more is a flower-garden, and yet it is allowed as an object of innocent amusement and delightful recreation. A woman who possesses this quality, has received a most dangerous present, perhaps not less so than beauty itself: especially if it be not sheathed in a temper peculiarly inoffensive, chastised by a most correct judgment, and restrained by more prudence than falls to the common lot.

This talent is more likely to make a woman vain than knowledge; for as wit is the immediate property of its possessor, and learning is only an acquaintance with the knowledge of other people, there is much more danger that we should be vain of what is our own, than of what we borrow.

But wit, like learning, is not near so common

* Lord Bacon.

a thing as is imagined. Let not therefore a young lady be alarmed at the acuteness of her own wit, any more than at the abundance of her own knowledge. The great danger is, lest she should mistake pertness, flippancy, or imprudence, for this brilliant quality, or imagine she is witty only because she is indiscreet. This is very frequently the case, and this makes the name of wit so cheap, while its real existence is so rare.

Lest the flattery of her acquaintance, or an overweening opinion of her own qualifications, should lead some vain and petulant girl into a false notion that she has a great deal of wit, when she has only a redundancy of animal spirits, she may not find it useless to attend to the definition of this quality, by one who had as large a portion of it as most individuals could ever boast :—

"'Tis not a tale, 'tis not a jest,
Admir'd with laughter at a feast,
Nor florid talk, which can that title gain,
The proofs of wit for ever must remain.

"Neither can that have any place,
At which a virgin hides her face;
Such dross the fire must purge away; 'tis just,
The author blush there, where the reader must."

COWLEY.

But those who actually possess this rare talent, cannot be too abstinent in the use of it. It often makes admirers, but it never makes friends; I mean, where it is the predominant feature; and the unprotected and defenceless state of womanhood calls for friendship more than for admiration. She who does not desire friends has a sordid and insensible soul; but she who is ambitious of making every man her admirer, has an invincible vanity and a cold heart.

But to dwell only on the side of policy, a prudent woman, who has established the reputation of some genius, will sufficiently maintain it, without keeping her faculties always on the stretch to say *good things*. Nay, if reputation alone be her object, she will gain a more solid one by her forbearance, as the wiser part of her acquaintance will ascribe it to the right motive, which is, not that she has less wit, but that she has more judgment.

The fatal fondness for indulging a spirit of ridicule, and the injurious and irreparable consequences which sometimes attend the *too prompt reply*, can never be too seriously or too severely condemned. Not to offend, is the first step towards pleasing. To give pain is as much an offence against humanity, as against good breeding; and surely it is as well to abstain from an action because it is sinful, as because it is unpolite. In company, young ladies would do well, before they speak, to reflect, if what they are going to say may not distress some worthy person present, by wounding them in their persons, families, connexions, or religious opinions. If they find it will touch them in either of these, I should advise them to suspect, that what they were going to say is not so *very* good a thing as they at first imagined. Nay, if even it was one of those bright ideas, which "Venus has imbued with a fifth part of her nectar," so much greater will be their merit in suppressing it, if there was a probability it might offend. Indeed, if they have the temper and prudence to make such a previous reflection, they will be more richly rewarded by their own inward triumph, at having suppressed a lively but severe remark, than they could have been with the dissembled applauses of the whole company, who, with that complaisant deceit which good breeding too much authorizes, affect openly to admire what they secretly resolve never to forgive.

I have always been delighted with the story of the little girl's eloquence, in one of the Children's Tales, who received from a friendly fairy the gift, that at every word she uttered, pinks, roses, diamonds, and pearls, should drop from her mouth. The hidden moral appears to be this, that it was the sweetness of her temper which produced this pretty fanciful effect; for when her malicious sister desired the same gift from the good-natured tiny intelligence, the venom of her own heart converted it into poisonous and loathsome reptiles.

A man of sense and breeding will sometimes join in the laugh, which has been raised at his expense by an illnatured repartee; but if it was very cutting, and one of those shocking sort of truths, which, as they can scarcely be pardoned even in private, ought never to be uttered in public, he does not laugh because he is pleased, but because he wishes to conceal how much he is hurt. As the sarcasm was uttered by a lady, so far from seeming to resent it, he will be the first to commend it; but, notwithstanding that, he will remember it as a trait of malice, when the whole company shall have forgotten it as a stroke of wit. Women are so far from being privileged by their sex to say unhandsome or cruel things, that it is this very circumstance which renders them more intolerable. When the arrow is lodged in the heart, it is no relief to him who is wounded to reflect, that the hand which shot it was a fair one.

Many women, when they have a favourite point to gain, or an earnest wish to bring any one over to their opinion, often use a very disingenuous method: they will state a case ambiguously, and then avail themselves of it, in whatever manner shall best answer their purpose; leaving your mind in a state of indecision as to their real meaning, while they triumph in the perplexity they have given you by the unfair conclusions they draw, from premises equivocally stated. They will also frequently argue from exceptions instead of rules, and are astonished when you are not willing to be contented with a prejudice, instead of a reason.

In a sensible company of both sexes, where women are not restrained by any other reserve than what their natural modesty imposes; and where the intimacy of all parties authorizes the utmost freedom of communication; should any one inquire what were the general sentiments on some particular subject, it will, I believe, commonly happen, that the ladies, whose imaginations have kept pace with the narration, have anticipated its end, and are ready to deliver their sentiments on it as soon as it is finished.

While some of the male hearers, whose minds were busied in settling the propriety, comparing the circumstances, and examining the consistencies of what was said, are obliged to pause and discriminate, before they think of answering. Nothing is so embarrassing as a variety of matter, and the conversation of women is often more perspicuous, because it is less laboured.

A man of deep reflection, if he does not keep up an intimate commerce with the world, will be sometimes so entangled in the intricacies of intense thought, that he will have the appearance of a confused and perplexed expression; while a sprightly woman will extricate herself with that lively and "rash dexterity," which will almost always please, though it is very far from being always right. It is easier to confound than to convince an opponent; the former may be effected by a turn that has more happiness than truth in it. Many an excellent reasoner, well skilled in the theory of the schools, has felt himself discomfited by a reply, which, though as wide of the mark and as foreign to the question as can be conceived, has disconcerted him more than the most startling proposition, or the most accurate chain of reasoning, could have done; and he has borne the laugh of his fair antagonist, as well as of the whole company, though he could not but feel that his own argument was attended with the fullest demonstration: so true is it, that it is not always necessary to be right, in order to be applauded.

But let not a young lady's vanity be too much elated with this false applause, which is given, not to her merit, but to her sex: she has not perhaps gained a victory, though she may be allowed a triumph; and it should humble her to reflect, that the tribute is paid, not to her strength, but her weakness. It is worth while to discriminate between that applause which is given from the complaisance of others, and that which is paid to our own merit.

Where great sprightliness is the natural bent of the temper, girls should endeavour to habituate themselves to a custom of observing, thinking, and reasoning. I do not mean, that they should devote themselves to abstruse speculation, or the study of logic; but she who is accustomed to give a due arrangement to her thoughts, to reason justly and pertinently on common affairs, and judiciously to deduce effects from their causes, will be a better logician than some of those who claim the name, because they have studied the art: this is being "learned without the rules;" the best definition, perhaps, of that sort of literature which is properest for the sex. That species of knowledge, which appears to be the result of reflection rather than of science, sits peculiarly well on women. It is not uncommon to find a lady, who, though she does not know a rule of syntax, scarcely ever violates one; and who constructs every sentence she utters with more propriety than many a learned dunce, who has every rule of Aristotle by heart, and who can lace his own threadbare discourse with the golden shreds of Cicero and Virgil.

It has been objected, and I fear with some reason, that female conversation is too frequently tinctured with a censorious spirit, and that ladies are seldom apt to discover much tenderness for the errors of a fallen sister.

"If it be so, it is a grievous fault."

No arguments can justify, no pleas can extenuate it. To insult over the miseries of an unhappy creature is inhuman, not to compassionate them is unchristian. The worthy part of the sex always express themselves humanely on the failings of others, in proportion to their own undeviating goodness.

And here I cannot help remarking that young women do not always carefully distinguish between running into the error of detraction, and its opposite extreme of indiscriminate applause. This proceeds from the false idea they entertain, that the direct contrary to what is wrong must be right. Thus, the dread of being only suspected of one fault, makes them actually guilty of another. The desire of avoiding the imputation of envy, impels them to be insincere; and to establish a reputation for sweetness of temper and generosity, they affect sometimes to speak of very indifferent characters with the most extravagant applause. With such, the hyperbole is a favourite figure; and every degree of comparison but the superlative is rejected, as cold and inexpressive. But this habit of exaggeration greatly weakens their credit, and destroys the weight of their opinion on other occasions; for people very soon discover what degree of faith is to be given both to their judgment and veracity. And those of real merit will no more be flattered by that approbation, which cannot distinguish the value of what it praises, than the celebrated painter must have been at the judgment passed on his works by an ignorant spectator, who, being asked what he thought of such and such very capital but very different pieces, cried out in an affected rapture, "All alike! all alike!"

It has been proposed to the young, as a maxim of supreme wisdom, to manage so dexterously in conversation, as to appear to be well acquainted with subjects, of which they are totally ignorant; and this, by affecting silence in regard to those on which they are known to excel. But why counsel this disingenuous fraud? Why add to the numberless arts of deceit, this practice of deceiving, as it were, on a settled principle? If to disavow the knowledge they really have be a culpable affectation, then, certainly, to insinuate an idea of their skill, where they are actually ignorant, is a most unworthy artifice.

But of all the qualifications for conversation, humility, if not the most brilliant, is the safest, the most amiable, and the most feminine. The affectation of introducing subjects with which others are unacquainted, and of displaying talents superior to the rest of the company, is as dangerous as it is foolish.

There are many, who never can forgive another for being more agreeable and more accomplished than themselves, and who can pardon any offence rather than an eclipsing merit

Had the nightingale in the fable conquered his vanity, and resisted the temptation of showing a fine voice, he might have escaped the talons of the hawk. The melody of his singing was the cause of his destruction; his merit brought him into danger, and his vanity cost him his life.*

ON ENVY.

"Envy came next, envy with squinting eyes,
Sick of a strange disease, his neighbour's health;
Best then he lives when any better dies,
Is never poor but in another's wealth;
On best men's harms and griefs he feeds his fill,
Else his own maw doth eat with spiteful will,
Ill must the temper be, where diet is so ill."
Fletcher's Purple Island.

"Envy (says Lord Bacon) has no holydays." There cannot perhaps be a more lively and striking description of the miserable state of mind those endure, who are tormented with this vice. A spirit of emulation has been supposed to be the source of the greatest improvements; and there is no doubt but the warmest rivalship will produce the most excellent effects; but it is to be feared, that a perpetual state of contest will injure the temper so essentially, that the mischief will hardly be counterbalanced by any other advantages. Those whose progress is the most rapid, will be apt to despise their less successful competitors, who, in return, will feel the bitterest resentment against their more fortunate rivals. Among persons of real goodness, this jealousy and contempt can never be equally felt, because every advancement in piety will be attended with a proportionable increase of humility, which will lead them to contemplate their own improvements with modesty, and to view with charity the miscarriages of others.

When an envious man is melancholy, one may ask him, in the words of Bion, what evil has befallen himself, or what good has happened to another? This last is the scale by which he principally measures his felicity, and the very smiles of his friends are so many deductions from his own happiness. The wants of others are the standard by which he rates his own wealth; and he estimates his riches, not so much by his own possessions, as by the necessities of his neighbours.

When the malevolent intend to strike a very deep and dangerous stroke of malice, they generally begin the most remotely in the world from the subject nearest their hearts. They set out with commending the object of their envy for some trifling quality or advantage, which it is scarcely worth while to possess: they next proceed to make a general profession of their own good-will and regard for him: thus artfully removing any suspicion of their design, and clearing all obstructions for the insidious stab they are about to give; for who will suspect them of an intention to injure the object of their peculiar and professed esteem? The hearer's belief of the fact grows in proportion to the seeming reluctance with which it is told, and to the conviction he has, that the relater is not influenced by any private pique or personal resentment, but that the confession is extorted from him sorely against his inclination, and purely on account of his zeal for truth.

Anger is less reasonable and more sincere than envy.—Anger breaks out abruptly; envy is a great prefacer—anger wishes to be understood at once; envy is fond of remote hints and ambiguities; but, obscure as its oracles are, it never ceases to deliver them till they are perfectly comprehended;—anger repeats the same circumstances over again; envy invents new ones at every fresh recital—anger gives a broken, vehement, and interrupted narrative; envy tells a more consistent and more probable, though a falser tale—anger is excessively imprudent, for it is impatient to disclose every thing it knows; envy is discreet, for it has a great deal to hide—anger never consults times or seasons; envy waits for the lucky moment, when the wound it meditates may be made the most exquisitely painful, and the most incurably deep—anger uses more invective; envy does more mischief—simple anger soon runs itself out of breath, and is exhausted at the end of its tale; but it is for that chosen period that envy has treasured up the most barbed arrow in its whole quiver—anger puts a man out of himself; but the truly malicious generally preserve the appearance of self-possession, or they could not so effectually injure.—The angry man sets out by destroying his whole credit with you at once, for he very frankly confesses his abhorrence and detestation of the object of his abuse; while the envious man carefully suppresses all his own share in the affair.—The angry man defeats the end of his resentment, by keeping *himself* continually before your eyes, instead of his enemy; while the envious man artfully brings forward the object of his malice, and keeps himself out of sight.—The angry man talks loudly of his own wrongs; the envious of his adversary's injustice.—A passionate person, if his resentments are not complicated with malice, divides his time between sinning and sorrowing; and, as the irascible passions cannot constantly be at work, his heart may sometimes get a holyday.—Anger is a violent act, envy a constant habit—no one can be always angry, but he may be always envious:—an angry man's enmity (if he be generous) will subside when the object of his resentment becomes unfortunate; but the envious man can extract food from his malice out of calamity itself, if he finds his adversary bears it with dignity, or is pitied or assisted in it. The rage of the passionate man is totally extinguished by the death of his enemy; but the hatred of the malicious is not buried even in the grave of his rival: he will envy the good name he has left behind him; he will envy him the tears of his widow, the prosperity of his children, the esteem of his friends, the praises of his epitaph—nay, the very magnificence of his funeral.

* The poetical fable here alluded to is in Strada's Prolusions on the Style of Claudian, and has been translated into English verse by different writers; particularly Ford, the dramatist, and by Dr. Gibbens, as an example of the Enantiosis in his "Treatise on Rhetoric," published in 1767.—Ed.

"The ear of jealousy heareth all things" (says the wise man), frequently, I believe, more than is uttered, which makes the company of persons infected with it still more dangerous.

When you tell those of a malicious turn, any circumstance that has happened to another, though they perfectly know of whom you are speaking, they often affect to be at a loss, to forget his name, or to misapprehend you in some respect or other; and this merely to have an opportunity of slyly gratifying their malice by mentioning some unhappy defect or personal infirmity he labours under; and, not contented "to tack his every error to his name," they will, by way of farther explanation, have recourse to the faults of his father, or the misfortunes of his family; and this with all the seeming simplicity and candour in the world, merely for the sake of preventing mistakes, and to clear up every doubt of his identity.—If you are speaking of a lady, for instance, they will perhaps embellish their inquiries, by asking if you mean her whose great-grandfather was a bankrupt, though she has the vanity to keep a chariot, while others who are much better born walk on foot; or they will afterward recollect, that you may possibly mean her cousin, of the same name, whose mother was suspected of such or such an indiscretion, though the daughter had the luck to make her fortune by marrying, while her betters are overlooked.

To *hint* at a fault does more mischief than speaking out; for whatever is left for the imagination to finish, will not fail to be overdone; every hiatus will be more than filled up, and every pause more than supplied. There is less malice, and less mischief too, in telling a man's name than the initials of it; as a worthier person may be involved in the most disgraceful suspicions by such a dangerous ambiguity.

It is not uncommon for the envious, after having attempted to deface the fairest character so industriously, that they are afraid you will begin to detect their malice, to endeavour to remove your suspicions effectually, by assuring you that what they have just related is only the popular opinion; they themselves can never believe things are so bad as they are said to be; for their part, it is a rule with them always to hope the best. It is their way never to believe or report ill of any one. They will, however, mention the story in all companies, that they may do their friend the service of protesting their disbelief of it. More reputations are thus hinted away by false friends, than are openly destroyed by public enemies. An *if*, or a *but*, or a mortified look, or a languid defence, or an ambiguous shake of the head, or a hasty word affectedly recalled, will demolish a character more effectually, than the whole artillery of malice when openly levelled against it.

It is not that envy never praises—No, that would be making a public profession of itself, and advertising its own malignity; whereas the greatest success of its efforts depends on the concealment of their end. When envy intends to strike a stroke of Machiavelian policy, it sometimes affects the language of the most exaggerated applause; though it generally takes care, that the subject of its panegyric shall be a very indifferent and common character, so that it is well aware none of its praises will stick.

It is the unhappy nature of envy not to be contented with positive misery, but to be continually aggravating its own torments, by comparing them with the felicities of others. The eyes of envy are perpetually fixed on the object which disturbs it; nor can it avert them from it, though to procure itself the relief of a temporary forgetfulness. On seeing the innocence of the first pair,

> "Aside the devil turn'd,
> For envy, yet, with jealous leer malign,
> Eyed them askance."

As this enormous sin chiefly instigated the revolt, and brought on the ruin of the angelic spirits, so it is not improbable, that it will be a principal instrument of misery in a future world, for the envious to compare their desperate condition with the happiness of the children of God; and to heighten their actual wretchedness by reflecting on what they have lost.

Perhaps envy, like lying and ingratitude, is practised with more frequency, because it is practised with impunity; but there being no human laws against these crimes, is so far from an inducement to commit them, that this very consideration would be sufficient to deter the wise and good, if all others were ineffectual; for of how heinous a nature must those sins be, which are judged above the reach of human punishment, and are reserved for the final justice of God himself!

ON THE DANGER OF SENTIMENTAL OR ROMANTIC CONNEXIONS.

Among the many evils which prevail under the sun, the abuse of words is not the least considerable. By the influence of time, and the perversion of fashion, the plainest and most unequivocal may be so altered, as to have a meaning assigned them almost diametrically opposite to their original signification.

The present age may be termed, by way of distinction, the age of sentiment, a word which, in the implication it now bears, was unknown to our plain ancestors. Sentiment is the varnish of virtue, to conceal the deformity of vice; and it is not uncommon for the same persons to make a jest of religion, to break through the most solemn ties and engagements, to practise every art of latent fraud and open seduction, and yet to value themselves on speaking and writing *sentimentally*.

But this refined jargon, which has infested letters and tainted morals, is chiefly admired and adopted by young ladies of a certain turn, who read *sentimental* books, write *sentimental* letters, and contract *sentimental* friendships.

Error is never likely to do so much mischief

as when it disguises its real tendency, and puts on an engaging and attractive appearance. Many a young woman, who would be shocked at the imputation of an intrigue, is extremely flattered at the idea of a sentimental connexion, though perhaps with a dangerous and designing man, who, by putting on this mask of plausibility and virtue, disarms her of her prudence, lays her apprehensions asleep, and involves her in misery; misery the more inevitable, because unsuspected. For she who apprehends no danger, will not think it necessary to be always upon her guard; but will rather invite than avoid the ruin which comes under so specious and so fair a form.

Such an engagement will be infinitely dearer to her vanity than an avowed and authorized attachment; for one of these sentimental lovers will not scruple, very seriously, to assure a credulous girl that her unparalleled merit entitles her to the adoration of the whole world, and that the universal homage of mankind is nothing more than the unavoidable tribute extorted by her charms. No wonder then she should be easily prevailed on to believe, that an individual is captivated by perfections which might enslave a million. But she should remember, that he who endeavours to intoxicate her with adulation, intends one day most effectually to humble her. For an artful man has always a secret design to pay himself in future for every present sacrifice. And this prodigality of praise, which he now appears to lavish with such thoughtless profusion, is, in fact, a sum economically laid out to supply his future necessities: of this sum he keeps an exact estimate, and at some distant day promises himself the most exorbitant interest for it. If he has address and conduct, and the object of his pursuit much vanity and some sensibility, he seldom fails of success; for so powerful will be his ascendency over her mind, that she will soon adopt his notions and opinions. Indeed, it is more than probable she possessed most of them before, having gradually acquired them in her initiation into the sentimental character. To maintain that character with dignity and propriety, it is necessary she should entertain the most elevated ideas of disproportionate alliances and disinterested love; and consider fortune, rank, and reputation, as mere chimerical distinctions and vulgar prejudices.

The lover, deeply versed in all the obliquities of fraud, and skilled to wind himself into every avenue of the heart which indiscretion has left unguarded, soon discovers on which side it is most accessible. He avails himself of this weakness by addressing her in a language exactly consonant to her own ideas. He attacks her with her own weapons, and opposes rhapsody to sentiment. He professes so sovereign a contempt for the paltry concerns of money, that she thinks it her duty to reward him for so generous a renunciation. Every plea he artfully advances of his own unworthiness, is considered by her as a fresh demand which her gratitude must answer. And she makes it a point of honour to sacrifice to him that fortune which he is too noble to regard. These professions of humility are the common artifice of the vain, and these protestations of generosity the refuge of the rapacious. And among its many smooth mischiefs, it is one of the sure and successful frauds of sentiment, to affect the most frigid indifference to those external and pecuniary advantages, which it is its great and real object to obtain.

A sentimental girl very rarely entertains any doubt of her personal beauty; for she has been daily accustomed to contemplate it herself, and to hear of it from others. She will not, therefore, be very solicitous for the confirmation of a truth so self-evident; but she suspects that her pretensions to understanding are more likely to be disputed, and, for that reason, greedily devours every compliment offered to those perfections which are less obvious and more refined. She is persuaded that men need only open their eyes to decide on her beauty, while it will be the most convincing proof of the taste, sense, and elegance of her admirer, that he can discern and flatter those qualities in her. A man of the character here supposed will easily insinuate himself into her affections, by means of this latent but leading foible, which may be called the guiding clew to a sentimental heart. He will affect to overlook that beauty which attracts common eyes and insnares common hearts, while he will bestow the most delicate praises on the beauties of her mind, and finish the climax of adulation by hinting that she is superior to it.

> "And when he tells her she hates flattery,
> She says she does, being then most flatter'd."

But nothing, in general, can end less delightfully than these sublime attachments, even where no acts of seduction were ever practised, but they are suffered, like mere sublunary connexions, to terminate in the vulgar catastrophe of marriage. That wealth, which lately seemed to be looked on with ineffable contempt by the lover, now appears to be the principal attraction in the eyes of the husband; and he, who but a few short weeks before, in a transport of sentimental generosity, wished her to have been a village maid, with no portion but her crook and her beauty, and that they might spend their days in pastoral love and innocence, has now lost all relish for the Arcadian life, or any other life in which she must be his companion.

On the other hand, she who was lately

> "An angel call'd, and angel-like ador'd,"

is shocked to find herself at once stripped of all her celestial attributes. This late divinity, who scarcely yielded to her sisters of the sky, now finds herself of less importance in the esteem of the man she has chosen, than any other mere mortal woman. No longer is she gratified with the tear of counterfeited passion, the sigh of dissembled rapture, or the language of premeditated adoration. No longer is the altar of her vanity loaded with the oblations of fictitious fondness, the incense of falsehood, or the sacrifice of flattery. Her apotheosis is ended! She feels herself degraded from the dignities and privileges of a goddess, to all the imperfections,

vanities, and weaknesses of a slighted woman and a neglected wife. Her faults, which were so lately overlooked, or mistaken for virtues, are now, as Cassius says, set in a notebook. The passion which was vowed eternal, lasted only a few short weeks; and the indifference, which was so far from being included in the bargain, that it was not so much as suspected, follows them through the whole tiresome journey of their insipid, vacant, joyless existence.

Thus much for the *completion* of the sentimental history. If we trace it back to its beginning, we shall find that a damsel of this cast had her head originally turned by pernicious reading, and her insanity confirmed by imprudent friendships. She never fails to select a beloved *confidante* of her own turn and humour, though, if she can help it, not quite so handsome as herself. A violent intimacy ensues, or, to speak the language of sentiment, an intimate union of souls immediately takes place, which is wrought to the highest pitch by a secret and voluminous correspondence, though they live in the same street, or perhaps in the same house. This is the fuel which principally feeds and supplies the dangerous flame of sentiment. In this correspondence the two friends encourage each other in the falsest notions imaginable. They represent romantic love as the great important business of human life, and describe all the other concerns of it as too low and paltry to merit the attention of such elevated beings, and fit only to employ the daughters of the plodding vulgar. In these letters, family affairs are misrepresented, family secrets divulged, and family misfortunes aggravated. They are filled with vows of eternal amity, and protestations of never-ending love. But interjections and quotations are the principal embellishments of these very sublime epistles. Every panegyric contained in them is extravagant and hyperbolical, and every censure exaggerated and excessive. In a favourite every frailty is heightened into a perfection, and in a foe degraded into a crime. The dramatic poets, especially the most tender and romantic, are quoted in almost every line, and every pompous or pathetic thought is forced to give up its natural and obvious meaning, and, with all the violence of misapplication, is compelled to suit some circumstance of imaginary wo of the fair transcriber. Alicia is not too mad for her heroics, nor Monimia too mild for her soft emotions.

Fathers have *flinty* hearts, is an expression worth an empire, and is always used with peculiar emphasis and enthusiasm. For a favourite topic of these epistles is the grovelling spirit and sordid temper of the parents, who will be sure to find no quarter at the hands of their daughters, should they presume to be so unreasonable as to direct their course of reading, interfere in their choice of friends, or interrupt their very important correspondence. But as these young ladies are fertile in expedients, and as their genius is never more agreeably exercised than in finding resources, they are not without their secret exultation, in case either of the above interesting events should happen, as they carry with them a certain air of tyranny and persecution which is very delightful. For a prohibited correspondence is one of the great incidents of a sentimental life, and a letter clandestinely received, the supreme felicity of a sentimental lady.

Nothing can equal the astonishment of these soaring spirits, when their plain friends or prudent relations presume to remonstrate with them on any impropriety in their conduct. But if these worthy people happen to be somewhat advanced in life, their contempt is then a little softened by pity, at the reflection that such very antiquated poor creatures should pretend to judge what is fit or unfit for ladies of their great refinement, sense, and reading. They consider them as wretches utterly ignorant of the sublime pleasures of a delicate and exalted passion, as tyrants whose authority is to be contemned, and as spies whose vigilance is to be eluded. The prudence of these worthy friends, they term suspicion; and their experience, dotage. For they are persuaded that the face of things has so totally changed since their parents were young, that though they might then judge tolerably for themselves, yet they are now (with all their advantages of knowledge and observation) by no means qualified to direct their more enlightened daughters; who, if they have made a great progress in the sentimental walk, will no more be influenced by the advice of their mother, than they would go abroad in her laced pinner or her brocade suit.

But young people never show their folly and ignorance more conspicuously than by this overconfidence in their own judgment, and this haughty disdain of the opinion of those who have known more days. Youth has a quickness of apprehension, which it is very apt to mistake for an acuteness of penetration. But youth, like cunning, though very conceited, is very shortsighted, and never more so than when it disregards the instructions of the wise and the admonitions of the aged. The same vices and follies influenced the human heart in their day which influence it now, and nearly in the same manner. One who well knew the world and its various vanities, has said, "The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."

It is also a part of the sentimental character, to imagine that none but the young and beautiful have any right to the pleasure of society, or even to the common benefits and blessings of life. Ladies of this turn also affect the most lofty disregard for useful qualities and domestic virtues; and this is a natural consequence; for as this sort of sentiment is only a weed of idleness, she who is constantly and usefully employed has neither leisure nor propensity to cultivate it.

A sentimental lady principally values herself on the enlargement of her notions, and her liberal way of thinking. This superiority of soul chiefly manifests itself in the contempt of those minute delicacies and little decorums,

which, trifling as they may be thought, tend at once to dignify the character, and to restrain the levity, of the younger part of the sex.

Perhaps the error here complained of originates in mistaking *sentiment* and *principle* for each other. Now, I conceive them to be extremely different. Sentiment is the virtue of *ideas*, and principle the virtue of *action*. Sentiment has its seat in the head, principle in the heart. Sentiment suggests fine harangues and subtle distinctions; principle conceives just notions, and performs good actions in consequence of them. Sentiment refines away the simplicity of truth and the plainness of piety; and, as a celebrated wit* has remarked of his no less celebrated contemporary, gives us virtue in words and vice in deeds. Sentiment may be called the Athenian, who *knew* what was right; and principle the Lacedemonian, who *practised* it.

But these qualities will be better exemplified by an attentive consideration of two admirably drawn characters of Milton, which are beautifully, delicately, and distinctly marked. These are, Belial, who may not be improperly called the *Demon of Sentiment;* and Abdiel, who may be termed the *Angel of Principle.*

Survey the picture of Belial, drawn by the sublimest hand that ever held the poetic pencil.

"A fairer person lost not heaven; he seem'd
For dignity composed, and high exploit,
But all was false and hollow, though his tongue
Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels, for his thoughts were low,
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Tim'rous and slothful; yet he pleased the ear."
Paradise Lost, Book II.

Here is a lively and exquisite representation of art, subtlety, wit, fine breeding, and polished manners; on the whole, of a very accomplished and sentimental spirit.

Now turn to the artless, upright, and unsophisticated Abdiel.

"Faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal.
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single."—Book V.

But it is not from these descriptions, just and striking as they are, that their characters are so perfectly known, as from an examination of their conduct through the remainder of this divine work; in which it is well worth while to remark the consonancy of their actions, and what the above pictures seem to promise. It will also be observed, that the contrast between them is kept up throughout, with the utmost exactness of delineation, and the most animated strength of colouring.

On a review it will be found that Belial *talked* all, and Abdiel *did* all. The former,

"With words still clothed in reason's guise,
Counsell'd ignobie ease, and peaceful sloth
Not peace"—Book II.

In Abdiel you will constantly find the eloquence of action. When tempted by the rebellious angels, with what retorted scorn, with what honest indignation he deserts their multitudes, and retreats from their contagious society!

"All night the dreadless angel unpursued
Through heaven's wide champaign held his way."
Book VI.

No wonder he was received with such acclamations of joy by the celestial powers, when there was—

"But one,
Yes, of so many myriads fallen, but one
Returned not lost."—Ibid.

And afterward, in a close contest with the arch fiend,

"A noble stroke he lifted high
On the proud crest of Satan."—Ibid.

What was the effect of this courage of the vigilant and active seraph?

"Amazement seized
The rebel throne, but greater rage to see
Thus foiled their mightiest."

Abdiel had the superiority of Belial as much in the warlike combat, as in the peaceful counsels.

"Nor was it aught but just,
That he who in debate of truth had won,
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
Victor."

But notwithstanding I have spoken with some asperity against sentiment as opposed to principle, yet I am convinced, that true genuine sentiment (not the sort I have been describing), may be so connected with principle as to bestow on it its brightest lustre, and its most captivating graces. And enthusiasm is so far from being disagreeable, that a portion of it is perhaps indispensably necessary in an engaging woman. But it must be the enthusiasm of the heart, not of the senses. It must be the enthusiasm which grows up with the feeling mind, and is cherished by a virtuous education; not that which is compounded of irregular passions, and artificially refined by books of unnatural fiction and improbable adventure. I will even go so far as to assert, that a young woman cannot have any real greatness of soul, or true elevation of principle, if she has not a tincture of what the vulgar would call romance, but which persons of a certain way of thinking will discern to proceed from those fine feelings, and that charming sensibility, without which, though a woman may be worthy, yet she can never be amiable.

But this dangerous merit cannot be too rigidly watched, as it is very apt to lead those who possess it into inconveniences from which less interesting characters are happily exempt. Young women of strong sensibility may be carried by the very amiableness of this temper into the most alarming extremes. Their tastes are passions. They love and hate with all their hearts, and scarcely suffer themselves to feel a reasonable preference before it strengthens into a violent attachment.

When an innocent girl of this open, trusting, tender heart, happens to meet with one of her own sex and age, whose address and manners are engaging, she is instantly seized with an

* See Voltaire's Prophecy concerning Rousseau.

ardent desire to commence a friendship with her. She feels the most lively impatience at the restraints of company, and the decorums of ceremony. She longs to be alone with her, longs to assure her of the warmth of her tenderness, and generously ascribes to the fair stranger all the good qualities she feels in her own heart, or rather all those which she has met with in her reading, dispersed in a variety of heroines. She is persuaded that her new friend unites them all in herself, because she carries in her prepossesing countenance the promise of them all. How cruel and how censorious would this inexperienced girl think her mother was, who should venture to hint that the agreeable unknown had defects in her temper, or exceptions in her character. She would mistake these hints of discretion for the insinuations of an uncharitable disposition. At first she would perhaps listen to them with a generous impatience, and afterward with a cold and silent disdain. She would despise them as the effect of prejudice, misrepresentation, or ignorance. The more aggravated the censure, the more vehemently would she protest in secret, that her friendship for this dear injured creature (who is raised much higher in her esteem by such injurious suspicions) shall know no bounds, as she is assured it can know no end.

Yet this trusting confidence, this honest indiscretion, is at this early period of life as amiable as it is natural; and will, if wisely cultivated, produce, at its proper season, fruits infinitely more valuable than all the guarded circumspection of premature, and therefore artificial prudence. Men, I believe, are seldom struck with these sudden prepossessions in favour of each other. They are not so unsuspecting nor so easily led away by the predominance of fancy. They engage more warily, and pass through the several stages of acquaintance, intimacy, and confidence, by slower gradations; but women, if they are sometimes deceived in the choice of a friend, enjoy even then a higher degree of satisfaction than if they never trusted. For to be always clad in the burdensome armour of suspicion is more painful and inconvenient than to run the hazard of suffering now and then a transient injury.

But the above observations only extend to the young and the inexperienced; for I am very certain, that women are capable of as faithful and as durable friendship as any of the other sex. They can enter not only into all the enthusiastic tenderness, but into all the solid fidelity of attachment. And if we cannot oppose instances of equal weight with those of Nysus and Euryalus, Theseus and Pirithous, Pylades and Orestes, let it be remembered that it is because the recorders of those characters were men, and that the very existence of them is merely poetical.

TRUE AND FALSE MEEKNESS.

A low voice and soft address are the common indications of a wellbred woman, and should seem to be the natural effects of a meek and quiet spirit; but they are only the outward and visible signs of it; for they are no more meekness itself, than a red coat is courage, or a black one devotion.

Yet nothing is more common than to mistake the sign for the thing itself; nor is any practice more frequent than that of endeavouring to acquire the exterior mark, without once thinking to labour after the interior grace. Surely this is beginning at the wrong end, like attacking the symptom and neglecting the disease. To regulate the features while the soul is in tumults, or to command the voice while the passions are without restraint, is as idle as throwing odours into a stream when the source is polluted.

The *sapient* king,* who knew better than any man the nature and the power of beauty, has assured us, that the temper of the mind has a strong influence upon the features: "Wisdom maketh the face to shine," says that exquisite judge; and surely no part of wisdom is more likely to produce this amiable effect, than a placid serenity of soul.

It will not be difficult to distinguish the true from the artificial meekness. The former is universal and habitual; the latter, local and temporary. Every young female may keep this rule by her, to enable her to form a just judgment of her own temper: if she is not as gentle to her chambermaid as she is to her visiter, she may rest satisfied that the spirit of gentleness is not in her.

Who would not be shocked and disappointed to behold a wellbred young lady, soft and engaging as the doves of Venus, displaying a thousand graces and attractions to win the hearts of a large company; and, the instant they are gone, to see her look mad as the Pythian maid, and all the frightened graces driven from her furious countenance, only because her gown was brought home a quarter of an hour later than she expected, or her riband sent half a shade lighter or darker than she ordered!

All men's characters are said to proceed from their servants; and this is more particularly true of ladies: for as their situations are more domestic, they lie more open to the inspection of their families, to whom their real characters are easily and perfectly known; for they seldom think it worth while to practise any disguise before those whose good opinion they do not value, and who are obliged to submit to their most insupportable humours, because they are paid for it.

Among women of breeding, the exterior of gentleness is so uniformly assumed, and the whole manner is so perfectly level and *uni*, that it is next to impossible for a stranger to know any thing of their true dispositions by conversing with them, and even the very features are so exactly regulated, that physiognomy, which may sometimes be trusted among the vulgar, is, with the polite, a most lying science.

A very termagant woman, if she happen also to be a very artful one, will be conscious she

* Solomon is here understood; but the term by which he is indicated, ill suits the dignity of one who had the reputation of being the wisest of men.—Ed.

has so much to conceal, that the dread of betraying her real temper will make her put on an over-acted softness, which, from its very excess, may be distinguished from the natural, by a penetrating eye. That gentleness is ever liable to be suspected for the counterfeited, which is so excessive as to deprive people of the proper use of speech and motion, or which, as Hamlet says, makes them lisp and amble, and nickname God's creatures.

The countenance and manners of some very fashionable persons may be compared to the inscriptions on their monuments, which speak nothing but good of what is within; but he who knows any thing of the world, or of the human heart, will no more trust to the courtesy, than he will depend on the epitaph.

Among the various artifices of factitious meekness, one of the most frequent and most plausible, is that of affecting to be always equally delighted with all persons and all characters. The society of these languid beings is without confidence, their friendship without attachment, and their love without affection, or even preference. This insipid mode of conduct may be safe, but I cannot think it has either taste, sense, or principle in it.

These uniformly smiling and approving ladies, who have neither the noble courage to reprehend vice, nor the generous warmth to bear their honest testimony in the cause of virtue, conclude every one to be illnatured who has any penetration, and look upon a distinguishing judgment as want of tenderness. But they should learn, that this discernment does not always proceed from an uncharitable temper, but from that long experience and thorough knowledge of the world, which lead those who have it to scrutinize into the conduct and disposition of men, before they trust entirely to those fair appearances which sometimes veil the most insidious purposes.

We are perpetually mistaking the qualities and dispositions of our own hearts. We elevate our failings into virtues, and qualify our vices into weaknesses: and hence arise so many false judgments respecting meekness. Self-ignorance is at the root of all this mischief. Many ladies complain that, for their part, their spirit is so meek they can bear nothing; whereas if they spoke truth, they would say, their spirit is so high and unbroken, that they can bear nothing. Strange! to plead their meekness as a reason why they cannot endure to be crossed, and to produce their impatience of contradiction as a proof of their gentleness!

Meekness, like most other virtues, has certain limits, which it no sooner exceeds than it becomes criminal. Servility of spirit is not gentleness, but weakness; and if allowed, under the specious appearances it sometimes puts on, will lead to the most dangerous compliances. She who hears innocence maligned without vindicating it, falsehood asserted without contradicting it, or religion profaned without resenting it, is not gentle, but wicked.

To give up the cause of an innocent, injured friend, if the popular cry happens to be against him, is the most disgraceful weakness. This was the case of Madame de Maintenon. She loved the character and admired the talents of Racine; she caressed him while he had no enemies, but wanted the greatness of mind, or rather the common justice, to protect him against their resentment when he had; and her favourite was abandoned to the suspicious jealousy of the king, when a prudent remonstrance might have preserved him.—But her tameness, if not absolute connivance in the great massacre of the Protestants, in whose church she had been bred, is a far more guilty instance of her weakness; an instance which, in spite of all her devotional zeal and incomparable prudence, will disqualify her from shining in the annals of good women, however she may be entitled to figure among the great and the fortunate. Compare her conduct with that of her undaunted and pious countryman and contemporary, Bougi, who, when Louis would have prevailed on him to renounce his religion for a commission or a government, nobly replied, "If I could be persuaded to betray my God for a marshal's staff, I might betray my king for a bribe of much less consequence."

Meekness is imperfect, if it be not both active and passive; if it will not enable us to subdue our own passions and resentments, as well as qualify us to bear patiently the passions and resentments of others.

Before we give way to any violent emotion of anger, it would perhaps be worth while to consider the object which excites it, and to reflect for a moment, whether the thing we so ardently desire, or so vehemently resent, be really of as much importance to us, as that delightful tranquillity of soul which we renounce in pursuit of it. If, on a fair calculation, we find we are not likely to get as much as we are sure to lose, then, putting all religious considerations out of the question, common sense and human policy will tell us, we have made a foolish and unprofitable exchange. Inward quiet is a part of one's self; the object of our resentment may be only a matter of opinion; and certainly, what makes a portion of our actual happiness, ought to be too dear to us to be sacrificed for a trifling, foreign, perhaps imaginary good.

The most pointed satire I remember to have read on a mind enslaved by anger, is an observation of Seneca's. "Alexander," said he, "had two friends, Clitus and Lysimachus; the one he exposed to a lion, the other to himself; he who was turned loose to the beast escaped, but Clitus was murdered, for he was turned loose to an angry man."

A passionate woman's happiness is never in her own keeping; it is the sport of accident, and the slave of events. It is in the power of her acquaintance, her servants, but chiefly of her enemies; and all her comforts lie at the mercy of others. So far from being willing to learn of Him who was meek and lowly, she considers meekness as the want of a becoming spirit, and lowliness as a despicable and vulgar meanness. And an imperious woman will so little covet the ornament of a meek and quiet

spirit, that it is almost the only ornament she will not be solicitous to wear. But resentment is a very expensive vice. How dearly has it cost its votaries, even from the sin of Cain, the first offender in this kind! "It is cheaper (says a pious writer) to forgive, and save the charges."

If it were only for mere human reasons, it would turn to a better account to be patient: nothing defeats the malice of an enemy like a spirit of forbearance; the return of rage for rage cannot be so effectually provoking. True gentleness, like an impenetrable armour, repels the most pointed shafts of malice: they cannot pierce through this invulnerable shield, but either fall hurtless to the ground, or return to wound the hand that shot them.

A meek spirit will not look out of itself for happiness, because it finds a constant banquet at home; yet, by a sort of divine alchymy, it will convert all external events to its own profit, and be able to deduce some good, even from the most unpromising: it will extract comfort and satisfaction from the most barren circumstances; "it will suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock."

But the supreme excellence of this complacent quality is, that it naturally disposes the mind where it resides to the practice of every other that is amiable. Meekness may be called the pioneer of all the other virtues, which levels every obstruction, and smooths every difficulty that might impede their entrance, or retard their progress.

The peculiar importance and value of this amiable virtue may be farther seen in its permanency. Honours and dignities are transient; beauty and riches, frail and fugacious, to a proverb. Would not the truly wise, therefore, wish to have some one possession, which they might call their own in the severest exigencies? But this wish can only be accomplished by acquiring and maintaining that calm and absolute self-possession, which, as the world had no hand in giving, it cannot, by the most malicious exertion of its power, take away.

THOUGHTS
ON
The Cultivation of the HEART *and* TEMPER
IN THE
EDUCATION OF DAUGHTERS.

I HAVE not the foolish presumption to imagine that I can offer any thing new on a subject which has been so successfully treated by many able and learned writers. I would only, with all possible deference, beg leave to hazard a few short remarks on that part of the subject of education, which I would call the *education of the heart*. I am well aware, that this part also has not been less skilfully and forcibly discussed than the rest, though I cannot, at the same time, help remarking, that it does not appear to have been so much adopted into common practice.

It appears, then, that notwithstanding the great and real improvements which have been made in the affair of female education, and notwithstanding the more enlarged and generous views of it which prevail in the present day, that there is still a very material defect, which it is not, in general, enough the object of attention to remove. This defect seems to consist in this, that too little regard is paid to the dispositions of the mind, that the indications of the temper are not properly cherished, nor the affections of the heart sufficiently regulated.

In the first education of girls, as far as the customs which fashion establishes are right, they should undoubtedly be followed. Let the exterior be made a considerable object of attention, but let it not be the principal; let it not be the only one. Let the graces be industriously cultivated, but let them not be cultivated at the expense of the virtues. Let the arms, the head, the whole person be carefully polished, but let not the heart be the only portion of the human anatomy which shall be totally overlooked.

The neglect of this cultivation seems to proceed as much from a bad taste as from a false principle. The generality of people form their judgment of education by slight and sudden appearances, which is certainly a wrong way of determining. Music, dancing, and languages, gratify those who teach them, by perceptible and almost immediate effects; and, when there happens to be no imbecility in the pupil, nor deficiency in the master, every superficial observer can, in some measure, judge of the progress. The effects of most of these accomplishments address themselves to the senses; and there are more who can see and hear, than there are who can judge and reflect.

Personal perfection is not only more obvious, it is also more rapid; and, even in very accomplished characters, elegance usually precedes principle.

But the heart, that natural seat of evil propensities, that little troublesome empire of the passions, is led to what is right by slow motions and imperceptible degrees. It must be admonished by reproof, and allured by kindness. Its liveliest advances are frequently impeded by the obstinacy of prejudice, and its brightest promises often obscured by the tempests of passion. It is slow in its acquisition of virtue, and reluctant in its approaches to piety.

There is another reason, which proves this mental cultivation to be more important, as well as more difficult, than any other part of education. In the usual fashionable accomplishments, the business of acquiring them is almost always getting forward, and one difficulty is conquered before another is suffered to show itself; for a prudent teacher will level the road his pupil is to pass, and smooth the inequalities which might retard her progress.

But in morals (which should be the great object constantly kept in view), the task is far more difficult. The unruly and turbulent desires of the heart are not so obedient; one passion will start up before another is suppressed. The subduing Hercules cannot cut off the heads so often as the prolific hydra can produce

them, nor fell the stubborn Antæus so fast as he can recruit his strength, and rise in vigorous and repeated opposition.

If all the accomplishments could be bought at the price of a single virtue, the purchase would be infinitely dear! And, however startling it may sound, I think it is, notwithstanding, true, that the labours of a good and wise mother, who is anxious for her daughter's most important interests, will seem to be at variance with those of her instructers. She will doubtless rejoice at her progress in any polite art, but she will rejoice with trembling—humility and piety form the solid and durable basis, on which she wishes to raise the superstructure of the accomplishments, while the accomplishments themselves are frequently of that unsteady nature, that if the foundation is not secured, in proportion as the building is enlarged, it will be overloaded and destroyed by those very ornaments, which were intended to embellish what they have contributed to ruin.

The more ostensible qualifications should be carefully regulated, or they will be in danger of putting to flight the modest train of retreating virtues, which cannot safely subsist before the bold eye of public observation, or bear the bolder tongue of impudent and audacious flattery. A tender mother cannot but feel an honest triumph, in contemplating those excellences in her daughter which deserve applause, but she will also shudder at the vanity which that applause may excite, and at those hitherto unknown ideas which it may awaken.

The master—it is his interest, and perhaps his duty—will naturally teach a girl to set her improvements in the most conspicuous point of light. *Se faire valoir* is the great principle industriously inculcated into her young heart, and seems to be considered as a kind of fundamental maxim in education. It is, however, the certain and effectual seed, from which a thousand yet unborn vanities will spring. This dangerous doctrine (which yet is not without its uses) will be counteracted by the prudent mother, not in so many words, but by a watchful and scarcely perceptible dexterity. Such a one will be more careful to have the talents of her daughter cultivated than exhibited.

One would be led to imagine, by the common mode of female education, that life consisted of one universal holyday, and that the only contest was, who should be best enabled to excel in the sports and games that were to be celebrated on it. Merely ornamental accomplishments will but indifferently qualify a woman to perform the duties of life, though it is highly proper she should possess them, in order to furnish the amusements of it. But is it right to spend so large a portion of life without some preparation for the business of living? A lady may speak a little French and Italian, repeat a few passages in a theatrical tone, play and sing, have her dressing-room hung with her own drawings, and her person covered with her own tambour-work, and may, notwithstanding, have been very badly educated. Yet I am far from attempting to depreciate the value of these qualifications: they are most of them not only highly becoming, but often indispensably necessary, and a polite education cannot be perfected without them. But as the world seems to be very well apprized of their importance, there is the less occasion to insist on their utility. Yet, though wellbred young women should learn to dance, sing, recite, and draw, the end of a good education is not that they may become dancers, singers, players, or painters; its real object is to make them good daughters, good wives, good mistresses, good members of society, and good Christians. The above qualifications, therefore, are intended to adorn their leisure, not to employ their lives; for an amiable and wise woman will always have something better to value herself on than these advantages, which, however captivating, are still but subordinate parts of a truly excellent character.

But I am afraid parents themselves sometimes contribute to the error of which I am complaining. Do they not often set a higher value on those acquisitions which are calculated to attract observation, and catch the eye of the multitude, than on those which are valuable, permanent, and internal? Are they not sometimes more solicitous about the opinion of others respecting their children, than about the real advantage and happiness of the children themselves? To an injudicious and superficial eye, the best educated girl may make the least brilliant figure, as she will probably have less flippancy in her manner, and less repartee in her expression; and her acquirements, to borrow Bishop Sprat's idea, will be rather "enamelled than embossed." But her merit will be known and acknowledged by all who come near enough to discern, and have taste enough to distinguish. It will be understood and admired by the man whose happiness she is one day to make, whose family she is to govern, and whose children she is to educate. He will not seek for her in the haunts of dissipation, for he knows he shall not find her there; but he will seek for her in the bosom of retirement, in the practice of every domestic virtue, in the exertion of every amiable accomplishment, exerted in the shade, to enliven retirement, to heighten the endearing pleasures of social intercourse, and to embellish the narrow but charming circle of family delights. To this amiable purpose, a truly good and well-educated young lady will dedicate her more elegant accomplishments, instead of exhibiting them to attract admiration, or depress inferiority.

Young girls, who have more vivacity than understanding, will often make a sprightly figure in conversation. But this agreeable talent for entertaining others is frequently dangerous to themselves, nor is it by any means to be desired or encouraged very early in life. This immaturity of wit is helped on by frivolous reading, which will produce its effect in much less time than books of solid instruction; for the imagination is touched sooner than the understanding; and effects are more rapid as they are more pernicious. Conversation should be the *result* of education, not the *precursor* of it. It is a

golden fruit, when suffered to grow gradually on the tree of knowledge; but if precipitated by forced and unnatural means, it will in the end become vapid in proportion as it is artificial.

The best effects of a careful and religious education are often very remote; they are to be discovered in future scenes, and exhibited in untried connexions. Every event of life will be putting the heart into fresh situations, and making demands on its prudence, its firmness, its integrity, or its piety. Those whose business it is to form it, can foresee none of these situations; yet, as far as human wisdom will allow, they must enable it to provide for them all, with an humble dependance on the Divine assistance. A well-disciplined soldier must learn and practise all his evolutions, though he does not know on what service his leader may command him, by what foe he shall be attacked, nor what mode of combat the enemy may use.

One great art of education consists in not suffering the feelings to become too acute by unnecessary awakening, nor too obtuse by the want of exertion. The former renders them the source of calamity, and totally ruins the temper; while the latter blunts and debases them, and produces a dull, cold, and selfish spirit. For the mind is an instrument, which, if wound too high, will lose its sweetness, and if not enough strained, will abate of its vigour.

How cruel is it to extinguish, by neglect or unkindness, the precious sensibility of an open temper, to chill the amiable glow of an ingenuous soul, and to quench the bright flame of a noble and generous spirit! These are of higher worth than all the documents of learning, of dearer price than all the advantages which can be derived from the most refined and artificial mode of education.

But sensibility and delicacy, and an ingenuous temper, make no part of education, exclaims the pedagogue—they are reducible to no class—they come under no article of instruction—they belong neither to languages nor to music. What an error! They *are* a part of education, and of infinitely more value

"Than all their pedant discipline e'er knew."

It is true, they are ranged under no class, but they are superior to all; they are of more esteem than languages or music, for they are the language of the heart, and the music of the according passions. Yet this sensibility is, in many instances, so far from being cultivated, that it is not uncommon to see those who affect more than usual sagacity, cast a smile of supercilious pity, at any indication of a warm, generous, or enthusiastic temper in the lively and the young; as much as to say, "they will know better, and will have more discretion when they are older." But every appearance of amiable simplicity, or of honest shame, nature's hasty conscience, will be dear to sensible hearts; they will carefully cherish every such indication in a young female; for they will perceive that it is this temper, wisely cultivated, which will one day make her enamoured of the loveliness of virtue, and the beauty of holiness: from which she will acquire a taste for the doctrines of religion, and a spirit to perform the duties of it. And those who wish to make her ashamed of this charming temper, and seek to dispossess her of it, will, it is to be feared, give her nothing better in exchange. But whoever reflects at all, will easily discern how carefully this enthusiasm is to be directed, and how judiciously its redundances are to be lopped away.

Prudence is not natural to children; they can, however, substitute art in its stead. But is it not much better that a girl should discover the faults incident to her age, than conceal them under this dark and impenetrable veil? I could almost venture to assert, that there is something more becoming in the very errors of nature, where they are undisguised, than in the affectation of virtue itself, where the reality is wanting. And I am so far from being an admirer of prodigies, that I am extremely apt to suspect them; and am always infinitely better pleased with nature in her more common modes of operation. The precise and premature wisdom which some girls havec unning enough to assume, is of a more dangerous tendency than any of their natural failings can be, as it effectually covers those secret bad dispositions, which, if they displayed themselves, might be rectified. The hypocrisy of assuming virtues which are not inherent in the heart, prevents the growth and disclosure of those real ones, which it is the great end of education to cultivate.

But if the natural indications of the temper are to be suppressed and stifled, where are the diagnostics by which the state of the mind is to be known? The wise Author of all things, who did nothing in vain, doubtless intended them as symptoms, by which to judge of the diseases of the heart; and it is impossible diseases should be cured before they are known. If the stream be so cut off as to prevent communication, or so choked up as to defeat discovery, how shall we ever reach the source, out of which are the issues of life?

This cunning, which, of all the different dispositions girls discover, is most to be dreaded, is increased by nothing so much as by fear. If those about them express violent and unreasonable anger at every trivial offence, it will always promote this temper, and will very frequently create it, where there was a natural tendency to frankness. The indiscreet transports of rage which many betray on every slight occasion, and the little distinction they make between venial errors and premeditated crimes, naturally dispose a child to conceal, what she does not however care to suppress. Anger in one will not remedy the faults of another; for how can an instrument of sin cure sin? If a girl is kept in a state of perpetual and slavish terror, she will perhaps have artifice enough to conceal those propensities which she knows are wrong, or those actions which she thinks are most obnoxious to punishment. But, nevertheless, she will not cease to indulge those propensities, and to commit those actions, when she can do it with impunity.

Good *dispositions*, of themselves, will go but

a very little way, unless they are confirmed into good *principles*. And this cannot be effected but by a careful course of religious instruction, and a patient and laborious cultivation of the moral temper.

But, notwithstanding girls should not be treated with unkindness, nor the first openings of the passions blighted by cold severity; yet I am of opinion that young females should be accustomed very early in life to a certain degree of restraint. The natural cast of character, and the moral distinctions between the sexes, should not be disregarded, even in childhood. That bold, independent, enterprising spirit, which is so much admired in boys, should not, when it happens to discover itself in the other sex, be encouraged, but suppressed. Girls should be taught to give up their opinions betimes, and not pertinaciously to carry on a dispute, even if they should know themselves to be in the right. I do not mean, that they should be robbed of the liberty of private judgment, but that they should by no means be encouraged to contract a contentious or contradictory turn. It is of the greatest importance to their future happiness, that they should acquire a submissive temper and a forbearing spirit: for it is a lesson which the world will not fail to make them frequently practise, when they come abroad into it, and they will not practise it the worse for having learned it the sooner. These early restraints, in the limitation here meant, are so far from being an effect of cruelty, that they are the most indubitable marks of affection, and are the more meritorious, as they are severe trials of tenderness. But all the beneficial effects which a mother can expect from this watchfulness, will be entirely defeated, if it is practised occasionally, and not habitually, and if it ever appears to be used to gratify caprice, ill-humour, or resentment.

Those who have children to educate ought to be extremely patient: it is indeed a labour of love. They should reflect that extraordinary talents are neither essential to the wellbeing of society, nor to the happiness of individuals. If that had been the case, the beneficent Father of the universe would not have made them so rare. For it is as easy for an Almighty Creator to produce a Newton, as an ordinary man; and he could have made those powers common which we now consider as wonderful, without any miraculous exertion of his omnipotence, if the existence of many Newtons had been necessary to the perfection of his wise and gracious plan.

Surely, therefore, there is more piety, as well as more sense, in labouring to improve the talents which children actually have, than in lamenting that they do not possess supernatural endowments or angelic perfections. A passage of Lord Bacon's furnishes an admirable incitement for endeavouring to carry the amiable and Christian grace of charity to its farthest extent, instead of indulging an over-anxious care for more brilliant but less important acquisitions. "The desire of power in excess (says he) caused the angels to fall; the desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall; but in charity is no excess, neither can men nor angels come into danger by it."

A girl who has docility will seldom be found to want understanding enough for all the purposes of a social, a happy, and a useful life. And when we behold the tender hope of fond and anxious love blasted by disappointment, the defect will as often be discovered to proceed from the neglect or the error of cultivation, as from the natural temper; and those who lament the evil, will sometimes be found to have occasioned it.

It is as injudicious for parents to set out with too sanguine a dependance on the merit of their children, as it is for them to be discouraged at every repulse. When their wishes are defeated in this or that particular instance, where they had treasured up some darling expectation, this is so far from being a reason for relaxing their attention, that it ought to be an additional motive for redoubling it. Those who hope to do a great deal, must not expect to do every thing. If they know any thing of the malignity of sin, the blindness of prejudice, or the corruption of the human heart, they will also know, that that heart will always remain, after the very best possible education, full of infirmity and imperfection. Extraordinary allowances, therefore, must be made for the weakness of nature in this its weakest state. After much is done, much will remain to do, and much, very much, will still be left undone: for this regulation of the passions and affections cannot be the work of education alone, without the concurrence of divine grace operating on the heart. Why then should parents repine, if their efforts are not always crowned with immediate success? They should consider, that they are not educating cherubims or seraphims, but men and women; creatures, who at their best estate are altogether vanity: how little then can be expected from them in the weakness and imbecility of infancy! I have dwelt on this part of the subject the longer, because I am certain that many, who have set out with a warm and active zeal, have cooled on the very first discouragement, and have afterward almost totally remitted their vigilance, through a criminal kind of despair.

Great allowances must be made for a profusion of gayety, loquacity, and even indiscretion in children, that there may be animation enough left to supply an active and useful character, when the first fermentation of the youthful passions is over, and the redundant spirits shall come to subside.

If it be true, as a consummate judge of human nature has observed,

"That not a vanity is given in vain,"

it is also true, that there is scarcely a single passion which may not be turned to some good account, if prudently rectified, and skilfully turned into the road of some neighbouring virtue. It cannot be violently bent, or unnaturally forced towards an object of a totally opposite nature, but may be gradually inclined towards a correspondent but superior affection. Anger, hatred,

resentment, and ambition, the most restless and turbulent passions which shake and distract the human soul, may be led to become the most active opposers of sin, after having been its most successful instruments. Our anger, for instance, which can never be totally subdued, may be made to turn against ourselves, for our weak and imperfect obedience—our hatred against every species of vice—our ambition, which will not be discarded, may be ennobled: it will not change its name, but its object; it will despise what it lately valued, nor be contented to grasp at less than immortality.

Thus the joys, fears, hopes, desires, all the passions and affections, which separate in various currents from the soul, will, if directed into their proper channels, after having fertilized wherever they have flowed, return again to swell and enrich the parent source.

That the very passions which appear the most uncontrollable and unpromising, may be intended, in the great scheme of Providence, to answer some important purpose, is remarkably evidenced in the character and history of Saint Paul. A remark on this subject by an ingenious old Spanish writer, which I will here take the liberty to translate, will better illustrate my meaning.

"To convert the bitterest enemy into the most zealous advocate, is the work of God for the instruction of man. Plutarch has observed, that the medical science would be brought to the utmost perfection, when poison should be converted into physic. Thus, in the mortal disease of Judaism and idolatry, our blessed Lord converted the adder's venom of Saul the persecutor, into that cement which made Paul the chosen vessel. That manly activity, that restless ardour, that burning zeal for the law of his fathers, that ardent thirst for the blood of Christians, did the Son of God find necessary in the man who was one day to become the defender of his suffering people."*

To win the passions, therefore, over to the cause of virtue, answers a much nobler end than their extinction would possibly do, even if that could be effected. But it is their nature never to observe a neutrality; they are either rebels or auxiliaries, and an enemy subdued is an ally obtained. If I may be allowed to change the allusion so soon, I would say that the passions also resemble fires, which are friendly and beneficial when under proper direction, but if suffered to blaze without restraint, they carry devastation along with them, and, if totally extinguished, leave the benighted mind in a state of cold and comfortless inanity.

But in speaking of the usefulness of the passions as instruments of virtue, envy and lying must always be excepted: these, I am persuaded, must either go on in still progressive mischief, or else be radically cured, before any good can be expected from the heart which has been infected with them. For I never will believe that envy, though passed through all the moral strainers, can be refined into a virtuous emulation, or lying improved into an agreeable turn for innocent invention. Almost all the other passions may be made to take an amiable hue; but these two must either be totally extirpated, or be always contented to preserve their original deformity, and to wear their native black.

*Obras de Quevedo, vida de San Pablo Apostol. [Francisco Quevedo de Villegas, born at Villeneuve d'l Infantado, in Spain, in 1570, and died there in 1645. His works, printed at Brussels (3 vols.) consist of poems, romances, satires, and some religious pieces, among which is the one here quoted.—Ed.]

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO THE FEMALE CHARACTER.

Various are the reasons why the greater part of mankind cannot apply themselves to arts or letters. Particular studies are only suited to the capacities of particular persons. Some are incapable of applying to them from the delicacy of their sex, some from the unsteadiness of youth, and others from the imbecility of age. Many are precluded by the narrowness of their education, and many by the straitness of their fortune. The wisdom of God is wonderfully manifested in this happy and well-ordered diversity, in the powers and properties of his creatures; since by thus admirably suiting the agent to the action, the whole scheme of human affairs is carried on with the most agreeing and consistent economy, and no chasm is left for want of an object to fill it, exactly suited to its nature.

But in the great and universal concern of religion, both sexes, and all ranks, are equally interested. The truly catholic spirit of Christianity accommodates itself, with an astonishing condescension, to the circumstances of the whole human race. It rejects none on account of their pecuniary wants, their personal infirmities, or their intellectual deficiencies. No superiority of parts is the least recommendation, nor is any depression of fortune the smallest objection. None are too wise to be excused from performing the duties of religion, nor are any too poor to be excluded from the consolations of its promises.

If we admire the wisdom of God in having furnished different degrees of intelligence, so exactly adapted to their different destinations, and in having fitted every part of his stupendous work, not only to serve its own immediate purpose, but also to contribute to the beauty and perfection of the whole; how much more ought we to adore that goodness which has perfected the divine plan, by appointing one wide, comprehensive, and universal means of salvation: a salvation which all are invited to partake; by a means which all are capable of using; which nothing but voluntary blindness can prevent our comprehending, and nothing but wilful error can hinder us from embracing.

The muses are coy, and will only be wooed and won by some highly-favoured suiters. The sciences are lofty, and will not stoop to the reach of ordinary capacities. But "wisdom (by which the royal preacher means piety) is a lov-

ing spirit; she is easily seen of them that love her, and found of all such as seek her." Nay, she is so accessible and condescending, "that she preventeth them that desire her, making herself first known unto them."

We are told by the same animated writer, "that wisdom is the breath of the power of God." How infinitely superior, in grandeur and sublimity, is this description to the origin of the *wisdom* of the heathens, as described by their poets and mythologists! In the exalted strains of the Hebrew poetry, we read, that "wisdom is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness."

The philosophical author of "The Defence of Learning" observes, that knowledge has something of venom and malignity in it, when taken without its proper corrective; and what that is, the inspired Saint Paul teaches us, by placing it as the immediate antidote—"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." Perhaps it is the vanity of human wisdom, unchastised by this correcting principle, which has made so many infidels. It may proceed from the arrogance of a self-sufficient pride, that some philosophers disdain to acknowledge their belief in a Being who has judged proper to conceal from them the infinite wisdom of his counsels; who (to borrow the lofty language of the man of Uz) refused to consult them when he laid the foundations of the earth, when he shut up the sea with doors, and made the clouds the garment thereof.

A man must be an infidel either from pride, prejudice, or bad education: he cannot be one unawares, or by surprise; for infidelity is not occasioned by sudden impulse or violent temptation. He may be hurried by some vehement desire into an immoral action, at which he will blush in his cooler moments, and which he will lament as the sad effect of a spirit unsubdued by religion; but infidelity is a calm, considerate act, which cannot plead the weakness of the heart, or the seduction of the senses. Even good men frequently fail in their duty through the infirmities of nature and the allurements of the world; but the infidel errs on a plan, on a settled and deliberate principle.

But though the minds of men are sometimes fatally infected with this disease, either through unhappy prepossession, or some of the other causes above-mentioned, yet I am unwilling to believe that there is in nature so monstrously incongruous a being as a *female* infidel. The least reflection on the temper, the character, and the education of women, makes the mind revolt with horror from an idea so improbable and so unnatural.

May I be allowed to observe that, in general, the minds of girls seem more aptly prepared in their early youth for the reception of serious impressions than those of the other sex, and that their less exposed situations in more advanced life qualify them better for the preservation of them? The daughters (of good parents I mean) are often more carefully instructed in their religious duties than the sons, and this from a variety of causes. They are not so soon sent from under the paternal eye into the bustle of the world, and so early exposed to the contagion of bad example: their hearts are naturally more flexible, soft, and liable to any kind of impression the forming hand may stamp on them; and, lastly, as they do not receive the same classical education with boys, their feeble minds are not obliged at once to receive and separate the precepts of Christianity, and the documents of pagan philosophy. The necessity of doing this perhaps somewhat weakens the serious impressions of young men, at least till the understanding is formed; and confuses their ideas of piety, by mixing them with so much heterogeneous matter. They only casually read, or hear read, the Scriptures of truth, while they are obliged to learn by heart, construe, and repeat, the poetical fables of the less than human gods of the ancients. And, as the excellent author of "The Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion"* observes, "Nothing has so much contributed to corrupt the true spirit of the Christian institution, as that partiality which we contract, in our earliest education, for the manners of pagan antiquity."

Girls, therefore, who do *not* contract this early partiality, ought to have a clearer notion of their religious duties: they are not obliged, at an age when the judgment is so weak, to distinguish between the doctrines of Zeno, of Epicurus, and of Christ; and to embarrass their minds with the various morals which were taught in the Porch, in the Academy, and on the Mount.

It is presumed that these remarks cannot possibly be so misunderstood, as to be construed into the least disrespect to literature, or a want of the highest reverence for a learned education, the basis of all elegant knowledge: they are only intended, with all proper deference, to point out to young women that, however inferior their advantages of acquiring a knowledge of the belles-lettres are to those of the other sex, yet it depends on themselves not to be surpassed in this most important of all studies, for which their abilities are equal, and their opportunities perhaps greater.

But the mere exemption from infidelity is so small a part of the religious character, that I hope no one will attempt to claim any merit from this negative sort of goodness, or value herself merely for not being the very worst thing she possibly can be. Let no mistaken girl fancy she gives a proof of her wit by her want of piety, or that a contempt of things serious and sacred will exalt her understanding, or raise her character even in the opinion of the most avowed male infidels. For one may venture to affirm, that with all their profligate ideas, both of women and of religion, neither Bolingbroke, Wharton, Buckingham, nor even Lord Chesterfield himself, would have esteemed a woman the more for her being irreligious.

With whatever ridicule a polite freethinker may affect to treat religion himself, he will think it necessary his wife should entertain dif-

* Soame Jenyns, Esq.

ferent notions of it. He may pretend to despise it as a matter of opinion, depending on creeds and systems; but, if he is a man of sense, he will know the value of it as a governing principle, which is to influence her conduct and direct her actions. If he sees her unaffectedly sincere in the practice of her religious duties, it will be a secret pledge to him that she will be equally exact in fulfilling the conjugal; for he can have no reasonable dependance on her attachment to *him*, if he has no opinion of her fidelity to God; for she who neglects first duties, gives but an indifferent proof of her disposition to fill up inferior ones; and how can a man of any understanding (whatever his own religious professions may be) trust that woman with the care of his family, and the education of his children, who wants herself the best incentive to a virtuous life, the belief that she is an accountable creature, and the reflection that she has an immortal soul.

Cicero spoke it as the highest commendation of Cato's character, that he embraced philosophy, not for the sake of *disputing* like a philosopher, but of *living* like one. The chief purpose of Christian knowledge is to promote the great end of a Christian life. Every rational woman should, no doubt, be able to give a reason of the hope that is in her; but this knowledge is best acquired, and the duties consequent on it best performed, by reading books of plain piety and practical devotion, and not by entering into the endless feuds, and engaging in the unprofitable contentions, of partial controversialists. Nothing is more unamiable than the narrow spirit of party zeal, nor more disgusting than to hear a woman deal out judgments, and denounce vengeance, against any one who happens to differ from her in some opinion, perhaps of no real importance, and which, it is probable, she may be just as wrong in rejecting, as the object of her censure is in embracing. A furious and unmerciful female bigot wanders as far beyond the limits prescribed to her sex, as a Thalestris or a Joan d'Arc. Violent debate has made as few converts as the sword, and both these instruments are particularly unbecoming when wielded by a female hand.

But, though no one will be frightened out of their opinions, yet they may be persuaded out of them; they may be touched by the affecting earnestness of serious conversation, and allured by the attractive beauty of a consistently serious life. And while a young woman ought to dread the name of a wrangling polemic, it is her duty to aspire after the honourable character of a sincere Christian. But this dignified character she can by no means deserve, if she is ever afraid to avow her principles, or ashamed to defend them. A profligate, who makes it a point to ridicule every thing which comes under the appearance of formal instruction, will be disconcerted at the spirited yet modest rebuke of a pious young woman. But there is as much efficacy in the manner of reproving profaneness, as in the words. If she corrects it with moroseness, she defeats the effect of her remedy by her unskilful manner of administering it. If, on the other hand, she affects to defend the insulted cause of God in a faint tone of voice, and studied ambiguity of phrase, or with an air of levity, and a certain expression of pleasure in her eyes, which proves she is secretly delighted with what she pretends to censure, she injures religion much more than he did who publicly profaned it; for she plainly indicates, either that she does not believe or respect what she professes. The other attacked it as an open foe; she betrays it as a false friend. No one pays any regard to the opinion of an avowed enemy; but the desertion or treachery of a professed friend is dangerous indeed!

It is a strange notion which prevails in the world, that religion only belongs to the old and the melancholy, and that it is not worth while to pay the least attention to it, while we are capable of attending to any thing else. They allow it to be proper enough for the clergy, whose business it is, and for the aged, who have not spirits for any business at all. But till they can prove that none except the clergy and the aged *die*, it must be confessed that this is most wretched reasoning.

Great injury is done to the interests of religion, by placing it in a gloomy and unamiable light. It is sometimes spoken of as if it would actually make a handsome woman ugly, or a young one wrinkled. But can any thing be more absurd than to represent the beauty of holiness as the source of deformity?

There are few, perhaps, so entirely plunged in business, or absorbed in pleasure, as not to intend, at some future time, to set about a religious life in good earnest. But then they consider it as a kind of *dernier ressort*, and think it prudent to defer flying to this disagreeable refuge, till they have no relish left for any thing else. Do they forget, that to perform this great business well requires all the strength of their youth, and all the vigour of their unimpaired capacities? To confirm this assertion, they may observe how much the slightest indisposition, even in the most active season of life, disorders every faculty, and disqualifies them for attending to the most ordinary affairs; and then let them reflect how little able they will be to transact the most important of all business, in the moment of excruciating pain, or in the day of universal debility.

When the senses are palled with excessive gratification; when the eye is tired with seeing, and the ear with hearing; when the spirits are so sunk, that the *grasshopper is become a burden*, how shall the blunted apprehension be capable of understanding a new science, or the worn-out heart be able to relish a new pleasure?

To put off religion till we have lost all taste for amusement; to refuse listening to the voice of the charmer, till our enfeebled organs can no longer listen to the voice of "singing men and singing women," and not to devote our days to heaven till we have "no pleasure in them" ourselves, is but an ungracious offering. And it is a wretched sacrifice to the God of heaven, to present him with the remnants of decayed appetites, and the leavings of extinguished passions.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON GENIUS, TASTE, GOOD SENSE,* &c.

Good *sense* is as different from *genius* as perception is from invention; yet, though distinct qualities, they frequently subsist together. It is altogether opposite to *wit*, but by no means inconsistent with it. It is not science, for there is such a thing as unlettered good sense; yet, though it is neither wit, learning, nor genius, it is a substitute for each where they do not exist, and the perfection of all where they do.

Good sense is so far from deserving the appellation of *common sense*, by which it is frequently called, that it is perhaps one of the rarest qualities of the human mind. If, indeed, this name is given it in respect to its peculiar suitableness to the purposes of common life, there is great propriety in it. Good sense appears to differ from taste in this, that taste is an instantaneous decision of the mind, a sudden relish of what is beautiful, or disgust at what is defective in an object, without waiting for the slower confirmation of the judgment. Good sense is perhaps that confirmation which establishes a suddenly conceived idea or feeling, by the powers of comparing and reflecting. They differ also in this, that taste seems to have a more immediate reference to arts, to literature, and to almost every object of the senses; while good sense rises to moral excellence, and exerts its influence on life and manners. Taste is fitted to the perception and enjoyment of whatever is beautiful in art or nature: good sense, to the improvement of the conduct, and the regulation of the heart.

Yet the term good sense is used indiscriminately to express either a finished taste for letters, or an invariable prudence in the affairs of life. It is sometimes applied to the most moderate abilities, in which case the expression is certainly too strong; and at others to the most shining, when it is as much too weak and inadequate. A sensible man is the usual, but unappropriate phrase, for every degree in the scale of understanding, from the sober mortal, who obtains it by his decent demeanour and solid dulness, to him whose talents qualify him to rank with a Bacon, a Harris, or a Johnson.

Genius is the power of invention and imitation. It is an incommunicable faculty: no art or skill of the possessor can bestow the smallest portion of it on another: no pains or labour can reach the summit of perfection, where the seeds of it are wanting in the mind; yet it is capable of infinite improvement where it actually exists, and is attended with the highest capacity of communicating instruction as well as delight to others.

It is the peculiar property of genius to strike out great or beautiful things: it is the felicity of good sense not to do absurd ones. Genius breaks out in splendid sentiments and elevated ideas; good sense confines its more circumscribed, but perhaps more useful walk, within the limits of prudence and propriety.

> "The poet's eye in a fine phrensy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And, as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothng,
> A local habitation and a name."*

This is, perhaps, the finest picture of human genius that ever was drawn by a human pencil. It presents a living image of a creative imagination, or a power of inventing things which have no actual existence.

With superficial judges, who, it must be confessed, make up the greater part of the mass of mankind, talents are only liked or understood to a certain degree. Lofty ideas are above the reach of ordinary apprehensions: the vulgar allow those who possess them to be in a somewhat higher state of mind than themselves; but of the vast gulf which separates them, they have not the least conception. They acknowledge a superiority, but of its extent they neither know the value, nor can conceive the reality. It is true, the mind, as well as the eye, can take in objects larger than itself; but this is only true of great minds; for a man of low capacity who considers a consummate genius, resembles one who, seeing a column for the first time, and standing at too great a distance to take in the whole of it, concludes it to be flat: or, like one unacquainted with the first principles of philosophy, who, finding the sensible horizon appear a plain surface, can form no idea of the spherical form of the whole, which he does not see, and laughs at the account of antipodes, which he cannot comprehend.

Whatever is excellent is also rare; what is useful is more common. How many thousands are born qualified for the coarse employments of life, for one who is capable of excelling in the fine arts! yet so it ought to be, because our natural wants are more numerous and more importunate than the intellectual.

Whenever it happens that a man of distinguished talents has been drawn by mistake, or precipitated by passion, into any dangerous indiscretion, it is common for those whose coldness of temper has supplied the place and usurped the name of prudence, to boast of their own steadier virtue, and triumph in their own superior caution—only because they have never been assailed by a temptation strong enough to surprise them into error. And with what a visible appropriation of the character to themselves do they constantly conclude with a cordial compliment to *common sense!* They point out the beauty and usefulness of this quality so forcibly and explicitly, that you cannot possibly mistake whose picture they are drawing with so flattering a pencil. The unhappy man whose conduct has been so feelingly arraigned, perhaps acted from good, though mistaken motives; at least, from motives of which his censurer has

* The author begs leave to offer an apology for introducing this essay, which, she fears, may be thought foreign to her purpose. But she hopes that her earnest desire of exciting a taste for literature in young ladies (which encouraged her to hazard the following remarks), will not *obstruct* her general design, even if it does not actually *promote* it.

* Shakspeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V Scene 1st.

not capacity to judge: but the event was unfavourable, nay, the action might be really wrong, and the vulgar maliciously take the opportunity of this single indiscretion, to lift themselves nearer on a level with a character which, except in this instance, has always thrown them at the most disgraceful and mortifying distance.

The elegant biographer of Collins, in his affecting apology for that unfortunate genius, remarks, "That the gifts of imagination bring the heaviest task on the vigilance of reason; and to bear those faculties with unerring rectitude, or invariable propriety, requires a degree of firmness, and of cool attention, which does not always attend the higher gifts of the mind; yet difficult as nature herself seems to have rendered the task of regularity to genius, it is the supreme consolation of dulness and of folly to point with Gothic triumph to those excesses which are the overflowing of faculties they never enjoyed."*

What the greater part of the world mean by common sense, will be generally found, on a closer inquiry, to be art, fraud, or selfishness! That sort of saving prudence which makes men extremely attentive to their own safety or profit; diligent in the pursuit of their own pleasures or interests; and perfectly at their ease as to what becomes of the rest of mankind: furies, where their own property is concerned; philosophers, when nothing but the good of others is at stake; and perfectly resigned under all calamities but their own.

When we see so many accomplished wits of the present age, as remarkable for the decorum of their lives as for the brilliancy of their writings, we may believe that, next to principle, it is owing to their *good sense*, which regulates and chastises their imaginations. The vast conceptions which enable a true genius to ascend the sublimest heights, may be so connected with the stronger passions as to give it a natural tendency to fly off from the straight line of regularity; till good sense, acting on the fancy, makes it gravitate powerfully towards that virtue which is its proper centre.

Add to this, when it is considered with what imperfection the divine wisdom has thought fit to stamp every thing human, it will be found that excellence and infirmity are so inseparably wound up in each other, that a man derives the soreness of temper, and irritability of nerve, which make him uneasy to others, and unhappy in himself, from those exquisite feelings, and that elevated pitch of thought, by which, as the apostle expresses it on a more serious occasion, he is, as it were, out of the body.

It is not astonishing, therefore, when the spirit is carried away by the magnificence of its own ideas,

"Not touch'd, but rapt; not waken'd, but inspired;"

that the frail body, which is the natural victim of pain, disease, and death, should not always be able to follow the mind in its aspiring flights, but should be as imperfect as if it belonged only to an ordinary soul.

Besides, might not Providence intend to humble human pride, by presenting to our eyes so mortifying a view of the weakness and infirmity of even his best work? Perhaps man, who is already but a little lower than the angels, might, like the revolted spirits, totally have shaken off obedience and submission to his Creator, had not God wisely tempered human excellence with a certain consciousness of its own imperfection. But though this inevitable alloy of weakness may frequently be found in the best characters, yet how can that be the source of triumph and exaltation to any, which, if properly weighed, must be the deepest motive of humiliation to all? A good-natured man will be so far from rejoicing, that he will be secretly troubled whenever he reads that the greatest Roman moralist was tainted with avarice, and the greatest British philosopher with venality.*

It is remarked by Pope, in his Essay on Criticism, that

"Ten censure wrong, for one who writes amiss."

But I apprehend it does not therefore follow that to judge is more difficult than to write. If this were the case, the critic would be superior to the poet, whereas it appears to be directly the contrary. "The critic," says the great champion of Shakspeare,† "but fashions the body of a work; the poet must add the soul which gives force and direction to its actions and gestures." It should seem that the reason why so many more judge wrong than write ill, is because the number of readers is beyond all proportion greater than the number of writers. Every man who reads is in some measure a critic, and, with very common abilities, may point out real faults and material errors in a very well-written book; but it by no means follows that he is able to write any thing comparable to the work which he is capable of censuring. And unless the numbers of those who write and those who judge were more equal, the calculation seems not to be quite fair.

A capacity for relishing works of genius is the indubitable sign of a good taste. But if a proper disposition and ability to enjoy the compositions of others entitle a man to the claim of reputation, it is still a far inferior degree of merit to his who can invent and produce those compositions, the bare disquisition of which gives the critic no small share of fame.

The president of the royal academy,‡ in his admirable discourse on Imitation, has set the folly of depending on unassisted genius in the clearest light; and has shown the necessity of adding the knowledge of others to our own native powers, in his usual striking and masterly manner. "The mind," says he, "is a barren soil, is a soil soon exhausted, and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continually fertilized, and enriched with foreign matter."

* Dr. John Langhorne's Biographical Memoir, prefixed to the Poetical Works of William Collins.

* Seneca and Bacon.

† Mrs. Montagu, in her vindication of our immortal dramatist from the censorious remarks of Voltaire.—Ed.

‡ Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Yet it has been objected, that study is a great enemy to originality; but, even if this were true, it would perhaps be as well that an author should give us the ideas of still better writers, mixed and assimilated with the matter in his own mind, as those crude and undigested thoughts which he values under the notion that they are original. The sweetest honey neither tastes of the rose, the honeysuckle, nor the carnation, yet it is compounded of the very essence of them all.

If in the other fine arts this accumulation of knowledge is necessary, it is indispensably so in poetry. It is a fatal rashness for any one to trust too much to his own stock of ideas. He must invigorate them by exercise, polish them by conversation, and increase them by every species of elegant and virtuous knowledge, and the mind will not fail to reproduce with interest those seeds, which are sown in it by study and observation. Above all, let every one guard against the dangerous opinion that he knows enough; an opinion that will weaken the energy and reduce the powers of the mind, which, though once perhaps vigorous and effectual, will be sunk to a state of literary imbecility, by cherishing vain and presumptuous ideas of its own independence.

For instance, it may not be necessary that a poet should be deeply skilled in the Linnæan system; but it must be allowed that a general acquaintance with plants and flowers will furnish him with a delightful and profitable species of instruction. He is not obliged to trace nature in all her nice and varied operations, with the minute accuracy of a Boyle, or the laborious investigation of a Newton; but his good sense will point out to him that no inconsiderable portion of philosophical knowledge is requisite to the completion of his literary character. The sciences are more independent, and require little or no assistance from the graces of poetry; but poetry, if she would charm and instruct, must not be so haughty; she must be contented to borrow of the sciences many of her choicest allusions, and many of her most graceful embellishments; and does it not magnify the character of true poesy, that she includes within herself all the scattered graces of every separate art?

The rules of the great masters in criticism may not be so necessary to the forming a good taste, as the examination of those original mines from whence they drew their treasures of knowledge.

The three celebrated essays on the art of poetry do not teach so much by their laws as by their examples; the dead letter of their rules is less instructive than the living spirit of their verse. Yet these rules are to a young poet, what the study of logarithms is to a young mathematician: they do not so much contribute to form his judgment, as afford him the satisfaction of convincing him that he is right. They do not preclude the difficulty of the operation; but, at the conclusion of it, furnish him with a fuller demonstration that he has proceeded on proper principles. When he has well studied the masters in whose schools the first critics formed themselves, and fancies he has caught a spark of their divine flame, it may be a good method to try his own compositions by the test of the critic rules, so far indeed as the mechanism of poetry goes. If the examination be fair and candid, this trial, like the touch of Ithuriel's spear, will detect every latent error, and bring to light every favourite failing.

Good taste always suits the measure of its admiration to the merit of the composition it examines. It accommodates its praises, or its censure, to the excellence of a work, and appropriates it to the nature of it. General applause, or indiscriminate abuse, is the sign of a vulgar understanding. There are certain blemishes which the judicious and good-natured reader will candidly overlook. But the false sublime, the tumour which is intended for greatness, the distorted figure, the puerile conceit, and the incongruous metaphor, these are defects for which scarcely any other kind of merit can atone. And yet there may be more hope of a writer (especially if he be a young one), who is now and then guilty of some of these faults, than of one who avoids them all, not through judgment, but feebleness; and who, instead of deviating into error, is continually falling short of excellence. The mere absence of error implies that moderate and inferior degree of merit with which a cold heart and a phlegmatic taste will be better satisfied than with the magnificent irregularities of exalted spirits. It stretches some minds to an uneasy extension to be obliged to attend to compositions superlatively excellent; and it contracts liberal souls to a painful narrowness to descend to books of inferior merit. A work of capital genius, to a man of an ordinary mind, is the bed of Procrustes to one of a short stature, the man is too little to fill up the space assigned him, and undergoes the torture in attempting it: and a moderate or low production to a man of bright talents, is the punishment inflicted by Mezentius; the living spirit has too much animation to endure patiently to be in contact with a dead body.

Taste seems to be a sentiment of the soul which gives the bias to opinion, for we feel before we reflect. Without this sentiment, all knowledge, learning, and opinion would be cold, inert materials; whereas they become active principles when stirred, kindled, and inflamed by this animating quality.

There is another feeling which is called enthusiasm. The enthusiasm of sensible hearts is so strong, that it not only yields to the impulse with which striking objects act on it, but such hearts help on the effect by their own sensibility. In a scene where Shakspeare and Garrick give perfection to each other, the feeling heart does not merely accede to the delirium they occasion; it does more, it is enamoured of it, it solicits the delusion, it sues to be deceived, and grudgingly cherishes the sacred treasure of its feelings. The poet and performer concur in carrying us

"Beyond this visible diurnal sphere;"

they bear us aloft in their airy course with un-

resisted rapidity, if they meet not with any obstruction from the coldness of our own feelings. Perhaps only a few fine spirits can enter into the detail of their writing and acting; but the multitude do not enjoy less acutely, because they are not able philosophically to analyze the sources of their joy or sorrow. If the others have the advantage of judging, these have at least the privilege of feeling: and it is not from complaisance to a few leading judges, that they burst into peals of laughter, or melt into delightful agony; their hearts decide, and that is a decision from which there lies no appeal. It must however be confessed, that the nicer separations of character, and the lighter and almost imperceptible shades which sometimes distinguish them, will not be intimately relished, unless there be a consonancy of taste as well as feeling in the spectator; though, where the passions are principally concerned, the profane vulgar come in for a larger portion of the universal delight, than critics and connoisseurs are willing to allow them.

Yet enthusiasm, though the natural concomitant of genius, is no more genius itself, than drunkenness is cheerfulness; and that enthusiasm which discovers itself on occasions not worthy to excite it, is the mark of a wretched judgment and a false taste.

Nature produces innumerable objects: to imitate them is the province of genius; to direct those imitations is the property of judgment; to decide on their effects is the business of taste. For taste, who sits as supreme judge on the productions of genius, is not satisfied when she merely imitates nature: she must also, says an ingenious French writer, imitate *beautiful* nature. It requires no less judgment to reject than to choose; and genius might imitate what is vulgar under pretence that it was natural, if taste did not carefully point out those objects which are most proper for imitation. It also requires a very nice discernment to distinguish verisimilitude from truth; for there is a truth in taste nearly as conclusive as demonstration in mathematics.

Genius, when in the full impetuosity of its career, often touches on the very brink of error; and is, perhaps, never so near the verge of the precipice, as when indulging its sublimest flights. It is in those great, but dangerous moments, that the curb of vigilant judgment is most wanting: while safe and sober dulness observes one tedious and insipid round of tiresome uniformity, and steers equally clear of eccentricity and of beauty. Dulness has few redundances to retrench, few luxuriances to prune, and few irregularities to smooth. These, though errors, are the errors of genius, for there is rarely redundance without plenitude, or irregularity without greatness. The excesses of genius may easily be retrenched, but the deficiencies of dulness can never be supplied.

Those who copy from others will doubtless be less excellent than those who copy from nature. To imitate imitators, is the way to depart too far from the great original herself. The latter copies of an engraving retain fainter and fainter traces of the subject, to which the earlier impressions bore so strong a resemblance.

It seems very extraordinary, that it should be the most difficult thing in the world to be natural; and that it should be harder to hit off the manners of real life, and to delineate such characters as we converse with every day, than to imagine such as do not exist. But caricature is much easier than an exact outline, and the colouring of fancy less difficult than that of truth

People do not always know what taste they have, till it is awakened by some corresponding object; nay, genius itself is a fire, which in many minds would never blaze, if not kindled by some external cause.

Nature, the munificent mother, when she bestows the power of judging, accompanies it with a capacity for enjoying. The judgment, which is clear-sighted, points out such objects as are calculated to inspire love, and the heart instantaneously attaches itself to whatever is lovely.

In regard to literary reputation, a great deal depends on the state of learning in the particular age or nation in which an author lives. In a dark and ignorant period, moderate knowledge will entitle its possessor to a considerable share of fame; whereas, to be distinguished in a polite and lettered age, requires striking parts and deep erudition.

When a nation begins to emerge from a state of mental darkness, and to strike out the first rudiments of improvement, it chalks out a few strong but incorrect sketches, gives the rude outlines of general art, and leaves the filling up to the leisure of happier days, and the refinement of more enlightened times. Their drawing is a rude schizzo, and their poetry wild minstrelsey.

Perfection of taste is a point which a nation no sooner reaches, than it overshoots; and it is more difficult to return to it, after having passed it, than it was to attain when they fell short of it. Where the arts begin to languish after having flourished, they seldom indeed fall back to their original barbarism, but a certain feebleness of exertion takes place, and it is more difficult to recover them from this dying languor to their proper strength, than it was to polish them from their former rudeness; for it is a less formidable undertaking to refine barbarity, than to stop decay: the first may be laboured into elegance, but the latter will rarely be strengthened into vigour.

Taste exerts itself at first but feebly and imperfectly; it is repressed and kept back by a crowd of the most discouraging prejudices: like an infant prince, who, though born to reign, yet holds an idle sceptre, which he has not power to use, but is obliged to see with the eyes, and hear through the ears, of other men.

A writer of correct taste will hardly ever go out of his way, even in search of embellishment: he will study to attain the best end by the most natural means; for he knows that what is not natural cannot be beautiful, and that nothing can be beautiful out of its own place; for an improper situation will convert the most striking

beauty into a glaring defect. When by a well-connected chain of ideas, or a judicious succession of events, the reader is snatched to "Thebes or Athens," what can be more impertinent than for the poet to obstruct the operation of the passion he has just been kindling, by introducing a conceit which contradicts his purpose, and interrupts his business? Indeed, we cannot be transported, even in idea, to those places, if the poet does not manage so adroitly as not to make us sensible of the journey: the instant we feel we are travelling, the writer's art fails, and the delirium is at an end.

Proserpine, says Ovid, would have been restored to her mother Ceres, had not Ascalaphus seen her stop to gather a golden apple, when the terms of her restoration were, that she should taste nothing. A story pregnant with instruction for lively writers, who, by neglecting the main business, and going out of the way for false gratifications, lose sight of the end they should principally keep in view. It was this false taste that introduced the numberless *concetti* which disgrace the brightest of the Italian poets; and this is the reason why the reader only feels short and interrupted snatches of delight in perusing the brilliant but unequal compositions of Ariosto,* instead of that unbroken and undiminished pleasure which he constantly receives from Virgil, from Milton, and generally from Tasso. The first-mentioned Italian is the Atalanta, who will interrupt the most eager career, to pick up the glittering mischief; while the Mantuan and the British bards, like Hippomenes, press on warm in the pursuit, and unseduced by temptation.

A writer of real taste will take great pains in the perfection of his style, to make the reader believe that he took none at all. The writing which appears to be most easy, will be generally found to be least imitable. The most elegant verses are the most easily retained; they fasten themselves on the memory without its making any effort to preserve them, and we are apt to imagine that what is remembered with ease was written without difficulty.

To conclude: genius is a rare and precious gem, of which few know the worth; it is fitter for the cabinet of the connoisseur, than for the commerce of mankind. Good sense is a bank-bill, convenient for change, negotiable at all times, and current in all places. It knows the value of small things, and considers that an aggregate of them makes up the sum of human affairs. It elevates common concerns into matters of importance, by performing them in the best manner, and at the most suitable season. Good sense carries with it the idea of equality, while genius is always suspected of a design to impose the burden of superiority; and respect is paid to it with that reluctance which always attends other imposts, the lower orders of mankind generally repining most at demands by which they are least liable to be affected.

As it is the character of genius to penetrate with a lynx's beam into unfathomable abysses and uncreated worlds, and to see what is *not*, so it is the property of good sense to distinguish perfectly and judge accurately what really *is*. Good sense has not so piercing an eye, but it has as clear a sight: it does not penetrate so deeply, but as far as it *does* see, it discerns distinctly. Good sense is a judicious mechanic, who can produce beauty and convenience out of suitable means; but genius (I speak with reverence of the immeasurable distance) bears some remote resemblance to the Divine Architect, who produced perfection of beauty without any visible materials, "who spake and it was created;" who said, "Let it be, and it was."

MORIANA.

Accomplishments.—It is superfluous to decorate woman so highly for early youth; youth is itself a decoration. We mistakingly adorn most, that part of life which least requires it, and neglect to provide for that which will want it most. It is for that sober period, when life has lost its freshness, the passions their intenseness, and the spirits their hilarity, that we should be preparing. Our wisdom would be, to anticipate the wants of middle life, to lay in a store of notions, ideas, principles, and habits, which may preserve, or transfer to the mind, that affection which was at first partly attracted by the person. But to add a vacant mind to a form which has ceased to please, to provide no subsidiary aid to beauty while it lasts, and especially no substitute when it is departed, is to render life comfortless, and marriage dreary.

Let such women as are disposed to be vain of their comparatively petty attainments, look up with admiration to those two contemporary shining examples, the venerable Elizabeth Carter and the blooming Elizabeth Smith. I knew them both, and to know was to revere them. In them let our young ladies contemplate profound and various learning, chastised by true Christian humility. In them let them venerate acquirements which would have been distinguished in a university, meekly softened and beautifully shaded by the gentle exertion of every domestic virtue, by the unaffected exercise of every feminine employment.

Admiration.—Self-deception is so easy, that I am ever afraid of highly extolling any good quality, lest I should sit down satisfied with having borne my testimony in its favour, and so rest contented with the praise instead of the practice. Commending a right thing is a cheap substitute for doing it, and with this we are too apt to satisfy ourselves.

* Ariosto was born at Reggio in 1474, and died of grief in 1535. His principal work, the poetical romance of "Orlando Furioso," some of his admirers affected to set in opposition to the "Jerusalem Delivered" of Tasso.—Ed.

Affections.—True religion is seated in the heart; that is the centre from which all the lines of right practice must diverge. It is the great duty and chief business of a Christian to labour to make all his affections, with all their motives, tendences, and operations, subservient to the word and will of God. His irregular passions, which are still apt to start out into disorder, will require vigilance to the end. He must not think all is safe, because the more tractable ones are not rebellious; but he may entertain a cheerful hope when those which were once rebellious are become tractable.

Ambition.—Among the various objects of ambition, there are few in life which bring less accession to its comfort than an unceasing struggle to rise to an elevation in society very much above the level of our own condition, without being aided by any stronger ascending power than mere vanity. Great talents, of whatever kind, have a natural tendency to rise, and to lift their possessor. The flame in mounting does but obey its impulse. But when there is no energy more powerful than the passion to be great, destitute of the gifts which can confer greatness, the painful effects of ambition are like water forced above its level by mechanical powers. It requires constant exertions of art, to keep up what art first set agoing.

Amusements.—I have known pious persons who would, on no account, allow their children to attend places of gay resort, who were yet little solicitous to extinguish the spirit which those places are calculated to generate and nourish. This is rather a geographical than a moral distinction. It is thinking more of the place than of the temper. They restrain their persons; but are not careful to expel from their hearts the dispositions which excite the appetite, and form the very essence of danger. A young creature cannot be happy who spends her time at home in amusements destined for exhibition, while she is forbidden to be exhibited.

The woman who derives her principles from the Bible, and her amusements from intellectual sources, from the beauties of nature, and from active employment and exercise, will not pant for beholders. She is no clamorous beggar for the extorted alms of admiration. She lives on her own stock. Her resources are within herself. She possesses the truest independence. She does not wait for the opinion of the world, to know if she is right; nor for the applause of the world, to know if she is happy.

Analogy.—The sacred writings frequently point out the analogy between natural and spiritual things. The same spirit which in the creation of the world moved upon the face of the waters, operates on the human character, to produce a new heart and a new life. By this operation, the affections and faculties of the man receive a new impulse—his dark understanding is illuminated, his rebellious will is subdued, his irregular desires are rectified; his judgment is informed, his imagination is chastised; his hopes and fears are directed to their true and adequate end. Heaven becomes the object of his hopes, an eternal separation from God the object of his fears. His love of the world is transmuted into the love of God. The lower faculties are pressed into the new service. The senses have a higher direction. The whole internal frame and constitution receive a nobler bent; the intents and purposes of the mind, a sublimer aim; his aspirations, a loftier flight; his vacillating desires find a fixed object; his vagrant purposes, a settled home; his disappointed heart a certain refuge. That heart, no longer the worshipper of the world, is struggling to become its conqueror. Our blessed Redeemer, in overcoming the world, bequeathed us his command to overcome it also; but, as he did not give the command without the example, so he did not give the example without the offer of a power to obey the command.

Anger.—We contrive to make revenge itself look like religion. We call down thunder on many a head, under pretence that those on whom we invoke it are God's enemies, when, perhaps, we invoke it because they are ours.

Applause.—Human applause is, by a worldly man, reckoned not only among the luxuries of life, but among articles of the first necessity. An undue desire to obtain it has certainly its foundation in vanity, and it is one of our grand errors to reckon vanity a trivial fault. An overestimation of character, and an anxious wish to conciliate all suffrages, is an infirmity from which even worthy men are not exempt; nay, it is a weakness from which, if they are not governed by a strict religious principle, worthy men are in most danger. Reputation being in itself so very desirable a good, those who actually possess it, and in some sense deserve to possess it, are apt to make it their standard, and to rest in it as their supreme aim and end.

We are as fond of the applauses even of the upper gallery as the dramatic poet. Like him, we affect to despise the mob, considered as individual judges, yet, as a mass, we court their applause. Like him, we feel strengthened by the number of voices in our favour, and are less anxious about the goodness of the work than about the loudness of the acclamation. Success is merit in the eyes of both.

Ascetic Piety.—A piety altogether spiritual, disconnected with all outward circumstances, a religion of pure meditation and abstracted devotion, was not made for so compound, so imperfect a creature as man. There have, indeed, been a few sublime spirits, "not touch'd, but rapt," who, totally cut off from the world, seem almost to have literally soared above this terrene region; who almost appear to have stolen the fire of the seraphim, and to have had no business on earth, but to keep alive the celestial flame. They would, however, have approximated more nearly to the example of their divine Master, the great standard and only perfect model, had they combined a more diligent discharge of the active duties and beneficences of life with their high devotional attainments.

Atheism.—It furnishes the most incontrovertible proof that the world by wisdom knew

not God, that it was at the very time, and in the very country, in which knowledge and taste had attained their utmost perfection, when the Porch and the Academy had given laws to human intellect, that atheism first assumed a shape, and established itself into a school of philosophy. It was at the moment when the mental powers were carried to the highest pitch in Greece, that it was settled as an infallible truth in this philosophy, that the *senses were the highest natural light of mankind.* It was in the most enlightened age of Rome that this atheistical philosophy was transplanted thither, and that one of her most elegant poets adopted it, and rendered it popular by the bewitching graces of his verse.

It seems as if the most accomplished nations stood in the most pressing need of the light of revelation; for it was not to the dark and stupid corners of the earth that the apostles had their earliest missions. One of St. Paul's first and noblest expositions of Christian truth was made before the most august deliberative assembly in the world, though, by-the-way, it does not appear that more than one member of Areopagus was converted. In Rome, some of the apostle's earliest converts belonged to the imperial palace. It was to the metropolis of cultivated Italy, it was to the "regions of Achaia," to the opulent and luxurious city of Corinth, in preference to the barbarous countries of the uncivilized world, that some of his first epistles were addressed.

During the late attempt to establish heathenism in a neighbouring country, does it not look as if the thirty theatres which were opened every night in its capital, in the early part of the revolution, had been intended, in imitation of the Romans, whose religion, titles, and offices the French affected to adopt, as a nightly expiation to the *goddess of Reason*, for the cruelties and carnage of the day?

Authors.—If we resolve never to read a work of instruction because the author had faults, Lord Bacon's inexhaustible mine of intellectual wealth might have still been unexplored. Luther, the man to whom the Protestant world owes more than to any other uninspired being, might remain unread, because he is said to have wanted the meekness of Melancthon. Even the divine instructions in the book of Ecclesiastes would have been written in vain.

Evil in the man would not invalidate the truths he has been teaching. Balaam, though a bad man, prophesied truly. Erasmus, whose piety is almost as doubtful as his wit and learning were unquestionable, yet, by throwing both into the right scale, was a valuable instrument in effecting the great work in which he was concerned. Erasmus powerfully assisted the Reformation, though it is not quite so clear that the Reformation essentially benefited Erasmus.

If, then, the writer advances unanswerable arguments in the cause of truth, if he impressively enforces its practical importance, his character, even if defective, should not invalidate his reasoning. Though we allow that even to the reader it is far more satisfactory when the life illustrates the writing, yet we must never bring the conduct of the man as any infallible test of the truth of his doctrine. Allow this, and the reverse of the proposition will be pleaded against us. Take the opposite case. Do we ever produce certain moral qualities which Hobbes, Bayle, Hume, and other sober skeptics possessed, as arguments for adopting their opinions? Do we infer, as a necessary consequence, that their sentiments are sound, because their lives were not flagitious?

It would be the highest degree of unfairness to prefer a charge of injustice, hypocrisy, or inconsistency against an author, because his life, in some respects, falls short of the strictness of his writings. It is a disparity almost inseparable from this state of frail mortality. He may have fallen into errors, and yet deserve to have no heavier charges brought against him than he has brought against others. Infirmity of temper, inequality of mind, a heart, though fearing to offend God, yet not sufficiently dead to the world:—these are the lingering effects of sin imperfectly subdued, in a heart which yet longs, prays, and labours for a complete deliverance from all its corruptions.

Of two evils, had not an author better be tedious than superficial? From an overflowing vessel you may gather more, indeed, than you want, but from an empty one you can gather nothing.

Avarice.—That charity begins at home, is not seldom pleaded as a reason why she should never stir out. There is one plea always ready as an apology for the eagerness to amass wealth; and it is a plea which has a good look. "We must provide for our childen," is the pretence; but we must indulge our avarice, is the truth. The fact is, a man is provident for his family, but he is covetous for himself. The sordid mind and the grasping hand are too eager to put off their gratification to so remote a period as the future aggrandizement of those for whom they pretend to amass. The covetous man hungers for instant gratification, for the pleasure of counting his hoards, for the pride of calling his lands by his own name.

The Bible.—The sacred volume was composed by a vast variety of writers, men of every different rank and condition, of every diversity of character and turn of mind; the monarch and the plebeian, the illiterate and the learned, the foremost in talent and the moderately gifted in natural advantages, the historian and the legislator, the orator and the poet,—each had his immediate vocation, each his peculiar province: some prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, living in ages remote from each other, under different modes of civil government, under different dispensations of the divine economy, filling a period of time which reached from the first dawn of heavenly light to its meridian radiance.

The Old Testament and the New, the Law and the Gospel; the prophets predicting events, and the evangelists recording them; the doctrinal yet didactic epistolary writers, and he

who closed the sacred canon in the Apocalyptic vision;—all these furnished their respective portions, and yet all tally with a dove-tailed correspondence: all the different materials are joined with a completeness the most satisfactory, with an agreement the most incontrovertible.

This instance of uniformity without design, of agreement without contrivance; this consistency maintained through a long series of ages, without a possibility of the ordinary methods for conducting such a plan; these unparalleled congruities, these unexampled coincidences—form altogether a species of evidence, of which there is no other instance in the history of all the other books in the world.

Our divine Teacher does not say *read*, but *search* the Scriptures. The doctrines of the Bible are of everlasting interest. All the great objects of history lose their value, as through the lapse of time they recede further from us; but those of the book of God are commensurate with the immortality of our nature. All existing circumstances, as they relate to this world merely, lose their importance as they lose their novelty; they even melt in air, as they pass before us.

While we are discussing events, they cease to be; while we are criticising customs, they become obsolete; while we are adopting fashions, they vanish; while we are condemning or defending parties, they change sides. While we are contemplating feuds, opposing factions, or deploring revolutions, they are extinct. Of created things, mutability is their character at the best, brevity their duration at the longest. But "the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

The Bible never warns us against imaginary evils, nor courts us to imaginary good.

Young persons should read the Scriptures, unaltered, unmutilated, unabridged. If parents do not make a point of this, the peculiarities of sacred language will become really obsolete to the next generation.

Blessings.—In adoring the providence of God, we are apt to be struck with what is new and out of course, while we too much overlook long, habitual, and uninterrupted mercies. But common mercies, if less striking, are more valuable, both because we have them always, and because others share them. The ordinary blessings of life are overlooked, for the very reason that they ought to be most prized, because they are most uniformly bestowed. They are most essential to our support; and when once they are withdrawn, we begin to find that they are also most essential to our comfort. Nothing raises the price of a blessing like its removal, whereas it was its continuance which should have taught us its value. We require novelties to awaken our gratitude; not considering that it is the duration of mercies which enhances their value. We want fresh excitements. We consider mercies long enjoyed as things of course, as things to which we have a sort of prescriptive claim; as if God had no right to withdraw what he has once bestowed, as if he were obliged to continue what he has once been pleased to confer.

God is the fountain from which all the streams of goodness flow; the centre from which all the rays of blessedness diverge. All our actions are therefore only good as they have a reference to him; the streams must revert back to their fountain, the rays must converge again to their centre.

Books.—For those who have much business and little time, it is a great and necessary art to learn to extract the essential spirit of an author from the body of his work; to know how to seize on the vital parts; to discern where his strength lies; and to separate it from those portions of the work which are superfluous, collateral, or merely ornamental.

In avoiding books which excite the passions, it would seem strange to include even some devotional works. Yet such as merely kindle warm feelings are not always the safest. Let us rather prefer those which, while they tend to raise a devotional spirit, awaken the affections without disordering them; which, while they elevate the desires, purify them; which show us our own nature, and lay open its corruptions. Such as show us the malignity of sin, the deceitfulness of our hearts, the feebleness of our best resolutions; such as teach us to pull off the mask from the fairest appearance, and discover every hiding-place where some lurking evil would conceal itself: such as show us not what we appear to others, but what we really are; such as, co-operating with our interior feelings, and showing us our natural state, point out our absolute need of a Redeemer, lead us to seek to him for pardon from a conviction that there is no other refuge, no other salvation. Let us be conversant with such writings as teach us that while we long to obtain the remission of our transgressions, we must not desire the remission of our duties. Let us seek for such a Saviour as will not only deliver us from the punishment of sin, but from the domination also.

The Arabian Nights and other oriental books of fable, though loose and faulty in many respects, yet have always a reference to the religion of the country. Nothing is introduced against the law of Mahomet; nothing subversive of the opinions of a Mussulman. I do not quarrel with books for having *no* religion, but for having a *false* religion. A book which in nothing opposes the principles of the Bible I would be far from calling a bad book, though the Bible was never named in it.

It is not sufficient to avoid reading pernicious books, care should be taken to prevent their circulation. This duty, however, it is to be feared, is too little regarded even by those who are sincere in religious profession.

When the French revolution had brought to light the fatal consequences of some of Voltaire's writings, some half-scrupulous persons, no longer willing to afford his fourscore volumes a place in their library, sold them at a low price. This measure, though it "stayed the plague" in their own houses, caused the infection to spread wider. The Ephesian magicians made no such compromise; they burned theirs.

We have too many elementary books. They are read too much and too long. The youthful mind, which was formerly sick from inanition, is now in danger from a plethora. Much, however, will depend on capacity and disposition. A child of slower parts may be indulged till nine years old with books which a lively genius will look down upon at seven. A girl of talents *will* read. To her, no excitement is wanting. The natural appetite is a sufficient incentive. The less brilliant child requires the allurement of lighter books. She wants encouragement as much as the other requires restraint.

Calamities.—Most of the calamities of human life originate with ourselves. Even sickness, shame, pain, and death, were not originally the infliction of God. But out of many evils, whether sent us by his immediate hand, or brought on us by our own faults, much eventual good is educed by him who, by turning our suffering to our benefit, repairs by grace the evils produced by sin. Without being the author of evil, the bare suggestion of which is blasphemy, he converts it to his own glory, by causing the effects of it to promote our good. If the virtuous suffer from the crimes of the wicked, it is because their imperfect goodness stood in need of chastisement. Even the wicked, who are suffering by their own sins, or the sins of each other, are sometimes brought back to God by mutual injuries, the sense of which awakens them to compunction for their own offences. God makes use of the faults even of good men to show them their own insufficiency, to abase them in their own eyes, to cure them of vanity and self-dependance. He makes use of their smaller failings to set them on the watch against great ones; of their imperfections, to put them on their guard against sins; of their faults of inadvertence, to increase their dread of such as are wilful. This superinduced vigilance teaches them to fear all the resemblances, and to shun all the approaches to sin. It is a salutary fear, which keeps them from using all the liberty they have; it leads them to avoid, not only whatever is decidedly wrong, but to stop short of what is doubtful, to keep clear of what is suspicious; well knowing the thin partitions which separate danger from destruction. It teaches them to watch the buddings and germinations of evil, to anticipate the pernicious fruit in the opening blossom.

As no calamity is too great for the power of Christianity to mitigate, so none is too small to experience its beneficial results.

Catechism.—The catechism was written for children, and contains all the seeds and principles of Christianity for men. It evidently requires much explanation, much development; still it furnishes a wide and important field for colloquial instruction, without which young persons can by no means understand a composition so admirable, but so condensed.

Character.—We are apt to call men good, because they are without certain bad qualities. But this is not only not knowing religion, it is not knowing human nature. All vices are not affinities; of course the very indulgence of one vice is not seldom an exclusion of another, as covetousness avoids profligacy, and ambition expels indolence: but though they are natural antipathies, they all spring from the same source; the same fountain of corrupt nature feeds both.

In describing a bad character, the Bible does not say that his actions are *flagitious*, but that "God is not in all his *thoughts*." This is the description of a thoroughly worldly man. Those who are given up completely to the world, to its maxims, its principles, its cares, or its pleasures, cannot entertain thoughts of God. And to be unmindful of his providence, to be regardless of his presence, to be insensible to his mercies, must be nearly as offensive to him as to deny his existence. Excessive dissipation, a supreme love of money, or an entire devotedness to ambition, drinks up that spirit, swallows up that affection, exhausts that vigour, starves that zeal, with which a Christian should devote himself to serve his Maker.

Charity.—I have often heard it regretted that ladies have no stated employment, no profession. It is a mistake; charity is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is her profession. Men have little time or taste for details. Women of fortune have abundant leisure, which can in no way be so properly or so pleasantly filled up as in making themselves intimately acquainted with the worth and the wants of all within their reach. With their wants, because it is their bounden duty to administer to them; with their worth, because without this knowledge, they cannot administer prudently and appropriately.

The reason is particularly obvious, why the bounty of the affluent ought to be most liberally, though not exclusively, extended to the spot whence they derive their revenues. There seems indeed to be a double motive for it. The same act involves a duty both to God and to man. The largest bounty to the necessitous on our estates is rather justice than charity. It is but a kind of peppercorn acknowledgment to the great Lord and Proprietor of all, from whom we hold them. And to assist their own labouring poor is a kind of natural debt, which persons who possess great landed property owe to those, from the sweat of whose brow they derive their comforts, and even their riches. It is a commutation, which, as the advantage is greatly on our side, so is our duty to diminish the difference of paramount obligation.

The iniquity of our holy things requires much Christian vigilance. Next to not giving at all, the greatest fault is to give from ostentation. The contest is only between two sins. The motive robs the act of the very name of virtue, while the good work that is paid in praise, is stripped of the hope of higher retribution.

Some are ingenious in contriving, by a strange self-delusion, to swell the amount of their charity, by tacking to it extraneous items of a totally distinct character. The author was formerly acquainted with a lady of rank, who, though her benevolence was suspected to bear no proportion to the splendour of her establishment, was yet rather too apt to make her boun-

ties a subject of conversation. After enumerating the various instances of her beneficence, she often concluded by saying, "notwithstanding my large family, I give all this in charity, *besides paying the poor rates:*" thus converting a compulsory act, to which all are equally subject, into a voluntary bounty.

Childhood.—The mind should be formed early, no less than the person; and for the same reason. Providence has plainly indicated childhood to be the season of instruction, by communicating at that period such flexibility to the organs, such attention to the memory, such quickness to the apprehension, such inquisitiveness to the temper, such alacrity to the animal spirits, and such impressibility to the affections, as are not possessed at any subsequent period. We are therefore bound, by every tie of duty, to follow these obvious designations of Providence, by moulding that flexibility to the most durable ends; by storing that memory with the richest knowledge; by pointing that apprehension to the highest objects; by giving to that alacrity its best direction; by turning that inquisitiveness to the noblest intellectual purposes: and, above all, by converting that impressibility of heart to the most exalted moral uses.

Christianity.—Christianity is not merely a religion of authority; the soundest reason embraces most confidently what the most explicit revelation has taught, and the deepest inquirer is usually the most convinced Christian. The reason of philosophy is a disputing reason, that of Christianity an obeying reason. The glory of the pagan religion consisted in virtuous sentiments; the glory of the Christian in the pardon and the subjugation of sin. The humble Christian may say with one of the ancient fathers, "I will not glory because I am righteous, but because I am redeemed."

Christianity has no by-laws, no particular exemptions, no individual immunities. That there is no appropriate way of attaining salvation for a prince or a philosopher, is probably one reason why greatness and wisdom have so often rejected it. But if rank cannot plead its privileges, genius cannot claim its distinctions. That Christianity did not owe its success to the arts of rhetoric, or the sophistry of the schools, but that God intended by it "to make foolish the wisdom of this world," actually explains why the "disputers of this world" have always been its enemies.

Christianity was a second creation. It completed the first order of things, and introduced a new one of its own, not subversive but perfective of the original. It produced an entire revolution in the condition of men, and accomplished a change in the state of the world, which all its confederated power, wit, and philosophy, not only could not effect, but could not even conceive. It threw such a preponderating weight into the scale of morals, by the superinduction of the new principle of faith in a Redeemer, as rendered the hitherto insupportable trials of the afflicted comparatively light. It gave strength to weakness, spirit to action, motive to virtue, certainty to doubt, patience to suffering, light to darkness, life to death.

The Commandments.—If the promises are our aliment, the commandments are our work; and a temperate Christian ought to desire nourishment only in order to carry him through his business. If he so supinely rest on the one as to grow sensual and indolent, he might become not only unwilling, but incapacitated for the other. We must not expect to live upon cordials, which only serve to inflame, without strengthening. Even without these supports, which we are more ready to desire than to put ourselves in the way to obtain, there is in humble trust in God, and in a simple reliance in his word—there is a repose of spirit, a freedom from solicitude, in a lowly confidence in him, for which the world has nothing to give in exchange.

Commerce.—I believe that an overflowing commerce and the excessive opulence it has introduced, though favourable to all the splendours of art and mechanic ingenuity, yet have lowered the standard of taste, and debilitated the mental energies. They are advantageous to luxury, but fatal to intellect. It has added to the brilliancy of the drawing-room, but deducted from that of the inhabitants. It has given perfection to our mirrors, our candlesticks, our gilding, our inlaying, and our sculpture, but it has communicated a torpor to the imagination, and enervated our intellectual vigour.

Conscience.—There is a fatal way of lulling the conscience, by entertaining diminishing thoughts of sins long since committed. We persuade ourselves to forget them, and we therefore persuade ourselves that they are not remembered by God. But though distance diminishes objects to the eye of the beholder, it does not actually lessen them. Their real magnitude remains the same. Perhaps, if we remember them, God may forget them, especially if our remembrance be such as to induce a sound repentance. If we remember them not, he assuredly will.

Contentment.—As godliness cannot subsist without contentment, so neither can true contentment spring from any other than an inward principle of real piety. All contentment which has not its foundation in religion is merely constitutional, animal hilarity, the flow of blood and spirits in the more sanguine character; coldness and apathy, in the more indifferent. A spirit of contentment is stifling covetousness in its birth; it is strangling the serpent in the cradle.

Controversy.—As truth will be assaulted, it must be defended. Controversial discussions, therefore, are not only harmless but useful, provided truth is the inspiring motive, and charity the medium of conducting them. Truth is frequently beaten out by conflicting blows, when it might have contracted rust and impurity by lying quiet, uninquired into and unassailed. We are in danger of growing negligent about a truth which is never attacked, or of surrounding it with our own fancies, and appending to it our own excrescences; while the assailant

teaches even the friendly examiners to clear the principle of all foreign mixtures, and, by giving it more purity, to give it a wider circulation.

Conversation.—Books alone will never form the character. It is conversation which must unfold, enlarge, and apply the use of books. Without that familiar comment on what is read, mere reading might only fill the mind with fallacious models of character, and false maxims of life. It is conversation which must develop what is obscure, raise what is low, correct what is defective, qualify what is exaggerated, and gently, and almost insensibly, raise the understanding, form the heart, and fix the taste ; and by giving just proportions to the mind, teach it the power of fair appreciation, draw it to adopt what is reasonable, to love what is good, to taste what is pure, and to imitate what is elegant.

Conversion.—The primitive church carried their incredulity of the appearances of repentance so far, as to require not only years of sorrow for sin, but perseverance in piety, before they would admit offenders to their communion ; and, as a test of their sincerity, required the uniform practice of those virtues most opposite to their former vices. Were this made the criterion now, we should not so often hear such flaming accounts of converts so exultingly reported, before time has been allowed to try their stability. More especially, we should not hear of so many triumphant relations of death-bed converts, in whom the symptoms must frequently be too equivocal to admit the positive decision of human wisdom.

Courage.—There are other ways of exercising courage than in the field of battle. There are more exalted means of showing spirit than by sending or accepting a challenge. To sustain a fit of sickness, may exhibit as true heroism as to lead an army. To bear a deep affliction well calls for as high exertion of soul, as to storm a town ; and to meet death with Christian resolution, is an act of courage in which many a woman has triumphed, and many a philosopher, and even some generals, have failed.

Cowper.—Such an original as Cowper must naturally have a herd of imitators. If they cannot attain to his excellences, his faults are always attainable. The resemblance between the master and the scholar is found chiefly in his defects. The determined imitator of an easy writer becomes vapid ; of a sublime one, absurd. Cowper's ease appeared his most imitable charm ; but ease aggravated is insipidity. His occasional negligences, his disciples adopted uniformly. In Cowper there might sometimes be carelessness in the verse, but the verse itself was sustained by the vigour of the sentiment. The imitator forgot that Cowper's strength lay in the thought ; that his buoyant spirit always supported itself ; that the figure, though amplified, was never incongruous, and the illustration, though new, was never false.

Devotion.—To maintain a devotional spirit, two things are especially necessary—habitually to cultivate the disposition, and habitually to avoid whatever is unfavourable to it.

May we venture to express a wish that some persons of more piety than discernment, among whom there are those who value themselves on being more particularly the disciples of St. Paul, would always imitate his chastened language. When the apostle pours out the fulness of his heart to his Redeemer, every expression is as full of veneration as of love. His freedom is a filial freedom, while *their* devout effusions are sometimes mixed with adjectives which betray a familiarity bordering on irreverence.

This remark applies more particularly to certain hymns, written in a very devout strain, but with a devotion rather amatory than reverential.

Discipline.—It is not some signal act of mortification, but an habitual state of discipline, which will prepare us for great trials. A soul ever on the watch, fervent in prayer, diligent in self-inspection, frequent in meditation, fortified against the vanities of time by repeated views of eternity—all the avenues to such a heart will be in good measure shut against temptation, barred in a great degree against the tempter.

Duty.—Business must have its period as well as devotion. We were sent into this world to act as well as to pray ; active duties must be performed as well as devout exercises. Even relaxation must have its interval : only let us be careful that the indulgence of the one do not destroy the effect of the other ; that our pleasures do not encroach on the time, or deaden the spirit, of our devotions ; let us be careful that our cares, occupations, and amusements, may be always such that we may not be afraid to implore the divine blessings on them ; this is the criterion of their safety, and of our duty. Let us endeavour that in each, in all, one continually growing sentiment and feeling of loving, serving, and pleasing God, maintain its predominant station in the heart.

Economy.—A discreet woman adjusts her expenses to her revenue. Every thing knows its time, and every person has his place. She will live within her income, be it large or small : if large, she will not be luxurious ; if small, she will not be mean. Proportion and propriety are among the best secrets of domestic wisdom ; and there is no surer test of integrity and judgment than a well-proportioned expenditure.

A sensible woman loves to imitate that order which is stamped on the whole creation of God. All the operations of nature are uniform, even in their changes, and regular in their infinite variety. Nay, the great Author of nature himself disdains not to be called the God of order.

Education.—We often hear of the necessity of being qualified for the world ; and this is the grand object in the education of our children, overlooking the difficult duty of qualifying them for retirement. But if part of the immense pains which are taken to fit them for the company of others, were employed in fitting them for their own company, in teaching them the duties of solitude as well as of society, this earth would be a happier place than it is ; a training suitable to a world of such brief duration, would be a better preparatory study for a world which will have no end.

Employment.—If the Christian cannot glorify God by serving others, he knows that he has always something to do at home; some evil temper to correct, some wrong propensity to reform, some crooked practice to straighten. He will never be at a loss for employment, while there is a sin or a misery in the world; he will never be idle, while there is a distress to be relieved in another, or a corruption to be cured in his own heart. We have employments assigned to us for every circumstance in life. When we are alone, we have our thoughts to watch; in the family, our tempers; in company, our tongues.

Epitaphs.—If we were called upon to collect the greatest quantity of hyperbole—falsehood might be too harsh a term—in the least given time and space, we should do well to search for it in those sacred edifices expressly consecrated to truth. There we should see the ample mass of canonizing kindness which fills their mural decorations, expressed in all those flattering records inscribed by every variety of claim, in addition to what is dedicated to real merit, by real sorrow: we should hear of tears which were never shed, grief which was never felt, praise which was never earned: we should see what is raised by decent demands of connexion, by tender but undiscerning friendship, by poetic license, by eloquent gratitude for testamentary favours. It is an amiable though not a correct feeling in human nature, that, fancying we have not done justice to certain characters during their lives, we run into the error of supposed compensation by over-estimating them after their decease.

Eternity.—Eternity is a depth which no geometry can measure, no arithmetic calculate, no imagination conceive, no rhetoric describe. The eye of a dying Christian seems gifted to penetrate depths hid from the wisdom of philosophy. It looks athwart the dark valley without dismay, cheered by the bright scene beyond it. It looks with a kind of chastised impatience to that land where happiness will be only holiness perfected. There all the promises of the gospel will be accomplished. There afflicted virtue will rejoice at its past trials, and acknowledge their subservience to its present bliss. There the secret self-denials of the righteous shall be recognised and rewarded. There all the hopes of the Christian shall have their complete consummation.

Experimental Religion.—It is the fashion of the times to try experiments in the arts, in agriculture, in philosophy. In every science, the diligent professor is always afraid there may be some secret which he has not yet attained, some occult principle which would reward the labour of discovery, something even which the assiduous and intelligent have actually found out, but which has hitherto eluded *his* pursuit. And shall the Christian stop short in his scrutiny? shall he not examine and inquire till he lays hold on the very heart and core of religion?

Why should experimental philosophy be the prevailing study, and experimental religion be branded as the badge of enthusiasm, the cant of a hollow profession? Shall we never labour to establish the distinction between appearance and reality, between studying religion critically, and embracing it practically? between having our conduct creditable, and our heart sanctified? Shall we not aspire to do the best things from the highest motives, and elevate our aims with our attainments? Why should we remain in the vestibule, when the sanctuary is open? Why should we be contented to dwell in the outer courts, when we are invited to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus?

Extremes in Religion.—I have known many men who, from their dread of a burning zeal, have taken refuge in a freezing indifference! As to the two extremes of heat and cold, neither of them is the true climate of Christianity; yet the fear of each drives men of opposite complexions into the other, instead of fixing them in the temperate zone which lies between them, and which is the region of genuine piety.

Extremes.—Christianity may be said to suffer between two criminals, but it is difficult to determine by which she suffers most; whether by that uncharitable bigotry which disguises her divine character, and speculatively adopts the fagots and the flames of inquisitorial intolerance; or by that indiscriminate candour, that conceding slackness, which, by stripping her of her appropriate attributes, reduces her to something scarcely worth contending for; to something which, instead of making her the religion of Christ, generalizes her into any religion which may choose to adopt her. The one distorts her lovely lineaments into caricature, and throws her graceful figure into gloomy shadow; the other, by daubing her over with colours not her own, renders her form indistinct, and obliterates her features. In the first instance, she excites little affection; in the latter, she is not recognised.

Faith.—As faith is of a spiritual nature, it cannot be kept alive without spiritual means. It requires for its sustenance aliment congenial with itself. Meditation familiarizes it with its object; prayer keeps it close to its end. If thus cherished by perpetual exercise, sustained by the habitual contemplation of the oracles of God, and watered with the dews of his grace, it becomes the pregnant seed of every Christian virtue.

Fame.—The eager desire of fame is a sort of separation line between Paganism and Christianity. The ancient philosophers have left us many shining examples of moderation in earthly things, and of the contempt of riches. So far the light of reason, and a noble self-denial, carried them; and many a Christian may blush at these instances of their superiority: but of an indifference to fame, of a deadness to human applause, except as founded on loftiness of spirit, disdain of their judges, and self-sufficient pride, I do not recollect any instance.

Feelings.—A person of a cold phlegmatic temper, who laments that he wants that fervour in his love of the Supreme Being which is apparent in more ardent characters, may take comfort, if he find the same indifference re-

specting his worldly attachments. But if his affections are intense towards the perishable things of earth while they are dead to such as are spiritual, it does not prove that he is destitute of passions, but only that they are not directed to the proper object. If, however, he love God with all that measure of feeling with which God has endowed him, he will not be punished or rewarded because the stock is greater or smaller than that of some others of his fellow-creatures.

Flattery.—Did we turn our thoughts inward, it would abate much of the self-complacency with which we swallow the flattery of others. Flattery hurts not him who flatters not himself. If we examined ourselves keenly, we should frequently blush at the praises our actions receive. Let us, then, conscientiously inquire not only what we do, but whence and why we do it—from what motive, and to what end.

Friendship.—I have often been amused with observing what a magic transformation the same event produces on two opposite classes of characters. The misfortunes of their acquaintance convert worldly friends into instantaneous strictness of principle. The faults of the distressed are produced as a plea for their own hardhearted covetousness; while that very misfortune so relaxes the strictness of good men, that the faults are forgotten in the calamity; and they, who had been perpetually warning the prodigal of his impending ruin, when that ruin comes, are the first to relieve him. The worldly friend sees only the errors of the sufferer, the Christian sees only his distress.

Gibbon.—The preference of remote to approximating opinions is by no means confined to the religious world. The author of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," though so passionate an admirer of the prophet of Arabia, as to raise a suspicion of his own Islamism; though so rapturous a eulogist of the apostate Julian, as to raise a suspicion of his own polytheism; yet with an inconsistency not uncommon to unbelief, he treats the stout orthodoxy of the vehement Athanasius with more respect than he shows to the "scanty creed" of a contemporary philosopher and theologian, whose cold and comfortless doctrines were much less removed from his own. [The person here meant was Dr. Priestley.]

Good Works.—One would imagine, that some who so loudly insist that we should be saved by works, must mean works of supererogation, and that they depended for salvation on the transfer of the superfluity of the merits of others to themselves; for it is remarkable, that *they* trust their future bliss most confidently to good works, who have the slenderest portion of their own to produce.

The Gospel.—Had the first apostles been men of genius, they might have injured the purity of the gospel by bringing their ingenuity into it. Had they been men of learning, they might have imported from the schools of Greece and Rome, each from his own sect, some of its peculiar infusions, and thus have vitiated the simplicity of the gospel. Had they been critics and philosophers, there might have been endless debates which part of Christianity was the power of God, and which the result of men's wisdom. Thus, though corruptions soon crept into the church, yet no impurities could reach the gospel itself. Some of its teachers became heretical, but the pure word remained unadulterated. However the philosophizing or the Judaizing teachers might subsequently infuse their own errors into their own preaching, the gospel preserved its own integrity. They might mislead their followers, but they could not deteriorate the New Testament.

Grace.—Grace being a new principle added to our natural powers, as it determines the desires to a higher object, so it adds vigour to their activity. We shall best prove its dominion over us by desiring to exert ourselves in the cause of heaven with the same energy with which we once exerted ourselves in the cause of the world. The world was too little to fill our whole capacity.

Grace will not thrive abundantly in that heart which does not believe it to be the seed of glory.

Happiness.—Happiness is a serious thing. While pleasure manifests itself by extravagant gayety, exuberant spirits, and overt acts, happiness retreats to its own proper region—the heart. There, concentrating its feelings, it contemplates its treasures, meditates on its enjoyments, and still more fondly on its hopes; counts up its mercies, and feels the consummation of them in looking to the fountain from whence they flow; feels every blessing immeasurably heightened by the heart-cheering reflection that the most exquisite human pleasures are not the perfection of his nature, but only a gracious earnest, a bounteous prelibation of that blessedness which is without measure, and shall be without end.

Humility.—There is no work which more clearly distinguishes that humility which has the love of God for its principle, from its counterfeit, a false and superficial politeness, than this—that while the last flatters, in order to extort in return more praise than its due, humility, like the divine principle from which it springs, seeketh not even its own.

Ignorance.—I once lent a person of rank and talents an admirable sermon, written by one of our first divines. Though deeply pious, it was composed with uncommon spirit and elegance, and I thought it did not contain one phrase which could offend the most fastidious critic. When he returned it, he assured me that he liked it much, on the whole, and should have approved of it altogether, but for one methodistical expression. To my utter astonishment, he pointed to the exceptionable passage, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The chapter and verse not being mentioned, he never suspected it was a quotation from the Bible!

The Imagination.—It is important that we should never suffer our faith, and more than our

love, to be depressed or elevated, by mistaking for its own operations, the ramblings of a busy imagination. The steady principle of faith must not look for its character to the vagaries of a mutable and fantastic fancy.

Indolence.—A grave and sedate indolence, investing itself with the respectable attribute of moderation, eats out the heart's core of piety. These somnolent characters communicate the repose which they enjoy; they excite no alarm, because they feel none. Their rule of observances is regularly brought in; their list of forms is completely made out. Forms, it is true, are valuable things, when they are "used as a dead hedge to secure the quick:" but here the observances are the whole of the fence. The dead fence is not considered as a protection, but a substitute. The teacher and the taught, neither disturbing nor disturbed, but soothing and soothed, reciprocate civilities, and exchange commendations. If little good is done, it is well; if no offence is given, it is better; if no superfluity of zeal is imputed, it is best of all.

Infidelity.—Among the triumphs of religion which we have witnessed, it is not the least considerable, that whereas Christianity was originally charged with a design to overturn states and empires, we have seen the crime completely turned over to the accusers; we have seen the avowed adversaries of Christ become the strenuous subverters of law and government.

Innocence.—Innocence can never be pleaded as a ground of acceptance, because the thing does not exist. Innocence excludes the necessity of repentance; and where there is no sin, there can be no need of a Saviour. Wherever, therefore, we may be in comparison with others, innocence can afford no plea for our acceptance, without annulling the great plan of our redemption.

Justification and Sanctification.—The two cardinal points of our religion, justification and sanctification, are near relatives; they imply a reciprocal relation; nor do I call that state Christianity, in which either is separately and exclusively maintained. The union of these manifests the dominion of religion in the heart, by increasing its humility, by purifying its affections, by setting it above the contaminations, the maxims, and habits of the world; by detaching it from the vanities of time, and elevating it to a desire for the riches of eternity.

Learning.—What has been said of those who affect to despise birth, has also been applied to those who decry learning; neither is ever undervalued, except by men who are destitute of them; and it is worthy of observation, that as literature and religion both sunk together in the dark ages, so both emerged at the same auspicious era.

Learning has this strong recommendation, that it is the offspring of a most valuable virtue; I mean, industry; a quality on which I am ashamed to see pagans frequently set a higher value than we seem to do.

Life.—We complain that life is short, and yet throw away the best part of it; only making over to religion that portion which is good for nothing else; life would be long enough, if we assigned its best period to its best purpose.

Love of God.—Our love to God arises out of want; God's love to us, out of fulness. Our indigence draws us to that power which can relieve, and to that goodness which can bless us. His overflowing love delights to make us partakers of the bounties he graciously imparts, not only in the gifts of his providence, but in the richer communications of his grace. We can only be said to love God, when we endeavour to glorify him,—when we desire a participation of his nature, when we study to imitate his perfections.

Marriage.—When young persons marry, even with the fairest prospects, they should never forget that infirmity is inseparably bound up with their very nature, and that in bearing one another's burdens, they fulfil one of the highest duties of the union.

Milton.—Milton was an enthusiast both in religion and politics. Many enthusiasts with whom he was connected, doubtless condemned the exercise of his imagination in his immortal poem, as a crime; but his genius was too mighty to be restrained by opposition, and his imagination too vast and powerful to be kept down by a party. Had he confined himself to his prose writings, weighty and elaborate as some of them are, how little service would he have done the world, and how little would he now be read or quoted! In his lifetime, politics might blind his enemies, and fanaticism his friends. But now, who, comparatively, reads the Iconoclastes? who does not read Comus!

Music.—I look upon the great predominance of music in female education, to be the source of more mischief than is suspected; not from any evil in the thing itself, but from its being such a gulf of time as really to leave little room for solid acquisitions. The monstrous proportion, or rather disproportion, of life which it swallows up, has converted an innocent diversion into a positive sin. I question if many gay men devote more hours in a day to idle purposes, than the daughters of many pious parents spend in this amusement. All these hours the mind lies fallow, improvement is at a stand, if even it does not retrograde. Nor is it the shreds and scraps of time, stolen in the intervals of better things, that is so devoted; but it is the morning, the prime, the profitable, the active hours, when the mind is vigorous, the spirits light, the intellect awake and fresh, and the whole being wound up by the refreshment of sleep, and animated by the return of light and life for nobler services.

Natural Religion.—Even natural religion was little understood by those who professed it; it was full of obscurity till viewed by the clear light of the gospel. Not only natural religion remained to be clearly comprehended, but reason itself remained to be carried to its highest pitch in the countries where revelation is professed. Natural religion could not see itself by its own light: reason could not extricate itself from the labyrinth of error and ignorance in

which false religion had involved the world. Grace has raised nature. Revelation has given a lift to reason, and taught her to despise the follies and corruptions which obscured her brightness. If nature is now delivered from darkness, it was the helping hand of revelation which raised her from the rubbish in which she lay buried.

Obedience.—Scripture abounds with every motive to obedience, both rational and spiritual. But it would achieve but half its work, had it stopped there. As peccable creatures, we require not only inducements to obedience, but a heart, and a power, and a will to obey: assistance is as necessary as motives, power as indispensable as precept—all which requisites are not only promised by the word, but conferred by the Spirit of God.

Opinions.—A religion which consists in opinions only, will not advance us in our progress to heaven: it is apt to inflate the mind with the pride of disputation; and victory is so commonly the object of debate, that eternity slides out of sight.

The finest theory never yet carried any man to heaven. A religion of notions, which occupies the mind without filling the heart, may obstruct but cannot advance the salvation of men.

Opportunities.—A Christian cannot tell in the morning what opportunities he may have of doing good during the day: but if he be a real Christian, he can tell that he will try to keep his heart open, his mind prepared, his affections alive to do whatever may occur in the way of duty. He will, as it were, stand in the way to receive the orders of Providence; doing good is his vocation.

Party.—Would that it could not be said, that religion has her parties as well as politics! Those who endeavour to steer clear of all extremes in either, are in danger of being reprobated by both. It is a hardship for persons who, having considered it as a Christian duty to cultivate a spirit of moderation in thinking and of candour in judging, that when these dispositions are brought into action, they frequently incur a harsher censure than the errors which it was their chief aim to avoid.

Philanthropy.—Among the peculiarities of Christianity, it is one of the most striking, that they who, in Scripture language, love not the world, nor the things of the world, are yet the persons in it who are farthest from misanthropes. They love the beings of whom the world is composed, better than he who courts and flatters it. They seek not its favours nor its honours, but they give a more substantial proof of affection, —they seek its improvement, its happiness, its salvation.

Quiet.—We hear those complain most that they can get no quiet, whose want of it arises from the irruptions of their own passions. Peace is no local circumstance. It does not depend on the situation of the house, but of the heart. True quiet is only to be found in the extirpation of evil tempers, in the victory over unruly appetites; it is found, not merely in the absence of temptation, but in the dominion of religion. It arises from the cultivation of that principle which alone can effectually smooth down the swellings of pride, still the restlessness of envy, and calm the turbulence of impure desires. It depends on the submission of the will, on that peace of God which passeth all understanding, on the grace of Christ, on the consolations of the Spirit. With these blessings, which are promised to all who seek them, we may find tranquillity in Cheapside; without them, we may live a life of tumult on the Eddystone.

Reason.—If the human reasoner despises Christianity, some Christians are too much disposed to vilify reason. This contempt they did not learn of St. Paul. He never taught that to neglect an exact method of such consequences can be deduced from his writings. Revealed religion, indeed, happily for the poor and illiterate, may be firmly believed, and vitally understood, without a very accurate judgment, or any high cultivation of the moral powers. But without both, without a thorough acquaintance with the arguments, without a knowledge of the evidences, it never can be successfully defended. Ignorance on these points would throw such a weight into the scale of skepticism, as would weaken if it did not betray the cause of truth. In our days, an ignorant teacher of religion is "a workman that *needeth* to be ashamed." He should carefully cultivate his reason, were it only to convince himself of its imperfections.

Right.—Nothing seems more difficult to settle than the standard of right. Every man has a standard of his own, which he considers as of universal application. One makes his own tastes, desires, and appetites his rule of right; another the example of certain individuals fallible like himself; a third, and indeed the generality, the maxims, habits, and manners of the fashionable part of the world.

Shame.—Very young men, from timidity, are led to risk their eternal happiness through the dread of a laugh, though they know that they have not only religion but reason on their side; yet it requires a hardy virtue to repel a sneer, and an intrepid principle to confront a sarcasm. Thus their own mind loses its firmness; religion loses their support; the world loses the benefit which their example would afford; and they themselves become liable to the awful charge which is denounced against him who is ashamed of his Christian profession.

Solitude.—In complete solitude the eye wants objects, the heart wants attachments, the understanding wants reciprocation. The character loses its tenderness when it has nothing to love, its firmness when it has none to strengthen it, its sweetness when it has nothing to sooth it, its patience when it meets no contradiction, its humility when it is surrounded by dependants, and its delicacy in the conversation of the uninformed. Where the intercourse is very unequal, society is something worse than solitude.

Truth.—He who possesses a sound principle, and strong relish of truth, in his own mind, will possess a touchstone by which to try this quality in others, and which will enable him to detect false notions, to see through false man-

ners, and to despise false attractions. This discerning faculty is the more important, as the high breeding of very polished society presents so plausible an imitation of goodness, as to impose on the superficial observer, who, satisfied with the image and superscription, never inquires whether the coin be counterfeit or sterling.

Vanity.—Vanity differs from the other vices in this ; *they* commonly are only opposite to the one contrary virtue, while this vice has a kind of ubiquity, is on the watch to intrude everywhere, and weakens all the virtues which it cannot destroy. I believe vanity was the harpy of the ancient poets, which they tell us tainted whatever it touched.

Works of Wit.—Let us rescue from the hands of the profane and the impure the monopoly of wit which they affect to possess and which they would possess, if no good reasoning would make men sounder divines. No men had written works of elegant literature, if all good men totally despised them.

Zeal.—Zeal is not so much an individual virtue, as the principle which gives life and colouring, as the spirit which gives grace and benignity, as the temper which gives warmth and energy to every other. It is that feeling which exalts the relish of every duty, and sheds a lustre on the practice of every virtue ; which, embellishing every image of the mind with its glowing teints, animates every quality of the heart with its invigorating motion. It may be said of zeal among the virtues, as of memory among the faculties, that though it singly never made a great man, yet no man has ever made himself conspicuously great where it has been wanting.

THE END.

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